

The Experience of Alienation in *Season of Migration to the North* and *Song of Solomon*: A comparative Study of Mustafa Saeed and Milkman

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Abstract

The study aims at tracing out the comparable value Al-tayeb Saleh and Toni Morrison partake and deciphers it through their narratives *Season of Migration to the North* (SMN) and *Song of Solomon* (SS). It investigates Afro-Arabs and Afro-Americans' sense of alienation, a recurring theme in modern literature in general and the novel in particular. These novelists present a painstaking study of the effects of alienation which is a result of loss of identity on Afro-Arabs and Afro-Americans represented by Mustafa Saeed and Milkman. It holds out how the manifestation of alienation in both narratives are exhibited and also to show to what extent time and place have a role in promoting alienation features. A major objective of the study is to show how racism and the white values affect Afro-Arabs and Afro-Americans who undergo the impact of colonialization and materialism for ages. The comparative methodology is used to show the outcome of adopting the white values and neglecting the past. It is concluded that denying one's history and adopting the destructive ideas of the other that contradict societies that have an intellectual, cultural and religious legacy is ruinous as it leads one to alienation. Getting the best of the other as well as preserving original roots is necessary for a healthy and balanced personality. What impels me to tackle such topic is the timeless trauma and dilemma shared and experienced by Afro-Arabs and Afro-Americans due to their color.

Key words: Al-tayeb Saleh; Alienation, Identity; Milkman; Mustafa Saeed; Morrison

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INTRODUCTION

ALIENATION is an individual's feeling of uneasiness or discomfort which reflects his exclusion or self-exclusion from social and cultural participation. It is an expression of non-belonging or non-sharing, an uneasy awareness or perception. (Hajda, 1961, p.758)

Alienation, a recurring theme in modern literature, particularly in modern novel is deeply rooted in the depth of humane society. The idea of alienation and loss has been inherent to man throughout the ages and addressed in all literatures of all times. However, it has surfaced to the ground and becomes a tremendous literary preoccupation more than any other time because of the sudden changes that have stormed the modern world. Fromm in *The Sane Society* states "alienation is by no means a modern phenomenon" (1955, p.121). In the twentieth century, the man "becomes alienated, estranged from self and world" (Taylor, 2000, p.7). The experience of alienation "has become more and more a fact of life in these days of modernization" (Dhull & Sangeeta 2015, p.706). It has become one of the most prominent phenomena in Afro-Arab and Afro-African literature particular in modern fiction as a result of turbulent reality politically, socially, culturally and ethically owing to the loss of identity, Colonial policy, social discrimination and racism. In fact, "The Colonial experience left its nightmarish impact on the colonial societies, which divides their identity in all fields" (Al-hilali et al, 2017, p.3). This means "The superiority of the white race over the non-white

peoples has created a sense of division and alienation in the colonized black identity and beliefs” (p.3). Al-tayeb Salih (1929-2009) and Toni Morrison (1931-) are good examples of the outstanding Afro-Arab novelists and Afro-American novelists engaged in tackling the theme of alienation in their novels. Their novels that draw self-alienation and objective alienation in search of lost identity as a result of the denial of the original and search for another identity are a model of rejection and alienation.

In the two narratives chosen for the study, Al-tayeb and Morrison try to explore the dilemma experienced by their societies when they come into contact with the western influences. In both novels, the damage done through colonization, materialism philosophy and trauma of slavery result in alienation which is worse than death. The narratives explore the voice of the alienated and uncover the underlying injury brought on by alienation. They delve deep into the experience of alienation through their male protagonists (Mustafa Saeed & Milkman) showing the different and similar forms of their experience. One of the most remarkable features of these two novels is their permeating psychological insight delving deep into psyche of the two male- protagonists. Good insight into the inner world of the both protagonists, their thoughts, feelings and emotions are given. We follow their progress that leads in the end to an inevitable ending.

In this paper which investigates the issue of alienation from Afro- Arab and Afro-American perspectives, both of the novelists trace the events in their societies that lead many individuals feel alienated and disturbed. Al-tayeb Salih wrote during the colonization and independence of Sudan from the British rule chronicling the impact of slavery, racism, internalization of the colonized culture or the white values. Moreover, his novel tells us about the events that take place after the collapse of the Fong Kingdom (1504-1821) represented by Arab discrimination against Africans in Sudan and a system of enslavement that was put into practice. People from the Southern and Western parts of Sudan were forced to travel to the central area of the Nile in order to serve Arab families (Al Afif, 2006). The socio-cultural injustices that reigned throughout the 1950's in Sudan means a mutual feeling of hatred between Arab and African citizens emerged within the nation. Nationalism was built on the code of otherness which dictates that Sudanese citizens perceive each other as different based on racial criteria. In the national imagery, Sudan consists of masters and slaves. The Arab perspective reflects Africans as agharab (Westerners), and on the other side, the African citizens viewed Arabs as Janjaweed (Al Afif, 2006).

On the other hand, Morrison places her narrative in the fundamental periods of black U.S. history, unraveling and illustrating the intricacies experienced by the Afro-Americans. She portrays the voice of African Americans

who were transported as slaves to the USA and how they were forced to live in a set-up which is full of racism that results in alienation; alienation that never recognizes the other and rejects even his/her mere belonging. She “reveals the extent to which her characters are influenced by alienation; she portrays in her fiction that alienation is not limited to men and women, but it encompasses towns, localities, landscapes and streets” (Mahameed & Karim, 2017, p.66). The white values force the African to adopt new roles according to white American norms. By adopting the white values, the black wish to be fully accepted as human beings. Fanon says the black who wishes to gain true freedom, or to exist as an individual, they have to “Turn White or disappear” (Fanon, p. xxxiii). However, they always remain alienated from the main stream culture. The illness of internalization results in losing their past, history. Moreover, the blacks find themselves in a suspended position, rejected by both cultures.

As a matter of fact, the main protagonists in both novels are black which means their lives are affected, judged and evaluated by their color. To make a living and to be accepted by the white, they adopt the white values to be assimilated in the mainstream of American society and London society and then to separate themselves from their past or history. Unfortunately, their haste to assimilate themselves results in the distortion of their values. They find themselves experiencing alienation in a most agonizing form. They find themselves living a double existence expressed by W.E.B. DuBois “one ever feels his twoness-an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled striving's two warring...” (2007, p.xiii). In fact, when a person seeks to form himself according to the view of others, it often leads to alienation and psychological distress as he has to fake most of his values and will not be aware of it except in the light of other's appreciation. Thus, a person lives a crisis of identity that causes alienation which is worse than the death itself.

Al-tayeb Salih and Toni Morrison shed light on the various forms of alienation that color the societies that undergo the western influence through both of the male protagonists who face the dilemma of alienation. Dean defines (1961) alienation as consisting of three dimension: “Powerlessness, Normlessness and Social Isolation” (Dean, p.753). Social isolation is a feeling of loneliness; powerlessness is the inability to influence one's choice. Normlessness is a rejection of the dominant rules and values of society. The paper tries to find out the traces of alienation in both characters and delve into the roots of their isolation in both novels. The lack of awareness of the importance of identity in both novels causes damage not only to themselves but also to those people around them. It studies the issue of alienation of African American and Afro-Arab and their physical and mental torture due to their color. It is an attempt to show not only the experience

of alienation that is connected with racism or the color but rather to show how alienation cripples the victims.

1. SEASON OF MIGRATION TO THE NORTH (1966) (SMN)

The novel tackles the concept of alienation that disturbs Mustafa Saeed throughout his life as he always feels alienated and that the place where he was born is not his right place. The alienation he feels from the outside world and from himself, will disappear and it will be replaced by a sense of belonging as soon as he leaves that deplorable place where he found himself in. Since his early childhood, there is a permanent sense of rejection and alienation imposed by his class belonging. Moreover, Saeed's character, represents his generation and the subsequent generation that suffer the scourges because of the impact of colonialism. In fact, "Mustafa Saeed is a symbol of intellectual hero in the colonial society who experienced colonialism to the core, drank it with the English language that came with the new system of life, absorbed its culture and civilization fully and realized its values physically, spiritually and historically" (Al hilali, 2017 pp.4-5). Written after four years of independence of Sudan from the British Colonialism, the novel "traces the existential impact of colonialism on part of the Arab African intelligentsia" (Al- halool, 2008, p.31?). This means "It becomes important to view the protagonist's character as a product of imperialism" (p.31). Mustafa's response to colonialism "illustrates the extent to which colonialism damages the self-image of the colonized nature and expresses metaphorically his desire to be his own master" (pp.31-32). The outcome is that the victim turns into repression, isolation and violence. Yet, it would be unfair to say Saeed's alienation is totally caused by the colonization because he is a product of his society that looks at him down as a traitor and his mother is seen as a slave. This means social exclusion, racism and discrimination leads one to a state of alienation. "We were certain that Mustafa Saeed ... his mother was a slave from the south" (Salih, 2009, p.66). Seblini adds "Having been enslaved and most likely based on southern Sudanese tribal forced at an early age to marry Saeed's Northern against her will, it is not surprising she has cold feeling and displays a detachment in her relationship with her son" (2007, P.109).

AL- tayeab has embodied in Mustafa the meaning of true alienation. Reading the novel that begins with a note of alienation and ends with a sense of alienation, one discovers that the only feeling that does not change in reading the novel is a sense of alienation. To Mustafa Saeed, his sense of alienation will disappear and a sense of belonging will be felt as soon as he leaves his deplorable place. In fact, Mustafa's sense of non-belonging is experienced since his childhood; he has a permanent sense

of rejection and alienation imposed by his class belonging and practiced upon him in some form of segregation from which he suffers at school as he is nicknamed by his classmate "the black Englishman" (Salih, 2009, p.48). Since his childhood he feels he is not accepted in his home land due to his color. He is a slave coming from south as his mother "was a slave from the south, from the tribes of Zandi or Baria" (p.49). This indicates that his alienation is also based on social discrimination or racism. He suffers from discrimination as he is seen as Arab, eastern and black. Mustafa's lack of sense of belonging has grown with him step by step, leading him to believe that he has mistakenly or unintentionally come to this place where he finds himself and that his relief consists in departure. He does not realize that this feeling is the curse of his father's inheritance; that passes to him "Had your father lived," she said to me, "he would not have chosen for you differently from what you have chosen for yourself Do as you wish, depart or stay it's up to you. It's your life and you're free to do with it as you will. (p.29)

As the families inherit their children's good fortune, the protagonist of the novel inherits misery and such permanent feeling of alienation due to the trauma of racism which is intensified by the colonialism. The absence of any one in his life including his parents increases his sense of alienation. The solution for a person who is born with a spirit of alienation is travelling. After a long series of misery, Mustafa decides to leave for another world even if the alternative is hell and deludes himself that his fortune is waiting for him elsewhere. He finds himself attracted by England that believes in science and where emotion has no place. "I am South that yearns for the North and the ice" (Salih, 2009, p. 108). This shows Saeed's association with the west rather than his homeland. Actually, Saeed's strange nature and absorbing western civilization isolate him from the world of his society.

His alienation from his mother that is nothing but a metaphor for his homeland and himself is evident on the day of his journey to London. "That was our farewell, no tears, no kisses" (Salih, 29). Al-hilali says: "Saeed's emotionless relationship towards his mother implies a similar relation to his original home" (2017, p.5). His relationship with his mother is strange. They have nothing in common and they come to live by chance.

We had no relatives. She and I acted as relatives to each other. It was as if she were some stranger on the road with whom circumstances had chanced to bring me. Perhaps it was I who was an odd creature, or maybe it was my mother who was odd — I don't know. We used not to talk much. I used to have — you may be surprised — a warm feeling of being free, that there was not a human being, by father or mother, to tie me down as a tent peg to a particular spot, a particular domain. (Salih, 2009, p.26)

2. IN LONDON

Saeed's journey to England can form his loneliness and isolation. "The whole of the journey I savoured that feeling of being nowhere, alone, before and behind me either eternity or nothingness" (p.31). To win London admiration and assimilation, he not only gets the white values internalized, but he is also ready to do anything. His feeling of ingratitude towards anyone who gives him a helping hand reflects the policy of the colonizer that makes the colonized unable to do anything. "I had no feelings of gratitude; I used to take their help as though it were some duty they were performing for me" (p. 28). This can be seen as the first indication of the central consequence of Saeed's attempt at assimilation in the West; an attempt that correspondingly distances him from his people and culture (Normlessness). In this respect, Frantz Fanon says:

Every colonized people—in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. (1952, p.9)

Though he achieves a great academic success and even becomes more than native English, he comes to the conclusion that no amount of schooling would make him one of London society. He expresses himself to be what they want him to be. He tries in London society and Sudanese society to create his version according to what has been desired and wanted from the society. In London, he accommodates his room with everything that does not have anything to do with English society and environment. Similarly, he does the same in Sudan, he creates an English library that has nothing to do with Sudanese and Arabic environment. This means he is alienated in both worlds. He expresses himself only in "a twisted manner" (Salih, 2009, p.54). His conversation with Isabela reveals his twisted manner. "Why do you look so sad?" she said. "Do I look sad? On the contrary I'm very happy" (p.41). Mustafa's twisted manner can also be seen in the court scene. He feels angry and has a strong desire to stand and shout at the courts, but he stays calm indifferent to what is going to happen to him (p.60). This means, he alienates himself from his life and choose to live his illusion and convinces himself that they are the reality.

Though I realized I was lying, I felt that somehow I meant what I was saying and that she too, despite her lying, was telling the truth. It was one of those rare moments of ecstasy for which I would sell my whole life; a moment in which, before your very eyes, lies are turned into truths, history becomes a pimp, and the jester is turned into a sultan. (Salih, 2009, p.110)

His assimilation makes him act not as any human being supposed to act particularly in what concern love.

The girl who falls in love with him addresses him as a machine "you are not a human being" "you are a heartless machine" (Salih, p.42). His lack of emotion and feeling can be attributed to "his dehumanization by colonial power and its education" (Murad, 2018, p.215). He alienates himself from the people around him and choose to be a machine. "I was busy with this wonderful machine" (Salih, 2009, 37). His alienation is intensified by the imbalance between the mind and the heart. "The measure of Saeed's alienation is enacted upon the body; he disassociates his mind from his body and heart, developing and sharpening his mind to the detriment of everything else" (Azzam, 2007, p.62). The most prominent aspect of his alienation is his dispense with his name and adopting so many names. He is "Hassan and Charles and Amin and Mustafa and Richard?" (Salih, 2009, p.37). Keeping changing his name shows his dissatisfaction with his being regardless of the purpose that stands behind changing his name.

His strong infatuation with the west goes further to the extent he sacrifices his history or past, religion and belonging with a hope of being accepted in London society. This is manifested when Jean Morris asks him to give her the old Arabic manuscript, the prayer rug and the rare vase in return for accepting him as her husband and to sleep with him. Yet, she throws the manuscript and the prayer rug into the fire place and hits the vase on the ground.

Taking up the old, rare manuscript she tore it to bits, filling her mouth with pieces of paper which she chewed and spat out. It was as though she had chewed at my very liver. And yet I didn't care. She pointed to a silken Isphahan prayer-rug which I had been given by Mrs. Robinson when I left Cairo. It was the most valuable thing I owned, the thing I treasured most. "Give me this too and then you can have me," she said. Hesitating for a moment, I glanced at her as she stood before me, erect and lithe, her eyes a gleam with a dangerous brightness, her lips like a forbidden fruit that must be eaten. I nodded my head in agreement. Taking up the prayer-rug, she threw it on to the fire and stood watching gloatingly as it was consumed, the flames reflected on her face. (p.119)

After losing everything in return for nothing, Mustafa "experienced a feeling of ignominy loneliness, and loss" (p.120). In fact, turning to make relationship with ladies is a form of escape from the world of alienation and to overcome his loneliness, separateness and isolation. Yet, Mustafa's relationship with Jean Morris is a sort of alienation. He is powerless in front of her and could not control himself. He surrenders totally to her. According to Fromm such submission "is an act of alienation and idolatry" (Fromm, 1955, p.119). It is said sex is a means of escaping alienation and loneliness, but what happened with Mustafa increases his alienation. His multiple relationship with ladies indicates that he does not find satisfaction from these relationships and that drives him to seek for more relations.

3. JOURNEY OF TORTURE

As a matter of fact, Mustafa Saeed suffers from racism in his original homeland and in London. In Sudan, he is called black English and the son of the slave while in London his relationship with the ladies is based on contempt and exploitation. Ann Hammond who exploits Saeed Sexually left a small paper before her suicide in which she writes “Mr Sa’eed, may God damn you.” (Salih, 2009, p. 34). The small paper means continuity of European contempt and demean of others, the east. Isabella Seymour says “My mother, ’ would go mad and my father would kill me if they knew I was in love with a black man” (p.106).

Saeed feels that he does not belong to any of Sudanese society or London society. He remains alien and strange in both societies. His alienation reaches to an intensive level, namely to the degree of denying his existence. So many times, he denies his existence and says his existence is a big lie and illusion. He is heard crying out: “Mustafa Sa’eed does not exist. He’s an illusion, a lie” (p.35). He repeats that more than once in the court “I am a lie” (p.35). He realizes that his color stands behind his rejection. His alien action that hinders him to adjust himself with the English society compels him to withdraw from England to Sudan.

4. MUSTAFA ’S RETURN

Mustafa’s return to Sudan is an attempt to overcome his alienation and to integrate with his society socially and culturally. He does all the requirements of integration, but in vain. He feels he is alien to the whole world. Though he plays the role that fits their claim and admiration in both societies, he does it mechanically. Saeed fails because “Belonging demands a strong belief in tradition, history, past and values. It is not enough to know them and to perform them” (Al-hilali et al, 2017 p.17). His alienation comes up to the point he does not remember anything about himself and the men who sit with them in one room. “All of a sudden there came to me the ghastly nightmarish feeling that we — the men grouped together in that room — were not a reality but merely some illusion” (Salih, 2009, p.23). He is alien even at the moment of intoxication. This is clear when he starts reciting poetry in English:

Those women of Flanders
Await the lost,
Await the lost who never will leave the harbour
They await the lost whom the train never will bring
To the embrace of those women with dead faces, (p.22).

Mustafa’s alienation can be seen also in the form of powerlessness, indifference, difference, and estrangement. Saeed appears weak enough to resist his desire for travelling “But mysterious things in my soul and in my blood impel me towards far away parts that loom up

before me and cannot be ignored” (p.58) and cannot encounter his weakness and blame the fate “I was created thus, or my fate was thus — whatever may be the meaning of that I don’t know.” (p.58). He desires to die, but he wants the court to grant him death sentence “I was hoping that the court would grant me what I had been incapable of accomplishing” (p.59). He talks about the events of the past invasion of Sudan, Jerusalem conquest of Spain (p.77). His inability to separate himself from the illusion of the past and to live in the present is a form of alienation. As an alienated person, he develops a sense of indifference towards the whole world around him including his mother. This indifference is important for mere survival. He cares only for himself:

I paid no attention to the astonishment of the teachers, the admiration or envy of my schoolmates. The teachers regarded me as a prodigy and the pupils began seeking my friendship, but I was busy with this wonderful machine with which I had been endowed. I was cold as a field of ice, nothing in the world could shake me. (p.28)

His lack of emotion and feeling can be attributed to “his dehumanization by colonial power and its education” (Murad, 2018, p.215). He was indifferent to other’s emotion and unable to form meaningful relationship based on mutual sympathy. His indifference to his family is clear in his will in which he says “I am not concerned that they should think well of me” (Salih, 2009, P.58). Yet, he does not want his children to feel the alienation that he has experienced throughout his whole life. He wants them to stay in one place:

If they grow up imbued with the air of this village, its smells and colours and history; the faces of its inhabitants and the memories of its floods and harvestings and sowings, then my life will acquire its true perspective as something meaningful alongside many other meanings of deeper significance. (p.58)

Mustafa Saeed is different and selfish from his childhood till the end. He is emotionless since he was a child in Sudan.

I had felt from childhood that I — that I was different — I mean that I was not like other children of my age: I wasn’t affected by anything, I didn’t cry when hit, wasn’t glad if the teacher praised me in class, didn’t suffer from the things the rest did. I was like something rounded, made of rubber: you throw it in the water and it doesn’t get wet, you throw it on the ground and it bounces back. (p. 26).

To be different means one is isolated and alone. Moreover, he is seen strange or alien not only abroad but also among his people “Mustafa was not a local man but a Stranger” (p.15). He is different to the extent his existence is denied by the society.

Occasionally the disturbing thought occurs to me that Mustafa Sa’eed never happened, that he was in fact a lie, a phantom, a dream or a nightmare that had come to the people of that village one suffocating dark night, and when they opened their eyes to the sunlight he was nowhere to be seen. (p.43)

Mustafa Saeed is not concerned with everything around him to the extent he calls consciously or unconsciously that his intercourse with Isabella Seymour, “the peak of selfishness” (Salih, 2009, p.42). He is estranged from everything around him and nobody knows about him except what he tells them. When his wife was asked about the reason behind his advent, she says: “God knows” (p.101). His double life is a kind of alienation. The feeling of alienation increases more and more to the extent he comes to realize that his life in that village is a sort of self-deception “It’s futile to deceive oneself. That distant call still rings in my ears” (p.58). He finally decides to put an end to his suffering or deception and disappear. It can be said that Mustafa Saeed’s life is a journey of alienation right from the opening lines of the novel till the end. He lived alienated and died alienated.

5. SONG OF SOLOMON (1977) (SS)

According to Morrison “alienation is a definition of this century” (1-2) and each of her novel is a meditation on alienation in the African American world” (Conner, 2000, p. xxii). *SS* is no exception and it tackles the issue of alienation of African Americans who absorb the white values. It focuses on the mental torture as a result of being torn between two worlds and accepted by none. Being a way from their land, they find themselves forced to live in a set-up which is full of racism and sexism which results in alienation. In fact, alienation stems from belonging to another race, a race which was brought to America to bear the Whiteman’s burden. Through *Milkman*, Morrison depicts Afro-American’s experience of alienation. She delves deep into the bitter experience of her characters to show how the experience of alienation transforms her black characters into crippled characters and the way in which he characters can be healed. Morrison says “young black men are doomed to spiritual death and self-alienation unless they read and understand their history” (Washington, 1993, p.10). The narrative’s power lies in “Morrison’s insistence on the necessity of healing her broken, alienated protagonist, *Milkman Dead*” (Lee, 1998, p.109). Yet, the novel is “the story not just of one man’s individualization but of the potential for healing of a community” (p.110).

6. MILKMAN’S MATERIALISTIC MENTALITY AND ITS FRUIT

Milkman’s life that stands for the pain of the alienated, suffering, African American people is marked by alienation and inactiveness “because, like his parents, he adheres to excessively rigid, materialistic, western values and an attendant linear conception of time” (Smith, 1985, p.726). From his father’s philosophy of materialism, he learns that materialism and property are

the keys to freedom. His father teaches him that “Own things. And let the things you own own other things” (p.101). He adds that “You’ll be free. Money is freedom,” (Morrison, 2004, p.273). *Milkman* is also taught that he is superior to others “which is primarily considered to be a white and racist ideal” (Craddock, 2014, p. 17). Saleh says: “*Milkman* appears to be destined for a life of self-alienation and isolation because of his commitment to the materialism” (2012, p.478). In quest for materialism, the African American *Milkman* distances himself, from his family, past, the community and from the world around him.

His obsession with flight right from the beginning “that only birds and airplanes could fly—he lost all interest in himself” (Morrison, 2004, P.29) reflects his desire for freedom and his desire to escape from alienation. Flight is the only way to separate himself from all the others. Like Mustafa Saeed, *Milkman* wants to escape because there is nothing to connect him to himself. He looks at people in terms of commodity including his family members, abandoning his family, friends and culture emotionally. In this respect, Lee notes that *Milkman* is “an emotionally isolated, alienated black man” (1998, p.109). He lives with the members of his family as if they were strangers. The atmosphere of his family like that of Mustafa Saeed’s is strange. His parents seldom speak to each other. Lena tells him he has been peeing on the family all of his life. He “urinated over the heads of the women in the yard” (Morrison, 2004, p.327). Like Mustafa Saeed, he is emotionally estranged from his mother as he is from all women with whom he interacts. His mother is seen as “separate individual, with apart from allowing or interfering with his own” (p.132). As his name suggests, he milks women giving nothing in return. In general, women are born to serve them and fill their every need.

“His selfishness and lack of concern for others keep him from creating rapport with his family and growing as a person” (Rajala, 1999, p.23).

To avoid the destiny of his loveless and unhappy marriage of his parents, he shines a way from close relationship. “He hated the acridness in his mother’s and father’s relationship, the conviction of righteousness they each held on to with both hands” (Morrison, 2004, p.299). He wants to alienate himself from his parents out of fear of becoming like them. “He just wanted to beat a path away from his parents’ past, which was also their present and which was threatening to become his present as well” (p.299). His failure to accept his commitment towards his family is evident when he narrates his dream to Guitar that plants in the garden grow rapidly over his mother strangling her. He did not try to help her as his mother wants to enjoy it (pp-182-183). In fact, “his alienation is not solely a result of his family’s dissociation, but also a result of his disconnection from his past and ancestry. In short, “a forgetting of home” (Beaulieu, 2003, p.162).

Smith views “The degeneration of the Dead family, and the destructiveness of Macon’s rugged individualism, symbolize the invalidity of American, indeed western values” (1985, p.727). Milkman’s materialistic mentality creates ugliness and sterility in his domestic life. To him, human relationship is viewed in term of commodity and that sex and love are not necessarily connected. He is totally unconcerned about racial conflict and have no regard for the feeling of women in his life. He has no knowledge of his culture and family history. All these work together to alienate him from himself and from the world around him.

7. MILKMAN’S EARLY ALIENATION

The first remarkable thing of his alienation begins with his birth. He is the first black infant born in the all-white Mercy Hospital while Mustafa Saeed was the first Sudanese sent to study in London. His prolonged nursing has a role in his alienation. When he discovers that he cannot fly “he lost all interest in himself” (Morrison, 2004, p.29) and in all those around him. He is excluded from other children during their singing “Behind him the children were singing a kind of ring around- the-rosy or Little Sally Walker game” (p.428). Like Mustafa Saeed, he feels alienated from his mother “Never had he thought of his mother as a person, a separate individual, with apart from allowing or interfering with his own” (p.132). His effort to connect with his family ends only in failure.

8. SOCIAL ALIENATION & INDIFFERENCE

Milkman seems to be unconcerned with the issues of his society. The Emmet Till’s murder does not concern him. His reaction “Yeah, well, fuck till. I’m the one in trouble.” (p.154). He does not care for the death of Dr. Foster, his grandfather “He felt curiously disassociated from all that he had heard” (p.131). He always feels “secure in unknowingness” (as cited in Saleh, p.484). This Desire accompanies him right from the beginning.

He never volunteers to do anything for any person. Not only can he not engage with the larger world, he would not recognize that his alienation has its roots in the very white racism that allows for killing of Emmet Till. In fact, “he is estranged from the African American community* and out of touch with his cultural heritage” (Beaulieu, 2003, p.94). He is isolated from his people and community that he is the last to know about the relationship between Henry Porter and his sister. In fact, “all he knew in the world about the world was what other people had told him”(Morrison, 2004, p.57). This means Milkman’s self-alienation is deep- rooted in his estrangement from his community.

Unable to relate to others, he is unable to put himself in Hagar’s shoes. He abandons her as he realizes that she is useless for him. He exploits Hagar for 12 years and then abandons her causing her death. “after more than a dozen years, he was getting tired of her.” (p.159). His abandonment of Hagar is also motivated by the standard of the beauty adopted by the white American. This means his rejection of Hagar is “a rejection of his own blackness” (Farrel, 1995, p.141). To him getting rid of his hometown, past, and his responsibility will guarantee his future. In short, he realizes the world in the same way his father does. His detachment from his people and obsession with wealth “locks him out from his own communityalienates him not only from other blacks, but also from the property that he thinks is the only thing to leads him to freedom”(Intanam, 2110, p. 46).

His commitment to materialism leads him to a life of self-alienation; alienation that makes him feel that his life is “pointless, aimless (Morrison, 2004, p. 185) just as “a garbage pail for the actions and hatreds of other people.” (p. 207). He experiences a sense of exclusion and of not belonging as “he had never felt that way, as though he belonged to anyplace or anybody. He’d always considered himself the outsider” (p. 475). In fact, he finds himself rejected by both worlds and that his whole body “lacked coherence, a coming together of the features into a total self” (p.124).

9. WEAKNESS

Another form of alienation is realized in the form of powerlessness. As a matter of fact, Milkman’s adopting of western values has an extensive effect on his mental development. Though he reaches the age of 31, his life is still stagnant and his growth suspended. He lacks wholeness and does not know who he is. He “was like flying blind, and not knowing where he was going—just where he had been—troubled him” (p.63). As he looks at the mirror, he realizes that his face lack “coherence”. He is unable to distinguish his sister from his mother “women in general have value only as “need providers” for him. Therefore, “his act of urinating on Lena becomes an act symbolic of his pissing on all women. -Hagar in particular.” (Akhtar, 2008, p.94). Like Mustafa Saeed, he does not reciprocate women’s support and generosity.

Like Mustafa Saeed who lives in illusion, Milkman’s dream and aspiration show his lack of imagination and engagement. He is weak to take any initiative; only when his father tells him about finding Pilate’s gold. He has no idea of his future life. He wants gold only to escape from the suffocating world of his parents. He is repeatedly reminded of his weakness (alienation, aimlessness and failure to connect himself to a person, place and to confess his inability to risk himself) by Guitar. “You listen! You got a life? Live it! Live the motherfuckin life!

Live it!”(Morrison, 2004, p.304). Guitar tells him “ You don’t live nowhere. Not Not Doctor Street or Southside” (p.179). Only when he returns to his past, he finds a place for himself. His failure stems from his sense of alienation. The origin of his alienation is his lack of awareness, insight and inability to get himself involved with others. He remains ignorant of the political events that happens around him. This means he lives in two worlds as W.B.E.B. Du Bois (2007) states “born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, —a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world” (p. xiii).

10. DIFFERENCE & SELFISHNESS

His alienation is actualized in his difference in term of thought and behavior. He lacks any consideration for others as his behavior is much different from that of the rest of his community. He even walks against the flow of the traffic on the street. H finds “all going in the direction he was coming from. All walking hurriedly and bumping against him” (Morrison, 2004, p.136). Heading against the flow of the traffic shows his alienation, loneliness in his community and that he is unwelcomed by all the people around him. His concentration on things behind while walking shows Milkman’s difference from other children of his age and his alienation from the world and from himself. “He turned around to see where everybody was going, but there was nothing to see except their backs” (p.136). Like Mustafa Saeed, he does not return love and causes much pain. It can be said that slavery and racism or events that took place before their birth do not only disfigure their childhood but it also develops their selfishness. Milkman’s concern with his own tribulation and his wish to fly is a selfish escapism that cannot grant him true freedom. “But flight, perhaps the most obvious and exhilarating metaphor of all for freedom” (Schultz, 1980, p.136).

11. MILKMAN’S RETURN

Afro -Americans who suffer from the plight of alienation were always wanting to escape. After recognizing their alienation, lack of social identification, fragmentation, they think constantly of travelling or escaping from the plight of alienation. In fact, returning to the root or the past provides a sense of independence and integrated identity. Yet, curing one’s sense of alienation and confusion is not how to fly “to his ancestral home and cultural memory but how to fight and face his reality” (Kim, 2010, p.83). Milkman’s sense of alienation is cured only when he learns how to encounter his reality, his past “to fly without ever leaving the ground” (Morrison, 2004, p.336). It is only when Milkman “begins to believe

in the possibility of flying that he stops feeling alienated from his race and culture and begins to have a sense of belonging” (Craddock, 2014, pp.14-15). It is only “when an individual can establish a specific connection with his people’s origin(that) he becomes rooted” (Schultz, 1980, p.130). Milkman finds himself accepted as a member of his society only when he adjusts himself to beliefs, rules and conventions of the black community. Yet, it should be noted that Milkman’s journey to the south doesn’t mean embracing his original identity entirely and abandoning the northern as experience becomes internalized. He just adopts the best from his early experiences and preserves his native roots. He becomes a whole only when he allows himself to accept his personal and familial past (Al-hilali et al, 2017, p.17).

12. MUSTAFA SAEED AND MILKMAN: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Both Afro-Arabs and Afro-Americans represented by Mustafa Saeed and Milkman are the product of colonialism and capitalism; both are the fruit of western culture in terms of education, perspective and tendency. Upon the western invasion of Sudan and the natural outcome of capitalism, the Afro-Arabs and Afro-American find themselves in contradiction and torn between the past and the present. Mustafa Saeed’s contradiction is manifested in his room while Milkman is torn between his father materialistic world and his aunt’s spiritual world. The past of Milkman’s family is “unwanted knowledge” (Morrison, 1977, p.120) whereas Saeed has never mentioned the past of his family. They feel that their past (which slavery is at its root) is too dishonorable to be related to the children or to be remembered; but they fail to realize that there cannot be a today without a yesterday. In an attempt to be accepted fully by the white, they abandon their past and history and internalize the white culture to the extent they start viewing themselves and the people around them through the eyes of the white whose criteria of evaluation is color. Milkman’s disdain of black Hagar is “a rejection of his own blackness” (Farrel, 1995, p.141). In fact, “The lack of roots and the disconnection from the community and the past leads to individual’s alienation” (Mahameed et al, 2017 p.66). The events that took place before their birth disfigure their childhood; racism has a big impact in their alienation. Mustafa is humiliated in his country and in England “he feels the slave and prey of the west again” (Süreci, 2015, p.474). Both protagonists stand for the pain of alienated, suffering of Afro- Arab and Afro- American people who refuse to acknowledge connection to ancestor and past causing alienation. Through Mustafa Saeed and Milkman, the novelists want to provide an example of the importance of connection with the past for survival and recovery from the sense of alienation and rootlessness. Milkman recovers

from his alienation only as he has journeyed into the past and discovers his heritage and his ancestors. Lee states that "Morrison begins with a twentieth-century modern man, alienated and fragmented, and ends with man's successful connection with a people" (1998, p.120) On the other hand, Saeed's failure to be cured from his alienation is attributed not only to racism in Sudan and in England, but also to the lack of authentic Sudanese roots, upbringing, family and his strange nature. He is seen a stranger in both worlds and does not feel a sense of belonging. The division based on racism in Sudan and the impact of colonization have a role in Mustafa's failure.

CONCLUSION

Al-tayeb Salih and Toni Morrison are two of the most important Third World writers (in the last century) who shed light on the various features of alienation that color the societies that undergo the western influence. The study is an attack of the colonialism and materialistic philosophy whose outcome is pathetic. The most dangerous type of alienation that results from the loss of identity is the adoption of destructive ideas such as materialism and consumerism in societies that have an intellectual, cultural and religious legacy that contradict this materialistic view of life. The emergence of a class of intellectuals (represented by Mustafa Saeed) who call for the values of the usurper occupier of the land and the adoption of its ideas in living and social patterns, family and social relations between members of society is one of the most dangerous types of this alienation; Intentionally or unintentionally, they expressed their alienation from society, lagging behind their civilization and their true identity; the matter that results in more and more loss and alienation.

It turns out that the most dangerous weapons of the colonized in the East is the destruction of its identity to seize its consciousness; then taming and subjecting people as it happens with Mustafa Saeed and Milkman who abdicate their identities or their history in return for being accepted by the white society but in vain as the criteria of evaluation is color. In the narratives at hand, Afro-Arabs and Afro-Americans' alienation and its effect on the characters and how it determines their life; their relationship with others, with themselves, places and with their roles have been remarkably exhibited. The study has focused on the physical and mental torture of the two alienated protagonists.

Both novels reflect the social illness of racism and the way in which it can be healed. Both of the protagonists escape from racism as it happens with Mustafa Saeed to find themselves subject to exploitation, feeling alienated and displaced in their new surroundings. In fact, the lack of root and distance from the past and the community causes alienation. Yet, alienation can be countered by

achieving belonging and asserting social identity as it happens with Milkman who sheds the shells of materialism that slows down his development; and settles himself to beliefs, rules and conventions of the black community. He finds himself accepted as one of them or becomes a whole as he just adopts the best from his early experiences and preserves his native roots. Mustafa Saeed could not achieve belonging as belonging demands a strong belief in tradition, history, past and values. At the same time, Saeed wants to keep up with the western civilization. In short, his lack of authentic Sudanese roots, upbringing, racism in Sudan and in England and the influence of colonization stand behind his failure to be healed from alienation.

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