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**Navigating Identity and Colonialism: A
Comparative Study of Solé's Birds of
Passage and Salih's Season of Migration
to the North**

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Abstract:

This paper explores the correlated themes of identity and colonialism in Robert Solé's *Birds of Passage* (1992) and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966). Through comparative analysis, the study examines how both novels depict the protagonists' struggles with cultural displacement and the enduring impact of colonialism on their identities. In *Birds of Passage*, the Batrakani family navigates the complexities of migration and cultural assimilation in Egypt, reflecting the broader colonial exploitation and its effects on personal and cultural identity. Similarly, *Season of Migration to the North* delves into the psychological and cultural ramifications of British colonialism on Sudanese society, as seen through the experiences of Mustafa Sa'eed and the unnamed narrator. By focusing on the protagonists' journeys and the cultural tensions they face, the study reveals the universal struggles of identity and displacement in a post-colonial world. This research provides a deeper understanding of the ways in which Solé and Salih articulate the complexities of human experience through their portrayals of identity and colonialism. It tends to answer the questions: In what ways does colonialism impact on the characters' identities and their sense of belonging?

Keywords:

Identity, Colonialism, Cultural Displacement, Migration, Bird Imagery, Nature and Weather

I. Introduction

Themes of identity and colonialism have been central in post-colonial literature, offering a profound understanding of human experience and the ongoing impact of colonial rule. Robert Solé's *Birds of Passage* (1992) and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966) explore these themes through their protagonists' journeys. Both novels follow the struggles of characters experiencing cultural displacement and the effects of colonialism on their identities.

Solé in *Birds of Passage* narrates the story of the Batrakani family, a Syrian immigrated family in Egypt in the beginning of the Twentieth century. They try to overcome the complexities of migration and cultural assimilation with the backdrop of political change in Egypt. The family finds itself struggling to identify itself, are they foreigners or are they locals in Egypt? They find themselves on the fringe of both. This struggle reflects the broader colonial exploitation and its impact on personal and cultural identity.

Salih examines in his *Season of Migration to the North*, the psychological and cultural impact of British colonialism in Sudan on Sudanese society through the eyes of Mustafa Sa'eed and the unnamed narrator. Salih highlights the cultural tension that is created by traveling for education and the dilemma of belonging which starts a quest for identity in a post-colonial setting.

Born in Cairo in 1946, Robert Solé, is a French journalist and novelist of Syrian origin. He writes in French about Egypt. His

writing often explores themes of cultural identity and migrant experience. Solé's deep connection to Egypt, because of his background as an immigrant provided a rich tapestry of cultural and historical context which made it significant. His novels *Le Tarbouche* (1992), which won the Prix Méditerranée, *La Mamelouka* (1996), and *The Rosetta Stone* (1999), all explore Egypt in different eras, reflecting his connection and identity crisis and are all translated. Solé's style of writing is characterized by its historical interest, rich descriptions, and a deep sense of place, he often blends fiction with historical facts to create engaging narratives (Mohamed, 2000). Robert Solé was born in Cairo, Egypt, in 1946 to a family of Syrian origin. His deep connection to Egypt and his personal experience as an immigrant significantly influences his writing. He moved to France at the age of 18 and has worked as a journalist and novelist, often exploring themes of cultural identity and the immigrant experience.

Born in 1929, in Karmakol, Sudan Tayeb Salih, is a rewarded Sudanese writer. He is known for his exploration of the intersections between traditional and modern life. *Season of Migration to the North*, his most read, translated from Arabic and rewarded novel, is considered one of the most important novels in Sudanese Arabic literature (El-Tayeb 2014). Salih's education in a traditional Qur'anic school and his studies in Khartoum and London have deeply influenced his literary experience and expression. His understanding of the complexities of identity and colonialism was further emphasized by his working experiences for the BBC and UNESCO. This enriched his narratives being exposed to both

Sudanese and Western cultures, which he masterfully expressed in his other works (Ibid.) *The Wedding of Zein* (1969). Salih's style of writing is significant by his use of lyrical prose, rich character development, and symbolism, which reflects his deep connection to his African and Arabic cultures.

Solé and Saleh explore in their works of art themes of identity, colonialism, and cultural displacement, but their narratives differ in various ways. Solé's *Birds of Passage* focuses on the multi-generational story of the Batrakani family, showing the socio-economic changes in Egypt and the impact of colonialism on the family's identity over time. On the other hand, Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* delves into cultural conflicts and identity crisis faced by individuals returning to their homeland after living in England, the colonizer's land. Solé's narrative is extensive and historical, Salih's is more individual and subjective, offering a deep exploration of the protagonist's inner turmoil and the identity crisis.

II. Methodology:

This paper aims to provide a **comparative analysis** of the works by Robert Solé and Tayeb Salih, investigating how each author **articulates the complexities of identity and colonialism**. The study constructs a multi-layered examination by focusing on several key elements, migration and identity, symbolic use of bird imagery, role of nature and weather and protagonists' personal journeys.

The research is driven by the overarching question:

In what ways does colonialism impacts the characters' identities and their sense of belonging?

This question invites a discussion on how external structures—rooted in **colonial mentality and racial hierarchies**—force both individual and collective identities into a state of constant change. It also examines the psychological impact of colonialism and ties it to the characters' ongoing struggles with belonging and self-assertion. The paper intends through this comparative study, to shed light on the **universal struggles** of identity formation and the continuing impact of colonial histories on cultural and personal identity in both Egyptian and Sudanese contexts. This approach not only enhances the understanding of the socio-historical dimensions of the texts but also addresses existing research gaps, especially concerning the intersections of culture, identity, and the legacies of imperialism.

III. Theoretical farmwork:

Quoting Frantz Fanon (1961), "Colonialism is not a machine capable of thinking, a body endowed with reason. It is naked violence and only gives in when confronted with greater violence." Fanon expresses the harsh realities of colonialism and its deep-rooted impact on identity. The paper resorts to colonial and post-colonial theories, in addition to identity construction theories, to have an insight into how individuals navigate to retain their identities in colonial rule.

In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), Fanon explores how colonialism affects the mental health of both the colonized and

the colonizer. He argues that colonialism creates a sense of inferiority among the colonized, leading them to internalize the values and norms of the colonizer (Hilton, 2011). He analyzed the psychological impacts of colonization, particularly how it leads to the dehumanization of the colonized individuals. (Hilton, P. 45). Fanon used the concept of Manichean psychology to describe the polarized colonial world, characterized by the binary opposition of the colonizers and the colonized. This worldview perpetuates a cycle of violence and oppression (ibid.). This in its turn leads the colonized to adopt the language and culture of the colonizers, leading to an identity crisis and cultural alienation. The colonized individual feels the need to assimilate to the dominant culture to gain acceptance and freedom, further intensifying their psychological distress. (Hilton, 49). Fanon recalls Freud and Lacan to prove that the encounter with the white dominance forces black/ inferior people into a position of perplexed dilemma of desiring to whitewash their blackness and hating the whiteness of their colonizer.

Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) argues that Western thinkers have fabricated a false image of the Orient as the primitive "other" in contrast to the civilized West. This image has been used to justify colonialism and its accompanying horrors (Hamadi, 2014, 39). Said emphasizes that literature has played a significant role in reinforcing colonialism by depicting the Orient in a biased and distorted manner. He argues that literature and culture cannot be separated from politics and history. (*Orientalism* 26). Said goes further to

emphasize that, unfortunately, the standardized molds and culturally stereotyped images of the Orient still permeate the Western media, academia, and political circles, thus intensifying "the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of 'the mysterious Orient' " (ibid.).

In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said explains the indispensable connections between the imperial enterprise and the culture that reflects and strengthens it. Said elaborates on the inseparability between the history of the empire and the great works of literature written in that era. He illustrates the relationship between literature and the life of its time. In fact, this relationship between literature and the Imperial endeavor has been emphasized by many other writers. In "Can the Subaltern Speak" (1988), Spivak assures that "Western intellectual production is, in many ways, complicit with Western international economic interests" (Bryden 1427). In his essay he examines whether those colonized and speak the language of the colonizer speak back and tell their stories and wonders if their stories will be dominated by dominated discourse of the colonizer? (Spivak 1988). Not unlike Said or Spivak, Elleke Boehmer, in *In Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (2005), argues that, among other functions, literature in a way reflects the social and historical moment. Boehmer defines the colonial literature as that which was "written by and for colonizing Europeans about non-European lands dominated by them...Colonialist literature was informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire" (Boehmer, 2005, 3). He examines the narrative and rhetorical dynamics used by postcolonial writers

to denote their fragmented identities and psychological neurosis. His analysis reveals subversion and irony to explore the colonial explicit and implicit power exerted on them.

Homi K. Bhabha (1994) in the "third space" undermines colonial domination, of cultural enunciation where the colonizer and the colonized encounter one another. His third space disrupts the conventional binary opposition between the self and the other, the colonizer and the colonized, or the East and the West. This space primarily undermines "the binary thought and essentialist identities produced by colonial knowledge" (276). It deconstructs the notion of authentic and essentialist oppositional polarities (Bhabha, 1990). the idea from Homi K. Bhabha (1994) that the negotiation of cultural differences between the colonizer and the colonized produces a new form of cultural identity. These ideas highlight Bhabha's contributions to understanding the complexities of cultural identity and resistance in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Jacobus G. Maree acknowledges the contribution of Erik Erikson's psychological development theory in relation to colonialism. Erikson's theory emphasizes the concept of an identity crisis, which occurs during adolescence. This crisis is a crucial period where individuals explore different aspects of their identity and make commitments to certain roles and values (Maree, 2004, 1109). Erikson believed that individuals actively shape their identity through their experiences and interactions with the world. This process involves overcoming challenges and conflicts, leading to a sense of mastery and self-efficacy (1112). Erikson highlights the influence of

society and culture on identity formation. Social interactions, cultural norms, and historical context play a significant role in shaping an individual's identity (1114).

Henri Tajfel's paper "Social identity and intergroup behaviour" (1974) highlights the concept of social identity, which is the part of an individual's self-concept derived from their membership in social groups. This theory explains how individuals categorize themselves and others into groups, leading to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination (65). Tajfel explores how social categorization leads to the formation of stereotypes. These stereotypes simplify social perception but can also reinforce negative biases and contribute to intergroup conflict (72).

IV. Comparative Analysis:

1. Migration and Identity:

Migration is a fundamental aspect of human history, shaping societies and cultures across the globe. It is a journey driven by a myriad of factors, including the pursuit of better opportunities, escape from conflict, and the innate human desire for exploration. The movement of people from one place to another has profound effects on both the migrants and the communities they join. *Birds of Passage* by Robert Solé and *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih present a lens of personal stories and historical context, the reader to their stories gains a deeper understanding of the challenges and triumphs that accompany the migratory experience, highlighting the complexities of cultural displacement and the enduring effects of colonialism.

The Batrakani family In *Birds of Passage*, are Syrian immigrants in Egypt, navigating the challenges of migration and cultural assimilation. "Georges Batrakani, the Greek Catholic French-speaking Syrian businessman, hovered between two cultures, juggled with three languages and possessed no well-defined status of his own." (Solé, 2000, 45). Their identity is shaped by their constant negotiation between their Syrian heritage and their trying to adapt to the Egyptian culture, illustrating the dual pressures of preserving one's heritage and integrating into a dominant culture. "They called us Syrians an ambiguous appellation that took no account of Lebanon. More particularly it implied that we belong to another country- as if our families, though established in Egypt for ages, hadn't severed their links wit Damascus, Aleppo or Sidon" (3). The Batrakani didn't want to be identified as Syrians, strangers to the Egyptians, yet "didn't we ourselves maintain that ambiguity for form's sake and because we needed to be different" (3-4). This dilemma of wanting to belong and wanting to be distinctive exemplifies Erikson's identity crisis.

The family's business, manufacturing fezzes, symbolizes their attempt to blend their Syrian heritage with Egyptian culture. "The fez, a symbol of their heritage, became a metaphor for their hybrid identity, caught between two worlds" (78). However, George changed track of his business to consider the powerful upsurge of nationalism in Egypt after the 1919 revolution. "Early in 1923 his tarbooshes were abruptly Egyptianized. 'Fabrication a la Française' was out from now

on; his new models bore the words ‘Made in Egypt’. Their names too had changed the Versailles was replaced by the Malaki” (131).

On a broader scope, the family's journey reflects a broad colonial impact on their personal and cultural identity. Migration in this context leads to a hybrid identity, where the characters embody elements of both their native and adopted cultures. They experience tension between cultural preservation and assimilation, a common theme in post-colonial literature. The portrayal of the Batrakani family challenges provides an understanding of how migration acts as a catalyst for identity transformation. Their journey illustrates migration is not a linear process of adapting to a new culture and reality but an experience where hybridization becomes a site of both conflict and creativity, revealing profound complexity of personal and cultural identity formation in post-colonial context (Bhabha, 1994). Their switch of language between French and Arabic, their listening to local Egyptian singers and classics especially Verdi’s Aida, illustrates their multilayered identity and rich experience.

The political upheaval in Egypt, including the overthrow of King Farouk, forces the family to leave Egypt to France, which put them in a constant adaption mode, reflecting the instability and uncertainty faced by immigrants. This ongoing adaptation shapes their identity, making them resilient yet perpetually in flux. In the final scene at the grave Joseph says he saw a dove, which is an ancient Egyptian belief that the dead visit the grave as a dove. “Perhaps it isn’t a dove, habibi. Perhaps it’s just a bird of passage” (375), this denies their

perpetuation of belonging to the land and its believes because they are just ‘birds of passage’ moving from one land to the other for better conditions. This moment underscores the transient nature of their existence, highlighting that their journey is of perpetual movement and adaptation, rather than a quest for permanent belonging.

In *Season of Migration to the North*, Mustafa Sa'eed and the unnamed narrator highlight the effects of migration on identities. Both characters migrate from Sudan to England, setting the stage for negotiations between competing cultural frameworks. Mustafa Sa'eed finds himself caught between two worlds in the thirty years he spends in England, unable to fully belong to either. This migration results in a state of ‘cultural liminality’ where the characters exist in a ‘Third Space’ that blends, yet simultaneously segregates, elements of their native and adopt cultures (Bhabha 1994). His life in England is marked by his attempts to assert his identity through relationships with English women, which ultimately leads to his psychological turmoil and sense of displacement, to Fanon he tries to whitewash his color by those women. Mustafa Sa'eed prolonged stay in England embodies this struggle vividly. His extended resistance in England, a place characterized by its colonial histories and distinct cultural norms, leads him to develop a ‘hybrid identity’ that is neither Sudanese nor English.

The unnamed narrator, spends seven years in England, also suffers with his identity upon returning to Sudan. Both characters' migrations create a sense of cultural confusion and

loss of identity. They struggle to reconcile their experiences abroad with their roots in Sudan, leading to a fragmented sense of self. This duality is symbolized by Mustafa's two rooms—one in England and one in Sudan—each representing different aspects of his identity. His London apartment, decorated to suggest his 'exotic' origins, contrasts with his secret room in Sudan, filled with English books and an English fireplace, highlighting his cultural dislocation. "Was it likely that what had happened to Mustafa Sa'eed could have happened to me? He had said that he was a lie, so was I also a lie?" (14)

The unnamed narrator's reflection on Mustafa Sa'eed's life highlights the impact of colonialism on their identities and their sense of belonging, questioning the authenticity

“Sometimes during the summer months in London, after a downpour of rain, I would breathe in the smell of it, and at odd fleeting moments before sunset I would see it. At the latter end of the night the foreign voices would reach my ears as though they were those of my people out here. I must be one of those birds that exist only in one region of the world.” (38)

He wanted to be a bird like every other ‘bird’, one ‘of those’ people but he couldn’t just as Mustafa Sa’eed whose thirty years of existence never grant him the right color. His acquaintance with Mrs. Robinson and life first in Cairo then in London, never whitewashed his darkness (Fanon 1967)

“the smell of her body — a strange, European smell — tickling my nose, her breast touching my chest, I felt — I, a boy of twelve — a vague sexual yearning I had never previously experienced. I felt as though Cairo, that large mountain to which my camel had carried me, was a European woman just like Mrs Robinson, its arms embracing me, its perfume and the odour of its body filling my nostrils. In my mind her eyes were the colour of Cairo: grey—green, turning at night to a twinkling like that of a firefly.” (26)

Mustafa Sa’eed was sent to Lond in the beginning of the twentieth century, determined to find his place in a flux world. London was emerging from the war and shedding the oppressive atmosphere of the Victorian era. Mustafa immersed himself in the city's social scene. Mustafa's desire to belong made him adopt the cultural practices of his new surroundings. His actions reflected a complex interplay of assimilation and self-assertion, as he tried to carve out an identity in a society that was both attractive and alien.

“London was emerging from the war and the oppressive atmosphere of the Victorian era. I got to know the pubs of Chelsea, the clubs of Hampstead, and the gatherings of Bloomsbury. I would read poetry talk of religion and philosophy, discuss paintings,

and say things about the spirituality of the East. I would do everything possible to entice a woman to my bed". (28)

Mustafa Sa'eed's immersion in London's social and intellectual circles can be seen as an attempt to navigate his identity crisis. By engaging in the cultural practices of his new environment, he seeks to assert his place within it, yet this also highlights the tension between his original identity and the one he is trying to adopt. This reflects the psychological impact of colonialism on the colonized, as pronounced by Fanon particularly the internal conflict and identity crisis that arise from trying to assimilate into the colonizer's culture (1967). He fabricates stories to impress his women about his 'exotic' land. He finds a 'third space' (Bhabha 1994) between the two cultures where he invents "As we drank tea, she asked me about my home. I related to her fabricated stories about deserts of golden sands and jungles where non-existent animals called out to one another. I told her that the streets of my country teemed with elephants and lions and that during siesta time crocodiles crawled through it." (45).

Both novels depict migration as a transformative experience that reshapes the characters' identities. Migration is depicted, not merely as a physical transition but a transformative process of identity negotiation. The tension between the nostalgic pull of homeland culture and the adaptive pressures exerted by an alien society results in a fragmented self, where neither cultural identity wholly embraced theses, phenomena is elucidated in Bhabha's idea of cultural identity. For him, identity is an interplay between assimilation and resistance as

they seek reconcile conflicting culture influence (1994). In *Birds of Passage*, the focus is on the collective experience of a family navigating cultural assimilation, while in *Season of Migration to the North*, the emphasis is on the individual psychological impact of migration and colonialism. Solé's narrative is expansive and historical, capturing the socio-economic changes in Egypt, whereas Salih's narrative is introspective, delving into the personal and psychological conflicts of his characters

The impact of time spent in the hosting culture reflects the profound process of 'acculturation' The characters are forced to confront and internalize diverse social norms and values, which leads not only to personal evolution but also to the reconfiguration of traditional notions of self. This ongoing negotiation results in 'heightened psychological dissonance' (Erikson 1974), as both the inner self and the external identity are in constant flux, reflecting the broader post-colonial theme of cultural displacement and identity fragmentation.

2. Symbolism and imagery:

a. Bird Imagery:

The use of bird imagery in both "Season of Migration to the North" by Tayeb Salih and "Birds of Passage" by Robert Solé is multipurposed. Migratory birds reflect the characters' migration and their struggles with cultural displacement. They pose the question of whether birds can do it, why can't humans?' The answer will be because of all the baggage that

comes with colonialism of identification and limitations which oppose the symbolism of freedom of birds.

Solé uses birds to symbolize the transient nature of the characters' lives and their constant search for 'home'. The title suggests the instability of the characters' lives, much like migratory birds that move from one place to another in search of better living conditions. The metaphor of 'birds of passage' reflects the characters' constant quest for belonging and emotional turmoil of their nomadic existence. The Batrakani, like 'birds of passage', migrate from Syria to Egypt, then from Egypt to France. The family's journey mirrors the patterns of migratory birds, emphasizing their adaptability in the face of changing circumstances. **"The Batrakanis, birds of passage, their love affair with Egypt at an end, must move on to a new exile elsewhere."** (365). Like migratory birds, they came and went with the seasons, never truly belonging anywhere.

In *Season of Migration to the North*, Salih employs migratory bird imagery to explore themes of migration and belonging. The characters' movements between Sudan and England are likened to the migratory journeys of birds, highlighting their search for belonging and identity. Salih predicts that it is season of migration to the north of Sudanese birds after being affected by colonial identification. Salih's birds symbolize the protagonist's feelings of displacement and longing to move to the north for better conditions. Mustafa Sa'eed's life is marked by constant movement, much like a migratory bird. His travels from Sudan to England and back symbolize his quest for identity and the cultural dislocation he experiences. When Mustafa Sa'eed leaves Sudan for England, Salih describes his

journey as akin to that of a migratory bird seeking new horizons. This imagery is used to highlight his quest for identity and belonging in a foreign land (29). Upon Mustafa's return to Sudan, the narrative likens his movement to that of a bird returning to its nest after a long migration. This symbolizes his attempt to reconnect with his roots and find a sense of home (p. 145).

The protagonist compares himself to a bird in the wilderness, highlighting his sense of estrangement and his search for identity. "I am like a palm tree in the desert, a bird in the wilderness." (6). He is never home and never belonging to either. He reflects on his struggle to find stability after returning to Sudan from England, highlighting the impact of cultural displacement on his identity. "I hear a bird sing or a dog bark or the sound of an axe on wood—and I feel a sense of stability, I feel that I am important, that I am continuous and integral. No, I am not a stone thrown into the water, but seeds sown in a field." (6).

The novel references the seasonal migration of birds parallels the characters' movements between Sudan and England. The bird imagery underscores his sense of being caught between two worlds, unable to fully belong to either. The unnamed narrator's journey back to his homeland reflects the migratory patterns of birds returning to their nesting grounds. However, his sense of alienation and the cultural tensions he faces upon his return highlight the complexities of his identity and the impact of his migration

Both Solé and Salih use bird imagery to symbolize the themes of migration and identity, but they do so in different ways. In *Birds of Passage*, the focus is on the collective experience of a family navigating cultural assimilation, with bird imagery emphasizing their resilience and adaptability. In *Season of Migration to the North*, the emphasis is on the individual psychological impact of migration, with bird imagery highlighting the characters' sense of dislocation and their search for belonging.

The bird imagery in both novels underscore the characters' journeys and their struggles with cultural displacement. Birds often reflect the characters' attempts to navigate their identities in a post-colonial world. The use of bird imagery in both novels serve to illustrate the universal struggles of identity and displacement, providing a deeper understanding of the complexities of human experience in the context of migration and colonialism.

b. Nature and Weather:

In *Birds of Passage*, Solé uses nature and weather to mirror the internal states and journeys of the Batrakani family. Changing seasons in Egypt reflect the family's fluctuating fortunes and emotional states. The oppressive heat of the Egyptian summer symbolizes the intense pressures and challenges the family faces as they try to establish themselves in a new land. "Under the scorching sun, they felt both the harshness and the beauty of their homeland, a place that shaped their resilience and longing." (245) their emotional connection to their homeland. "The wind carried with it the

scent of the sea, a reminder of the journeys they had taken and the ones yet to come" (355). To the Batrakani's the scent of the sea and wind evokes memories of past migration, instability and constant search for identity.

The Nile River has a constant presence in the family's life. It represents both stability and change, it is always there, in a changing condition. Its cyclical flooding brings fertility and renewal, paralleling the family's hopes and aspirations. However, the unpredictability of the river also mirrors the uncertainties and upheavals in their lives. The river's dual nature underscores the tension between stability and change that the family experiences. The family goes to the Nile in connection with the land, feeling its movement (255)

Salih employs nature and weather to reflect the psychological turmoil of his characters, particularly Mustafa Sa'eed and the unnamed narrator. Mustafa Sa'eed's portrays the Sudanese landscape as much African and exotic as he can to be more interesting in his social circles and lovers. His fabrication of exotic stories to Isabella Seymour illustrates his manipulation of Western stereotypes and his struggle with cultural identity, reflecting the broader theme of cultural displacement "As we drank tea, she asked me about my home. I related to her fabricated stories about deserts of golden sands and jungles where non-existent animals called out to one another. I told her that the streets of my country teemed with elephants and lions and that during siesta time crocodiles crawled through it." (14).

The Nile River plays a significant role in the novel, For Mustafa Sa'eed, the river represents both a connection to his homeland and a barrier to his integration into Sudanese society after his return from England. Nile "Our house is right on the bank of the Nile, so that when I'm lying on my bed at night, I put my hand out of the window and idly play with the Nile" (33). The natural landscape helps the protagonist connect with his identity and heritage. "The river was calm, its surface reflecting the sky like a mirror. It was in moments like these that I felt a deep connection to my roots, to the land that had shaped me." (32-33)

Salih uses nature imagery to symbolize the flow of time and the continuity of life in Sudan. He writes, "Thirty years. The willow trees turned from white to green to yellow in the parks; the cuckoo sang to the spring each year" (p. 32), illustrating the cyclical changes in nature. Additionally, he vividly portrays the oppressive heat of Sudan through the sun, describing it as "the enemy" that remains "exactly in the liver of the sky" (p. 76). This intense heat is so overwhelming that "even the stones groan, the trees weep, and iron cries out for help," capturing the harshness of the environment and its impact on all living things. The harsh climate serves as a metaphor for their internal struggles and the cultural tensions they face. "The heat of the desert sun was relentless, a constant reminder of the harsh realities of life. Yet, it was also a source of strength, a testament to the endurance of those who called this place home." (78). The heat becomes the only constant thing that he can call home.

The use of natural elements such as rivers and weather patterns in both novels underscores the characters' journeys and their struggles with cultural displacement. These elements serve to illustrate the universal struggles of identity and displacement, providing a deeper understanding of the complexities of human experience in the context of migration and colonialism

Solé and Salih use nature and weather to reflect the internal states and journeys of their characters, but they do so in different ways. In *Birds of Passage*, the focus is on the collective experience of a family navigating cultural assimilation, with nature and weather symbolizing their external and internal challenges. In *Season of Migration to the North*, the emphasis is on the individual psychological impact of migration and colonialism, with nature and weather highlighting the characters' emotional states and cultural tensions

V. Conclusion

In *Birds of Passage* by Robert Solé and *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih, both are a translation to English, are master pieces of their times taking migration as their main issue. The protagonists' journeys vividly illustrate the interrelated themes of migration, identity, and colonialism. The Batrakani family's experiences of cultural displacement and assimilation reflect Solé's own migration from Egypt to France, highlighting the delicate balance between adapting to a new culture and preserving one's own heritage. Solé portrays

cultural identity through the generational perspectives within the family, showing the tension between tradition and modernity.

Similarly, Mustafa Sa'eed's journey from Sudan to England and back mirrors Salih's personal struggles with cultural identity and displacement, underscoring the challenges of reconciling one's roots with experiences in the West. Salih uses Mustafa's life to explore cultural hybridity, reflecting Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the "third space" where new identities emerge. The impact of colonialism on cultural identity is further emphasized through the unnamed narrator's return to Sudan, paralleling Salih's own experiences and highlighting the lingering effects of colonialism on personal and collective identities.

Together, these novels offer profound insights into the complexities of cultural displacement and the enduring effects of colonialism on both individual and collective identities. They enrich our understanding of the human experience in a post-colonial world, illustrating how migration, colonialism, and personal experiences shape one's sense of self.

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