

Shadi Neimneh, Hashemite University, Jordan

Cultures, Identities, and Sexualities in Leslie Silko's *Ceremony* and Tayeb Salih's
Season of Migration to the North

It hardly needs to be said that colonial contact disrupts indigenous culture, often radically. For many people, it renders traditional ideas uncertain and ends the easy performance of traditional practices. In doing this, it makes cultural identity a problem—an issue on which one almost necessarily takes a stand.... In short, under colonialism, in the region of contact, the conflicts are so strong and pervasive that they constitute a challenge to one's cultural identity, and thus one's personal identity.

—Patrick Hogan, *Colonialism and Cultural Identity*

Abstract: This article looks at the intersections of culture, identity, and sexuality in a Native American novel written in English and an African one written in Arabic and translated into English. Within a postcolonial framework, it is argued that such texts engage postcolonial ideologies, which allows for a strong connection between themes related to cultural contact, native identity, and interracial sexuality. Drawing on postcolonial theory, I discuss native identity and the confrontation between cultures—East and West and Native American and non-Indian. Despite the overall negative impact of cultural contact on native identity, I argue that this identity can alternatively be reinvigorated or restored in the process. Neither mere assimilation nor mere traditionalism are the cure for native identity in the aftermath of colonial contact but rather a new vision that acknowledges change and seeks to move beyond it to achieve integration into one's culture. While postcolonial texts write back to imperialist ones, they also mirror and enrich each other.

I. Introduction

It is axiomatic in literary studies that texts create meaning in relation to other texts. This can be accounted for considering the communal nature of human experiences, which writers treat at different times and from different perspectives. The literatures of the colonized and dispossessed are an interesting case in point, for they share many concerns. The postcolonial literature of such colonized nations as Native Americans and Arabs shows that they have always been looked at as "the Other" by Western culture. The postcolonial discourse many Native American and Arab writers are engaged in is, therefore, a form of "writing back" to the once colonial Empire.¹ Cultural confrontation and its subsequent impact on native identity are recurring themes in the postcolonial literature found in many texts by Native American and Arab writers. The postcolonial ideologies reflected in such texts allow for a strong connection between themes related to cultural contact, native identity, and interracial sexuality. I explore the interrelationship among these themes. Drawing on cultural studies, I discuss native identity and the confrontation between cultures—East and West and Native American and non-Indian—in two classics of modern Arabic and Native American fiction. The texts examined are two postcolonial novels: *Mawsim al-hijrah ilā al-shamāl* (1967; *Season of Migration to the North*, 1969)² by the Arab Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih and *Ceremony* (1977) by the Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko. These

¹ See Ashcroft et al. in Works Cited. The body of writings reacting to imperial or colonizing powers is commonly viewed as literature that "writes back" to dominant centres of power. I realize that America's position of power makes its post-colonial literature, like Native literature, more problematic, but it is my contention, as this argument reveals, that it should be considered part of the post-colonial literary canon. In their introduction to *The Empire Writes Back*, Ashcroft et al. use the term "postcolonial" to include "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (2). In this inclusive sense, the novels I analyze in this article are postcolonial ones, for they treat the European colonization of native Arab-African and Indian lands and the cultural impact of this colonization to date.

² Al-Tayeb Salih, *Mawsim al-hijrah ila al-shamal* (Beirut: Dar al-Awdah, 1967); English translation: *Season of Migration to the North*, Trans. Denys Johnson-Davies (New York: Michael Kesend, Ltd., 1989). All citations in this article are from this English translation. This translation will henceforward be cited as *Season*.

novels are the subject of comparison because they address cultural and sexual contact between natives and colonizers and the impact of this acculturation on native identity. Although the article is written under the rubric of comparative studies, there is no underlying assumption that the two novels compared are identical or consciously intertextual. Certain common themes, however, do invite comparisons in both texts. In attempting to compare a Native American novel to an Arabic one, I am also aware that I am approaching a new terrain in comparative studies.³

Essential to each novel is the relationship between natives on the one hand and Europeans and Euro-Americans on the other hand. This relationship often unfolds via cultural contact. The theme of cultural contact between the white European colonizer and the colonized, be they black or brown-skinned, manifests itself both in *Season* and *Ceremony* in terms of interracial sexuality that takes the form of revenge by the colonized on the colonizer. Equally important in both novels is the impact of this cultural contact on native identity. Through cultural contact, the identity of the native is often subject to loss, disintegration, and interpolation. However, it is also recreated via contact with an alien culture. To illustrate this, a plot summary of both texts is useful.

Despite its complex structure and content, *Ceremony*⁴ basically tells the story of Tayo, a mixed-blood Laguna Pueblo man whose Indian mother died when he was young, and whose non-Indian father is unknown. Traumatized by his war experiences in the Philippines as a marine soldier during World War II, Tayo is hospitalized in Los Angeles for a post-traumatic stress disorder, which doctors refer to as "battle fatigue." Conventional white medicine proves ineffective, and Tayo ends up disorientated in the hospital. Afterwards, Tayo is sent home. Back at his Laguna reservation, Tayo

³ I am aware of some comparative studies between Native American literature and the Arab Palestinian literature like Steven Salaita's *The Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan*. It would be more fruitful, I thought, to widen the horizon and open up Native American texts to other texts of colonization written by Arab writers. In this case, I chose the celebrated Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih.

⁴The difficulty of *Ceremony* to non-Native readers, as Allan Chavkin rightly argues, stems from its employment of many "Pueblo and Navajo cultures, traditions, and mythologies" (8).

continues to suffer from the internalized effects of racism and colonization of Indian lands. His sense of guilt for the death of his cousin Rocky during the war, the death of his uncle Josiah after his cattle are stolen, and his own shame for his mixed racial ancestry as half-Indian and half-white augment his illness. Thus, a more effective cure than hospitalization is necessary. Tayo is cured in both body and mind by a Navajo medicine man named Betonie and a mysterious mountain woman named Ts'eh. By the end, Tayo regains his uncle's stolen cattle and renews his attachment to his native land and Indian traditions. Overall, Silko's *Ceremony* traces the impact of World War II on Tayo and other displaced Indians. The ceremony in the title is Tayo's quest for psychic and physical wholeness, which he finds in a return to his roots and Indian cultural heritage.

Salih's *Season* is equally complex in its narrative structure and themes and resembles *Ceremony* in that its events are broken up in time and place. Structurally, *Ceremony* has no chapter divisions and consists of two intertwined stories, of which one concerns Tayo and the other, in poetic passages, tells creation stories. Similarly, *Season* has no chapter divisions and consists of Mustafa's story told within that of the narrator's. *Season* offers a critique of the cultural dissonance between the East and the West, and in particular that between blacks and whites. The nameless narrator is a Sudanese who, after studying English literature in Britain for seven years, returns to the postcolonial Sudan (the south) to live among his people. In his native village, he meets Mustafa Sa'eed, a Sudanese who also encountered the colonial culture as a student of Economics at Oxford. The novel is essentially the narrator's account of the haunting story Mustafa once told him before he disappeared. Mustafa's story is a harrowing account of his life in Britain (the north). The first person narrator, in a confessional mode, seeks to purge himself of Mustafa's tragic story as a man who, torn between his native Sudanese culture and his assimilation of white culture, disappears and is assumed to have drowned in one of the Nile's floodings. While European culture has a shattering impact on Mustafa, the narrator barely escapes its destructive influence. Exhausted from swimming and struggling against the forces of the Nile, the narrator

chooses life over death; he cries for help and decides to live among his people rather than submit to the cultural disease that destroyed Mustafa in Europe. Though this skeletal account cannot accommodate the subtle structure and rich allusiveness of both texts, it hints at the political and cultural themes relevant to Native Americans and Arab Africans.

The critical scholarship of *Season* has focused on the character of Mustafa, the nameless narrator, and sexual politics, among other things.⁵ Some critics have also tackled the novel's colonial and postcolonial import and have sought to compare its form and themes to those of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.⁶ The novel's comment on the relationship between Western and Eastern cultures has also been observed. For example, Roger Allen points out in *The Arabic Novel* that Tayeb Salih's *Season* "is the most accomplished among several works in modern Arabic literature that deal with cultures in contact" (159). Allen adds that Mustafa's relationship with Jean Morris, a British woman whom he marries and later kills, "symbolizes the absolute clash of these two cultures within a Western context" (161). The body of criticism written about *Ceremony*, on the other hand, is vast in scope and often complex in content. Critics have examined such issues as the Pueblo mythology Silko incorporates, the function of the landscape, Tayo's ceremonial healing, and the position of the mixed-blood in Native American fiction.⁷ Other critics have focused on the nature of Tayo's illness and have

⁵ For such criticism, see the collection of articles on *Season* edited by Amyuni. These articles represent the mainstream scholarship on *Season* until 1985, but they remain crucial critical commentaries for the student of the novel to date.

⁶ See, for example, Mohammad Shaheen's article "Tayeb Salih and Conrad," Byron Caminero-Santangelo's chapter on "Legacies of Darkness: Neocolonialism and Conrad in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*" in *African Fiction and Joseph Conrad* 69-87, and Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* 211-12.

⁷ For an excellent and relatively recent collection of articles on *Ceremony*, see Chavkin.

sought to compare *Ceremony* to the grail legend whereby a direct relationship can be traced between Tayo's illness and the drought in his Laguna reservation.⁸

II. Native Identity between Loss and Restoration

A careful reading of the novels reveals that they share complex narrative structures and rely heavily on flashbacks. They also share several themes that transcend the cultures and languages they belong to. For example, they deal with the diverse effects of European colonization of native lands on the colonized. They also show how the cultural identity of the colonized is absorbed into the metropolitan colonial centre. In *Ceremony*, for instance, white towns and highways surround the Laguna reservation and Indians lose their "Indianness" through participating in World War II and attempting to assimilate into non-Indian culture. Indian war buddies like Tayo, Emo, and Harley immerse themselves, when the war is over and whites revert to racism against Indians, in drinking and telling stories about the war, white cities, and white women. On the other hand, Mustafa in *Season* absorbs white culture and ideologies in Europe and becomes a sexual predator away from his native land. In each novel, native identity is interpolated through contact with the colonial power. It is also recreated and restored by rejecting the colonizer's system as the ending of each novel reveals: significantly, Tayo in *Ceremony* rejects the ways of white people and returns to his Laguna traditions, and, likewise, the narrator in *Season* returns to his native Sudan, rejects his association with Europeans, and exorcizes Mustafa as a man whose life has been poisoned by colonial contact. The narrator does this by setting fire to Mustafa's secret, Anglicized study and then plunging into the waters of the Nile, a symbolic act of purgation and regeneration. Hence, the identity of the native in each case is directly influenced by a separation from or a costly return to native land and customs. Above all, each novel treats the effects of

⁸ For this comparison, see Alan Velie 106-121.

internalized racism and colonization on a traditional native community, the Laguna reservation in *Ceremony* and a small Sudanese village at the bend of the Nile in *Season*.

Both novels also deal with the theme of storytelling. Tayo's story in *Ceremony* is in fact Thought Woman's story told by Silko's speaker; the mythological Thought Woman, in the novel's opening poem, is "sitting in her room/ thinking of a story now" and the speaker tells us the story "she is thinking" (1). The novel's opening verse then declares that stories are "all we have to fight off/ illness and death" (2). Tayo's healing is brought about in part when he comes to realize the importance of stories in Indian cultures and tells his own story to his healers, Ku'oosh and Betonie, in the course of the novel. Mustafa's story, on the other hand, is related within the narrator's narrative, which begins as follows: "It was, gentlemen, after a long absence...that I returned to my people" (1). Telling Mustafa's story is, in a sense, a curative act in which the narrator exorcizes the haunting ghost of Mustafa. Thus, storytelling in *Season* becomes the ceremony that cures the narrator of the pernicious effects of the colonial culture that destroyed Mustafa.

The protagonists in *Ceremony* and *Season* are never the same after they encounter the colonial culture of whites. While *Ceremony* presents us with the tension between the Laguna culture and Euro-American culture, *Season* foregrounds the tension between the European, Occidental culture and the Afro-Arab, Oriental culture. In each case, cultural contact challenges racial and cultural purity and puts native identity at stake. In fact, Mustafa and Tayo undergo traumatic experiences of identity crisis in foreign cultures, one as a product of imperial education and the other as a mixed-blood and a returning veteran from the white man's war. Thus, both protagonists are culturally hybrid. Mustafa is an orphan of Afro-Arab descent. His father, a camel merchant from the north of Sudan, dies before he is born and his mother, a slave woman from the south, dies later while he is studying in Europe. Like Mustafa, Tayo is an orphan. His Indian mother is dead and his white father is anonymous. Because of his mixed ancestry, being half-Laguna and half-white, Tayo is caught between two cultures:

the Indian culture of his mother and the Euro-American culture of his father. He bears the shame of his mother's sexual liaison with white men and is ridiculed for being "part white" and a "half-breed" (57). Tayo is culturally hybrid as an Indian with hazel-green "Mexican eyes" and light skin, traits he inherited from his unknown white father (99). By comparison, Mustafa is, as one of his contemporaries at school tells the narrator, "the spoilt child of the English" and is nicknamed at Gordon College in Sudan "the black Englishman" (52, 53). A young Sudanese lecturer at Khartoum University also claims that Mustafa is the first Sudanese "to marry an English woman" and take a "British nationality" (55-56). In Cairo, Mustafa is introduced to Western culture and literature: Bach's music, the poetry of John Keats, and the fiction of Mark Twain. His life in London steeps him more in Western culture, and he comes to know "the pubs of Chelsea, the clubs of Hampstead, and the gathering of Bloomsbury" (29). While Tayo is essentially hybrid by virtue of his mixed blood, Mustafa is hybrid because of his assimilation of an alien culture.

When the narrator meets Mustafa the day after a drinking session in which Mustafa recites poetry in English, he finds the latter digging up the soil around a lemon tree. Mustafa initiates a conversation with the narrator and says: "Some of the branches of this tree produce lemons, others oranges" (15). The narrator responds to this in English: "What an extraordinary thing!" (15). This grafted tree in *Season* can be taken as a trope for cultural hybridity, for it bears two kinds the fruits just as Mustafa and the narrator speak two languages and have experienced two cultures. Patricia Geesey's comments are insightful in this regard, for she points out that not only Mustafa but also the narrator himself is culturally hybrid in *Season*. Geesey asks if we should view Mustafa as a "cultural hybrid," being the result of a "colonial union" between Britain and Sudan (129), and contends:

The clues presented in the text indeed suggest that Sa'eed represents a less than happy intermingling of East and West. The narrator too has been similarly affected by cultural "contact" between England and the Sudan, but he is at first unwilling to acknowledge this reality. Only through his exploration of Mustafa

Sa'eed's account of his life does the narrator come to understand more fully the nature of cultural contact and contamination between Sudan and its former colonial power. (129)

Mustafa's dedication to one of his notebooks, an unfinished autobiography the narrator finds in his secret study, reads: "To those who see with one eye, speak with one tongue and see things as either black or white, either Eastern or Western" (150-151). The key to interpreting this dedication can be found in the last phrase. Those who are able to see things as "either Eastern or Western" are, unlike Mustafa himself, not culturally hybrid. The hypothetical audience to whom this autobiography is dedicated probably enact the impossibility of separating the East from the West. As culturally hybrid, Mustafa could not see things according to his dedication and, consequently, could not finish his life story. Thus, Mustafa and Tayo exist on the borderline of two cultures and inhabit what Homi Bhabha calls "the ambivalent world of the 'not quite/ not white'" in colonial discourse (131). Both suffer from a marginal existence as outsiders due to their hybrid cultures. Such internalized mixed heritage is the source of sickness in each novel. Both heroes, therefore, end up seeking psychic wholeness in a quest towards self-recognition. Whereas Tayo asserts his native identity through restorative Indian ceremonies, Mustafa tries to assert his through distancing himself from his prior experiences in Europe and reflecting on them, thus adopting what Al-Musawi terms a "self-critical stance" (201). Just as Indian ceremonies exorcize the evil symptoms of Tayo's illness, Mustafa's confession to the narrator exorcizes his horrible past. There is an attempt in each novel to restore native identity to wholeness despite the damage done through colonial contact and regardless of the success of such an attempt.

Once uprooted from their lands, Tayo and Mustafa's very existence is at stake. Their cultural identities are inseparable from their relatedness to a place, or a landscape, and an ethnicity. Whereas Mustafa is identified by his "blackness" as a man coming from the south among Europeans, Tayo, like other Indians in *Ceremony*, is identified by his ethnic difference from whites as a Laguna Pueblo and a mixed-blood. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin articulate this common theme of the interrelationship

between "place" and "identity" in postcolonial literature. They argue that "A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place" (8). It is interesting to read the above quotation against the narrator's assertion in *Season* whereby he underscores a similar relationship between his identity and his native landscape: "But *I* am from *here* [my emphasis], just as the date palm standing in the courtyard of our house has grown in *our* [emphasis original] house and not in anyone else's" (49). When this narrator returns home after many years in Europe, he rejoices at his new-found identity among his people and the familiar village life. He listens "intently to the wind" and hears "the cooing of the turtle-dove" (1, 2). He looks at the palm in the yard of his house and reestablishes his connection with his native roots contending: "I looked at its strong straight trunk, at its roots that strike down into the ground, at the green branches hanging down loosely over its top, and I experienced a feeling of assurance. I felt not like a storm-swept feather but like that palm tree, a being with a background, with roots, with a purpose" (2). As with Tayo, the narrator comes to appreciate trees, animals, and birds. He regains a stable identity in his native land and lives in harmony with its scenery: "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 seed sown in a field" (5). The destructive impact of colonial contact on Mustafa yields the opposite for the narrator who appreciates cultural rootedness.

Tayo also learns to reestablish his relationship with his cultural roots in the Laguna Pueblo reservation after his return from World War II by reconnecting to its familiar healing landscape. Emphasizing this value, Silko writes that "In a world of crickets and wind and cottonwood trees he was almost alive again; he was visible" (104). Formerly, Tayo had lost his relationship with the mother Earth and its animals when he cursed the rain. Tayo's cursing the rain is juxtaposed with the Pueblo myth of Corn Woman scolding her sister Reed Woman for bathing all day and not working. The

latter leaves and, as a result, the earth gets dry. Tayo cursed the rain when his cousin, Rocky, was wounded in the jungle during the war. The rain was aggravating Rocky's wounds and making it difficult for Tayo and the corporal to carry the stretcher down a muddy road. Jungle flies were also crawling over Rocky, until Tayo "cursed their sticky feet and wet mouths" and "smashed them between his hands" whenever he could do so (102). Enraged by this situation, Tayo cursed the rain repeatedly, which effected destruction.

The consequences of his cursing the rain were then seen everywhere: "the grey mule grew gaunt, and the goat and kid had to wander farther and farther each day to find weeds or dry shrubs to eat" (14). Thus, when Tayo returns to Laguna, Bonnie Winsbro argues, his "loss has been quadrupled," for "in addition to his mother, he has now lost Rocky, Josiah, and his connection to the land and to the mother of the people" (97). Later on, Tayo is restored to health. He completes his cure with the guidance of the medicine men Ku'oosh at the Laguna reservation and Betonie in Gallup, Arizona. The love of the mountain spirit Ts'eh, whom Tayo meets on Mt. Taylor, also helps him complete his healing ceremony and find his uncle's stolen cattle. His cure is completed when he overcomes the evil of witchery loose in him after his participation in a violent and destructive war. He refuses to kill Emo when he finds him torturing Tayo's best friend Harley near a uranium mine later in the novel, thus resisting the witchery of Emo and achieving integration into his native land and community. Rain falls again and the land blooms. It is for this reason that Paula Gunn Allen sees Tayo's sickness as "a result of separation from the ancient unity of person, ceremony, and land" and his recovery as "a result of his recognition of this unity" (119). Tayo's cure is effected, therefore, after he completes his curative ceremony, restores his uncle's cattle, and learns to live in harmony with nature and people.

Uprooted and dislocated, Tayo and Mustafa lose their identities in white cultures. Mustafa returns from his journey in the West in search of his native identity. He buys himself a house in a small village at the bend of the Nile, marries a native woman, fathers two sons, and cultivates a farm. He tries to establish a sense of belonging to his

native land and people. "We're farmers and think of what concerns us," he tells the narrator who has returned with a Ph.D. in poetry from England; he adds: "Knowledge, though, of whatsoever kind is necessary for the advancement of *our* country [my emphasis]" (9). By contrast, in the mental ward at a veteran's hospital in Los Angeles Tayo loses consciousness. He becomes hollow within, speechless, and almost "invisible." In an often quoted passage, Silko articulates Tayo's disorientation in white culture:

For a long time he had been white smoke. He did not realize that until he left the hospital, because white smoke had no consciousness of itself. It faded into the white world of their bed sheets and walls; it was sucked away by the words of doctors who tried to talk to the invisible scattered smoke. He had seen outlines of gray steel tables, outlines of the food they pushed into his mouth, which was only an outline too, like all the outlines he saw. (14)

Tayo also inhabits "a gray winter fog on a distant elk mountain" (15). The "white smoke" and "scattered smoke" in the above quotation suggest the disintegration of Tayo's identity and its lack of outlines. The murkiness and boundarylessness associated with "fog" and "smoke" echo his invisible, indistinct, and incoherent identity among whites. James Ruppert rightly points out that Tayo "comes to realize" in the course of the novel "that his identity is bound up with Laguna's identity, with something larger than his own psyche" (179). Likewise, Louis Owens remarks that Tayo's identity is inseparable from that of his Indian community: "Tayo has identity and a coherent self only insofar as he is an integral part of the larger community" (172-3). Owens maintains that Tayo's "individual identity disappears as he journeys toward the communal identity ultimately pronounced by the pueblo elders..." (168-169). Tayo's cultural identity as an Indian is staked through contact with white people. Talking to his psychiatrist in the hospital, Tayo argues: "It was, until you came. It was all white, all the color of the smoke, the fog" (16). As a modern split subject, Tayo comes to experience his voice as something alien and distant. His voice betrays his fragmented state by speaking of himself to his army doctor in the third person: "He can't talk to you. He is invisible. His words are formed

with an invisible tongue, they have no sound" (15). Tayo, in other words, is a man with an incomplete, estranged identity—a "nonentity" hardly seen or heard in the hospital.

Tayo also becomes inarticulate. His tongue is "dry and dead, the carcass of a tiny rodent" (15). When he leaves the Los Angeles veteran's hospital, he continues to feel "weak" and "invisible" among whites (16). More images of smoke and fog abound. Tayo thinks that "he would be lost in smoke again, in the fog again," and he waits "to die the way smoke dies" (16, 17). He is physically and psychologically sick in white culture. His psychic illness manifests itself physically in frequent vomiting and urinating. Figuratively, he is dead in such an environment. He comes to realize the stifling impact of white culture on him later in the novel as he recognizes "the thick white skin that had enclosed him, silencing the sensations of living, the love as well as the grief; and he had been left with only the hum of tissues that enclosed him" (229). Winsbro argues that Tayo's participation in the white man's war was akin to discarding his Indian identity and "putting on a new white skin" (98). However, cultural contact with whites during the war was not the only threat to Indian identity. The war's aftermath was more damaging because the Indian war veterans and other assimilationists such as Tayo's mother, his aunt, and Helen Jean fall prey to white habits and ways. Like other reservation Indians suffering from feelings of inferiority and dissatisfied with the poverty of reservation life, Helen Jean leaves her reservation in Towac and is lost in Gallup. Tayo is aware of the disintegration of his Indian identity via contact with the ways of white civilization, a civilization built on stolen Indian land. He realizes that the things Indians admire in white culture like alcohol, glittering lights, music, food, and cars are taken from Indian lands.

Tayo's cousin, Rocky, provides a good example of an Indian who loses his native identity via contact with white culture. However, unlike Tayo, he is an example of identity loss without a promise of restoration or reinvigoration. A successful football player and an A-student, Rocky absorbs white culture without the problematic impact this contact with whites has on Tayo. Rocky "deliberately avoided the old-time ways" (51). He listens to his white teachers who advise him not to "let the people at home hold [him] back," and he knows "what he had to do to win in the white outside world" (51).

Rocky's mother also distances herself from tribal life and delves into Christianity, a religion that "separated the people from themselves" and "tried to crush the single clan name, encouraging each person to stand alone..." (68). Like Rocky and his mother, the war veteran Emo assimilates white violence and habits and becomes a tool of the white people's evil. As Reed Dasenbrock states, Emo is "the real half-breed, poisoned by the white ways" (qtd. in Kilgore 22). Emo cuts his hair in the army and puts on a new uniform. He breaks away from his cultural heritage, curses "the barren dry land the white man had left," and calls the mother Earth an "Old dried-up thing!" (61, 25). Emo, like other assimilationists, forgets his past and is unable to relate to his roots. His status as a foil for Tayo augments the bad example he is supposed to set when it comes to identity politics. Tayo, after his healing ceremony, comes to realize the paramount importance of the Indian past in the face of an encroaching white culture: "It would be easy to get lost in this place of theirs, where the past, even a few hours before, suddenly lost its impact and seemed like a vague dream ..." (241). Like the narrator in *Season*, Tayo also comprehends the changing state of his Laguna reservation as it is being encroached upon by Euro-American culture. Silko captures this realization when she writes: "But the fifth world had become entangled with European names: the names of the rivers, the hills, the names of the animals and plants—all of creation suddenly had two names: an Indian name and a white name" (68).

Like Tayo, Mustafa lacks psychic wholeness as a result of being misplaced in London. He loses his identity there and ends up being a criminal tried for murder. No wonder, he assumes multiple false identities in his relationships with European women: Hassan, Charles, Amin, Mustafa, and Richard. In a sense, Mustafa becomes a schizophrenic estranged from his real self. During his trial in London, Mustafa says: "I sat for weeks listening to the lawyers talking about me – as though they were talking about some person who was no concern of mine" (31). Like the inarticulate Tayo, Mustafa becomes "a corpse" before his cross examiner in the courtroom and sits there in a state of "stupor" (32). His answers are minimal, in the form of "I don't know" or "Yes" (32, 35). Hinting at how colonialism negates or reduces one's native identity, he

even relates to the narrator how he once thought of standing up during his trial and shouting: "This Mustafa does not exist. He is an illusion, a lie. I ask of you to rule that the lie be killed" (32). He is unable to articulate an identity and remains "as lifeless as a heap of ashes" (32). As with Tayo who experiences himself as invisible white smoke, Mustafa, also a product of two cultures, experiences himself as an illusion and as a lie. In fact, the narrator refers to him in these terms and tells his friend, Mahjoub, that "Mustafa Sa'eed was a lie" (107). The narrator even questions Mustafa's material existence and describes him as a ghost, arguing: "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 suffocatingly dark night, and when they opened their eyes to the sunlight he was nowhere to be seen" (46).

The narrator becomes afraid of becoming a "lie" himself as a result of his contact with Mustafa and Europeans in the West and tries to reassure himself that his identity is still intact. He also reassures himself that he always imagined his small native village when he was in the West just as Tayo keeps in his mind the image of his uncle Josiah and Josiah's cattle throughout the novel. Contemplating, the narrator questions whether what happened to Mustafa also happened to him:

Was it likely that what had happened to Mustafa Sa'eed could have happened to me? He said that he was a lie, so was I also a lie? I am from here – is not this reality enough? I too had lived with them. But I had lived with them superficially, neither loving nor hating them. I used to treasure within me the image of this little village, seeing it wherever I went with the eye of my imagination. (49)

Interestingly enough, Silko and Salih show the lies and deception inherent in colonial ideologies by way of emphasizing the destructive impact of colonialism on the colonized. For example, Tayo recognizes the lie that white men never steal when he discovers that they have stolen his uncle's cattle. White people also turn out to be living a lie in *Ceremony*, for "theirs was a nation built on stolen land ..." (191). In *Season*, the "civilizing mission" of British colonialism in Sudan also turns out to be a lie used to

exploit native lands and people. During Mustafa's trial, one of his former teachers, Prof. Foster-Keen, says: "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" (93-94). Mustafa, a product of this civilizing "lie," is himself a lie as he perceives himself and as other characters in the novel sometimes view him. In fact, Mustafa counters colonial lies by employing lies himself to seduce English women; his London house, with its oriental fascination, is "the den of lethal lies" he used to seduce with its ivory, sandalwood, incense, ostrich feathers, and oriental drawings (146). He gives a lecture on Abu Nuwas, an Arab poet, at Oxford and lies and exaggerates until he feels that lies are "tripping off [his] tongue like sublime truths" (143). Mustafa employs lies and familiar stereotypes about the romanticized East in seducing Isabella Seymour, an older English woman. Relating to the narrator how he has seduced her, he claims:

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....There came a moment when I felt I had been transformed in her eyes into a naked, primitive creature, a spear in one hand and arrows in the other, hunting elephants and lions in the jungles. (38)

In his relationships with English women, Mustafa casts himself in the role of what Edward Said terms "the mysterious Orient" that appeals to the West by virtue of its exoticism (*Orientalism* 26). The untrue statements Mustafa uses to deceive women are significant because they indicate the brittle, fragile identity of the colonized, his lack of self-confidence, and the cultural gap between the colonizer and the colonized.

It seems that Salih is exposing here the assumption that the colonizer is a civilizing agent of native savagery. He also subtly exposes such false stereotyping of natives as primitive savages and shows the illusions, fantasies, and lies that predominate whenever the conception of the colonized native or European colonizer is

considered. When the narrator returns to his native Sudan, people ask him questions about Europe: "Were the people there like us or where they different? 'Is it true,' Wad Rayyes asked me, 'that they don't marry but a man lives with a woman in sin?'" (3). The narrator then reveals the false conceptions and generalizations held by his people about Europeans: "They were surprised when I told them that Europeans were, with minor differences, exactly like them, marrying and bringing up their children in accordance with principles and traditions ..." (3). The Europeans also view the natives in terms of certain stereotypes. When Isabella Seymour asks Mustafa about his race, he answers "I'm like Othello—Arab-African" (38). Her response is indicative of such stereotypes: "Your nose is like the noses of Arabs in pictures, but your hair isn't soft and jet black like that of Arabs" (38). Mustafa exploits cultural stereotypes to seduce English women and reverse certain gender roles typical of colonial ideologies. The existence of stereotypes indicates the loss, distortion, or interpolation identity is subjected to through colonial contact.

III. Sexualizing Colonial Discourse

It is often the case in colonial ideologies that "cultural hierarchies" are assimilated, Patrick Hogan contends, to "sex hierarchies" (17). Colonial ideologies, Hogan argues, seek to "'feminize' indigenous men and 'hyper-feminize' indigenous women" (18). Wail Hassan touches on the sexualization of colonial discourse and points out that "What draws Jean to Mustafa is the same thing that draws Mustafa to English women—namely a struggle for imperial power and hegemony, one that unfolds in terms of a masculinist discourse on sexuality, working in alliance with colonial discourse" (102). The masculine role assumed by the colonizing power as the active, aggressive side before the feminized colonized native often gets reversed once the colonized individual takes sexual revenge from the colonizer's women to contradict the violence perpetrated on the colonized and the "penetration" of native lands by the colonizer. Hence, the Indian war veterans in *Ceremony* tell stories about white women they slept

with in Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego. Tayo says that "[t]hese Indians fucked white women, they had as much as they wanted too" (41-2). The Indian buddies, we are told, "didn't ever want to give up the cold beer and the blond cunt" (42). Emo, in a verse section, relates to his war buddies his sexual exploits with white women. Significantly, he assumes another ethnic identity, an Italian one, and employs deception to seduce two white women. Emo brags: "Yes, sir, this In'di'n/ was grabbin' white pussy/ all night!" (59). After the war, white people reverted to racism against Indians. The drunken Emo vents his desire for sexual revenge on white people and makes apparent the association between land and women; he says: "They took our land, they took everything! So let's get our hands on white women!" (55). It is worth noting that the female body within a (post)colonial context becomes the contested site for the exercise of male power. The colonizer seeks to dominate native women, and the colonized, in return, seek to retaliate in opposite terms. The objectification of the female body indicates the complicity of women in hierarchical power structures.

At one point in *Season*, the narrator meets a fellow Sudanese and a former student of Mustafa who tells him that Mustafa used to say "I'll liberate Africa with my penis" (120). The logic of this assertion means that Mustafa, like the Indian veterans in white cities, went to Europe as a conqueror who wanted to liberate his native land through a sexual revenge on European women. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon discusses this theme of sexual revenge in the course of his analysis of the impact of white colonization on the black psyche. Fanon points out that the Negro who seeks to sleep with a white woman is motivated by "a wish to be white. A lust for revenge, in any case" (16). In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon speaks of something similar: "The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dream of possession—all manner of possession: to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife if possible" (32). The colonized person's desire for revenge, then, becomes an outlet for interracial sexuality and is driven by feelings of inferiority.

In addition to illustrating the theme of interracial sexuality as a means of exacting vengeance on the colonizer, both Emo and Mustafa's aforementioned assertions explicate Said's contention in his introduction to *Culture and Imperialism* that "The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course, but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future—these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative" (xii-xiii). Said, as a cultural critic, links narratives to the causes of empires and cultural forms of native resistance. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon makes a claim similar to that of Said about the importance of land for the colonized. Fanon writes: "For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity" (36). In this light, Silko and Salih are both engaged in "imperialism" as a struggle over land. Considering that land for Arabs and Natives is equated with values of honour, sovereignty, and "dignity," a colonized land is symbolically penetrated by the colonizer. The native land is explicitly commoditized, exploited, and objectified in colonization. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the title of one of Mustafa's books discovered by the narrator is *The Rape of Africa*. The vengeance of the colonized in this case is penetrating the colonizer's women. In this form of reverse colonization, the bodies of (white) women are the sites of contention because the female body evokes associations of the fertile woman with the mother earth. For this reason, it is no wonder that Mustafa always associates the bodies of European women with cities. When Mrs. Robinson, the wife of a British schoolteacher, embraces Mustafa on the train station platform in Cairo, he feels "as though Cairo, that large mountain to which my camel had carried me, was a European woman just like Mrs. Robinson..." (25). His victim Isabella Seymour walks beside him as "a glittering figure of bronze under the July sun, a city of secrets and rapture" (37). When he succeeds in seducing her, "[t]he city [London] has changed into a woman" (39). Isabella Seymour, in reference to her Spanish mother, is described as "a fertile Andalusia" (42). This association of women with cities in *Season* evokes the mother-earth theme in Native American literature. In her mythological

scheme in *Ceremony*, Silko equates earth and woman and reminds us of the earth as a fertile female responsible for the creation of life.

Reacting to colonization that exploits native lands and indigenous people, Mustafa holds himself to be a "colonizer," an "intruder," and an "invader" who has come from the south to the heart of Europe (94, 95, 160). He defines himself as "a drop of the poison" that the colonizers "have injected into the veins of history" when they colonized native lands (95). Hence, Mustafa's sexual encounters often take violent and aggressive aspects in Salih's novel. As Saree Makdisi puts it, "[j]ust as imperialism had violated its victims, Mustafa violates his, and his unwitting lovers become sacrifices in his violent campaign" (811). Consequently, Mustafa's sexual encounters are often expressed in terms of conquests and military clashes. For example, he describes his pursuit of Jean Morris, an English woman he married and later killed, in military jargon: "Every day the string of the bow became more taut" (33). His "caravans were thirsty" and "the arrow's target had been fixed" (33). His bedroom is "a theatre of war" and his bed is "a patch of hell" (34). During his sexual encounters, he "would stay awake all night warring with bow and sword and spear and arrows..." (34). The violence of such sexual language is not surprising considering the violence inherent in colonialism, an oppressive, patriarchal (and even patronizing) endeavor that victimizes both colonizing and colonized women.⁹

Muhammad Siddiq implies a relationship between aggressive sexuality and colonial discourse when he observes that Mustafa's character "seems to imply a causal relationship between his distorted emotional relationships with English women and the economic, cultural, and psychological violence perpetrated by British colonial rule" (qtd.

⁹ The alliance between postcolonialism and feminism has been articulated by many critics. The hierarchical logic of colonialism is often maintained to the disadvantage of the marginalized woman. One is reminded of Gayatri Spivak's assertion in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" that: "If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (287). Spivak argues the double colonization of patriarchy and imperialism and their impact on producing a "gendered subaltern": "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third-world woman' caught between tradition and modernization" (306). The white woman can assume the same position of the subaltern a native woman is forced into.

in Allen; *Literary Criticism* 268). In *Ceremony*, the Indian veterans reverse the violence of the colonizers and engage in several sexual encounters with white women. The Indian war veterans also enjoy exploiting certain stereotypes of Indians in order to exploit white women to sleep with them, and that is exactly what Mustafa does in *Season*. Mustafa and the Indian veterans are able to sleep with white women because of certain stereotypes that they seem to be aware of. Such stereotypes are often associated with certain landscapes and racial features. For instance, Tayo reminisces that white women used to say to him during the war: "Hey soldier, you sure are handsome. All that black thick hair." (41). This reveals that Tayo is appealing to white women because of his "black thick hair" he inherited from his Indian mother, a sign of his difference from whites. Just as colonial contact is an outlet for the alteration of indigenous identity, it is also a site for sexual exchange. In a similar vein, Shiela Greenwood, a country English girl, says to Mustafa: "How marvellous your black color is!" (139). His color is, in her words, "the colour of magic and mystery and obscenities" (139). An Indian sergeant from Isleta tells Helen Jean in *Ceremony* about his war experiences: "Another thing was the women. The white women in California. Boy! You never saw anything like it! They couldn't get enough of *us*, huh?" (my emphasis; 164). Silko also hints at the existence of some stereotypes in the interracial sexuality the Indian buddies exploit, as when they exploit their ethnicity to gain sexual favors from white women. She writes: "The night progressed according to that ritual: from cursing the barren dry land the white man had left them, to talking about San Diego and the cities where the white women were still waiting for them to come back to give them another taste of what white women never got enough of" (61). Although such language can be empty sexual rhetoric growing out of frustration, its symbolic meaning indicates a subversive reversal of power relations. Similarly, Mustafa exploits the East's spirituality in his sexual campaign against several European women who stand for the collective colonial identity and include "girls from the Salvation Army, Quaker societies and Fabian gatherings" (30). Hassan observes this and remarks: "That Mustafa's mistresses come from different social classes indicates that they share a cultural and racial, if not a class

identity" (101). Ann Hammond, a student of Oriental languages at Oxford whom Mustafa seduces in *Season*, "yearned for tropical climes, cruel suns, purple horizons. In her eyes I [Mustafa] was a symbol of all her hankerings" (30). Therefore, Mustafa exploits his Oriental appeal to European women by drawing on his Eastern culture to make a seductive bedroom for his victims.

As a black man, Mustafa is especially appealing to European women because he embodies stereotypes about the sexuality of black men. Fanon speaks of the myth of Negroes in the jungles with "tremendous sexual powers" who "copulate at all times and in all places" (*Black Skin* 157). A white woman, according to Fanon, views the Negro "as the keeper of the impalpable gate that opens into the realm of orgies, of bacchanals, of delirious sexual sensations" (*Black Skin* 177). Mustafa manipulates such stereotypes about black men in his sexual affairs. His bedroom is a relevant case in point. It becomes the epitome of what Said calls in *Orientalism* "Eastern excesses, those mysteriously attractive opposites to what seem to be normal values" (57). Mustafa's description of his bedroom makes this idea of "Eastern excesses" clear: "The room was heavy with the smell of burning sandalwood and incense, and in the bathroom were pungent Eastern perfumes, lotions, unguents, powders, and pills" (31). The items Mustafa uses to decorate his bedroom enhance what Hassan describes as "fetishism in sexualized Western fantasies about Africa and the Orient" (97). Therefore, Ali Abbas rightly observes that in his numerous affairs with European women, Mustafa makes use of the "prejudices and misconceptions" European women have about African men and that he "uses his knowledge of Arabic history and culture with devastating effect in order to entice his unwitting victims to his bed" (30). Mustafa also exploits his cultural and racial difference from English men to provide a welcome source of change and fascination for English women. His relationships with Sheila Greenwood, Ann Hammond, and Isabella Seymour illustrate this point whereby the colonized man assumes the power position of the master with relation to the colonizing woman who becomes a sexual slave/object.

For instance, Sheila Greenwood, an English waitress, falls victim to stereotypes about the East. Mustafa says of her: "The smell of burning sandalwood and incense made her dizzy; she stood for a long time laughing at her image in the mirror as she fondled the ivory necklace I had placed like a noose round her beautiful neck" (35). The master/slave relationship between the colonizer and the colonized gets reversed via interracial sexuality between native men and white women. Thus, Ann Hammond, awed by Mustafa's mystical sexual prowess, becomes his slave and he becomes her master. She tells him: "[y]ou are Mustafa, my master and my lord" (146). Isabella Seymour even calls Mustafa a "black god" and implores him to "ravish" her. Isabella tells Mustafa: "Ravish me, you African demon. Burn me in the fire of your temple, you black god. Let me twist and turn in your wild and impassioned rites" (106). The narrator is aware of this reversed relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. He reflects, "How strange! How ironic! Just because a man has been created on the Equator some mad people regard him as a slave, others as a god" (108). In both novels, interracial sexuality does not seem to be motivated by true love, and nor does it seem fruitful or yield harmonious relations.

The interracial sexuality in *Ceremony* takes another turn in which white men take sexual favors from Indian women, thus confirming the power exercised by the white male over the native woman. Trying to forget their frustrations about lost land and racial segregation, the Indian war buddies revel in drinking and vengeful memories about sleeping with white women: "Another round, and Harley tells his story about two blondes in bed with him" (43). However, cultural contact in *Ceremony* allows for sexual relationships between white men and Indian women. Laura, Tayo's mother, gave herself to drinking and going out with white men and Mexicans. Her Indian people experience the loss and impact of miscegenation on the collective Indian identity: "the humiliation fell on all of them; what happened to the girl did not happen to her alone, it happened to all of them" and they "felt something deeper: they were losing her, they were losing part of themselves" (69, 68). White people taught her in school to feel shame "about the deplorable ways of the Indian people" and "urged her to break away from her home"

(68). She assimilated white culture and imitated white girls in her dress, hair, and lipstick. As a result, she suffered from a negative form of cultural hybridity by being torn between two cultures and ambivalent feelings: "The feelings of shame, at her own people and at the white people, grew inside her, side by side like monstrous twins that would have to be left in the hills to die" (69). Importantly, despite her sexual liaison with white men, Tayo's mother remains an outsider in the white world.

As in *Season*, sexuality fails to effect true affection among different races, and violence remains the ultimate outcome. Tayo's mother discovers this "truth" after she goes out with white men: "But after she had been with them, she could feel the truth in their fists and in their greedy feeble love-making" (69). The case of Tayo's mother can be best understood considering Fanon's claim that the relationship between women of color and European men is influenced by feelings of "inferiority" and a desire to be White, rendering true love between these races "unattainable" (*Black Skin* 42). Tayo's mother was fascinated by a "superior" white culture. Her ultimate contact with this white culture, revealed in her sexual relationships with white men, ended in rejection, and she returned to her Laguna reservation seeded with Tayo. Gregory Salyer convincingly argues that the lesson Tayo learns after his return from the white man's war is that "In Euro-American culture, difference cannot be overcome by love or war; the structures that define native and white are stronger than human emotion and national rituals" (45). Roger Bastide offers an insightful analysis of interracial sexuality between the woman of color and the white man and argues that "The coloured woman is considered not as a woman but simply as an object of pleasure, as an easy prey for the white male. A whole series of preconceived ideas are in play here. First of all the idea of the more unbridled sexuality of the black woman, in comparison with the white: the black woman will make love at any time, and with anyone" (189). Bastide concludes that sexuality fails to bring races together and eliminate racial "prejudice." The woman of color remains inferior for the white man and the black man seeks vengeance on the white woman. Bastide argues that

... closer relationships between the colors, whether in marriage or in simple sexual pleasure, are not a sign of absence of prejudice: the Dusky Venus hides the debasement of the black woman as a prostitute; and the Black Apollo is seeking revenge on the white man. It is not so much that love breaks down barriers and unites human beings as that racial ideologies extend their conflicts even into love's embraces. (197)

This diseased and barren interracial sexuality that prevails in *Ceremony* and *Season* alike is obviously different from the healing sexual love Laguna women like Night Swan and Tse'h offer to Tayo. Their love and acceptance, unlike the negative forms of interracial sexuality depicted in both novels, help Tayo heal physically and psychologically and give him the strength necessary to overcome the witchery loose in the world and restore his uncle's stolen cattle.

One aspect of cultural contact and colonization related to sexuality both novels deal with is the theme of violence practiced by the displaced Indians and Arab-Africans in white America and Europe. The drunken war veterans often resort to violence in the bars they visit in white cities. For instance, the drunken Tayo tries to gut Emo with a broken beer bottle and wounds himself in the process. Emo, the paramount symbol of witchery and evil among the Indian veterans, tortures Tayo's best friend, Harley, and brags about his actions. Emo also tells stories of how he tortured Japanese soldiers during the war and keeps, as a war souvenir, a set of human teeth "he had knocked out of the corpse of a Japanese soldier" (60-61). The violence practiced by Mustafa, on the other hand, is not internalized or directed at his Sudanese fellows; it is directed at the European women he knows and culminates in the scene when he kills Jean Morris. She, the climax of his sexual conquest of the West, is not an easy victim. She challenges him, humiliates him, kicks him, and destroys his cultural artifacts including a rare Arabic manuscript and a precious prayer rug. Mustafa's relationship with her exemplifies, therefore, a cultural and racial clash. She gives him "a look of arrogance, coldness, and something else" when she first sees him at a party (29). She even calls him "savage bull" and "ugly" (33, 30). Their last encounter is a bloody one. Mustafa, in a

perverse act of sexual violence, thrusts a knife between her breasts. Their destructive separation counters the union of their sexual intercourse. The East remains the East, and so does the West.

IV. Conclusion: Cultural Illness and "Cures"

Closely allied to these themes of violence and identity loss is that of drinking, another effect of contact with the imperial culture in Europe or its territories and a sign of cultural degeneration. A report Tayo's doctor reads shows that "since the Second World War a pattern of drinking and violence, not previously seen before, is emerging among Indian veterans" (53). The returning native veterans in *Ceremony* roam the bars drinking and telling stories about the war and white women. They are engaged in what Gay Wilentz calls "obscene rituals" that manifest "collective cultural illness" (93). Wilentz argues that "[t]hrough both the external forces of 'white' domination and the taboos broken in the war as well as by their contemporary lifestyles, the men at the bar and in the community at large are ill" (95). Tayo's illness best exemplifies how illness and cure can be part of something larger and more inclusive than the personal level because his illness reflects the withering state of his land and community at large after the arrival of whites. Tayo is aware of this and tells the medicine man Betonie: "I wonder what good Indian ceremonies can do against the sickness which comes from their wars, their bombs, their lies?" (132). This "collective cultural illness" Wilentz speaks of in *Ceremony*, and of which Tayo is cured, is echoed, though differently, in *Season*.

Mustafa often represents the cultural contact between the colonizer and the colonized in *Season* as an unhealthy one. Cultural contact between natives and the colonial power is rendered as a contamination that threatens both parties. Mustafa often relates this contact to an infectious disease or a deadly poison. His sexual conquest of European women is viewed as a retort to the colonial power that contaminated the history of the colonized nations and sickened them. Mustafa says: "The infection had stricken these women a thousand years ago, but I had stirred up the latent depths of the

disease until it had got out of control and had killed" (34). His bedroom, in which European women contract this cultural infection, is described as "the germ of a fatal disease" (34). Moreover, Mustafa imagines himself telling his English judges that their harmful colonization has been a poison for his native land: "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." (95). Sexual contact is the direct means of spreading a destructive cultural illness, for Sheila Greenwood entered Mustafa's bedroom as "a chaste virgin and when she left it she was carrying the germs of self-destruction within her" (35). Another sexual victim, Isabella Seymour, was also infected "with a deadly disease" that will destroy her and her colonial nation "be it sooner or later" (39). In addition to being destructive, Mustafa's sexual relationships with European women prove to be barren and "sick," just like the sterile sexuality of Indian veterans and white women.

The correspondences between both texts, far from the totalized claim that the colonized or subjugated are always exactly the same, show that postcolonial texts can revise, enrich, and rewrite each other, and that, in broad terms, the experience of colonialism is similar in different literatures and cultures. Salih and Silko treat the problem of native identity as it is entangled with colonial and postcolonial settings. The dislocated characters in both novels seek integration into their native cultures. They experience sterility and sickness in white cultures and return home to be restored to health and fertility. Tayo goes through the curing ceremony and is restored to his people while Mustafa, if drowned as the village people assume, undergoes a different kind of purgation. He returns home to confess his life story in Europe to the narrator who, in turn, tells Mustafa's story as a means of coming to terms with its shattering impact on him. Maintaining a world free from colonial influence seems impossible in the vision both novels offer. The glimmer of hope seems on the borderline between assimilation of white culture and traditionalism. This liminal space of cultural encounters can help mediate colonialism rather than responding to it in violent extremes or assimilative passivity as Emo, Rocky, and Mustafa, among others, do in both novels—which is why

Tayo and the narrator in *Ceremony* and *Season*, respectively, offer better examples of asserted, reinvigorated identities.

In *Ceremony*, Betonie, a mixed-blood Navajo healer who uses artifacts of white civilization like calendars and phone books, successfully treats Tayo. Betonie is not seriously affected by cultural contact with whites and is adaptable to change. Like the narrator of *Season* suspended in the middle of the Nile towards the end of the novel, Betonie seems to occupy the midpoint between assimilation and traditionalism. In presenting Mustafa's tragic story, *Season* apparently conveys the failure of attempts at bridging the gap between the north and the south, the East and the West. Just as *Ceremony* ends with sunrise—a reminder that Thought Woman's cycle continues—and with Tayo cured, the narrator in *Season* seeks his purgation at dawn. He enters the Nile naked and leaves the haunting ghost of Mustafa in Mustafa's secret study. The narrator then swims to the northern shore until he gets "half-way between north and south" (167). He sees "formations of sand grouse heading northwards" (168). His awakening from the nightmare comes when he is suspended "[i]n a state between life and death" (168). The narrator's suspended state corresponds to his liminal existence on the borderline between assimilation and traditionalism. He decides to live with his people rather than surrender to the currents of the Nile and the novel ends with his cries for help.

Works Cited

- Abbas, Ali. "The Father of Lies: The Role of Mustafa Sa'eed as Second Self in *Season of Migration to the North*." Amyuni 27-37.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.
- Allen, Roger. *The Arabic Novel: An Historical and Critical Introduction*. 2nd edition. Syracuse: Syracuse U P, 1995.
- . Comp. and ed. *A Library of Literary Criticism: Modern Arabic Literature*. New York: Ungar, 1987.
- Al-Musawi, Muhsin. *The Postcolonial Arabic Novel: Debating Ambivalence*. Boston: Brill Leiden, 2003.
- Amyuni, Mona, ed. *Tayeb Saleh's Season of Migration to the North: A Casebook*. Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1985.
- Bastide, Roger. "Dusky Venus, Black Apollo." *Race and Social Difference*. Ed. Paul Baxter and Basil Sansom. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972. 187-198.
- Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Caminero-Santangelo, Byron. *African Fiction and Joseph Conrad: Reading Postcolonial Intertextuality*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005.
- Chavkin, Allan, ed. *Leslie Marmon Silko's Ceremony: A Casebook*. Oxford: Oxford U P, 2002.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- . *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press, 1963.
- Geesey, Patricia. "Cultural Hybridity and Contamination in Tayeb Salih's *Mawsim al-hijra ila al-Shamal (Season of Migration to the North)*." *Research in African Literature* 28 (1997): 128-140.

- Hassan, Wail. *Tayeb Saleh: Ideology and the Craft of Fiction*. New York: Syracuse U P, 2003.
- Hogan, Patrick Colm. *Colonialism and Cultural Identity*. Albany: State University of York Press, 2000.
- Kilgore, Tracy. "The Story Is Everything: The Path to Renewal in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*." Diss. East Tennessee State University, 2003.
- Makdisi, Saree. "The Empire Renarrated: *Season of Migration to the North* and the Reinvention of the Present." *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992): 804-820.
- Owens, Louis. *Other Destinies: Understanding the American Indian Novel*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.
- Ruppert, James. "No Boundaries, Only Transitions: *Ceremony*." Chavkin 175-191.
- Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.
- . *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.
- Salaita, Steven. *The Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse U P, 2006.
- Salih, Tayeb. *Season of Migration to the North*. Trans. Denys Johnson-Davies. New York: Michael Kesend, Ltd, 1989.
- Salyer, Gregory. *Leslie Marmon Silko*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997.
- Shaheen, Mohammad. "Tayeb Salih and Conrad." *Comparative Literature Studies* 22:1 (1985): 156-171.
- Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. New York: Penguin, 1977.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Cary Nelson & Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. 271-313.
- Velie, Alan R. *Four American Indian Literary Masters*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982.
- Wilentz, Gay. *Healing Narratives: Women Writers Curing Cultural Dis-ease*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000.

Winsbro, Bonnie. *Supernatural Forces*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

SHADI NEIMNEH is an Assistant Professor of Literature and Cultural Studies in the English Department at Hashemite University, Jordan. He received his Ph.D. in 2011 from Oklahoma University, USA. His research interests include, among others, South African Apartheid Literature, Harlem Renaissance Literature, and European Modernism. He has published numerous articles in international journals in Canada and currently has several articles under review with international journals in the USA.