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Hybridity, Assimilation, and Acculturation in Chinua Achebe's "No Longer at Ease," Jamaica Kincaid's "Lucy," and Tayeb Salih's "Season of the Migration to the North": A comparative Analysis (3).

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ABSTRACT

This Article aims to analyze the representation of hybridity, assimilation, and acculturation as depicted in Salih's novel, Season of Migration to the North. Put simply, it analyzes the novel through the lens of postcolonial theorist perspectives. Salih denounces the moral degradation of white males in colonial cultures due to the significant impact of Europeans on cultural, religious, and societal aspects. The work encompasses various significant themes from a post-colonial standpoint. The study examines cultural conflict, encompassing the dynamics between the colonizer and the colonized male and female, and the response of a post-colonial individual to acculturation and integration into a new culture. In other words, this study explores hybridity and the Self's identity quest in Season of Migration to the North. It also investigates Tayeb Salih's ambivalence and mimicry in light of hybridity's diverse interpretations.

1. Introduction

In a 1980 lecture at the American University of Beirut, Salih discussed how his 1966 novel Season of Migration to the North reinterpreted the traditional East/West dynamic as mostly defined by conflict. Salih voiced skepticism about romanticized depictions of East-West concord. He underlined that in the postcolonial era, the ideas of east and west—which were reinforced and maintained by European colonial communication for centuries—remain as ideological frameworks based on cultural exclusivity and disparities.

Salih's postcolonial Sudanese novel illustrates the tension between traditional and developing sociocultural norms, which supports the continuous east-west conflict within the Wad Hamid village outside of Khartoum. Through the psychological and epistemological difficulties that hybrid protagonists encounter, which in turn impact the novel's plot, this study investigates how the east-west struggle is expressed in Season of Migration to the North. By converting political processes into interpersonal relationships, the book Season of Migration to the North skillfully captures the anguish brought on by peripheral modernity (Parry 72). Typically considered a leading example of global modernism, Season of Migration to the North is persuasively analyzed by Patke. This research aims to determine.

Conrad and Salih both use literature as a tool to overcome different cultural and imperial barriers. Both Season of Migration to the North and Heart of Darkness explore hybrid identities and

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the difficulties faced by people who identify as "in-between-groups" or "mixed-race" and have suffered trauma, even though they were born in a particular place and are currently living in exile. The characters are trapped in a variety of cultural and geographical settings. Due to their displacement, marginalization, and alienation in places that are tense and unfamiliar, these people have mixed identities, contradictory viewpoints, and mimic behaviors. This phenomena is best shown by the Season of Migration to the North.

The protagonist, Mustafa Sa'eed, and the narrator can be classified as hybrid characters due to their prolonged periods of separation from their homelands, which have significantly influenced their self-perceptions and identities. In Sudan and England, they have integrated and capitalized on their foreignness. Sa'eed preserved his life in England in the rectangular chamber in Wad Hamid, as it was crucial to him up till now, he did not align with his rural lifestyle. He crafted orientalist narratives centered around his native land and early years for his English romantic partners. Salih stated that when lying on his bed at night, he would extend his hand out of the window and aimlessly interact with the Nile waters until he fell asleep. During siesta time, his country was abundant with elephants, lions, and crocodiles. Nevertheless, the narrator, feeling uncomfortable due to his separation from Wad Hamid, possesses a strong desire to find a sense of belonging and purpose in Sudan. In the study, Season of Migration to the North will be analyzed beyond simply depicting hybridity as a combination of cultural identities or a personal struggle resulting from cultural clashes. In the initial portion of this composition, the utilization of Bhabha's hybridity theory is employed to examine the character of Sa'eed and the use of decentered and ambivalent formal techniques within the novel. Subsequently, the narrator's cultural identity transforms as he acquires a deeper understanding of Sa'eed. This study demonstrates the applicability of Bhabha's concept in examining hybrid readerly experiences, such as the narrator's role as Sa'eed's embedded reader. Hybridity embodies the process of introspection and subjective metamorphosis resulting from interpersonal encounters, hence fostering individual autonomy.

2. METHOD

The opening of Season of Migration to the North exemplifies its formal hybridity. The unidentified protagonist makes his way back to Wad Hamid, his place of origin near Khartoum, following a period of seven years spent overseas, during which three of those years were dedicated to exploring the life of a lesser-known English poet (9). Within the settlement, he comes upon Mustafa Sa'eed, a Khartoum native who had predominantly resided overseas and had committed the act of murdering three ladies he had been acquainted with. The individual in question was sentenced to a seven-year term for the homicide of his spouse, Jean Morris, an Englishwoman. Ultimately, he obtained a property in Wad Hamid and entered into matrimony with a woman from the area. Informally, he guides the village management regarding agriculture, economics, and engineering.

The novel, Season of Migration to the North, commences with a dichotomy between two narrators, namely Sa'eed and the narrator, as well as two distinct timelines, namely Sa'eed's past and the narrator's present. Consequently, the events of the novel converge into a hybrid narrative structure. The self-narration of Sa'eed is complicated and disrupted by multiple factors. The primary narrative techniques of the work are intricately linked to the anonymous narrator's introspection and psychological struggles. Critics concur that Mustafa Sa'eed and the narrator exhibit resemblances, with certain individuals characterizing their tumultuous connection as the central theme and framework of the narrative. Patke states that Salih's work focuses on an interstitial element, where the first element is observed through the slow awakening of the second element 84). Patke employs the terms first and second to make allusions to Sa'eed and the narrator. However, his overarching assertion on the novel's inherent commitment to an interstitial element also encompasses subjective realms wherein these characters engage in introspection and evaluate their personal encounters. According to AlHalool, the narrator's encounter with Sa'eed's Freudian uncanny prompts him to

recognize his own lack of familiarity (36). Velez employs a phenomenological methodology to observe that Sa'eed's existence significantly disrupts the narrator's connection to their immediate surroundings 'place-sense' and their sense of self, which is influenced by external concepts of culture and nationhood 'place-relation' (192). The narrator seeks to redefine his 'place-relation' and break free from the imperial notions of space, such as mapping, schooling, and communal conceptions of identity, by exploring vast expanses like the desert and river (191).

About, Season of Migration to the North, Geesey provides an extensive analysis of hybridity. In the narrative, Geesey briefly alludes to Bhabha's concept of hybridity and its ramifications for postcolonial studies. However, her primary emphasis lies in the fields of botany and animal genetics as a means to elucidate the concept of hybridity. The observer interprets Sa'eed's proclivity for destruction as indicative of biological hybridity and sterility. Sa'eed has been unable to overcome the adverse consequences of colonial cultural influence and embodies the harmful and reactive outcomes of hybridity (130). Geesey observes that the narrator initially holds the belief, if slightly inaccurately, that his ancestral connection to Wad Hamid will endure despite residing overseas for an extended period. However, his interaction with Sa'eed prompts him to come closer to recognizing his hybrid nature and infertility. Geesey observes that as the narrator grows more conscious of his own infertility, due to the futility of his poetry, his bureaucratic occupation, and his inability to articulate his romantic attraction towards Hosna Bint Mahmoud, Sa'eed also enlightens him on the generative potential of hybridity. The narrator is introduced to the grafted lemon-orange tree by Sa'eed. He posits that, although the real hybrid may or may not possess fertility and fruit production, the process of grafting has the potential to yield a robust tree with dual output (133).

An in-depth analysis of Season of Migration to the North as a sequence of occurrences that reinstates the hybrid subject's autonomy provides a more comprehensive understanding of Salih's intricate depiction of hybridity. In the study of hybridity in the postcolonial globalized world, Bhabha's theory of hybridity posits that individuals are created 'in-between' or 'exceeding' the sum of the parts of difference. This theory is considered both theoretically novel and politically significant. This premise suggests two concepts. Hybridity is a highly fruitful and dynamic subject matter as it encompasses the production of cultural subjects. Furthermore, the hybrid subject's recognition of the inherent duality presents in all cultural forms and experiences, as suggested by her analysis of the lemon-orange tree, does not inherently render the hybrid fertile. Rather, it is the phenomenological 'excess' of these forms that confer fertility upon the hybrid. Bhabha's hybrid, characterized by indeterminacy and the absence of cultural dualities, emerges as a result of conflict. Bhabha's cultural hybridity theory posits that culture initiates its predominance at cultural homogeneity boundaries, such as the eastern and western regions (5). The individual's perspective posits that communal form distinctions serve as productive and genuine platforms for the expression of cultural identity. The hybrid protagonists in Season of Migration to the North are prominently visible in the novel's geography due to their dual culture. The narratorial voice's authority and the mystery surrounding Mustafa Sa'eed's extraordinary and intricate life-story serve as formal indications that hybrid has narratives to share due to their active involvement or being subjected to critical examination. According to the narrator, the act of recalling his village evoked a sense of childhood. Observing its own reflection for the initial instance (4). The initiation of the narrator's self-exploration in this particular juncture of the tale serves to establish his hybrid nature.

According to Bhabha, hybridity is a theoretical and political position that does not assert either origin or transcendence. Salih's work does not explicitly mention Wad Hamid's colonial history or envision its postcolonial future. Instead, it portrays hybridity as the unfiltered present of the tale. The novel's deliberate omission of any mention of the narrator's early life in Wad Hamid, despite the presence of his family, serves to emphasize that the narrative does not rely on "narratives of originary and initial subjectivities" (1). While Sa'eed's early recollections provide some insight, his consistent and frequently unwarranted absence of emotional connection to others and circumstances indicates a deficiency in a fundamental and cohesive sense of self.

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Sa'eed asserts that he consistently maintained a resolute demeanor, unaffected by any external forces (22). The individual perceives world geography as a checkerboard and characterizes their excursions as oscillating between mountain summits, driven by a superficial desire for exploration. He views cities as summits rather than entire worlds. While acknowledging the importance of attachment in the lives of others, his level of detachment is unparalleled. According to Murad, Sa'eed's emotional detachment contributes to the overall enjoyment of foreign living. Sa'eed informs the narrator that he chose to reside in Wad Hamid in order to restore a feeling of rightful inclusion: "I am aware of what is morally correct: my endeavor to live in this village with these content individuals" (67). Sa'eed's feelings towards detachment, irrationality, lack of knowledge, and unhappiness clash with his recognition of attachment. Sa'eed self-identifies as "no Othello" due to the absence of causal connections in his narrative and his lack of concern or emotional connection. He possesses neither virtue nor vice. The actions of the individual in question fail to establish precedents or promote dramatic, poetic, or political justice.

Nevertheless, Sa'eed's complete apathy results in excruciating and frequently lethal feelings of isolation. In his trial testimony, Sa'eed asserts that he held the belief that the lawyers were referring to an individual who was not of any significance to him (31). The contrast between Sa'eed's affinity for anonymity, detached omnipresence, and affiliation with the sea and his underlying darkness is evident. During his voyage, he experienced a profound connection with the vast and abyssal ocean. He derived immense pleasure from the solitude he felt, both before and behind him, as he gazed into the vastness of infinity or oblivion (27). The unrestricted independence of his mother resulted in his insignificance, as well as feelings of shame, isolation, and bereavement (159). Sa'eed's journal contains instances of skepticism regarding the notion of radical liberation from conditioning and superstition. “[we] teach people in order to open up their minds and release their captive powers. But we cannot predict the result. Freedom – we free their minds from superstition. We give the people the keys of the future to act therein as they wish”. (151)

The critique of ultimate freedom in Season of Migration to the North reevaluates the boundless subjective possibilities of the hybrid. The novel showcases Sa'eed's amalgamation of several cultures and demonstrates that mobility does not equate to liberation. The fractured dynamic between Sa'eed and himself is a hindrance to his autonomy.

Salih's novel makes a distinctive contribution to the examination of hybridity by highlighting the potential connection between hybridity and introspection in readers. It also demonstrates that hybridity can serve as a reservoir of resilience when an individual's resources are reorganized. The reorganization of the story aids the narrator in developing a heightened consciousness of his hybridity. Sa'eed consistently engages in self-destruction due to his failure to implement self-alignment strategies and his inability to harness the prominence and agency of his hybridity. The protagonist's frequent and symbolic experiences with death in the novel demonstrate that his deep sense of detachment from his own identity renders every endeavor to uncover his own self a form of self-destruction. During his trial, Sa'eed refers to himself as a "corpse" or a conduit of mortality (32) and expresses a desire for the falsehood, in which he is himself, to be eradicated (32). Sa'eed, apart from committing the murders of his wife and three women, seems to have perished by drowning in the Nile. Murder and suicide are indicative of an individual's active involvement in their own departure. Sheila Greenwood, one of his romantic partners, tragically took her own life. Sa'eed asserts that she entered his bedroom as a pure and undefiled virgin, but upon leaving, she had the seeds of self-destruction inside her (35). Wad Hamid is haunted by the seed of doom that Sa'eed placed in the village. The introduction of murder to Hamlet, where no one ever kills anyone, resulted in a transformation of Bint Mahmoud (140). Death enables Sa'eed to explore his own nature and establish connections with others, with whom he typically shares a profound and unsettling bond. Sa'eed reflects on death while engaging in a sexual encounter with Jean Morris. He experiences the feeling that, in a moment that transcends time, he has embraced the goddess of Death and observed

Hell through her eyes (153). On these critical occasions with fellow individuals, he becomes aware of his own insignificance, the veracity underlying his falsehoods.

Sa'eed formulates a perplexing enigma and anticipates its revelation, akin to a significant historical artifact, as he grapples with the inability to embrace his fragmented sense of self to be immortalized (154). The process of deciphering commences with the convergence of the storyteller and Sa'eed. While Sa'eed and the narrator share similar backgrounds, the tale mostly centers around Sa'eed's hybridity and his ability to adapt. Bhabha asserts that the hybrid character lacks both origin and transcendence. Sa'eed's endeavors to surpass his hybrid state are evidently unsuccessful, frequently resulting in catastrophic outcomes. According to Bhabha, the narrator's incapacity to go beyond his mixed state indicates an emerging that goes beyond him in order to return to the current political reality with a mindset of revision and reconstruction (3). The narrator in Season of Migration to the North is fully engaged and cognizant of his environment. As previously stated, the novel does not center on the historical background or future prospects of Wad Hamid or the narrator. The final episode has the narrator accompanying Sa'eed as he navigates the Nile in a northerly direction in search of significance. Upon arriving at the midpoint between the northern and southern regions, he exerts great effort to remain floating in a vast expanse of water, feeling incapable of progressing further or turning back (167). Upon experiencing a state of utter immobility, he realizes that existence has been devoid of authentic decision-making. He returns to the shore and sustains life. He revisits the current era of the novel within the political context of Wad Hamid's postcolonial present, rather than envisioning a more optimistic future.

In contrast to Sa'eed, the narrator does not engage in the recurring pattern of agency privilege leading to self-destruction. The novel posits that the protagonist's hybridity encompasses the processes of knowledge destruction, revision, and reconstruction, wherein none of these processes serve as foundations for cultural or subjective authority. Bhabha is concerned about the persistent danger in his process of articulation. Bhabha suggests that institutional culture might manifest (35). The narrator's inability to maintain a consistent or decisive idea regarding home or identity until the conclusion can be attributed to his persistent interruptions and fluctuations in his personal conceptualizations of these concepts. The text lacks a clear and logical progression in the narrator's comprehension of himself and his surroundings, such as a shift from ignorance to enlightenment or immaturity to maturity. In contrast, the text employs realist, humanist, and sublime storytelling techniques in order to convey the narrator's rationality and personal articulation. The new style employed in the novel portrays the narrator's internal transformation as a "casual flight" (168) through various narrative strategies and ideological shifts. This essay examines the epistemological concept of the narrator, as well as the processes of rupture and reinstitution that occur during self-alignment.

In the initial pages of the novel, the narrator perceives his community as being stable, continuous, and integral (5). Upon his arrival back in his town, the narrator experiences a profound sense of belonging, like to a palm tree, rather than a storm-swept feather. He perceived himself as a being with a distinct background, roots, and purpose. Additionally, he appears to endorse universalist and humanist perspectives regarding the nature of mankind. When inquisitive peasants inquire about life in Europe, he responds with assurance that: “Europeans were, with minor differences, exactly like them, marrying and bringing up their children following principles and traditions, that they had good morals and were in general good people. [...] [J]ust like us they are born and die”. (3)

The character of the narrator can be identified as a liberal humanism idealist who perceives colonialism as a "melodramatic act which with the passage of time will change into a mighty myth" (60). He had the belief that numerous territories need to be explored, fruits need to be harvested, books need to be read, and blank pages in the chronicles of existence need to be written with colorful sentences in a bold manner (5), showcasing his cosmopolitan nature.

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According to Geesey, the narrator's initial impressionistic feeling of being firmly established in Wad Hamid stems from his fear of being a hybrid and his difficulty in defining his own identity. Nevertheless, the narrator's tendency to idealize his cultural heritage and declare his liberal convictions with confidence indicates that he is not experiencing confusion or anxiety regarding his hybrid identity (130). Despite his desire to remain grounded, he is aware that his hybridity grants him perspectives and characteristics that are absent among the residents of Wad Hamid. The novel presents the narrator as assuming a passive role until the end, so diminishing the plausibility of Geesey's assertion that his attempt to reassure himself contributed to his feeling of being rooted. The narrator's admission at the end of the novel, "all [his] life [he] had not chosen, had not decided" (Salih 168), indicates that he did not deliberately adopt a certain emotional response to his feelings of being rootless. The narrator's initial sense of contentment regarding his village origins can be interpreted as indicative of his naivety and unexplored hybridity. The individual's conviction in the capacity for an unwavering sense of self during a period of seven years spent outside demonstrates the harmonious coexistence of his indigenous background and cosmopolitan outlook, as well as the harmonious integration of his 'eastern' and 'western' characteristics.

At the beginning of the story, the narrator establishes a dichotomy based on knowledge between the indigenous people of Wad Hamid and the hybrid individuals, such as himself and Sa'eed. Wad Hamid has a shortage of technological skills and knowledge. According to Salih Mustafa Sa'eed asserts that the acquisition of technology is essential for the progress of Wad Hamid (9). This implies that both Sa'eed and the narrator are responsible for bringing knowledge to these locations. Sa'eed predicted that Wad Hamid's character would serve as a barrier between his personal history and the current. He successfully integrated into a life where every moment appeared ordinary and insignificant due to the absence of his clandestine existence in the village. The grandfather of the narrator, who consistently opposes both cosmopolitan protagonists, is characterized by his lack of secrets (11). Non-natives of Wad Hamid are familiar with clandestine narratives. The initial account highlights Mustafa Sa'eed as the exclusive source of logical understanding, resembling a “small girdle of cold, fresh breeze” that “comes from the direction of the river like a half-truth” and intrudes into “the meridional heat of the desert [...] a world filled with lies” (69). The narrator's unwavering confidence in his unwavering identity implies that he believes that his diligent pursuit of measurable knowledge through a dissertation and his unquestioning rest on his family's bed, content with his identity, are mutually reinforcing. He believes that his identity can be either one or both, depending on his circumstances.

Salih's novel, Season of Migration to the North, challenges the romantic notion of east-west cooperative complementarity, revealing the ongoing struggle in the east-west relationship. The novel's inquiries regarding knowledge, primarily conveyed through the narrator's endeavors to comprehend himself and his culture, obscure the distinction between England as a producer of information and Wad Hamid as a seeker of knowledge. During this epistemic shift, the narrator starts to question the position of Mustafa Sa'eed as the protector of Wad Hamid's rationality. As Sa'eed becomes intoxicated and recites English poetry, the narrator believes that the guys gathered in that room are not real but rather an illusion (15). Upon witnessing Sa'eed's lack of reality, the narrator expresses doubt about his own actuality: “he had said that he was a lie, so was I also a lie? I am from here – is not this reality enough?” (49). As the narrator struggles with his perceptions' illusoriness, life in local realities becomes clearer to him: “No fog separates them from me this time, for I am coming from Khartoum only, after an absence of no more than seven months. I see them with a matter-of-fact eye” (63). This implies that the narrator now sees his village as it is, without his romantic presumptions about it and his dual identity. This “matter of fact” vision comes with the knowledge that his earlier conceptions and relationship with his town were precarious, if not erroneous, and that its core is unknown, even unknowable. After a series of epistemic disruptions frustrates the narrator, he concludes that he “had lost the war because [he] did not know” (134).

Upon his return from Sa'eed's residence during the nighttime, the narrator observes his village amongst the vast and obscured darkness. This observation might be seen as a consequence of the narrator's chat with Sa'eed, during which he divulged his previous existence. Curiously, the narrator's seeming familiarity with his community is juxtaposed with his state of isolation:

I know this village street by street, house by house [...] I know who inhabit these graves, both those who died before my father was born and those who have died since my birth. [...] I have known the fields too. [...] All this I had been a witness to ever since I opened my eyes on life, yet I had never seen the village at such a late hour of the night. (47–48)

The repetition of the word 'know' serves to illustrate the diminishing community knowledge of the narrator. In this context, the term 'witness' is not associated with action. The aforementioned phrases attribute agency to the act of 'seeing', which is lacking in such an agency. The paradoxical nature of the narrator's clarity-in-darkness demonstrates that these revisions of knowledge rely on the experiential capacity to acquire knowledge without rational or causal means. Upon witnessing Sa'eed's life, the narrator becomes aware of the limitations of his self-confidence and subsequently alters his village knowledge.

Rajiva states that “agency [is] a necessarily lacunal aspect” of Season of Migration to the North (687). Based on Coole and Frost, Rajiva proposes “non-anthropocentric, new materialist concepts of experience” that question our present assumptions about the “normative sense of the human and its beliefs about human agency” (689). He uses 'emergence theory' to study Season of Migration to the North, identifying causation without acknowledging theoretical or polemical precursors and repercussions. Rajiva claims that Salih's novel uses doubling to provide the “promise of a causal relationship between characters or ‘parts’ of the postcolonial environment,” yet its occurrences are unexpected and not fully random (690). Due to its seeming absence of causation, the novel lends itself to a new materialist interpretation. Denying agency in the novel is to disregard its subtle subversions by its shifting formal techniques. In the quoted lines, the move from 'witnessing' to 'seeing' is a 'displacement' that gives the narrator a supplementary space of contingency. The “individuation of the agent” “emerges as an effect of the intersubjective – as the return of the subject as agent” (Bhabha 185). After his 'intersubjective' meeting with Sa'eed, the narrator attempts to 'return' to his life. After realizing his resemblance to Sa'eed, the narrator becomes determined not to be him.

In his view, hybridity is not a “split of dual productivity” (Geesey 133) the narrator adopts during his long stay in England and exploits favorably after meeting Sa'eed. The narrator's hybridity questions his knowledge's finality and highlights the foreignness of Sa'eed, his town, and himself. The narrator feels distant from himself when he discovers he resembles Sa'eed, who replaced him in the community and may be destined for the same violent end. At the end of the story, he eventually identifies himself in Sa'eed's rectangle room mirror, capturing the narrator's path from delusion and misrecognition to harsh, almost appalling self-reflection:

The light exploded on my eyes and out of the darkness there emerged a frowning face with pursed lips that I knew but could not place. I moved towards it with hate in my heart. It was my adversary, Mustafa Sa’eed. The face grew a neck, the neck two shoulders and a chest, then a trunk and two legs, and I found myself standing face to face with myself. This is not Mustafa Sa’eed – it’s a picture of me frowning at my face from a mirror (135).

Subsequently, the narrator is plagued by Sa'eed's recollections, causing him to become infuriated. Recognizing the futility of utilizing Sa'eed's memories and possessions, he embarks on a journey to the Nile to "extinguish [his] fury through swimming" (166). He transforms as he drifts aimlessly, unclothed, and submerged to his neck in the river.

Then my mind cleared and my relationship to the river was determined. Though floating on the water, I was not part of it. I thought if I died at that moment, I would have died as I was born –

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without any volition of mine. All my life I had not chosen, had not decided. Now I am making a decision. I choose life. (168)

The concluding scene of Season of Migration to the North is noteworthy due to the narrator's ability to regain agency without surpassing his evidently flawed imaginative and emotive faculties. Instead, his encounter with the river entails the utilization of the same affective and sensual capacities that influenced his initial sentimental perceptions of his village. The novel's final scene commences with the narrator's perception of touch and emotion: “When I first touched the cold water I felt a shudder go through me, then the shudder was transformed into a sensation of wakefulness” (166). After that, the narrator repeatedly mentions “numbness” and “force” (167), suggesting that the river experience is shaped by unexplained emotive intensities. Thus, the narrator recovers agency by being aware of his own sensual resources, which can be exciting, provocative, and redemptive. Siddiq concludes that the narrator undergoes “individuation”—a “broadening of consciousness to realize the bipolar potentialities of the self”—at the end of his journey. This expanded consciousness, which permits the self's inherent resources to be realized, is best illustrated by the narrator's dialectical description of the river: "I was conscious and not conscious. Was I asleep or awake? Was I alive or dead?” (167). The instability in his feelings shows that he is suffering from an identity crisis. he seeks self-realization.

The narrator does not define himself or the river in this final scene. Even as Sa'eed's memories and flashes plague him, the narrator slowly falls into his remaining inner resources—plain awareness and sensations. At this final point, the narrator floats not just in the Nile but also along the shores of his own being, pushing the frontiers of cognition and apperception. His intellectual capabilities are completely suspended: “The movements of my body settled down into restful harmony with the forces of the river. I stopped thinking as I walked through the water (167). He then states he was “aware of the coldness of the water on [his] body” (168). This “awareness” of his sensation matches his autobiographical narrative's self-consciousness and implies a potential of feeling or not feeling without thought. Season of Migration to the North supports 'feeling' as the aesthetic centrality of the self and posits that it might be a locus of human agency strong enough to be the center of the human subject and the driving force of human volition. The narrator recovers his agency during a banal craving for a cigarette and a sudden insight into the singularity and fortuity of birth and death. He recognizes his vulnerability to life but knows there is a way to feel not part of it all, of being in the water and “not [being] part of it” (168). Hence, the protagonist acquires agency through the presence of his residual consciousness, characterized by its thoughtless and sensual nature. Additionally, he becomes aware that even his fundamental internal resources, which serve as his pathway to agency, are not fixed and can be reorganized to meet his needs. While Salih does not advocate for reconciliation between the eastern and western regions, Season of Migration to the North implies that specific individual perspectives on postcolonial conflict may temporarily equip one to confront its inescapable nature. The novel concludes with a sense of agency restoration, suggesting that the ego can liberate itself from subjective constructs that are inherently influenced by historical and political factors.

It appears that center-periphery encounters caused Salih's characters' hybrid and split identities. The unidentified narrator and Mustapha feel isolated and culturally hybrid. Neither the hybridizing process nor the characters' return to Africa has made them foreigners and alienated in the English metropolis or at home. Bhabha's theories of 'hybridity', 'mimicry', 'ambivalence' and 'in-betweenness' are used to examine Salih's narrative's cultural hybridity. In doing so, Salih's ambivalent text opens a space where self and others are erased and hybridity remains the (post)colonial subjects' identity, "rejecting cultural paradigms of purity, singularity, and alterity". (Geesey 130)

An analysis of cultural hybridity in Season of Migration to the North can be effectively conducted by examining the biographical accounts of the nameless narrator and Mustapha Sa'eed, two characters who possess hybrid characteristics. Mustapha, originally from Sudan, received his education at a colonial school before relocating to Egypt and encountering Europeans. Following his

departure from Egypt, Mustapha obtains his doctoral degree and assumes the role of an economics professor at Oxford. During his time in England, Mustapha familiarizes himself with the pubs of Chelsea, the clubs of Hampstead, and the gatherings of Bloomsbury. "And he would read poetry, talk of religion and philosophy, discuss paintings" (30). Known as the "black Englishman" (52), Mustafa Sa'eed was the first Sudanese to marry an English woman and the first European of any kind. He married in England and received British nationality (55-56). Displacement in England and considerable contact with white women have created Mustapha a man of two cultures. Due to his Arab African ancestry and residence in the urban center, Mustapha was heavily influenced by that culture. Mustapha loses his natural identity and adopts many aliases. As will be shown later, Mustapha's hybrid identity causes him to suffer traumatic experiences and self-doubt, especially after returning to his native village, like Conrad's narrative.

The nameless narrator is culturally hybrid like Mustapha. After seven years in England and a PhD in English poetry, the unidentified narrator returns to Sudan. The nameless narrator's Western education and travels reflect the Western cultural influence on him and his native identity. The anonymous narrator, a product of two cultures and experiences, is a wonderful example of cultural hybridity in Season of Migration to the North. Despite being influenced by cultural contact between England and the Sudan, the nameless narrator first rejects this reality (Geesey 129). Salih's narrative is full of examples of the anonymous narrator's rejection of cultural hybridity and insistence on his and his people's purity. One paragraph suggests the narrator denies his cultural hybridity:

I heard the cooing of the turtledove, and I looked through the window at the palm tree standing in the courtyard of our house and I knew that all was still well with life. 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)

During his time in England, the narrator seems to reject his hybridity and European culture. The narrator compares the "palm tree" to his "sense of self" to explain this idea. More importantly, the narrator seeks to prove he has a cultural heritage, and belonging, and is not uprooted. To demonstrate his connection to his hometown, "the narrator first takes his fixed role in the village of his ancestors, namely his grandfather's, for granted" (Stampfl 170). However, his feeling of belonging and attempts to reintegrate into his "pays natal" are disrupted by European colonial culture. After researching Mustapha's life, the narrator realizes his hybrid identity. As Geesey states, the initial reluctance of the narrator to recognize the impact of cultural contact between England and Sudan is evident. The narrator's comprehension of cultural contact and contamination between Sudan and its former colonial power is solely derived from the examination of Mustafa Sa'eed's life (129). Geesey's notes reveal the narrator's hybridity. After his exploration of Mustapha's account and meeting him, the narrator's hybridity is revealed. The narrator acknowledges his cultural hybridity at this point since he is "trapped" between two cultures and experiences. In one meeting with Mustapha, the latter makes assertions that go beyond the purity of cultures and identities, disproving the narrator's belief that identity is immutable. Mustapha tells the narrator that "some of the branches of this tree produce lemons, others oranges" while digging around a palm tree (15). Mustapha's statement shows cultural hybridity. Mustapha and the narrator have two cultures, identities, and spaces, like the tree that produces two fruits. Additionally, Mustapha's argument undermines the Western essentialist view of identities as fixed and changeless. As postcolonial philosophy suggests, identities are fragmented, with migration and exile as examples of hybrid identities resulting from colonial dislocation (Loomba 180). Salih's characters' movement, exile, and dislocation have fostered fragmented and mixed identities, resulting in the loss of pure identity and self. As with Mustapha and the narrator, hybridity has caused serious repercussions and conflicts within their "selves" to the point that they feel alienated, strange, and nonbelonging, which has led to their tragic ends and ongoing search for identity. Ambivalence, mimicry, and identity will be discussed in the following parts.

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Hosna, the native wife of Mustapha, exhibits cultural hybridity similar to the characters in Salih's works. She challenges African customs and patriarchal ideologies, indicating her exposure to Mustapha's Western modernism. This is evident in her refusal of Wad Rayyes's marriage proposal. Nevertheless, Wad Rayyes erupts into a fervent outburst of anger towards the narrator, asserting that she will marry him regardless of his words or actions (97). Both her father and her brothers have reached a consensus. The knowledge you acquire in school will not apply to your situation. In this village, the men are guardians of the women (97). Wad Rayyes's statement illustrates the phallocentric dominance of men in post-independence Sudanese culture, which Hosna, Mustafa's wife, [who] had become in some measure westernized through contact with him. Her murder of Wad Rayyes and her suicide can be read as an attempt to liberate her from Mustapha's frame of thinking, which supports women's struggle for survival and against "the extreme side of traditionalism" (Makdisi 819) embodied in Wad Rayyes. She has never moved, but her actions show cultural hybridity. Salih's characters are culturally hybrid, representing what Fanon calls black skin/white masks. They are African, but they adopt a Western mindset to account for the fact that colonial identities are constantly changing, especially in the postcolonial world. However, characters' hybrid identities and being pulled between two worlds have caused them to endure a horrific and unpleasant experience and psychological disruption.

Many issues link Season of Migration to the North to Heart of Darkness. Conrad's Marlow makes unsure and ambivalent statements in different contexts and toward different characters, evoking his perplexity and his conscious or unconscious tendency to erase language, culture, and civilization-based self/otherness borders. More intriguing is that his ambivalence between Africans and white people, especially in his desire for identification and his dark side as Kurtz, is expressed. Salih's narrative, like Conrad's, depicts African characters' "mixed feelings through essential dichotomies marking émigrés' lives…love-hate relationships, contradictions between self and other, native-alien clash of cultures, hybridity, alienation, and ultimate disillusionment" (Kumar 1). Salih's Mustapha and narrator demonstrate postcolonial subjects' ambivalence. Salih's characters' connections with each other and European men are ambivalent. To illustrate, consider the following paragraph from the novel's beginning, when the narrator returns from Europe and is asked two questions by his native hamlet. The peasants ask whether Europeans are like them or different. The narrator replied:

I told them [the villagers] that Europeans were, with minor differences, exactly like them, marrying and bringing up their children in accordance with principles and traditions, that they had good morals and were in general good people…just like us they are born and die, and in the journey from the cradle to the grave they dream dreams some of which come true and some of which are frustrated; that they fear the unknown, search for love and seek contentment in wife and child; that some are strong and some are weak… (3)

The passage above dissolves African-European divides. Thus, the narrator's attitude develops as he realizes that the construction of other people's Otherness and exclusion from the community of "selves" is unfounded and typical of essentialist thinking, which has no validity. Africans and Europeans are depicted similarly but slightly differently. This emphasizes the diverse nature of (post) colonial subjects, going beyond the essentialist view of identities as "selves" and "others". Ambivalence and hybridity in Salih's writing dispute the monolithic view of identities and emphasize that self and other identities are compatible. This argument emphasizes how others define the self. The Lacanian mirror image suggests that the self only realizes itself when it meets the other.

In a similar vein, Salih's text comprises multiple sections that exemplify its inherent ambiguity and inconsistent perspectives regarding the white man. The entirety of the narrative encompasses passages that substantiate this notion. In association to Mustapha, the narrator displays a perceived indifference towards Europeans and British colonizers in the subsequent excerpt:

I too had lived with them. But I had lived with them superficially neither loving nor hating them.… Over there is like here, neither better nor worse. But I am from here, just as the date palm standing in the courtyard of our house has grown in our house and not in anyone else's. The fact that they came to our land… Sooner or later they will leave our country just as many people throughout history left many countries. The railways, ships, hospitals, factories and schools will be ours and we'll speak their language without either a sense of guilt or a sense of gratitude. (49)

As before, the narrator is ambivalent and indifferent. The narrator's tendency to erase European-African barriers is striking. Indeed, similarities between the two are noted. As the passage shows, the narrator's attitude weakens "the conflict of cross-culture between the Arab African background of South and the new environment of the North" (Shaheen 163), in contrast to Mustapha's strong desire to avenge the white men's harm to Africa and Africans. Salih's writing is ambivalent, and the narrator's view of white conquerors is notable. Salih's text contains ambivalence. According to this statement, the narrator's assertion that "we will speak their [the white man's] language without either a sense of guilt or a sense of gratitude". This statement shows the narrator's contradiction to Mustapha, who has expressed concern over the European man's language as a threat to African language and identity. The above sentence shows the narrator's increased pride in his homeland. The remark "But I am from here" reflects the narrator's search for origin. As the following extract demonstrates, the narrator feels estranged from his original land and people:

I did not greet him [Mahjoub] and he did not turn to me but went on digging round the shoot. I remained standing, watching him. Then I lit a cigarette and held out the packet to him, but he refused with a shake of his head. I took my cares off to the trunk of a nearby date palm against which I rested my head. There is no room for me here. Why don't I pack up and go? Nothing astonishes these people. They take everything in their stride. They neither rejoice at a birth nor are saddened at a death (130).

In contrast to the previous sentence, where the narrator emphasizes that he is "from here" and belongs, this passage displays his concern over the divide between him and his "pays natal" and its inhabitants. This emphasizes the narrator's national isolation. The author attributes this feeling to his dislocation abroad, where he cannot "[feel] his…bonds with the…native land" (Dash 332). He also experiences a "psychic re-memberment" of "the triumph over the estranging sea" (Dash 332). Exile, estrangement, and alienation help the narrator distance himself from his own people, whose attitudes seem weird and uncaring. As "the narrator shares with [Mustapha] not only common experience in the North but also a similar fate in the South" (Shaheen 161), the narrator's affection for Mustapha is clear and important. Mustapha, who "was not a local man but a stranger who had come here five years ago" (2), feels alienated like the narrator. Mustapha and the narrator can be interpreted as doubles. Mustapha's ambivalence for the narrator shows his divided self. The storyteller is perceived as weird and spooky. Mustapha's "curiosity about the stranger involves both sympathy and antipathy- sympathy stemming from a shared sense of alienation, and antipathy deriving from a muted but real rivalry between them as native son and settler" (John and Taraweh 166). Indeed, Mustapha's ambivalence stems from his alienation in his native land due to his displacement. Salih's characters are ambivalent toward foreigners and each other, as shown by the narrator's relationship with Mustapha.

If Kurtz is "the best-known canonical example of the perils of going native" (Ashcroft, et al. 115), Mustapha Sa'eed, a postcolonial hero, and Ralph Singh from Naipaul are likely examples of going western and its dangers. Mustapha, the main character, will be analyzed to show his mimic acts, 'going western' that led to alienation, paranoid schizophrenia, and disillusionment, all of which are as visible and relevant as Kurtz's in Heart of Darkness. Season of Migration to the North has many passages that explain Mustapha's mimicking. For example, Mustapha's English proficiency is shown in the following excerpt:

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I covered the first stage in two years and in the intermediate school I discovered other mysteries, amongst which was the English language. My brain continued on, biting and cutting like the teeth of a plough. Words and sentences formed themselves before me as though they were mathematical equations; algebra and geometry as though they were verses of poetry. I viewed the vast world in the geography lessons as though it were a chess board. The intermediate was the furthest stage of education one could reach in those days… (22)

According to Salih the intermediate level of education was the most advanced one could attain during that time period. From the white colonists' perspective, "colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 86). The white man needs to mimic men because he believes they will bridge Europeans and the tribes they rule. One of the most obvious ironies of colonialism is that while binarism divides Europeans and Africans, colonial imitation erases these divisions. Mimicry leads to ambivalent and hybrid identities, contradicting the Manichean image of fixed and pure identities, and demonstrates "a desire to sever the ties with (self) in order to move towards (other)" (Kumar 2). Bhabha and Mustapha show that mimicry can threaten the white man and disrupt colonial discourse, which is a technique of resistance.

Mustapha, who was "raised through our English school" (Bhabha 86), views his mind as his "sole weapon" and "sharp knife inside [his] skull" (26). His command of the English language, part of his broad knowledge, has helped him avenge the English women he seduces and whose bodies he takes. Mustapha uses English to sexually conquer the West. Mustapha explains that English schools were established to teach to say "Yes" in their language. He also admits that he was an invader who injected poison into history (95). This shows Mustapha's growing awareness of colonial school and his mimicry and resemblance, which disrupts the colonizer's authority. As Bhabha states, the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed "the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed" (92). In this regard, Mustapha’s mimicry conveys the dialectics of power relationships as he becomes an observer above the whites.

Mustapha's English proficiency is evident in numerous situations, which accounts for his imitation and resemblance to white individuals. Mamur, a former classmate of Mustapha, showcases his understanding of the language and assimilation of the white man. "Mustapha was the privileged English child, and we held him in high regard and had high expectations for him" (52). The pronunciation of English words resembled that of Arabic, with the exception of the inability to combine two consonants without a vowel. However, Mustafa Sa'eed demonstrated the ability to articulate sentences in a manner reminiscent of his home language by contorting his mouth and protruding his lips. This would both elicit irritation and evoke admiration. With a mixture of admiration and contempt, we referred to him as "the black Englishman." (53)

In this event, Mustapha imitates and articulates English in a manner that resembles his mother tongue. Mamur says Mustapha's unique approach to studying English has led his classmates to refer to him as "the black Englishman". This moniker shows Mustapha's inclination towards 'going English' and his immersion in the English language. If one acknowledges the notion that language serves as a means to gain insight into another culture and facilitate comprehension of their civilization, it follows that Mustapha is unable to fully integrate into Western civilization. Currently, Mustapha's inclination towards adopting Western customs is apparent through his affinity for the English language and culture. As previously said, Mustapha's decision to embrace Western culture engenders a sense of paranoia, as he aspires to exert dominion over white women like a deity, thereby exposing his inherent self-deception. Upon becoming a native, Conrad's character Kurtz aspires to govern Africans and assume the role of their deity. The act of killing Africans and thereafter placing their heads around the Inner Station serves as a manifestation of his self-deception, paranoia, and megalomania.

The narrator dedicates seven years to studying English poetry in England, which enables him to become a remarkable mimic, despite the scarcity of textual proof of his 'going western'. Consequently, the narrator finds himself trapped between two distinct cultures, resulting in a loss of his sense of self and belonging. The narrator and Mustapha's identity loss has created psychological pain, especially after coming home. This emphasizes the pitfalls of 'going western'. "The natives [who] feel perpetually trapped and shipwrecked in their native land for the destined wretchedness making them embrace borrowed culture, language, fashion and style only to experience ever-prevailing and ever-tormenting ambivalence which destabilizes their lives in entirety" (Kumar 1). Divided between two experiences, the narrator and Mustapha become strangers to each other, their communities, and themselves. Mustapha feels like he has no place because he cannot reconnect with his roots in Africa or bond with England by developing a library of English books. Indeed, his sense of displacement, psychological distress, and loss of self-led to his terrible death in the Nile, evocative of Kurtz's in the Congo River.

As indicated, Mustapha's disappearance deepens the narrator's desire to identify with him and find his alter ego. This thought is articulated when the latter enters the former's chamber and sees his deformed face:

I opened a second window and a third, but all that came in from outside was more darkness. I struck a match. The light exploded on my eyes and out of the darkness there emerged a frowning face with pursed lips that I knew but could not place. I moved towards it with hate in my heart. It was my adversary Mustafa Sa'eed. The face grew a neck, the neck two shoulders and a chest, then a trunk and two legs, and I found myself standing face to face with myself. This is not Mustafa Sa'eed — it's a picture of me frowning at my face from a mirror. (135)

Before and throughout this event, the narrator demonstrates concern about Mustapha as a stranger and shows him aversion, dislike, animosity, and disassociation. Despite the ambivalence of affiliation, the narrator strives to distance himself from Mustapha, who has become a part of his life and thinking (50). The narrator's fascination with Mustapha and desire to know him are identity searches. In the prior chapter, the narrator enters Mustapha's room to find himself in the mirror. The narrator perceives Mustapha as his "alter ego reflecting the dark potential within the narrator himself" (John and Tataweh 165). Through Mustapha, the narrator searches for his soul. Before entering the room, the narrator's identification with Mustapha as his alter ego deepens as he drowns in the Nile. In the narrator's inquiry, 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? I too had lived with them…" (59). The narrator's ambivalence toward Mustapha is confusing. Despite trying to avoid Mustapha by labeling him a stranger, the narrator wishes to identify with him in a way that demonstrates their doubleness. The narrator's alter ego, Mustapha, absorbs Western civilization, embraces modernity, and seduces white women. These aspects indicate the narrator's wicked side, which he tries to mask by claiming local traditions, pure identity, and avoiding white women. The narrator, like Mustapha, is imprisoned between two cultures and experiences, dislocated, and psychologically disturbed, so he throws himself in the Nile. The narrator and Mustapha face a dreadful adventure and share the same destiny.

3. Results

In patriarchal cultures, men exploit and dominate women. Psychoanalysis has contended that this relationship is established in human awareness from childhood. Each man and woman have unique features that define their identity or personality. Males in patriarchal cultures must play with boys, whilst girls should play with girls. Thus, human beings create their identity from birth because their parents lead them. Thus, boys are educated to admire weaponry, rifles, and adventures, while girls play with dolls and read romance novels. Because of such, women are usually weak in civilizations governed by powerful men. This indicates colonizer-colonized interactions. Whiteman

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or colonizer is masculine, and colonized is female. Thus, the relationship between colonized and colonizer represents the relationship between man and woman, man and his world, and masculinity and femininity. Thus, apart from sexualization, there have always been clashes between civilizations of culture, religion, norms, and customs, even between colonized people who signified castration and colonists who raped African virgin lands in post-colonial times. In many ways, colonizer and colonized resemble man and woman in exploitation and power. White men dominated and exploited African savages throughout history. Brickmaker tells Marlow in Heart of Darkness, that anything can be done in this country. This is what I say. Nobody here can endanger your position and while you stand the climate outlasts them all. The danger is in Europe." Joseph Conrad condemns and presents imperial control in Africa. The white man raping the black woman makes the black man feel castrated sexually. Since they follow European conventions, customs, social standards, and culture, colonists feel free to behave as they like in Africa, while their freedom is restrained in their own continent. In Season of Migration to the North, Salih attacks Conrad and reverses European imperial mentality through Mustapha Said, portraying cultural castration and control. He feels free from colonial, cultural, and social limitations in his own society. The colonized has the same freedom to do what native society bans when he is abroad. Black guys utilize this moment to reclaim their masculinity from white men. In other words, Season of Migration to the North reverses European excesses in Africa.

Three options address the east-west civilization clash in response to acculturation and orient-culturalization. Progress and prosperity need to adapt all of European culture. By accepting an imperial civilizing mission, western culture, morals, education, and values are absorbed. Thus, colonial people can only grow and progress by adopting Western culture, ideas, and values. Second, reject European culture and civilization. Once the person chooses the first option, he/she loses his/her faith, culture, values, and tradition. Our independence from traditional, cultural, and religious values will progress life, but politics and religion will collide. Separating religion from politics affects the colonized. The last alternative is embracing only what will promote colonial civilization while keeping cultural identity and religious belief. The colonized will accept only progressive values and ideas while keeping their religious and cultural identity, replicating hybridity's ambiguity. Given these factors, east-west religion and cultural disputes in acculturation and orient-cultural transition are inevitable. Finally, man and woman, east and west, colonized and colonizer, and male and female are together. This relationship is about acculturation through multiple means, exploitation, and power, but specifically sexualizing clash of civilizations.

This research has explored hybridity, which is unconnected to ambivalence and imitation, and its centrality in Season of Migration to the North. This thesis claims that cultural and colonial connections and relocation to another space lead to hybrid identities in characters. Bhabha demonstrates that hybridity challenges the essentialist Manichean notion of identities based on self-other divisions. Hybridity merges these lines of demarcation into a Lacanian mirror image where the other defines the self, hence the complementarity of identities. However, Salih's characters' mixed and complicated identities have generated conflicts with themselves and their surroundings. Indeed, the characters' ambivalence deepens their sense of alienation, exile, and dislocation, which, as Mustapha reveals, leads to their loss of self and sad ends.

Bhabha's concept of the 'Third Space' as a subjective domain and his argument that “the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity” (37) are visible in the narrator's personal metamorphosis in Season of Migration to the North. The narrator's experiences turn knowledge, a repertory of cultural and intercultural symbols and meaning, into a personal domain of self-projections. In the novel, the narrator realizes that “[him]self-had become the world, no world exist[ed] outside of [him]” (134). The narrator's restructuring of his inner subjective resources reminds us of Bhabha's argument that cultural signs “can be appropriated, translated, re-historicized and read anew” (37). The narrator's reconsideration of his place in the world is one way that self may give its subjective cultural identity new dimensions.

Salih's Season of Migration to the North depicts postcolonial "otherness" in literature. Salih's flip of Conrad's Heart of Darkness challenges its imperial philosophy. Otherness seems to imply the oneness and purity of Self and Other since they are given two clear-cut attributes that neatly split them and negate any impact that one might have on the other in encounters and negotiations. However, during and after colonial and cultural contacts and migratory processes, the concept of Other/Otherness is considered inaccurate because identities, a complex concept, have been in constant flux, making hybridity the main attribute of colonial and postcolonial subjects. This theory contends that hybridity disproves binarism in the representation of "selves" and "others". However, a Lacanian mirror-image indicates that Self/Other is complimentary since only by encountering the Other does the Self know itself.

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