



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

Representing Otherness: A Comparative Study of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*

Lahcen AIT IDIR
Sultan Moulay Slimane University
Bd Ibn Khaldoun, Beni-Mellal 23000, Morocco
Email: aitidir.lahcen@yahoo.com

Otherness remains, to borrow Lévi-Strauss's words, an 'empty signifier'; for its meaning is floating and is endlessly open to different interpretations depending on the context wherein it is used as the Derridean thinking has suggested. Yet, seen in the light of postcolonial scholarship, the concept of Otherness is basically suggestive of two entities which are different from each other in many ways and aspects. With regard to Orientalist and colonialist writings, there is always a tendency to build walls of demarcation between Europeans and non-Europeans. In the process of Othering, the construction of the Self entails unavoidably that of the Other. Clear enough; the positive representation of the Self who enjoys but affirmative qualities presupposes a derogatory representation of the Other, which is fraught with downgrading images. In this respect, Conrad's Heart of Darkness is a good case in point wherein Africans are "Othered" and seen as being quite different from those who belong to the community of European 'selves'. In the course of Othering Africans, Conrad's narrative relies on a network of rhetorical strategies such as surveillance, stereotype and debasement.

Keywords: otherness; colonialism; postcolonialism; Joseph Conrad; Tayeb Salih; Discursive strategies

Introduction

Otherness remains, to borrow Lévi-Strauss's words, an 'empty signifier'; for its meaning is floating and is endlessly open to different interpretations depending on the context wherein it



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

is used as the Derridean thinking has suggested . Yet, seen in the light of postcolonial scholarship, the concept of Otherness is basically suggestive of two entities which are *different* from each other in many ways and aspects. With regard to Orientalist and colonialist writings, there is always a tendency to build walls of demarcation between Europeans and non-Europeans. In the process of Othering, the construction of the Self entails unavoidably that of the Other. Clear enough; the positive representation of the Self who enjoys but affirmative qualities presupposes a derogatory representation of the Other, which is fraught with downgrading images. In this respect, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a good case in point wherein Africans are "Othered" and seen as being quite different from those who belong to the community of European 'selves'. In the course of Othering Africans, Conrad's narrative relies on a network of rhetorical strategies such as surveillance, stereotype and debasement.

Encountering Africa: Processes of Seeing the Self and the Other in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

To borrow Gerard Genette's own words, Marlow's narrative in *Heart of darkness* is 'homodiegetic' in the sense that "the narrator [is] present as a character in the story he tells" (Genette, 245). Yet, although Genette pinpoints that "presence [in narration] has degrees" (Genette, 245), it remains legitimate to ascribe Marlow both qualities of omnipresence and omniscience. In fact, a major portion of the story in *Heart of Darkness* is narrated and seen through Marlow's I/Eye. In this sense, as a focalizer and a "voice of understanding and wisdom" (Genette, 253), Marlow has the agency of constructing identities of the native narratees whose voices are silenced, denied, and muted through the narrator's essentialist gaze and/ or what Genette has qualified as "the conquest of the I" (Genette, 249); hence, Marlow's words function as swords that defend but the ideological stances of the Western imperial enterprise.



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

It is in this regard that the rhetorical strategy of surveillance appears striking. To put it in David Spurr's (1993) terms, the narrator/ Marlow enjoys a "commanding view ... a sense of mastery over the unknown and over what is often perceived by the western [narrator] as strange and bizarre" (Spurr, 15). In fact, this commanding view is revelatory of the Foucauldian claim of the inextricable connection between knowledge and power; for the narrator's gaze presupposes the knowledge he has about the natives, hence the power over them. In a way reminiscent of the Foucauldian idea, Said argues that "to have...knowledge...of a thing is to dominate it and to have authority over it" (Said, 32). It is in this juncture that the ideological binarism comes to the fore; while the European self is represented as the knower, the seer, the powerful, the African Other incarnates the known, the seen, and the powerless. What follows is an example which accounts for Marlow's 'commanding view' in *Heart of Darkness*:

I left in a French steamer, and she called in every blamed port they have out there, for, as I could see, the sole purpose of landing soldiers and customhouse officers. I watch the coast. Watching a coast as it slips by the ship is like thinking about an enigma. There it is before you- smiling, frowning, inviting, grand, mean, insipid, or savage, and always mute with an air of whispering. (Conrad, 14)

Two main remarks can be deduced from the passage above. First, striking is the hegemonic presence of the 'I' which is symptomatic of the narrative omniscience which stands for the power of narration that leaves enough space for Marlow, the conqueror, to construct his ideologically informed representation of the land of the Other. Second, clear also in the passage above is the power of the 'eye' and/ or perception which finds illustration in the gerund 'watching', a verb which is highly reflective of the narrator's powerful and continuous gaze which, in a way or another, renders everything under his control. Being gazed upon, the land of the colonial Other is ascribed but submissive, passive and stereotypical images such as



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

‘frowning’, ‘inviting’, ‘mean’, ‘insipid’, ‘savage’, and ‘mute’. In the main, the passage above clearly reveals

How looking and speaking enter into the economy of an essentially colonial situation, in which one race holds authority over another’s [land]. To look at and speak to not only implies a position of authority; it also constitutes the commanding act itself... By entering into this economy of uneven exchange, [the narrator] becomes an accomplice to the very system of authority, of control, and of surveillance. (Spurr, 14)

On this basis, surveillance presupposes the colonial control of the European Self over Africa and African Others who are relegated to the status of submissiveness and inferiority. In this sense, the natives are incapable of representing themselves; for they are ignorant, illiterate, and backward. Hence, ‘the ideological function’, in Genette’s terms, of Marlow, the mouthpiece of empire, comes to light. The above qualities of the natives leave room for Marlow to show his unconditioned and strong support for the presence of empire in Africa for the purpose of “weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways” (Conrad, 13). Quite obvious, the negative portrayal of the natives entails strongly a positive representation of the European Self who strives hard in order to share with the Africans the fruit of the western science, knowledge, and technology which the natives lack. In this way, the European self distances itself from the natives, the contradictory entity. In fact, it is in this line that Said argues that “European culture has gained in strength and identity by setting itself against [Africa] as a sort of surrogate and undergrounded self” (Said, 3). All these ideologies that the western hegemonic discourse based on them are kept reverberating in Conrad’s text for which Marlow’s ‘narrative I’ shows but open support and defense.



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

Endowed with ‘the commanding view’, Marlow has “the privilege of inspecting, of examining, of looking at” (Spurr, 13), hence of controlling the natives. Through Marlow’s surveillance, the Africans are assigned downgrading pictures that set out to systematically empty them from any human quality. What follows is a fine instance:

And between whiles I had to look after the savage who was fireman...
He was there below me and, upon my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat walking on his hind legs. A few months of training had done for that really fine chap. (Conrad, 45)

The use of such verbs as ‘look’ and ‘see’ remain of critical importance. What they account for is the narrator’s ‘commanding view’. It is at this narrative level that the African Other is possessed and controlled by the European narrator. Relevant in this regard is Michael Foucault’s idea of ‘the chess board’ wherein the African native is represented as “a semiotic pawn on a chess board under the control of the white signmaker. [The latter]...can move these pawns only within certain prescribed areas” (Glodie, 232). Certainly, as ‘the white signmaker’, Marlow delineates ‘the black pawns’ in way that displays their degrading position. As revealingly highlighted in the above passage, the African native is dehumanized and rendered a ‘dog’ ‘walking on his hind legs’.

In keeping with the white man’s surveillance of the Africans, it is worth noting that such a process lays also emphasis on the examination of the body of the Other. In fact, *Heart of Darkness* is fraught with passages that account for the African body under surveillance. The following excerpt is a clear case in point:

Now and then a boat from the shore gave on a momentary contact with reality. It was paddled by black fellows. You could see from afar the



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

white of their eyeballs glistening. They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks- these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. (Conrad, 15)

Once again, the above portrayal is indicative of the fact that the narrator's view is positioned at a high narrative level; a fact that enables him to figuratively appropriate the body of the Other and represent it according to his wish. Put otherwise, the narrator is endowed with the power of the gaze which basically excludes and denies all other perspectives; hence the narrator's own perspective, a reliable one, is foregrounded and is assigned legitimacy to represent the savage Otherness. In addition, the gazed-upon- body of the primitive natives as shown in the above passage is, Spurr comments revealingly,

As much the object of examination, commentary and valorization as the landscape of the primitive. Under western eyes, the body is that which is most proper to the primitive, the sign by which the primitive is represented. The body rather than speech, law, or history, is the essential defining characteristic of primitive peoples. They ... live in their bodies and in natural space, but not in a body politic worthy of the name nor in meaningful historical time. (Spurr, 22)

Through the narrator's surveillance, the body is visually appropriated in colonialist writings. In its- the body- representation, Africans are represented as giving it much importance - ; a telling fact which shows that reason is worth nothing for them. Indeed, as primitives, they live in their bodies as the only thing they have. Yet, this view is reductionist and it is ideologically informed as it inferiorises Africans. It is in this context that V. Street suggests that "the notion of



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

primitive people as inferior is assumed to be a political excuse for taking their lands” (V. Street, 5). That is, this discourse of primitivism is a justificatory discourse that aims at rationalizing the project of empire. Once again, in the binary system of thought, if the African Other is seen as primitive, the European Self embodies the civilized. This idea finds reflection in Alstair’s words who clearly comments that “to describe oneself as ‘modern’ and ‘progressive’, meant that those who were not included in that definition are to be described as ‘primitive’ or ‘backward’. [This] alterity... was an integral part of the enlightenment project” (Pennycook, 47). In other words, the system of binarism is predicated on contradictory images of self/other. Clear enough, the positive construction of Self presupposes the negative representation of the Other. Again, this is to cater for the interests of empire.

In the same connection with the visual possession of the African body, the anthropological claims, which have served the intentions of colonialism, are very present in Conrad’s text. To illustrate, let’s consider the following passage:

While I stood horror-struck, one of these creatures rose to his hands and knees, and went off on-all fours towards the river to drink. He lapped out of his hand... and after a time let his wooly head fall on his breastbone. When near... I met a white man, in such an unexpected elegance of getup that in the first moment I took him for a sort of a vision... he was amazing.... I shook hands with this miracle. (Conrad, 19-20)

The above quote remains undoubtedly of paramount importance for two main reasons. First, visually looked at, hence appropriated, the body of the African Other is portrayed in a way that shows his animal-like features, ‘went off on-all fours’, ‘wooly head’.... In fact, these descriptions set out to deprive the African Other of human qualities. Strikingly, the portrayal of the native as walking on ‘all-fours’ is very telling in the sense that it shows that he is in the first



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

stages of ‘human’ development; an idea which is reminiscent of the Darwinian theory which has been at the service of the colonial enterprise. In this respect, V. Street makes the subsequent point: “the inferiority of the native....is reinforced by the popularity of the evolutionary theory... race [is used] as a means of classifying mankind ... the European man at the top and primitive at the bottom” (V. Street, 9). Indeed, the system of classification upon which the white man’s mode of thinking finds its cornerstone is ideologically loaded, and it has the purpose of confirming the idea that “ ‘they’ were not like ‘us’ , and for this reason deserved to be ruled” (Said, xi- xii).

Second, in a striking contrast, the white man in the above excerpt is represented as ‘superhuman’ in the sense that he is seen in such ‘unexpected elegance’ unlike the native other who is less than human as his features testify. More than this, the white man is perceived as ‘a miracle’, a quality that invites the reader to construct of him only positive images and perceptions. As I pointed out earlier, the good qualities associated with the white man are implicitly meant to stress the strange Otherness of the natives. In the main, Marlow’s narrating ‘I’ and gazing ‘eye’ are revelatory of the idea that Otherness is rendered under his surveillance; hence he constructs everything related to it according to his will and intentions.

In the main, narrating and representing the non-western Otherness in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* find their cornerstones in a network of rhetorical strategies and processes that aim at drawing lines of demarcations between the Europeans and non-Europeans. With regard to Orientalist writings, the construction of the non-European Other entails perforce that of the European Self following what is commonly referred to as binary system of thinking. Ostensibly, the examined modes of representation have shown this tendency of creating ideological boundaries between the Europeans and Africans in Conrad’s narrative. All these strategies act as an ideologically informed representation that depicts the Africans as ‘mysterious’, ‘savage’, ‘violent’, ‘exotic’, ‘ugly’ creatures that enhance in the west, and basically ‘the western readership’, a sense of contempt and abhorrence towards Africans who therefore represent a



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

source of deep anxieties; for Africans threaten the value and the idea of humanity and the western universal civilization.

Encountering the West: Processes of Reversing the Dialectics of Self/Other in Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*

Strikingly enough, Salih and Conrad's narratives display many affinities in their narration, characterization, as well as their foci and main concerns. *Heart of Darkness* is a journey southward from "the greatest town on earth" (Conrad,8), London, to the "unknown planet" (Conrad,9), Africa. The journey of Conrad's narrator in search of the elusive character of Kurtz, a prodigy, starts from the locus of civilization to the jungle of Africa. Remarkable as it is, London is where history starts and ends which is implicitly manifested in the fact it is Marlow's both points of departure and return. Striking is the reversal that Salih's narrative demonstrates to Conrad's. Narrated by an unnamed narrator, *Season of Migration to the North* is, as the title indicates, about Mustapha Sa'eed's journey northward from 'equator' to 'heart of darkness', London. Akin to Kurtz, Mustapha, who sees himself as "South that yearns for the North and the ice" (Salih,25), undoes the rhetoric "I, over and above all, am colonizer" (Salih, 94). Contrariwise to *Heart of Darkness*, the journey of Salih's protagonists starts from "the center of the world- the heart of Africa- to Europe and back to that focal point where 'things begin and things end' " (Amyuni, 18). Having announced himself as a colonizer, Mustapha along with the narrator, Mustapha's secret-sharer- to borrow a Conradian idea- resorts to a network of discursive strategies whereby they construct the Otherness of the West which is seen through their eyes. In this line, this section is devoted to the scrutiny of three core processes of representation that Salih's narrative deploys in its portrayal of the white man; hence reverses the dialectics of Self/Otherness upon which Conrad's text sets its cornerstone.



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

As I pointed out earlier, there are many correspondences between Conrad and Salih's fictional narratives. If Marlow, Conrad's narrator, brings Africans under western eyes and represents them in accordance with his own will, intentions and ideologies, Salih's unnamed narrator acts in much the same manner as he renders westerners under African eyes and constructs their images in a way that goes hand in hand with his will and purposes. Yet, although Salih's unnamed narrator is as 'homodiegetic' as Marlow, the main examples that show the African construction of the white man's Otherness are reflected in the speeches and utterances of the focal character of Mustapha Sa'eed. A child of colonialism and of the ravages of empire, Mustapha received his education in Sudan, Egypt and England. It is in this latter that he studied and mastered every specific detail about Economics and literature, and his "mind was able to absorb western civilization" (Salih, 33). Mustapha's knowledge and mastery of the English language, literature, culture and economics have provided him with the chance to deterritorialize, in the Deuleuzian sense, the major expression. Certainly, deterritorialization serves as an effective means to the ends of Mustapha, who is "regarded... as a prodigy" (Salih, 22), and who fully incarnates the African cultural imperialism. It is in this respect that Mustapha's conquest of the North is cultural and sexual. Such conquests have paved the path for Mustapha to display his superiority over the English, hence having them under his control. The following excerpt wherein Mustapha projects one of his encounters with an English girl is a relevant example:

She knelt and kissed my feet. "You are Mustafa, my master and my lord," she said, "and I am Sausan, your slave girl." And so, in silence, each one of us chose his role, she to act the part of the slave girl and I that of the master. She prepared the bath, then washed me with water in which she had poured essence of roses... She put on an aba and head-dress, while I stretched out on the bed and she massaged my chest, legs,



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

neck and shoulders. “Come here,” I said to her imperiously. “To hear is to obey O master!” she answered me in a subdued voice. (Salih, 146)

Contrapuntally projected, the scene in the excerpt above is revelatory of the reversal of the dialectics of Self/Otherness. Fascinating is the system of binary oppositions upon which the above portrayal is predicated. While the African Self is represented as ‘master’ and ‘lord’, the English Other represents its contradictory image of a ‘slave’. The latter displays images indicative of submission and obedience to Mustapha’s African control and eyes. Conspicuous as it is, the white girl is projected as fulfilling whatever need the black Mustapha might be in need of. The latter, on the contrary, shows a sense of mastery over the ‘native girl’ whom he ‘imperiously’ addresses. Strikingly enough, the excerpt at hand is reminiscent of a passage from *Heart of Darkness*, which I quoted in the previous section, and wherein Marlow represents himself as a master over one of the natives who, says Marlow, “was there below me and, upon my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather walking on his hind legs” (Conrad, 45). No doubt, colonial literature is replete with such scenes wherein the European Self is seen as the master and the colonized Other is projected as a slave. A similar example to that of Marlow is in Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* wherein the white English character of Crusoe acts as a master over the native Friday who, says Crusoe, “made all the signs to me [Crusoe] of subjection, servitude...[and he] would serve me as long as he lived” (Defoe, 203). Indeed, if read contrapuntally, these passages, which are fully inscribed within the realm of European colonial literature, remain very telling; for they are revelatory of Mustapha’s deployment of colonial discourse in his representation of the Western Otherness.

Following the same line of thought, in his “An Exploration of the Use of Colonial Discourse within Mustafa Sa’eed’s Interracial Relationships in *Season of Migration to the North*”, Danielle Tran Argues that Mustapha Sa’eed’s “colonial discourse is thus similarly employed as a method to differentiate oneself from a person of an opposing race, highlighting



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

the inescapability of racial categorizations during the colonial period” (Tran, 4). Put differently, Mustapha seems to appropriate the classificatory system upon which the western frame of mind is built, which finds reflection in western colonial discourse, with a view to construct the Otherness of the West, hence representing himself as master who enjoys all the power to render the English women under his rule. In the Saidian sense, Mustapha seems to have succeeded to “enter into the discourse of Europe and the West, to mix with it, transform it, to make it acknowledge marginalized or suppressed or forgotten histories” (Said, 216). In his redefinitions of power relations, the African Self aims at redrawing lines of difference with the European Other. No doubt, passages and statements that demonstrate Mustapha’s use of colonial discourse, hence announcing himself as a colonizer, are quite many. The subsequent passage is one further case in point:

I was the invader who had come from the South, and this was the icy battlefield from which I would not make a safe return. I was the pirate sailor and Jean Morris the shore of destruction. And yet I did not care. I took her, there in the open air, unconcerned whether we could be seen or heard by people. For me this moment of ecstasy is worth the whole of life. (Salih, 160)

Remarkable again in this passage is the fact that in the process of his definitions of power relations and the dialectics of Otherness, Mustapha declares himself as an invader who enjoys a superior status in sheer contradistinction to the white Other who is conferred to an inferior position, hence incarnates the colonized subject. Indeed, as Saree S. Makdisi underlines, “just as Conrad's novel was bound up with Britain's imperial project, Salih's participates (in an oppositional way) in the afterlife of the same project today, by 'writing back' to the colonial power that once ruled the Sudan” (Makdisi, 805). Yet, Mustapha’s campaign is, unlike Kurtz’s, not a military and territorial one, and it, as Saree S. Makdisi notes, “is not carried out strictly in



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

terms of physical violence, however. Indeed, most of the damage he does is psychological [and imaginary]” (Makdisi, 812). In this sense, Mustapha’s sexual conquests, effective means of oppression and subjugation, are the result of “the surrogate culture of the invaders, a culture that he seeks to revenge himself upon through...sexual ‘counter-invasion’” (Tarawneh and John, 332). Yet, as I have pinpointed in a moment, such conquests have profound effects on the psychology of the white ladies to the extent that some of them committed suicide. More than this, Mustapha, a megalomaniac and paranoiac character, killed his English wife, Jean Morris, mercilessly in one of the most tragic events in *Season of Migration to the North*. No doubt, Mustapha’s violence is revelatory of the ravages and germs of empire as the following passage testifies:

They [Europeans] 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 a deadly disease that struck them more than a thousand years ago. Yes, my dear sirs, I came as an invader into your very homes: a drop of the poison which you have injected into the veins of history. (Salih, 95)

Ostensibly, Mustapha is a child of the violence and oppression that was once exerted upon the African natives during the British colonial period. In fact, the European violence is regarded as such a disease that was nowhere but within the confinement of Europe. Just as Marlow conceives of Africans as ‘violent niggers’, Mustapha constructs the image of the white man as the violent Other who exerted aggression and oppression on Africa and Africans. Hence, Mustapha travels northward to Europe to exact revenge on the white imperialists, deconstruct the European writings of the African history and dismantle the halls of power which were once built in Africa. In this way, Salih text “retells the history of imperialism with an eye to the way this history can be made to reveal the ... destructive effects of early twentieth-century European and



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

American colonial practice and ideology” (Camerono-Santangelo, 3). Seen in this context, the colonial project, which is fuelled with violence and hatred, is a hypocritical project that sought to cater for the needs of greedy and hungry-for-power people.

Following the same line of argumentation, the damages that European colonialism has brought to Africa testify that ‘la mission civilisatrice’ is a failure. Such an idea finds reflection in one of the white man’s words who, addressing Mustapha, revealingly comments that “You, Mr Sa’eed, are the best example of the fact that our civilizing mission in Africa is of no avail. After all the efforts we’ve made to educate you, it’s as if you’d come out of the jungle for the first time” (Salih, 93). What Europe has brought to African is not civilization but disease and violence. In this sense, colonization which harbors behind the façade of western civilization has rather worked “to *decivilize* the colonizer, to *brutalize* him in the true sense of the word, to degrade him, to awaken him to buried instincts, to covetousness, violence, race hatred, and moral relativism” (Césaire, 2). Seen in this light, *Season of Migration to the North* acts as a counter narrative to the ravages of empire, and it satisfactorily helps the Africans tell and write their stories and histories from their point of view which was once excluded by the European essentialist frame of narrating and writing histories. Indeed, ‘the voyage in’ of which Salih’s text bears the stamp is basically meant to rebuild and redefine the past in accordance with the perspectives of the Africans whose voice used to be muted and silenced.

In relation to the visual appropriation of the body of the Other, Mustapha seems to have succeeded in having the body of the European Other under his gaze, hence appropriating it visually. Similar to Marlow’s visual possession of the body of the natives in *Heart of Darkness*, Mustapha’s gaze allows him to control the white women’s bodies. The following excerpt is a good case point wherein the body of the native European women is rendered inferior as it is gazed upon through the eyes of the African Self:



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

My glances overwhelmed her and she turned her face from me... I looked at her breast and she too looked at where my glance had fallen, as though she had been robbed of her own volition and was moving in accordance with my will. I looked at her stomach and as she followed my gaze a faint expression of pain came over her face... I looked long at her white, wide-open thighs, as though massaging them with my eyes, and my gaze slipped from the soft, smooth surface till it came to rest there, in the repository of secrets, where good and evil are born. (Salih, 163-164)

Mustapha's extensive use of such words as 'glance', 'gaze' and look remain of wide critical importance. All these words are revelatory of the extent to which the English lady- Other- is rendered under the gaze of the African Self represented by Mustapha. In fact, the above portrayal is symptomatic of the European body under African surveillance. Hence, the latter accounts for the visual appropriation of the body by the African Self who represents the white Other as showing no act of resistance, but she is rather submissive and acts according to the will and needs of the African man. Clear enough, the high position that Mustapha ascribes himself presupposes and necessitates the inferior position the white Other occupies.

In the main, if Conrad's Marlow succeeds in Othering and bringing Africans under his surveillance by stifling their voices, Mustapha manages in much the same way to construct the Otherness of Europeans whom he renders under his African eyes. It is in this conjuncture that Mustapha appears to be able to dissolve and appropriate the ideological underpinnings of empire. No doubt, Mustapha's 'voyage in' has provided him with the chance to exact revenge and exert violence on the white wo/men and within their homes. In this sense, *Season of Migration to the North* remains very salient "not only for its appropriation of the topoi...of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, but also for its efforts to resist, reinterpret, and revise from the perspective of the colonized Other, the epistemology and language of discourse signified in Conrad's novel"



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

(Krishnan, 1). Significantly, through his symbolic conquests, Salih's protagonist manages to transfer the germ of empire to the northern heart of darkness.

Conclusion

The construction of Otherness and its implications in Conrad and Salih's narratives is what the present paper has unveiled. With regard to Conrad's text, we have seen Marlow's tendency at essentializing and stereotyping the African Otherness and representing it in accordance with his ideological underpinnings and imperial attitudes. The examined practices have revealed such a tendency to draw walls of difference between the Western Self and the African Other. In the same line of thought, the images that are conferred on Africans are but negative ones that foreground their cannibalism, violence, and primitivism, all of which threaten the idea and value of humanity. To save this value of humanity, the white man ideologically pretends to bring the western civilization, a universal one upon which other cultures and civilizations should be based, to the Africans through the colonial project in order to 'wean them out of their horrid ways'. Yet, such statements remain ideologically loaded, and they serve as justificatory statements of the violence and darkness which harbor behind the façade of western civilization (Karkaba, 157).

Strikingly enough, Salih's narrative has unveiled such violence that exists behind the façade of western civilization. In so doing, *Season of Migration to the North* deploys a network of practices that are revelatory of the west as the violent, strange and primitive Other. The representation of the white man in such a way is achieved through the mechanism of mimicking and reversing colonialist discourse, as well as exploiting western fantasies and stereotypes about the East. Contrapuntally projected, the English Other is brought under African control, and is represented through the employment of such rhetorical practices as surveillance, stereotype and resistance, all of which cater for his desire to colonize the west sexually. In this sense, colonial



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

discourse is sexualized with a view to send back to the west the germ of violence and oppression it had once exerted on Africa and Africans. With regard to the strategy of resistance, emphasis has been laid on Salih's text as stressing the need to decolonize the African mind and cut ties with the western modes of thought in order to rebuild the past and restore the value of the African language, culture and identity, and also to tear apart the Western system of economy in order to build a strong postcolonial Sudan in particular, and Africa in general. In the main, if Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, a colonial narrative, succeeds, by virtue of its framing and narrative style, in constructing the Otherness of Africans according to the western frame of mind and western imperial ideologies, Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, a postcolonial counter-narrative, succeeds in much the same way and by virtue of the mechanism of reversal in Othering the West and constructing of it images that go 'hand in glove' with the protagonists' will and purposes to defend Africa and Africans.

Works Cited:

1. Amyuni, Mona Takieddine. "Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*": An Interpretation". Arab Studies Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter 1980), pp. 1-18
2. Caminero-Santangelo, Byron. "Legacies of Darkness: Neocolonialism, Joseph Conrad, and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 30:4, October 1.
3. Césaire, Aimé. "Discourse on Colonialism". Trans. Joan Pinkham. Monthly Review Press: New York and London, 1972.
4. Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. London: Collins Classics, edition 2013.
5. Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1994.
6. Genette, Gerard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. New York: Cornell University Press, 1972.



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

7. Glodie, Terry. "The Representation of the Indigene." Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 232-236.
8. John, Josef and Youssef Taraweh. "Quest for Identity: The I-Thou Imbroglia in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*." *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Modern Arab Writers and the Politics of the Middle East (Spring 1986), pp. 161-177
9. Karkaba, Cherki. "Stereotypes of the West in Elalamy's *Un Marocain à New York*." *Philologia: Journal of the Faculty of Philology, Univ. of Belgrade* 6 (2008): 153-161.
- . "Deconstructing Identity in Postcolonial Fiction." *English Language Overseas Perspectives and Inquiries*, Volume VII, autumn. Eds Smiljana Komar and Uros Mozetic, 2010.
10. Makidis, Saree S. "The Empire Renarrated: "*Season of Migration to the North*" and the Reinvention of the Present." *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Identities (Summer,1992), pp. 804-820.
11. Pennycook, Alstair. *English and the discourses of colonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998.
22:1 (1985): 156-171
12. Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Penguin Books, 1978.
---. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
---. *The World, the Text and the Critic*. United States: Harvard University Press, 1983.
---. "Orientalism Reconsidered". *Cultural Critique*, No. 1. (Autumn, 1985):89-107. University of Minnesota Press. Web. 12 Feb. 2007.
13. Salih, Tayeb. *Season of Migration to the North*. London: Heinemann, 1969.



The Achievers Journal

Volume 4, Issue 2

ISSN (ONLINE): 2395-0897 / ISSN (PRINT): 2454-2296 April-June, 2018

14. Spurr, David. *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writings and Imperial administration*. London: Duke University Press, 1993
15. Tarawneh, Yosif and Joseph John. "Tayeb Salih and Freud: The Impact of Freudian Ideas on "Season of Migration to the North." *Arabica*, T. 35, Fasc. 3 (Nov., 1988), pp. 328-349.
16. Street, Brian. *The Savage in Literature: Representations of "Primitive" Society in English Fiction, 1858-1920*. London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1975.