

The Aspects Of Cultural Hybridity In The Shadow Lines And Season Of Migration To The North

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Abstract

The issue of identity is one of the most crucial topics that has aroused debate and interest in post-colonial societies. Post-colonial thinkers and writers reread colonial literature to resist the colonial representations of the colonized people and cultures. Hence, it helped native people restore their identities away from the hybrid contaminated ones that resulted from being in contact with the colonizers. This study follows a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze Tayeb Salih's (1929-2009) *Season of Migration to the North* (1969) and Amitav Ghosh's (1956) *The Shadow Lines* (1988), which contribute to investigating the problem of hybrid identity culture and to examining the possibility of using hybridity as a key to cross-cultural relationships.

Keywords: hybridity, hybrid identity, colonial representations, colonialism, post-colonialism, acculturation

I. Introduction

Cultural hybridity is one of the critical topics that aroused great debates and arguments among thinkers, intellectuals, writers, and researchers in post-colonialism. Long ago, the east people underwent physical and spiritual exploitation. Also, they got tortured by colonizers who invaded their lands, stole their wealth, and humiliated their people (Loomba et al., 2005, p.5). Consequently, after the colonizers' physical departure, a group of intellectuals from third-world countries attempted to wipe out the undesirable effects of colonialism and overcome the consequences of alienation and diaspora of the people. As a result, post-colonial writers reread colonial literature to defy colonial representations of the east, reestablish indigenous identity, and avoid the impact of hybridity. Therefore, all of that led to the appearance of new post-colonial concepts such as hybridity,

displacement, and otherness (Ashcroft et al., 1989, p. 35-40).

The term (Hybridity) refers to the integration or mingling of cultural signs and practices from the colonized cultures. Furthermore, Hybrids are a mix of original cultures and adopted ones. However, they undergo a state of double vision of the social, political, and cultural changes caused by colonialism. Also, they live with no distinct identity as they are between two different cultures (Bhabha, 1994, p. 112). However, hybridity can have positive effects when the hybrids have the intention of both cultures for their societies' interests. As such, it will be supportive to overcome the negative colonial effects and negotiate in this in-between space, returning to the colonizer's viewpoint. Marginalized people can develop a double consciousness in cultural hybridization (Hall, 2020, p. 381). Accordingly,

the assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices are positive, enriching, dynamic, and oppressive.

Identity is an essential and controversial concept in the post-colonial era. There are multiple definitions of identity. Overall, identity is people's understanding of themselves, what sort of people they are, and how they treat others (Abrams & Hogg, 2006, p. 2). Also, identity describes how individuals and groups define themselves and how others could define them based on race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture (Deng, 1995). Therefore, identity can refer to the way individuals and groups realize themselves and think about how different they are from others in racial, ethnic, religious, language, and cultural aspects. In addition, before colonialism, Eastern societies had no issue with identity realization. In fact, original cultures and traditions are transmitted smoothly and naturally from one generation to another. During colonialism, the western invaders disturbed the stability to force their own cultures to affect the homogeneity of these societies. Additionally, they separate the people from their original identity to weaken their sense of belonging to easily control them and exploit their wealth (Almaswari et al., 2017).

Seasons of Migration to the North in 1969, by Al-Tayeb in 1966 and *The Shadow Lines* by Ghosh in 1988 have been released and the effects of colonialism are still being seen in the East. Moreover, the populace went through long stretches of imperial repression and degradation. Also, they were treated as undeveloped wild creatures. Unhappily, the imperial powers considered them either slaves, inferior beings, or even possessed animals. In addition, the native inhabitants of the conquered territories felt alienated in their own countries due to the unfair treatment and the conquerors' overpowering. The sense of alienation reached people's identities and beliefs. Unfortunately,

people were judged by their color, but it is not by their achievements or success. Indeed, they forget their past, their language. Furthermore, their religion would accept anything from their masters. They got bored with the myth of white superiority (Almaswari et al., 2017). Additionally, ordinary people, intellectuals, thinkers, and writers struggled to redefine themselves and reclaim their original identity and sense of national belonging to reshape humanity in themselves and expose it to the world. However, others admired the west and tended to adopt the western culture and lifestyle, such as the character of "Mustafa Saeed" in Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and the character of "Tridib" in Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*.

In post-colonial novels, Al-Tayeb Salih's (1929-2009) *Season of Migration to the North* (1966) and Amitav Ghosh's (1956-Now) in *The Shadow Lines* (1988) discussed the conflict between old native traditions and the new ones that have direct contact with the colonizing cultures, and the effects of hybridity on the original identity. *Season of Migration to the North* reflected the internal and external conflict that dominated the characters' lives and the final destiny due to the cultural conflict aroused by the hybrid culture they adopted in London. This conflict leaves some impact on the characters that have been in contact with and affected by Mustafa Saeed and his wife Hosna Bint Mahmoud (Salih, 1966). Ghosh in *The Shadow Lines*, on the other hand, reflected the conflict between different generations in post-colonial India by narrating a group of stories about the life and history of the narrator's family, in Dhaka before partition, in Calcutta in 1960s, and in London in 1970s (Ghosh, 1988).

The current study is crucial because it deals with the identity issue as one of the major topics that have aroused the interests of thinkers, scholars, and intellectuals. Also, it affected the lives of ordinary people for years since the

colonizers' departure. The problem of filling the gap between the culture and the traditions of the east and the west still exists. The study is also essential as it connects Salih's and Ghosh's novels. Although they belong to the east and have similar experiences with western cultures and traditions, the two writers belong to different cultures and adopt different ideologies.

The study aims to scrutinize the representations and consequences of hybridity on identity in the two novels since the identity crisis still exists even after long decades of independence. In addition, the study searches for how the problem of hybridity and dual identity can be a source of inevitable reconciliation and possible compromise between the cultures of the east and the west. Hence, that would turn the conflict into mutual contact and establish a positive connection between these two cultures where one culture integrates with the other so both cultures can flourish.

2. Literature Review

The concept of hybridity has been developed through postcolonial theories to explore and describe the forms of identity and culture in postcolonial societies. According to Bhabha (1994), hybridity refers to the emergence of new modes of culture and identity as effects of colonialism. These modes locate between the original colonized culture and the new one of the colonizer. Those in the third space are hybrids, having the qualities of both cultures, and left in a blurred and unstable state of double vision or double consciousness. They tend to protect their presence through a process of colonial mimicry in which they imitate the colonizers and lose their original identity (Bhabha, 1994).

Hall (2020) assumed that hybridity or double consciousness can be a privilege since it enables the marginalized culture groups, the hybrids, to see it from the inside and the outside.

Bhabha suggested that hybridity can overcome the colonial effects and return the colonizer's gaze (Bhabha, 1994, p.112). In Makdisi (1992) study entitled "The Empire Renarrated Season of Migration to the North and the Reinvention of the Present," the western culture dominates and causes some inevitable flaws and imperfections in the Eastern culture. It also creates hybrids with dual identities, living in the maze of dual identities. Makdisi (1992) also claimed that hybridity and dual identity negatively impacted the Eastern psyche and mindset. In addition, the hybrids live in a constant search for identity. For example, "Mustafa Saeed" thinks he can live with two identities, one in Sudan and the other in London. On the other hand, the narrator attempts to solve this hybridity problem by returning to his original roots and traditions and renouncing the new identity he adopted in the west.

Similarly, Phukan (2019), in her study entitled "Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines: A Postcolonial Novel*." assumes that Ila, in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, is a symbol of the rootless post-colonial Indians and that her conflict with the grandmother symbolizes the rejection of colonial effects of the Indian identity. The past colonial history has created an artificial cultural boundary that separates the characters from their roots in their countries of origin.

Wallada (2018) assumed that "Mustafa Saeed" is a Sudanese scholar who adopts the brutality and barbaric sexuality of the Western colonizers and uses them as recrimination and racial punishment against the Westerners for their crimes against and the exploitation of the African people. Also, Wallada (2018) explored the conflict between the East and the West.

Jaber (2012) stated that Mustafa Saeed is not merely an avenger who travels to Britain for retribution but rather than that, he is a colonizer who aims to become a citizen. In addition, he has undergone a profound transformation due to the

estern conquerors' influence. In fact, he was impacted by western culture, changing him from a victim to a victimizer.

El-Sawy (2018) stated that Mustafa Saeed develops a western identity and increases his English language absorbance and culture due to the western education and living for several years. In this way, Mustafa made the cultural dependence to link with colonial conquest since language is an ideological framework that forms and works for the dominant group's interests.

Zohdi (2018) revealed that Mustafa lost his original identity and acquired a hybrid as a result of absorbing western language and culture. Consequently, the actual identity loss caused Mustafa Saeed and the unknown narrator to suffer alienation, exile, and dislocation after coming back to their homeland and back in London. However, they have become neither eastern nor western. As such, their hybridity, inner struggle, and imitation of the west leave them in the third space between western culture and Oriental culture. Rima & Amani (2019) reported that "Mustafa Saeed" and the unknown narrator grew hybrid identities, which led to their ambivalence, sense of alienation, exile, and dislocation.

Najadat et al (2017) pointed out that hybridity, inner struggle, and imitation of Western development have made the narrator and "Mustafa Saeed" live in a third space: in culture between the Western culture and the oriental culture. They failed to combine their indigenous identity with the newly acquired one.

Al-Saidi (2018) assumed that both the narrator and Mustafa Saeed" suffered a crisis of identity in a post-colonial society, and they tried to solve this problem, each in their way. "Mustafa Saeed" uses his pleasures and interests to take revenge against the long history of western colonialism.

Season of Migration to the North and The Shadow Lines displayed the effects of colonialism on the cultures and traditions of two neighboring cities. The novels suggested that social, psychological, and cultural inferiority imposed on the people of these cities by colonizers. The novels also presented hybridity in different elements in the novel such as language, place, time, and identity.

Kasikhan & Kasikhan (2015) declared that the Bengali and English languages are being alternated by the narrator who was born in India but got an English education in The Shadow Lines. Therefore, speaking or writing in English in a nation where English is not the official language exhibits some degree of exclusion or hybrid identity. They also claimed that Ghosh thought of geographical and cultural boundaries as little more than abstract concepts. According to "Tridib," the narrator's uncle in The Shadow Lines, the world considers a "global village" of men and women where they should attempt to speak with one another, regardless of their culture and nationality.

Waghmare (2015) assumed that dual identity is introduced in The Shadow Lines as a direct result of hybridity. In addition, the state of duality can be seen in the contrast between "Thamma" and "Ila." "Thamma," who is the grandmother, is trapped and feels lost after being expelled from her home in Dhaka. At the same time, "Ila," a representative of dual identity, acts as a modern Indian and wants to be a free woman living on her own in London. She wants to free herself from what she calls "bloody culture."

Sati (2002) suggested establishing a world beyond the nation as the ideal form of existence. However, the novel points out the limitations, difficulties, and obstacles facing this establishment. "Tridib," who dreams of becoming a global citizen, eventually finds

himself without a homeland and meets his tragic end at the hands of a group of rioters.

To solve the problem of identity and belonging, Manzoor (2012) stated that Ghosh tries to construct an understanding of nationalism from a post-ideological perspective. "Tridib" and the narrator attempt to strain a broken world. Ghosh uses their relationship with "May" to connect the colonial center and the former colony. Ghosh tries to make reconciliation between the national and what has become international since the structure, the narration, as well as the incidents of the novel shows how time and place are temporary.

Previous studies show that the idea of cultural hybridity is a central issue in both *Season of Migration to the North* and *The Shadow Lines*. First, they reflected the effects of hybridity on the characters and their adoption of western-oriented beliefs. Their absorption of the western way of life and thinking makes them stand, as Bhabha (1994) claims, in the third distance between their original culture and the newly adopted one. Finally, they examined the representations and consequences of hybridity and colonialism in the character's *Season of Migration to the North* and *The Shadow Lines*.

3. Research methodology

This study follows a qualitative research approach. It explores the representations of hybridity and its impact on identity. According to Bhabha's theory of hybridity, the analytical diagrams discuss and examine the characteristics of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994). After reviewing the two novels, the current study uses 'Season' to refer to Altayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and 'Shadow' to Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*. Although "Saeed" has been spelled differently by critics and in the translation of the novel in 1969, the primary reference will be "Saeed" to render the coherence in the research.

3.1: Questions of the Study

The current study aims to answer several questions. The first question is how hybridity is represented in both Altayeb Salih's *Season* and Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow* through narrators and main characters. Therefore, the second question investigates the effects of hybridity on the identity of postcolonial people represented in the surfaces of the narrator and "Mustafa Saeed" in *Season* and notable characters like the narrator, "Tridib," and "Ila" in *Shadow*. Finally, the third question investigates how the two novels can play a role in overcoming the consequences of postcolonial hybridity and reconstructing the new identities of the colonized after decolonization.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Appearance of Hybridity in Sudan and India

Since the departure of the British colonizers from Sudan and India, the Sudanese and Indian societies have witnessed significant political and social changes. In Sudan, the conflict between Arab and African citizens came to the surface, with successive nationalist governments failing to eradicate the mutual feeling of hatred between the Arab and African

citizens (Suleiman, 2007). The Northern Sudanese are seen as masters, while the Sudanese of the South are dealt with as enslaved people and are not a part of Sudan. The demeaning of the southerners isolated them and separated their homeland. Thus, the southerners' identity and sense of belonging were harmfully influenced. Such an impact is conspicuous in any Season. "Mustafa Saeed" is one of the ill-treated because his mother "was a slave from the south, from the tribes of Zandi or Baria" (Salih, 1966, p. 49). The missing sense of belonging makes the place of "Mustafa Saeed" "like some mountain on which I had pitched my tent and in the morning, I had taken up the pegs, saddled my camel and continued my travels" (Salih, 1966, p. 29).

On the other hand, the partition of the Indian subcontinent left the region in a continuous violent confrontation between different ethnicities. Consequently, the Sudanese and the Indian post-colonial societies seem to have lost their homogeneity and stability with the appearance of three conflicting generations. The first generation resisted the colonizers and kept on to their original cultures and traditions. The second generation was born and grew up during colonization. This generation had direct contact with the Western culture, with many migrating to receive their education in the West. The third generation represents those born after colonialism. These three generations appear to be present in both *Season* and *Shadow*. These generations, who seem to have developed their own identities, are constantly trying to confirm or in a quest for identity. Unlike the first generation, the essence of the second and third generations was greatly affected and contaminated by the West. The first generation preserved their original identity, trying to keep it uncontaminated, whereas the other ages were trapped in a space between their actual identity and that of the colonizers. They have been uprooted and cut off from their roots. Their sense of self and true selves is unclear. Without a doubt,

they have created hybrid identities in a variety of ways. Both *Season* and *Shadow* have characters with mixed identities. These characters' hybrid and fragmented identities resulted from their contact with the West and being under colonization or suppression for ages. Therefore, inner and in-between-generation conflicts are prominent in both novels. In *Season*, the cultural clash and the quest for identity were reflected through the two main characters, Mustafa Saeed and the first-person narrator. This conflict has also influenced other characters, like Hosna Bint Mahmoud, Mustafa's wife (Salih: 1969). Similarly, the main themes in Ghosh's *Shadow* were cultural conflict and the search for identity. This conflict is reflected in the noticeable distinctions among the three generations in post-colonial India and the subsequent boundaries established due to the partition (Ghosh, 1988).

Hybridity and duality of identity are recognized at different levels in both novels, primarily through the actions of the characters among the central characters and their relations with their homelands. The principal characters in the two novels are suitable products of two conflicting cultures. Their migrations to the West and direct contact with Western people and culture uprooted them and created a cultural chasm that they worked hard to bridge. Some, like Ila and Mustafa, tried to cut themselves off from their roots in their early beginnings. Some, like "Tha'mma," Salih's narrator, and "Mustafa," after returning to Sudan, sought their origins among the ruins of colonialism. Others, like "Tridib" and "Salih's narrator," who seemed to be carrying what might be the message and expressing the thoughts of the writers, struggled to solve the crisis of identity and benefit from hybridity to reach an agreement between the East and the West and achieve cultural coexistence between the conflicting cultures, the Eastern and the Western cultures.

4.2 Hybridity in “Season of Migration to the North” and “The Shadow Lines”

According to Bhabha (1994), hybridity is an essential feature of colonial culture. Hybridity, which refers to the cultivation of new cultural forms that belong neither to the colonizer nor the colonized cultures. As such, it appeared as a direct result of colonization, close contact with the colonizers' culture, and the suppression imposed by the colonizers. The state of hybridity marginalizes the hybrids and leaves them alienated and dislocated in an in-between state of cultural hybridity. The hybrids are turned into strangers in their homeland and the new place of settlement. The colonizer's superiority led to the destruction of the colonized native identities.

Those hybrid characters prevail in both Salih's *Season* and Ghosh's *Shadow*. For

example, Mustafa Saeed" in *Season* is a hybrid who is perplexed about his identity. He identifies as African and Arabic English; "I'm like Othello—Arab—African" (Salih, 1966, p. 39). He considers himself English, Arab, and African at the same time. In Ghosh's *Shadow*, characters like the narrator, "Tridib," and "Ila" are hybrid characters, too.

4.2.1: Hybridity in Salih's *Season*

The effects of colonialism on the Sudanese people who migrated to London are apparent in the characters of “Mustafa Saeed” and the first narrative speaker. Salih tends to disclose how the cultural identity of the colonized is absorbed by these characters, “Mustafa” and the narrator. Figure 1 presents the Hybridity in Salih's *Season* in term of language, characters, and places.

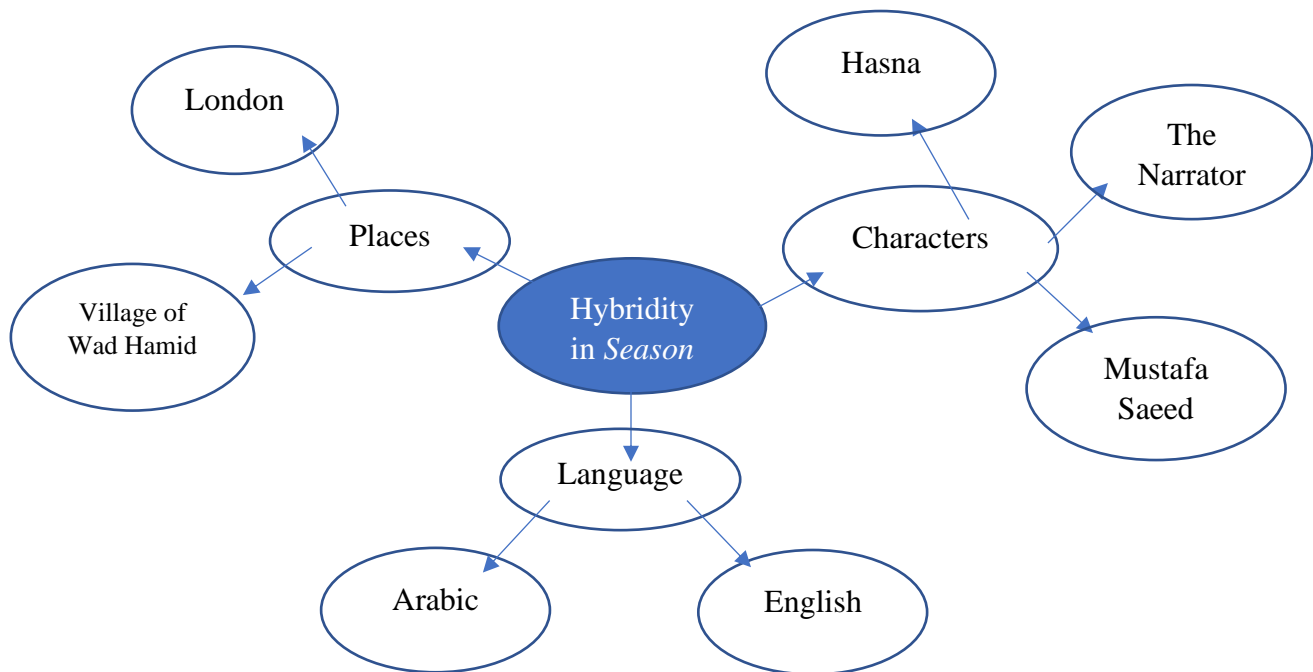


Figure1. The elements of hybridity in Salih's *Season*

Consequently, they are hybrid characters. They migrated and learned in the West, in London. They are bilingual. Mustafa significantly adopted a western style of life when

he helped the villagers solve some problems scientifically. Mustafa Saeed and the first-person narrator migrated to and lived in London. They got their PHDs there. They are affected most

positively by the culture and traditions of Western English society. However, the cruelty shown by Mustafa against his victims reflected the lousy effect of Western culture on him. He seemed to adopt the savagery of the West. Hybridity appears in their behaviors, acts, and mimicry of the western lifestyle. Mustafa Saeed masters the English language as his mother tongue and "absorbs Western civilization" (Salih, 1966, p. 35). He argues that language can be his "sole weapon," being that sharp knife (Salih:26) inside his skull. He was so distinguished in learning English that his classmates called him "the black Englishman" (Salih, 1966, p. 43). Mastering the English language signifies his immersion in the English culture. He is the first Sudanese "to marry an English woman" (Salih, 1966, p. 55) and take "British nationality" (Salih, 1966, p. 56). He got more involved in Western culture by visiting "Chelsea's pubs, the Hampstead's clubs, and the Bloomsbury's gathering" (Salih, 1966, p. 129). While digging around a lemon tree, Mustafa speaks loudly, telling us that "Some of the branches of this tree produce lemons, other oranges," and the narrator reacts by saying, "What an extraordinary thing!" (Salih, 1966, p. 15). The appearance of two different fruits in one tree and the narrator's reply in English reflect cultural hybridity. This situation has reference to the hybridity of Mustafa and the narrator. They adopted two cultures. It also indicates that they have not realized their hybridity yet.

Mustafa Saeed seemed to have lost his identity and sense of belonging since the early absence of his parents from his life. Saeed's missing parental care and love turn him into an alienated, restless, and rootless character. To him, this might be the primary reason for weakening his original identity. "As you see, I was born in Khartoum and grew up without a father, and He did, nonetheless, leave us something with which to meet our needs. I had no brothers or sisters, so

life was not difficult for my mother and me" (Salih, 1966, p. 17)

His presence in London was no less critical in breeding a sense of dislocation in him. He is no longer associated with his original identity due to being dislocated in London. He, instead, considers himself English and imitates the bad behavior of the English. He gets involved in sexual relations with European women to be part of the Western culture. Still, his multiple names (Hassan, Charles, Amin, Mustafa, and Richard) indicate that he has a multi-faceted identity. He is ready to sacrifice his original heritage and belonging to satisfy the whites and be a member of their society. However, the whites exploit and reject him. He ends up killing his wife and spending seven years in jail. Mustafa Saeed says: "I sat for weeks listening to the lawyers talking about me – as though they were talking about someone who was no concern of mine." Mustafa no longer exists. "He is an illusion, a lie." After losing his identity in the West, Mustafa returns and settles in a small village in Sudan in search of his native identity (Salih, 1966, p. 31-32).

Mustafa marries a Sudanese woman, has two sons, and cultivates a farm to raise his sense of belonging to the land. However, he is still recognized as a stranger in his country. The narrator's grandfather considers Saeed "not a local man but a stranger who had come here five years ago" (Salih, 1966, p. 2), and when he dies, he "hadn't even found himself a grave to rest his body in" (Salih, 1966, p. 54). His return to the south is a trial to search for and restore his original identity. However, the western lifestyle has become a part of his life that he kept a room in his small village with all the features of the Western lifestyle. He suffers because of being a hybrid, wanting to keep both his original identity and the western one. He can't live with this duality.

Similar to “Mustafa Saeed,” the narrator is an excellent example of cultural hybridity. He is a product of two experiences and two cultures. He passes through experiences of migration, being educated in the West, being separated from his land, and spiritual imprisonment in London.

Geesey (1997) assumed that the narrator is so obsessed with Saeed's past to the extent of being distracted by Saeed's legacy that he can barely distinguish between his own identity and that of Saeed. Patricia Geesey adds that the narrator has been similarly affected by the cultural contact between England and the Sudan (Geesey, 1997, p. 129). However, the narrator denied his cultural hybridity and refuses to accept the reality of being contaminated in the west. He thinks that he is different from Mustafa and can avoid his destiny. In Mustafa's secret room, the narrator saw the picture of Mustafa Saeed while looking in the mirror. The narrator says "I found myself standing face to face with myself. This is not Mustafa Saeed — it's a picture of me frowning at my face from a mirror" (Salih, 1966, p. 93). When he realized his similarity to Mustafa, the narrator was afraid of meeting Saeed's destiny because of his contact with Mustafa and the Europeans in the west. He embarked on a journey of self-identity, following the traditions of the villagers, offering condolences on deaths and congratulations on marriages. He consoled himself by saying, "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" (Salih, 1966, p. 49). He rejects being associated with the West. This rejection appeared in the narrator's return to his village. Finally, he attempted to incorporate the best of a foreign culture while returning to his cultural roots (Klee & Siddiq, 1978).

The effects of hybridity extend to other characters who are in contact with Mustafa, like his widow, Hosna Bint Mahmoud, who defies

Sudanese traditions and refuses to marry Wad Rayyes. However, when she is forced to marry him, she kills him and herself as well. Her refusal implies that she is affected by her dead husband, Saeed. She adopts Western traditions and becomes a hybrid due to living with him. Her tragic end declares that living in the East with a Western mindset might be distressing.

4.2.2: Hybridity in Ghosh's Shadow

Like other post-colonial writings, Ghosh's *Shadow* addresses the problem of hybridity and the duality of identity that people of colonized societies encounter. Similar to the Sudanese community in Salih's *Season*, the essence of Indian culture is violated and affected in Ghosh's *Shadow*. Hybridity is reflected in different aspects like language, time, place, and identity. Figure 2 presents the Hybridity in Ghosh's *Shadow* in terms of language, characters, and locations.

The narrator used English and Bengali. Although he was born in India, he received an English education. Writing or speaking in English in a nation where it is not the official language suggests some form of alienation or mixed identity. Hearing the Bengali dialect in London's streets becomes familiar. The narrator says, "For me, the experience of hearing Bengali dialects, which I had never heard in Calcutta, being spoken in the streets of London was still replete with unexplored ironies" (Ghosh, 1988, p. 176). Also, the frequent journeys between the East and the West indicate another indication of hybridity since these journeys include different places with different cultures, religions, and ethnicities. Tridib, the narrator, and Ila move between London and Calcutta. "Tridib" and "Ila," though differently, adopt Western traditions, styles of life, and ways of thinking. Tridib thought of a world with no boundaries. Ila wanted to forget everything about her Indian past. She tried to get her freedom by being entirely English. This mimicry of the western lifestyle is a feature

of hybridity. This hybridity, or dual identity, are rejected by Tha'mma, who believed that strong feelings of Indian nationalism and patriotism should be reinforced. Therefore, Tha'mma rejected Ila's presence in London confirming that "She has no right to be there. She doesn't belong there." She even blamed Ila's mother and accuses

her of being a "half-witted mother" (Ghosh, 1988, p. 4) for letting her daughter do so. She wanted the narrator to avoid Ila and Tridib. She even called Tridib "a loafer and a wastrel" because "he doesn't do any proper work, lives off his father's money" (Ghosh, 1988, p. 57).

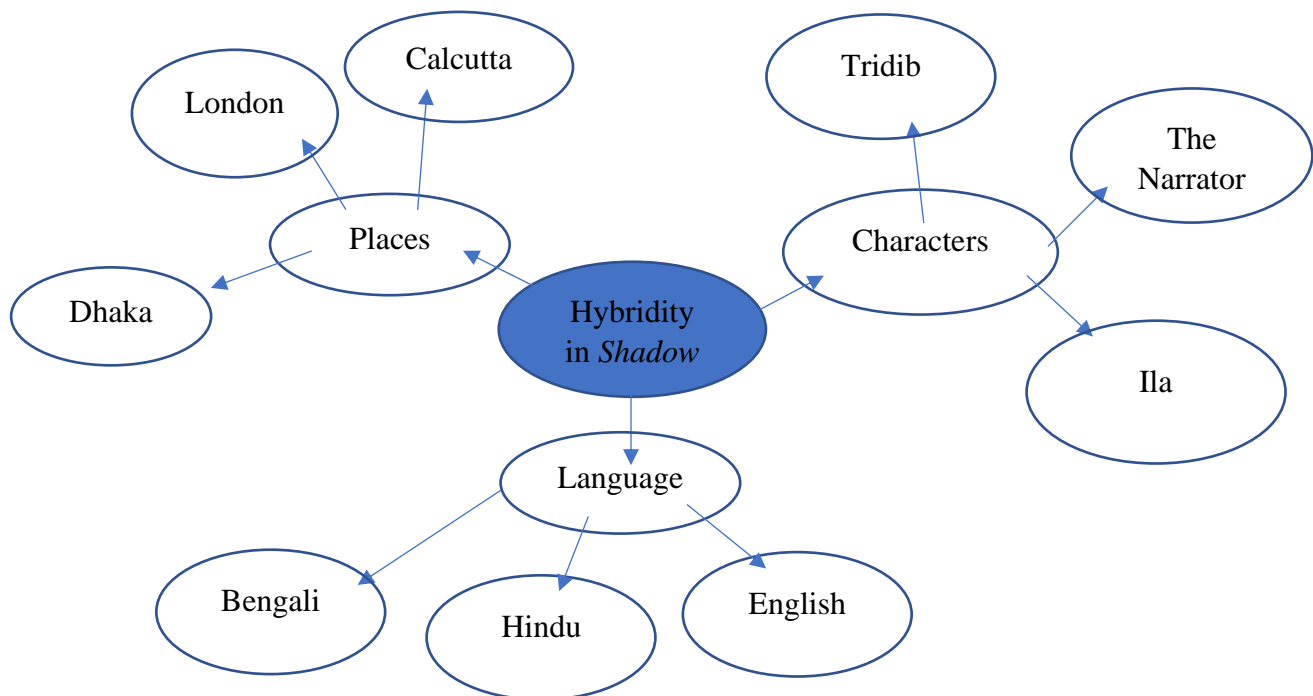


Figure2: Hybridity in Gosh's Shadow

Dislocation is a common theme in Ghosh's *Shadow*. Many of the characters in *Shadow* are physically or spiritually dislocated. The division of the Shehab's house and the country's partition contributes to this sense of dislocation, particularly for the grandmother. She felt strange in Dhaka on her last visit. "But you are a foreigner now. You're as foreign here as of May – much more than May, for a look at her, she doesn't even need a visa to come here" (Ghosh, 1988, p.112). On her visit to her old house in Dhaka after the partition, Tha'mma, the narrator's grandmother, cannot enter West Pakistan without a visa. She even becomes more foreign than the English woman, May, who does not have to get such a

visa. While Tha'mma's presence in Tridib in Dhaka seems strange, hearing Bengali in London's streets is familiar. "For me, the experience of hearing Bengali dialects, which I had never heard in Calcutta, being spoken in the streets of London was still replete with unexplored ironies" (Ghosh, 1988, p.142). The narrator expresses his grandmother's feeling of dislocation when he says that she is looking for "a word for a journey that was not a coming or a going at all; a journey that was a search for precisely that fixed point which permits the proper use of verbs of movement." When people live in a place, they feel no sense of belonging, or when they are away from the site they like and

belong to, they feel dislocated or even uprooted (Ghosh, 1988, p.167).

This question of identity, in *Shadow*, is not only related to the characters but the places as well. The national identities of both Calcutta and Dhaka changed due to the political partition. The two neighboring cities no longer belong to the same nation. This partition undoubtedly affects people's identities. Families are divided between the two towns; half the family is in Calcutta while the other half is in Dhaka, and each half becomes a stranger in the other city. These cities are unified only in the memories and imaginations of characters such as Tha'mma, who cannot accept the political borders between Dhaka and Calcutta. The unity of the two has become impossible in real life, and Tha'mma tries to obtain it through imagination. She cannot believe she is separated from Dhaka, where she was born and brought up. She does not want to believe that Dhaka is no longer her home and that she belongs to Calcutta because she lives there. "Am I an Indian merely because I am Hindu and live in Calcutta?" (Ghosh, 1988, p.82).

In *Shadow*, the quest for identity takes on a new dimension. However, freedom is the key to this search. As a hybrid character whose imagination and philosophy of life exceed the national, religious, and cultural limits and boundaries, "Tridib" attempts to construct his own identity by freeing himself from these limits. "Tridib" perceives the world as composed of neighboring, interconnected parts without borders. This is the perception or vision of life that "Tridib" wants the narrator to realize the world through. Such an attitude seems to be different from that of "Tha'mma," who is stuck in the past and wants to restore the country's national identity. Tridib's vision is also different from the third generation represented by Ila. To be free and live on her own, she wants to give up all the national Indian traditions and detach herself from the past. When asked about the

history, she answers: "It was a long time ago— the real question is, how do you remember?" (Ghosh, 1988, p.19). Ila's search for identity is represented in her struggle to get a free life away from her country and live in a place where she can behave according to her way. She wants to adapt to the colonizer's western world at the expense of her original Indian world. On the contrary, the narrator builds his own identity on the memories of history he knows about from his uncle Tridib through the eyes of his uncle "Tridib."

4.2.3: The effects of hybridity on the identity

Salih's *Season* and Ghosh's *Shadow* deal with the post-colonial crisis of hybridity and its impact on identity. The ill effects of hybridity due to the west are expressed in both novels. Also, the conflict between the east and the west is apparent. However, their manipulations of these themes are, to some extent, different. In fact, hybridity occurs in the novels' language, characters, and places. Mustafa Saeed and the narrator, who lived and learned in London, switch between Arabic and English in *Season* and move between Sudan and London.

Similarly, Tridib, the narrator, Ila, and other characters in *Shadow* speak English, Indian, and Bengali. In Salih's novel, Mustafa uprooted himself from his origin and died while attempting to reclaim his original identity. In Ghosh's novel, Ila also uprooted herself and could not stand her English friend's betrayal, although it may not be abnormal in his tradition. Moreover, the two novels imply an urgent quest for identity, either by establishing a new one or returning to the original (Ghosh, 1988; Salih, 1966).

Salih's *Season* and Ghosh's *Shadow* reflect the conflict between the Eastern and the Western as a reaction to hybridity. However, in Salih's *Season*, the conflict between the East and the West is clearly stated through the relationship between Mustafa and the English woman he has been with. However, the possibility of coexistence between different cultures, religions,

and ethnicities is not absent in the novel. It can be seen through the good relationship between Mustafa and the Robinsons when Mrs. Robinson considers him her son. Also, when the first narrator describes the English people in response to questions raised by the people in his village about life in London, the narrator says the English people are slightly different from the Sudanese, "marrying and bringing up their children by principles and traditions, that they had good morals and were in general good people" (Salih, 1966, p. 15). However, Ghosh's *Shadow* explicitly advocates such an idea of cultural coexistence. Tridib calls for a world without national, religious, or cultural boundaries. Unlike Tha'mma, she has no fear of dealing with the West and being absorbed in their culture. He sacrifices his life to defend these beliefs. The title of the novel, *Shadow*, is indicative of this respect. The boundaries people are fighting and killing each other for are mere shadows. The intimate relationship between Tridib's Indian family and May's English family carries another call for compromise between the East and the West (Ghosh, 1988; Salih, 1966).

5. Conclusion

In Al-Tayeb Salih's *Season* and Amitav Ghosh's *Shadow*, the two writers deal with the question of hybridity and the quest for identity in post-colonial Sudan and India, respectively. Hybridity is the direct contact between the East and the West, which led to the presence of hybrids combining both cultures. Accordingly, they speak different languages, learn new sciences, and adopt a western lifestyle. Furthermore, Bhabha (1994) assumed there could be a trap in a third space between the two cultures. This combination of two contradicting cultures had a severe impact on the identity of the hybrids. The aspects of hybridity in Salih's *Season* and Ghosh's *Shadow* can be in the characters, language, places, and relationships.

The usage of hybrid characters, such as the narrator Mustafa Saeed and Hosna Bint Mahmoud in Salih's *Season* and the narrator Tridib and Ila in Ghosh's *Shadow*, aims to shed light on the various forms of hybrids and the struggles they face in their journey while trying to restore or reestablish a new identity. The first type of hybrid wants to ignore their Eastern roots and be entirely Eastern, such as the early Mustafa, in Salih's *Season* and Ila, in Ghosh's *Shadow*. The other hybrids, such as the narrator, in *Season* and Tridib and the narrator, in *Shadow*, try, at different levels, to compromise and reconcile the East and the West. Hybridity is also presented through the apparent conflict between the modern, traditional, and modern in both novels. In Salih's *Season*, Hosna Bin Mahmud was the victim of this conflict when she was obliged to marry an older man, Wadd Rayes, against her will. Tridib, in Ghosh's *Shadow*, was killed in a riot after the partition that divided the unified nation into two.

Despite the severe negative impact of hybridity, the novels indicate that hybridity enables the desired reconciliation and coexistence of the East and the West. The hybrids can facilitate this compromise with their double vision and understanding of both cultures. They can help to produce healthy changes in their western societies without affecting their stability. In addition, the presence of good relationships between the Eastern and Western characters in the two novels offers some hope for prospective multiculturalism. Mustafa Saeed was supported by the Robinsons in Salih's *Season*, while the Prices helped Shehab's family in Ghosh's *Shadow*. Such examples, though they seem few in the novels, suggest that the Eastern and Western cultures are in contact, not in conflict.

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