

# Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*: Investigating Stereotypes and the Dehumanizing Effects of Colonialism

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**Abstract**—Long before colonialism emerged as an imperial project, cultural stereotypes and myths have fed the Western discourse about the Orient. Even during the medieval ages and Renaissance period, the discourse about Muslims and Islam was deeply informed of the distorted images, fabricated views, and overgeneralizations rooted in racial and religious prejudices. These myths were popularized through European art and literature to construct a particular narrative later used to legitimize the imperial designs and economic control of the native people. The research views this dehumanization of people and the vicious cycle of psychological trauma as a direct result of colonial enterprises by imperial forces. Using anti-colonial theories and postcolonialism as a framework of the study and building on the works of anticolonial theorists like Fanon, Memmi, and Césaire, the research seeks to investigate how these dehumanized images form the core of imperial designs and how colonialism dehumanizes people, distorts perspectives, engenders alienation and perpetuates a cycle of psychological violence across cultures and regions.

**Index Terms**—the vicious cycle of violence, traumatic existence, colonial enterprises, distorted images, dehumanizing effects

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Western discourse about Asians and Africans is deeply informed by certain stereotypes, cultural myths, and deformed images. They have been a source of fascination for centuries as the land and riches had enthralled Western explorers and travelers. Said (1978) says that although the Orient's reputation as a place of mystery, intrigue, and exoticism had persisted since antiquity, it was mostly a product of European imagination. In medieval and early modern Europe, Christian and European identity was conceptualized in opposition to Islam and Muslims. With time, these religious differences began to act as a metaphor for cultural differences and widened the existing social divide and cultural dichotomy. The existing myths and stereotypes about the Arab and the larger Muslim world were intensified and reworked to suit the colonial expansion and imperial designs (Loomba, 2015). Long before the physical control of territories and colonial enslavement, such stereotypes and horrible dehumanized images of the 'Orient' existed in the Western imagination. During the Middle age, Europeans presented Islam as a force of chaotic and violent passions and often looked at it as a potential threat to their culture and belief system. Crusade Wars and some texts like *Arabian Night*, famous as the most representative of Arabic literature, also played a significant role in constructing such images and perpetuating these stereotypes. It is so well known that people consider this text akin to Grimm's Fairy Tales (Kleitzi, 1988).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies deal with how these images of Islam and Muslims were a deliberate creation of imperial designs. Payne and Barbera (2010) note that Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) investigates these “stereotypes and distortions through which Islam and the East have been consumed” (p. 626). His *Covering Islam* (1981) suggests how media representations present Islam and Muslims as anti-American fanatics and fundamentalists. These misrepresentations are a complete distortion of reality and “often illogical because they grow from prejudice rather than from reality” (Tyson, 2005, p. 375). In his *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950), Césaire notes how Europe developed a complex system of racial structures that recast the colonial system and rule as inherently good. He indicts colonial powers for brutalizing the rest of the world in pursuit of their self-interests. He reveals how colonialism acts as a dehumanizing and degrading force for European culture and society itself. Fanon in his classic text *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) shows how the colonizers developed horrible images of the native people. He reveals the corrosive effects of colonization and demonstrates how it corrupts people's way of seeing reality. Similarly, his *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) theorizes colonialism in a larger context of racial oppression and shows how it seeks to depict the colonized as subhuman and absolute evil. He demonstrates how colonialism degrades both the Westerner and the Easterner and illustrates the psychological disorders, fragmentation of identity, and vicious cycle of psychological violence colonialism perpetuates.

Dallmayr (1996) investigates the issues of otherness and cultural difference and addresses the pressing issues of engagement and interaction from a global perspective. He expounds upon the dangers emanating from homogenization, and racial division, and promotes peaceful coexistence. Similarly, Rasheed El- Enany's work could be considered "a reverse study of Said's Orientalism" (2004, p. 1). He looks at Western culture from an Arab perspective, condemns the West for the Oriental portrayal, and explains how Arab and African authors have responded to their degraded images. The current study, however, asserts that there exists a direct relationship between stereotypes and colonialism. Building upon the anticolonial theories of Fanon, Césaire, and Memmi, the study investigates how these colonial myths act as a weapon for imperial designs and perpetuate a vicious cycle of psychological violence that dehumanizes people and degrades the human soul.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Anticolonial theories and postcolonial studies explore how the colonized people tend to internalize certain stereotypes and racist beliefs about themselves. They study the racist prejudices and the false and fragile identities developed by the colonizers. They expound upon how such false identities engender a sense of alienation. These people start feeling alienated even from their bodies. They begin to experience themselves as different species. Colonizers identify the colonized people as an 'other'. In doing so, they tend to demonize and dehumanize the 'other' and native people. This phenomenon of 'othering' dehumanizes the colonizers as it allows them to depict themselves as a superior human being and those who are different as inferior subhuman human beings (Tyson, 2005). It is rightly said that more than three-quarters of the global population has had their lives impacted by colonialism (Ashcroft et al., 2015). In *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008), Fanon shows how the Western belief system tends to be crude, dehumanizing, and utterly false about people different in colour. He analyses the psychological scars colonialism and racism leave on people's consciousness and delineates how the material realities of colonialism have shaped the psychological experiences of black people. The cycle of violence characterizing Mustafa Saeed's relationship with English women stems from the disease Professor Maxwell talks about while defending Mustafa Saeed charged with the abetment of the women to suicide.

This process of 'othering' the 'Orient' and native people, thus, reduces the natives to merely biological existence. They are not thought of as people who have a mind to think but as physical bodies, as animals and beasts. The association of the Orient and native people with stagnancy, illiteracy, and ignorance is to depict Europeans as illuminated and enlightened minds as knowledge and education symbolize the position of power and authority. Thus, the idea of the self, which stands for power, hegemony, and creativity, is frequently connected to the Occident. The other, on the other hand, is frequently thought of as being created, colored, oriental, and dominated (Zeidanin, 2021). Reduced to their bodies, they are also reduced to the purely physical and biological existence of human life. Mustafa Saeed refers to it when he says that Professor Maxwell could not conceal his dislike of me. He said to me:

You, Mr. Saeed, are the best example of the fact that our civilizing mission in Africa is of no avail. After all the efforts we have made to educate you, it is as if you would come out of the jungle for the first time. (Salih, 2003, p. 93)

### IV. ANALYSIS

Colonialism dehumanizes people and corrupts their ways of thinking. It leaves deep psychological scars on the human psyche. The existing studies show how it perverts people and causes them to lose their identity. They show how colonialism brutalizes people, objectifies the colonized, reduces them to a subhuman level, and how it affects their culture and history. The cultural misrepresentation and degraded image of Islam and the Muslim world is not a recent phenomenon. The literary works of Chaucer, Marlow, and Shakespeare offer many instances wherein characters from the middle east and Muslim world have been depicted in poor light. But what popularized these myths is the rise of travel literature in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The wider acceptability and popularity of travel literature acted as an essential source of information about Muslims and Islam. Literary authors later used this information to develop images of Muslims and the Arab world in their literary works (Masood, 2005). Said (1978) enumerates three reasons for this cultural stereotype of Arabs and Muslims. Anti-Arab and anti-Islamic prejudice, the Arab-Israel conflict, and the complete absence of any cultural positioning. Thus, we see that since the very beginning, a deformed image of the Orient was developed. The image of the Orient that we come across in books, movies, and literature was reworked to suit the colonial agenda and legitimize the imperial project.

The colonized subject is characterized as 'other' through discourses such as *primitivism* and *cannibalism*, as a means of establishing the *binary* separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and worldview. (Ashcroft et al., 2015, p. 154)

These colonial stereotypes and dehumanized images had always been at the heart of colonial imperialism. When we study travel literature, we find that the journey to Europe involves an enlightening mission and often acts as a self-fulfilling goal. The European protagonists are shown traveling for enlightenment and knowledge- a symbol of power and position. While those traveling from Europe to the Middle East and the larger Arab world are shown on a mission to understand the culture, educate the native people, and guide them on how to live and rule themselves. They are

presented as illuminated souls born to civilize people. The education system, the teaching of European languages, and history helped them realize their mission of presenting themselves as blessed people. The natives were encouraged to think of themselves from the perspectives of the colonizers. Anticolonial theories expound on how such dehumanized images were invented by the colonizers to subjugate people, enslave them and exploit natural resources. This colonialism reduced the native population to a subhuman level.

The word 'stereotype' refers to a commonly held generalized idea about a particular type of people. Such depictions and images are often false, irrational, and unreal as they are rooted in religious and racial prejudices. Goma and Raymond (2014) note that English fiction often depicts Arab as stock characters without any individual traits and often driven by desire and physical needs. An Arab male is often seen as anti-modern, his nationalism as anti-Western, and his culture as anti-female. His existence and ways of life are presented as self-destructive. According to the commonly held beliefs, he is shown to be "indolent, prone to violence, deceptive and given to excesses" (Christison, 1987, p. 397). The same idea Fanon refers to when he says that Western ideas of humanity are based on racial prejudices. Though man is a universally accepted term, the image of man created and developed in Western culture is that of the white man. Even within a society, there exist many types of racism. The following excerpt embodies these prejudices.

Its purpose is to produce a positive national self-definition for Western nations by contrast with Eastern countries on which the West projects all the negative characteristics it doesn't want to believe exist among its people. Thus, the Chinese or the Arabs, or whatever Asian or Middle Eastern population is politically convenient, are defined as cruel, sneaky, evil, cunning, dishonest, given to sexual promiscuity and perversion, and the like. (Tyson, 2005, pp. 420-21)

Nayar (2008) notes that the 19th century saw colonial expansionism and the formulation of many race theories and the popularization of already existing certain myths and stereotypes. Many such theories were formulated to legitimize the colonial control of Asian and African territories. These theories propagated that non-Europeans were incapable of guiding and ruling themselves due to a lack of knowledge, logic, and rational behaviour. The feelings of inferiority among the colonized are proportionate to the feeling of supremacy among the Europeans. Let us have courage to say that the racist himself creates his inferior being (Fanon, 2008, p. 69). These horrible images of the Muslim and Arab world are deliberate creations to construct a hierarchy of human society. In such a binary, the idea of the self, which stands for power, hegemony, and creativity, is frequently connected to the Occident. The other, on the other hand, is frequently thought of as being created, colored, oriental, and dominated (Zeidanin, 2021). Fanon suggests how colonization breeds violence, strips the colonizers of a sense of belonging, and creates a fragile identity. The result is the psychological trauma that has led to the complete alienation of the colonized people. What is important to note here is the degeneration and debasement the white and colonizers undergo because dehumanizing others is dehumanizing the self. Fanon (2008) refers to this debasement when he says that the black people wish to be white in order to be counted as equal human beings. Césaire (1950) also describes the dehumanizing and brutalizing effects of colonialism, especially how it degrades both the colonizer and the colonized. He exposes the inherent contradiction and hypocrisy in the Western notions of 'progress' and civilization and shows how colonialism turns non-white people into inhuman objects in the eyes of colonizers who also are dehumanized through this process of degrading the colonized.

One of the consistent goals of the anticolonial and postcolonial theories has been to counter such negative profiling, resist the colonialist ideology, and explain how it designs certain myths about the identity of the colonized. They unravel how colonialism thrives on violence and generates alienation, unhomeliness, and double consciousness. They reveal how colonialist ideology 'others' the indigenous people and creates a hierarchy of human beings and places white at the top of this hierarchy (Tyson, 2005). Césaire sums up colonization when he describes colonialism as thingification. This commodification and objectification of the native people help them present themselves as a superior race.

#### A. *Cultural Myths and Misrepresentations in Season of Migration to the North*

Mustafa Saeed, a child of colonialism, was born the same year Sudan was conquered. He and his English female lovers remain trapped within the colonial lens and myths they have about each other. They look at one another not as individuals but as representatives of their respective cultures. The women view him in reductive and stereotypical terms and treat him with a mix of reverence and utter disdain. He, in their opinion, comes from "tropical climes, cruel suns, purple horizons" (Salih, 2003, p. 142). His exotic image, black colour, and cultural roots intrigued these women. Similarly, he regards his European partners as representing the British imperial culture due to his inability to disengage/detach himself from the memories of his colonial legacy (Tran, 2010).

Isabella Seymour, a mother of two children and wife of a surgeon, was intrigued by Mustafa Saeed's exotic image. In him, she found a perfect description of her imagination of the Orient. Mustafa Saeed too took advantage of her ignorance. He told her false and concocted stories about the deserts with golden sands wherein animals of extinct species lived (Salih, 2003). He constantly played on her desire to idealize him, seduced her, and brought her to his room which evoked his oriental roots. To her questions, if he was African or Arab, he exploits her innocence. When she asked if he was African or Arab, Mustafa answered that he was "like Othello", "Arab-African". He uses these stereotypes for his benefit and, thus, victimizes Isabella Seymour. He thought of himself as the Arab soldier who led aggression on Spain during the middle ages. Mustafa Saeed told the narrator that he sometimes felt that he had been converted into a primitive, barbaric, and naked creature in her eyes holding a spear in one hand and arrow in the other hunting lions and elephants in the jungle (Salih, 2003). He tells Isabella that his face resembles the desert of the Empty Quarter, while his

head is African bearing the mischievous of children (Salih, 2003). She was so captivated by Mustafa Saeed that she broke up with her husband. She says to Mustafa Saeed, "Ravish me, you African demon. Burn me in the fire of your temple, you black god. Let me twist and turn in your wild and impassioned rites" (Salih, 2003, p. 106). But she commits suicide which explains the psychological complications colonialism engenders and which she seems to suffer.

Similarly, Ann Hammond had certain stereotypes about the Orient. Mustafa Saeed and the larger Arab and African world were a source of fascination and interest for her. Whatever details about her come from the narrator himself. According to him, Mustafa Saeed met Ann Hammond after he gave a lecture on an obscure Arabic poet Abu Nawas. Within days of meeting him, her interest in the protagonist increased to the extent that she started neglecting her studies at Oxford. She, according to Mustafa Saeed, derived much pleasure in burying her face under his armpit and breathed him into "herself as though inhaling some narcotic smoke" (Salih, 2003, p. 142). She used to tell him how she wanted to have the smell of him in full the smell of rains in the Arabian desert. She yearned for tropical climes, cruel suns, and purple horizons. She considered him a symbol of 'primitive' and exotic lands. Mustafa Saeed was a "symbol of all these hankerings of hers" (Salih, 2003, p. 142). The associations and images she has about him evoke the colonial stereotypes about these lands and African people. "You are beautiful beyond description and the love I have for you is beyond description" (Salih, 2003, p. 143), she used to tell Mustafa Saeed speaking in Arabic. Her comments demonstrate how she, like other English women, fetishized and worshipped him. Her understanding of Mustafa Saeed further speaks of how colonizers view those from colonized colonies in reductive and essentialist ways. These degraded images distort the common understanding and affect interpersonal relationships. This points to what Fanon says that both the colonizers and the colonized people are dehumanized because of the way they are trapped within their respective colonial identities.

Sheila Greenwood, one of the British women, was from a very humble background. Mustafa Saeed met her in a café where she worked as a waitress. Like other women, she fell prey to his dangerous seductive charms and cultural roots. She licked his face and told Mustafa Saeed that his tongue was as crimson as a tropical sunset (Salih, 2003). He said that she looked at him as if she was trying to discover something in him. She used to tell Saeed how amazing his black colour was! "The colour of magic and mystery and obscenities" (Salih, 2003, p. 139). Despite being aware of how strongly her parents would resist her romance with a black man, she fell in love with him. She even told him that her mother would go mad if she came to know that her daughter had an affair with a black man. Like other English women, she commits suicide. This again explains how racism and colonialism generate psychological complications.

#### *B. Dehumanization Under Colonial Rule and a Vicious Cycle of Psychological Violence*

Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* is often regarded as the best work of 20th postcolonial Arabic literature.

The text lies between in East and West's traditional categories which represent the zone wherein imperial powers 'culture is in conflict with the culture of the victims (Makdisi, 1992). It offers an insight into how colonialism dehumanizes people, engenders a sense of alienation, creates a fragile identity, develops a feeling of 'unhomeliness', and perpetuates a vicious cycle of violence and psychological trauma. The study shows the corrosive influences of colonialist ideology on the personal lives of characters.

I am unconditionally opposed to all forms of oppression. For me, oppression is the greatest calamity of humanity. It diverts and pollutes the best energies of man-of oppressed and oppressor alike. For if colonization destroys the colonized, it also rots the colonizer. (Memmi, 2003, p. 13)

Nothing explains the hypocrisy and duplicity of the European colonizers better than their contradicting attitudes toward the colonized. On the one hand, they mythologize the Orient, but on the other, they treat them like animals, enslave them, and exploit the resources of their countries. For example, Professor Maxwell scorns Mustafa Saeed and acts as a defence counsel for him in his trials for the suicides of these women. He does not blame Mustafa Saeed but the 'the germ of the disease' that had afflicted many hundred years ago. Mustafa Saeed experiences this hostile and friendly attitude in his relationships with English women: Isabella Seymor idolizes him while Jean Morris looks down upon him. Robinsons romanticize him, whereas Richard, the financial analyst, dehumanizes him. The narrator expresses surprise saying that just because a man was born on Equator some people view him as a slave while others regard him as a god (Salih, 2003).

The conflict and the violent encounters in the text illustrate the psychological trauma and degradation colonialism causes. They demonstrate how it strips an individual of human sensitivity and sympathy. The colonizing forces develop an exploitative habit and start viewing the colonized as a less human being and an inferior one. A colonizer reduces the existence of the colonized people to that of animals and thus he is also reduced through this process to the same level as he is guided by animal instincts, not by the illuminated human soul. In the name of the civilizing world, they end up degrading people and dehumanizing the human soul. This is clear from what Professor Maxwell says while defending Mustafa Saeed. He said that the estrangement engendered by colonialism was responsible for the death of these women. Mustafa Saeed, he says, came to England for illumination and enlightenment, but barbarism afflicting Europe disappointed him. Therefore, he should not be held responsible for their death. He blames not Mustafa Saeed but "the germ of a deadly disease" (Salih, 2003, p. 95) that had afflicted Europe a hundred years ago. Thus, the defence counsel seeks to generalize and place what Mustafa Saeed experiences into a broader historical context through such discourse. The argument advanced by Maxwell speaks of how the colonizers often use these deformed images to generalize

stereotypes about Arabs and the larger Muslim world. These women provoked Mustafa's anger as they reduced him to the popular Orientalist stereotype.

Their continual invocation of colonial discourse thus acts to perpetuate racial conflict as it helps maintain the racialized binary of colonizer and colonized. Furthermore, as their attraction to Mustafa lies in their fascination with the 'Other' world, which the women perceive Mustafa to be symbolic of, their attraction towards Mustafa is directly tied to the stereotypical image of Africans that the West had constructed. As a result, their reasons for being involved with Mustafa act to highlight their colonial mindset. (Tran, 2010, p. 17)

Mustafa Saeed goes on a scholarship to Cairo, England, and thus, becomes a professor of colonial economics after being awarded a doctorate. He uses his exotic image to seduce English women of all social classes. To lure these women, he exaggerates the stereotypes and transforms himself into a person who seeks revenge against colonialism. What is interesting to note is the efficient way he employs colonizers' oriental stereotypes about himself and his culture. He plays on his 'exotic' image and, thus, follows a series of destructive relationships with the British women. He uses attractive looks, intelligence, seductive charm, and his powers of manipulation to the utmost in enchanting these women. Arpa (2017) says that "Mustafa's interior dialogues present psychological layers of the vengeance which roots in the colonial period" (p. 764). Mustafa Saeed's psyche is twisted which is evident from the way he seeks to frame his victimization of English women in terms of colonial excesses unleashed on his people under colonial rule. He, thus, performs a complete inversion of colonial excesses and exposes the binary between East and West (Sellman 2018).

Mustafa Saeed is, thus, alienated, trapped between two cultures, and suffers from a divided identity which is reflected in his two rooms. The London apartment is an objectified version of his native culture, and his secret room symbolizes his love and homage to English culture. This crisis and division of identity is such that he ends up drowning. His death, like his life, remains a mystery and shows his inability to find any reconciliation with the contradictions of his identity and his colonial experience. He suffered from a loss of identity and rootless existence even in the peaceful village of Wad Hamid.

This feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both, of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from some individual psychological disorder but from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives, is referred to by Homi Bhabha and others as unhomeliness. (Tyson, 2005, p. 421)

The mystery surrounding his room and English books shows that despite being settled in his village, he was unable to give up his connection to his English life. He was suffering from an acute sense of alienation and exile even when he was with his wife, children, and family. He had double consciousness, always torn between two antagonist cultures. In Homi Bhabha's sense, he was 'unhomed'. He could find peace neither in England nor in a village as peaceful as Wad Hamid. He had a fragmented existence that was always in search of peace. He felt he belonged to nowhere as he was caught between the psychological demands of two antagonist cultures, Sudan where he was born, and England he so earnestly aspired for. Tyson (2005) says that to be 'unhomed' refers to the feelings of isolation and alienation everywhere including your home. You do not feel connected to people around you. The identity of your culture has transformed you into a psychological refugee. The excruciating pain of alienation he undergoes is clear from how wanderlust plagues him and leads him to wish for death. He was unable to overcome his desire to visit 'far away parts'. This complication of colonialism, Memmi (2003) refers to when he says that he was a kind of half-breed of colonization understanding but not able to belong to anyone.

The way he misses Jean Morris even after he arrives in his native village, Wad Hamid, suggests that he is haunted by his English life and explains the psychological complications he undergoes. This also shows Mustafa Saeed's shattered existence and the fragility of identity. His existence illustrates this double consciousness. He does both—draw meaning from his colonizers and also seeks to avenge the colonial excesses by victimizing these women. The same colonial complication is expressed in the following excerpt.

How could the colonizer look after his workers while periodically gunning down a crowd of the colonized? How could the colonized deny himself so cruelly yet make such excessive demands? How could he hate the colonizers and yet admire them so passionately? (Memmi, 2003, p. 6)

What shows the dehumanizing effects of colonialism is the way it distorts people's perspectives and engenders a sense of alienation. Mustafa Saeed keeps on swinging like a pendulum. On the one hand, he hates the Europeans for the colonial excesses unleashed by the colonizers on his people. On the other, he victimizes and subjects these women to violence. With Ann Hammond, he plays the master-slave game, thereby making her slave and becoming his master. "You are Mustafa, my master and my lord and I am Susan, your slave girl" (Salih, 2003, p. 146), she used to tell him. Many scholars believe that Mustafa Saeed's lack of empathy and violent behavior are a direct result of the colonial education and oppression that he received as he was growing up. This interpretation is also supported by what Fanon says about the effects of colonial violence on the native people. As colonial powers introduce violent practices into the colonies, they become "the bringer of violence into the home and the mind of the native" (Fanon, 2008, p. 38). The psychological violence and inhuman treatment leave them with disturbing images and ideas about themselves as they grow up with such horrible portrayals of themselves. This colonization "dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly, it turns him into an animal" (p. 42).

Ann Hammond was a young woman from an affluent family. The narrator discusses some specific details about her. Mustafa Saeed had told him how she, within days of contact with him, started neglecting her studies at Oxford to spend more and more time with him. She was mesmerized by his exotic image, African roots, and Orientalist background. Mustafa Saeed recalls how one day he woke up to find Ann Hammond in his London apartment bed. To sexually invade her chastity, he chose to sleep with her as he did with women in a room. The room was well decorated and gave him the impression of sleeping with a harem. However, after a short relationship with him, Ann Hammond wrote a note and committed suicide. The message read: "God damn you, Mustafa Saeed. He seems to be ostensibly responsible for her death. But her note to him creates a different impression. Like other English women, she also profoundly misinformed and fetishized him as a symbol of his primitive and exotic lands.

By failing to view Mustafa as an individual, Ann highlights her inability to divorce herself from colonial consciousness. By reducing Mustafa down to a 'smell', he is no longer viewed as a person but rather as an object which satisfies Ann's senses. Mustafa is not an equal partner but rather a perfume scent in which Ann desires to enshroud herself. (Tran, 2010, p. 9)

These myths and stereotypes, thus formed, inform the consciousness of the colonizers about Arab and African people. Her comments and the subsequent suicide demonstrate how such troubling images and ugly portrayals distort people's perspective and lead them to consider others as less human beings. The play-acting of Ann Hammond with Mustafa Saeed amply makes it clear how he uses his relationship as a means to reverse the terms of colonial subjugation. He did not seek to question and challenge it. He instead becomes a partner in it and seeks to exercise power and authority over Ann Hammond. He unleashes violence to avenge the colonial excess done to him and his people.

Mustafa Saeed carries out this self-appointed mission by inflicting pain and suffering on British women. Just as imperialism had violated its victims, Mustafa violates his, and his unwitting lovers become sacrifices in his violent campaign. The act of finding lovers and engaging with them sexually becomes scouting operations and skirmished in a war fought on the personal level. (Makdisi, 1992, p. 811)

Mustafa Saeed's wish for death and the suicide of English women points to the destructive and corrosive effects of colonialism. All these characters seem to have an inclination for death and seem to find an escape to some other world. This fascination for death and violence marking their life shows how its lingering consequences can reverberate across personal relationships of individuals. These characters' inability to think beyond the framework of conquest and subjugation shows the degradation colonialism causes and illustrates how it perpetuates a vicious cycle of violence and dehumanizes the colonizer and the colonized equally. This is further substantiated by what Loomba (2005) says that colonial oppression "dislocates and distorts the psyche of the oppressed" (p. 122). Mustafa Saeed's damage is not restricted to physical violence. It is psychological as he drives most of his victims to death. He subjects himself to a never-ending cycle of psychological violence (Makdisi, 1992, p. 812). The fact that the women he was involved with are eager to embrace death suggests that something was wrong with these characters. This is also evident from the fragility of identity, alienation, and contradictions that mark their life.

The same theme of colonial dehumanization underlies the violent relationships of Mustafa Saeed and Isabella Seymour. Like other English women, she was enchanted by his exotic roots and oriental background. Unlike Jean Morris, who scorned Mustafa Saeed, she fetishized him and considered him a god. The narrator refers to this apparent contradiction when he says that some people consider god while others view him as a slave man just because he was born on the equator. To seduce her, Mustafa Saeed feeds on these stereotypes that were popularized through the process of colonialism. He describes his homeland as something 'teeming with wild, exotic animals. He makes references to 'deserts' and jungle climates which revive the images of the noble savage. The discourse he uses makes it clear that he seeks to avenge his colonial subjugation by unleashing violence upon these women.

The word 'prey' conjures the image of a target to be killed as well as denoting a hierarchy of power. By labelling his victims as 'prey', Mustafa categorizes his partners as powerless, whilst simultaneously assigning himself the superior role of predator and, therefore, as the dominant power in his relationship. (Tran, 2010, p. 11)

The imagery he employs to describe his first encounter with Isabella Seymour shows that he looks at his relationship with these women in terms of power and conquest. He calls himself a coloniser and an invading man who belonged to the South. He thought that he would not make a safe return from this battle field. Moreover, he thought of himself and Jean Morris as pirating soldier and brink of destruction respectively (Salih, 2003). He draws a parallel between his approach to Isabella Seymour and the Arab conquest of Spain, wherein the Islamic empire had extended to Europe. He took much pleasure in drawing a parallel between his sexual victory over Isabella Seymour with the conquest of Spain by Arabs. Through this framework of conquest, he seeks to reverse the colonizers' order of domination and oppression of his people. He, now, wants to subjugate these women the way European colonizers had dominated his people.

The descriptions used by Mustafa for his conquests are couched not only in terms of military operations in general, but in terms of traditional Arab military campaigns in particular: going to meet new victims is described in terms of saddling his camels, the process of courtship is compared to laying siege, involving taints, caravans, the desert, and so forth. (Makdisi, 1992, p. 811)

This framework of colonization suggests how Mustafa Saeed finds himself unable to escape from this frame of conquest and subjugation despite the fact he consistently critiques the colonizers for the violence unleashed on his native people.

They imported to us the germ of the greatest European violence as seen on the Somme and at Verdun, the like of which the world has never previously known, the germ of the deadly disease that struck them more than a thousand years ago. (Salih, 2003, p. 95)

Though Mustafa Saeed seems to be responsible for Isabella Seymor's suicide, however, what she and her husband say problematizes the issue and forces the readers to place this violence within a broad historical perspective. She wishes Mustafa Saeed as much happiness as he had given her. Her husband acquits him of all the charges and cites cancer as a possible cause of his wife's death. Though she had admitted to him her affair with Mustafa Saeed, he no longer felt any envy or jealousy towards the accused. "In spite of everything I feel no bitterness within myself, neither against her nor against the accused. I merely feel a deep sadness at losing her" (Salih, 2003, p. 141).

Double consciousness and fragile identity are some of the consequences of colonialism. The characters in the text suffer from this multiplicity of identities. For example, Mustafa Saeed denies the charges against him but confesses to having killed Jean Morris. The fact that he lived with so many women for over one year under different names and identities has much to do with these false identities characterizing the lives of these characters. The positive attitude of the couple towards him echoes the faltering attitude of Mustafa Saeed towards the colonizers: simultaneously remembering and hating Britain for the colonial excesses. This is also clear from the narrator's reflection on Isabella Seymor's fetishization of Mustafa Saeed and his culture. This again suggests how colonialism dehumanizes people and corrupts their understanding.

Mustafa's sexual campaign in no way weakens the structures of the colonial system. He strengthens those structures by perpetuating colonial binaries and stereotypes both in his characterization of the women he seduces and in his means of seduction, which entail his inhabiting the colonial image of the African. (Caminero-Santangelo, 1999, p. 17)

Similarly, Sheila Greenwood, like Isabella Seymour and Ann Hammond, is the victim of these oriental stereotypes and Mustafa Saeed's dangerous seductive charms. The narrator recalls how Mustafa Saeed told him about Sheila Greenwood becoming enamoured with his exotic appearance and dark skin. Her comments about his skin suggest the extent to which she, as an English woman, was enthralled by his exotic roots. In her understanding, people with black colour represented a magical, mysterious, and obscene existence which was in stark contrast to the illumination and enlightenment defined by a Western identity. Though his identity completely engrossed her, Mustafa Saeed was aware of how a black man weighs in the opinion of her parents. She too knew well that her mother would go to any extent and would not accept her relationship. These are the racial prejudices through which Sheila Greenwood's parents looked at the Orient. They viewed him through these reductive and stereotypical images that were reminiscent of the 'noble savage'.

Thus, these are myths and false portrayals. They are the dehumanized images that distort people's understanding, strip them of human sympathy, reduce the Orient to a subhuman level, and perpetuate a vicious cycle of violence. The violence stems from this dehumanization which Professor Maxwell refers to when he says that these women were killed by a germ of the deadly disease which had afflicted Europe a thousand years ago (Salih, 2003). He talks of colonial violence by placing it within a broad historical narrative. This violence dehumanizes both the colonizer and colonized and kills the human spirit. Memmi (2003) said that it was impossible to reduce a man to the level of a dog without first considering as a human being. The unlikely dehumanization of the oppressed becomes the alienation of the oppressor and the colonizer. The tragic end of these relationships and an earnest desire to embrace death reveals the adverse and corrosive effects of colonization.

Jean Morris's relationship marked by violence offers yet another instance of the corrupting effects of colonialism on people's lives. It also speaks of the psychological trauma that follows and destroys human lives. Unlike other English women, she did not consider Mustafa Saeed as a God. She rather scorned him and thwarted his attempts to subjugate and dominate her sexually. Though married to him, she used to flirt with other men to torment him and assert her freedom. While other English women fetishized his exotic possessions, she broke the valuable artifacts he used to deepen the mystery and seduce English women. For Mustafa Saeed, Jean Morris represented the North he was resolute to conquer, whereas, for Jean Morris, he represented Africa always associated with ignorance, superstition, stagnancy, and biological existence. As Jean Morris allows him to sleep with her, he thinks of himself as a conqueror of physical territory. This suggests that he saw his relationship with English women in terms of conquest and power that reverses the colonial subjugation of his people. Tran (2010) says that the frequent use of this description reveals Mustafa Saeed's belief that conquering a European woman sexually would be akin to conquering a Western land.

Mustafa Saeed told the narrator how their bedroom had turned into a 'theatre of war' wherein he was left defeated by Jean Morris. The bedroom description reveals how his relationship with English women was marked by conflict and brutal fights. Even the description of the mirror in his room also suggests how the life of these characters is infected by this never-ending violence. Caminero-Santangelo (1999) notes that the words used by Mustafa Saeed and Jean shows an epistemic imperial violence as they define and isolate an identity based on place. When Mustafa Saeed plunges the

dagger into her chest, she seems to welcome the dagger. This points to the affinity and desire for death and destruction they seemed to have.

That is why the whole thing is fated, inevitable. It is fated and inevitable not because fate has decreed that Mustafa Saeed and Jean Morris' relationship would be inter-destructive and would end in tragedy but because the unconscious forces which propel each of them towards death are beyond their control. (Abbas, 1974, p. 53)

Thus, throughout the text, we see colonialism acting as a dehumanizing phenomenon. Mustafa Saeed never ceases to imagine himself as an avenger of wrongs committed by the colonizers on his people. During his stay in England, he considers English women's bodies as the manifestation of the European colonizers' sovereignty, and thus he seeks to victimize them. Through the victimization of these women, he unleashes the same degradation and dehumanization on Europe which it had inflicted on his territory. He wished to metaphorically rape Europe (Berkley & Ahmed, 1982). It becomes clear how colonialism creates a monster of violence and psychological trauma that leaves people dehumanized, degraded, and bereft of the traits of human sympathy and human dignity.

It is the oppressor himself who restores, with his slightest gesture, the humanity he seeks to destroy; and, since he denies humanity in others, he regards it everywhere as his enemy. To handle this, the colonizer must assume the opaque rigidity and imperviousness of stone. In short, he must dehumanize himself, as well. (Memmi, 2003, p. 24)

## V. CONCLUSION

The study finds a close connection between stereotypes and colonial designs. It examines how these images about Muslims and Islam are the deliberate creation of imperial designs. The European colonizers have always used these dehumanized images to assert racial supremacy, legitimize civilizing missions, colonize territory, subjugate the native people, and exploit their natural resources. The study asserts how this civilizing mission is a pretext to create a hierarchy of the human race. It demonstrates how these dehumanized images are rooted in racial prejudices which deform people and distort their ways of seeing reality. Mustafa Saeed and English women remain steeped in their cultural stereotypes and view each other in ways that are reminiscent of the stereotypes and images of the "other". The study also shows how Mustafa Saeed uses his exotic image to overturn white supremacy, seek revenge and thus challenge the power dynamics. Therefore, this way, colonialism deforms people, divests them of true human character, and perpetuates a cycle of psychological violence that mars the peaceful coexistence of people.

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