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**The Coloniser-Colonised Relationship in  
C. Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* and T. Salih's  
*Season of Migration to the North***

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The British Empire was undoubtedly one of the biggest empires in history. It prospered greatly from the second half of the eighteenth century to the 1920s. It is generally accepted, however, that the period from 1815 to 1914 is referred to as Britain's "imperial century". The Empire expanded over nearly one fourth of the globe, with a land mass of twenty-six million square kilometers of the earth's surface. The ways colonialism reverberates carve their indelible scars and traces in the traditions of different nations turn out to have certain similarities, and sometimes differences, that are important to investigate and study. The Nigerian Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) and the Sudanese Tayeb Salih (1929-2009) are two important novelists in this respect. The two of them took British colonialism of their native countries and the impacts of such colonialism to their focal interest.

This paper has two sections. Section I is an introductory one that paves the way to Section II. The section highlights some important issues including: the aim of the study, a literature review that sheds light on the studies that have been conducted in relation to the proposed topic and the research questions. Section II of this study provides a postcolonial reading of the two novels. This comes to grips with a plethora of postcolonial concepts as explored in the two novels. The section will discuss a number of concepts through investigating the coloniser-colonised relationship. Key postcolonial concepts, such as hybridity, hegemony, stereotyping and othering will be explored discussed. Some of the important ideas discussed in this context are the tight grip of the coloniser, education, religion, the colonised's reactions to the coloniser, the arrogance of the

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coloniser, the coloniser's dwarfing of the colonised and the Obi-Mr. Green relationship as an example of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised and Mostafa Sa'eed's outlook on the coloniser will be considered.

This paper aims at investigating the postcolonial aftermaths as revealed in C. Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and T. Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966). Despite the importance of the shared grounds underlying both novels, the protagonists and the authors, the reactions of the protagonists to the coloniser's dominance and arrogance are significantly different. While Achebe's Obi is all-submissive to Mr. Green, representing British colonization, of Nigeria, Salih's Mostafa Sa'eed never lowers his head to the coloniser. The paper will avail itself of the views and ideas of such paramount figures of postcolonial studies as Franz Fanon and Homi Bhabha.

**Key Words:** Postcolonialism, Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*, T. Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*

علاقة المستعمر بالمستعمر في روايتي  
"لم تعد هناك راحة" لتشييوا أتشيبي و "موسم الهجرة الى الشمال" للطيب صالح  
دكتورة نجلاء حسني أمين محمد

أستاذ مشارك الأدب الإنجليزي بجامعة شقراء  
بالمملكة العربية السعودية

### ملخص

كانت الإمبراطورية البريطانية أكبر الامبراطوريات في التاريخ. امتدت توسعات هذه الإمبراطورية لتغطي ربع الكرة الأرضية بمساحة تصل الى ٢٦ مليون ميل مربع. قام العديد من الكتاب, لا سيما الروائيين, في البلاد التي وقعت تحت نير الاستعمار البريطاني بكشف مساوئ الاستعمار على العباد و البلاد. يدرس هذا البحث العلاقة بين المستعمر و المستعمر كما تصورهما روايتي "لم تعد هناك راحة" للكاتب النيجيري تشييوا أتشيبي و "موسم الهجرة الى الشمال" للكاتب السوداني الطيب صالح. البحث في جزئين. الجزء الأول تمهيد للبحث و يوضح الهدف منه و يلقي الضوء على الدراسات السابقة المتعلقة بموضوع البحث. الجزء الثاني هو قراءة للروايتين من منظور ما بعد الاستعمار من خلال استكشاف العلاقة بين المستعمر و المستعمر و فيها يركز البحث على ازدياد المستعمر للمستعمر و هيمنة المستعمر و السبل التي يحكم بها المستعمر قبضته على المستعمر.

كلمات مفتاحية: ما بعد الاستعمار, رواية, "لم تعد هناك راحة", أتشيبي, "موسم الهجرة الى الشمال", الطيب صالح

## **The Coloniser-Colonised Relationship in C. Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* and T. Salih's *Season of Migration to the North***

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The British Empire was undoubtedly one of the biggest empires in history. It prospered greatly from the second half of the eighteenth century to the 1920s. Historians differ as for the dates of the beginning and the end of the British Empire (Subramanian 20); some date it as far back as the sixteenth century. It is generally accepted, however, that the period from 1815 to 1914 is referred to as Britain's "imperial century" (Hyam 134). The Empire expanded over nearly one fourth of the globe, with a land mass of twenty six million square kilometers of the earth's surface:

The British Empire was the largest empire in human history whose greatest extent during its zenith was the 1920s CE. The Empire consisted of mandates, protectorates, dominions and other territories administered and controlled by the UK and its forerunner states. The British Empire ruled over 23% of the total population in the world equivalent to 412 million by 1913 and covered about 24% of the Earth's total land area equivalent to about 13,000,000 square miles by 1920. (Boston)

Veins of bondage and servitude extend importantly throughout the writings of a considerable number of authors from previously colonised countries. The ways colonialism reverberates carve their indelible scars and traces in the traditions of different nations turn out to have certain similarities, and sometimes differences, that are important to investigate and study. Certain similarities in common among such writings, regardless of the

locations of such countries or the races or the colours of the authors, can prove striking.

A good number of men of letters from such countries that yielded to the yoke of occupation wrote in response, and in resistance, to the ruining aftermaths of the British occupation of their countries. The Nigerian Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) and the Sudanese Tayeb Salih (1929-2009) are two important novelists in this respect. The two of them took British colonialism of their native countries and the impacts of such colonialism to their focal interest. More often than not, the two writers dwelt on exploring and exposing the negative influences imperialism had on their countries.

This paper has two sections. Section I is an introductory one that paves the way to Section II. The section highlights some important issues including: the aim of the study, a literature review that sheds light on the studies that have been conducted in relation to the proposed topic and the research questions. Section II of this study provides a postcolonial reading of the two novels. This comes to grips with a plethora of postcolonial concepts as explored in the two novels. The section will discuss a number of concepts through investigating the coloniser-colonised relationship. Key postcolonial concepts, such as hybridity, hegemony, stereotyping and othering will be explored discussed. Some of the important ideas discussed in this context are the tight grip of the coloniser, education, religion, the colonised's reactions to the coloniser, the arrogance of the coloniser, the coloniser's dwarfing of the colonised and the Obi-Mr. Green relationship as an example of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised and Mostafa Sa'eed's outlook on the coloniser will be considered.

This paper aims, thus, at investigating the postcolonial aftermaths as revealed in C. Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and T. Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966). Some critics tend to rank Salih's novel first among twentieth-century Arabic novels (Idriss). The paper will avail itself of the views and ideas of

such paramount figures of postcolonial studies as Franz Fanon and Homi Bhabha.

Many studies have compared Chinua Achebe's novels with Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* (1899). Achebe admits that, "the point of my observation should be quite clear by now, namely, that Conrad was a bloody racist" (Achebe "An Image"). Such studies must have been triggered, among other reasons, by critics' views that Achebe novels were mainly written in response to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. It has often been claimed that it was Conrad's abovementioned novel that instigated Achebe to respond to and refute Conrad's claims about Africans. I. El-Hussari's "'Season of Migration to the North' and 'Heart of Darkness': African Mimicry of European Stereotypes" is a good example in this respect. Lahcen Idir discusses Salih's *Season* with Conrad's *Heart* as backdrop (Idir). Conrad's novel reveals the coloniser's contemptuous look at the colonised. Marlow, in Conrad's novel, says:

They trespassed upon my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretense, because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew. Their bearing, which was simply the bearing of commonplace individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety, was offensive to me like the outrageous flauntings of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend...but I had some difficulty in restraining myself from laughing in their faces so full of stupid importance. (Conrad 84)

Such snobbish and unjustified claims and the like provoked Chinua Achebe, among other Nigerian and African writers, to write in defense of the distorted image of their nations and traditions. Significantly, Achebe referred to Conrad and his work in *No Longer at Ease* (81) by way of exposing the colonizing imperialist's contemptuous look at (colonised) Nigeria. In the introduction to the 2008 edition to Pearson edition of *Things Fall Apart*, Mpalive-

Hangson Msiska explains that Achebe wrote the novel in response to “the denigration of Africa in colonial novels such as Joseph Conrad’s “Heart of Darkness” (1889) and Joyce Cary’s “Mister Johnson” (1939)” (Mataire).

No research paper has studied the two novels of the title together from a postcolonial perspective despite the importance of the topic. This paper will, thus, address such a gap. It is important here to note that while Achebe’s novel is written in English, Salih’s is in Arabic; it was translated into English by Denys Johnson-Davies in 1969. Salih’s novel was politically banned in many Arab countries “for its sexual frankness” (Kolk). The similarities, as well as the differences, between the two works will be explored and discussed. The paper will respond to the following questions: How is the coloniser-colonised relationship represented in C. Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* and T. Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*? How are the protagonists in both novels similar or different in the ways they react to British colonialism of their homelands?

## II

Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* and Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* have some important features in common. Like the protagonists in the two novels, Obi Okonkwo in the former and Mostafa Sa’eed in the latter, the authors of both novels belong to countries that were previously occupied by Britain. It is worth noting that both Nigeria and Sudan were under British occupation for long times. The first, Nigeria, from 1800 to 1960, the second, Sudan, from 1896 to 1953. Equally important, both countries suffered greatly under the yoke of British occupation. C. Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* was written in 1960 and T. Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* was written in 1966. Such two novels can, therefore, be said to have been written in the wake of Nigerian and Sudanese independence, when the two countries were on the thresholds of independence, “with our great country on the threshold of independence, we need men who are prepared to serve her well and truly” (Achebe *No Longer* 27). The novels are

exposing of the evil effects British occupation had on the authors' native lands. Further, like their protagonists, both authors lived and studied in England.

The settings of both novels are important to consider. In both novels the authors take us back and forth in place and time between England and their homelands, Achebe's Nigeria and Salih's Sudan. Further, the protagonists in both novels were among the first in their countries to travel to England. Salih's Mostafa Sa'eed was the first Sudanese to travel to England. He was also the first Sudanese to marry an English woman and to get the British nationality (Salih 41). In his turn, Achebe's Obi was the first Umuofian to travel to England. He was, thus, a great source of pride to the consortium of nine villages called Umuofia that paid the fees, as a loan, for Obi's four-year study in England.

Important to understanding Achebe's novel is Lauren Evans's remark that "Obi Okonkwo [is] the grandson of the main character Okonkwo from *Things Fall Apart*" (Evans). Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* is the hot-blooded and violent protagonist who never accepted the presence of the intruding white man on his native land (Achebe *Things* 176). He witnessed and reacted bloodily and fearlessly to the white man's early intrusion onto the land of Nigeria (Achebe *Things* 204).

Obi returned to Nigeria after studying in England for nearly four years:

He sometimes found it difficult to believe that it was as short as that. It seemed more like a decade than four years, what with the miseries of winter when his longing to return home took on the sharpness of physical pain. It was in England that Nigeria first became more than just a name to him (Achebe *No Longer* 12).

When in England, Obi got overwhelmed by an unequalled sense of patriotism. Obi's love and sense



of nostalgia were expressed in his poem “Nigeria”.  
(Achebe *No Longer* 78)

It should be noted, however, that the language and the form of the poem are adopted from the language of the coloniser. The poem is a lyric written in English. This simply shows that Obi has developed hybrid identity. Hybridity, “perhaps the most influential of Bhabha’s contribution to postcolonial theory” (Bertens 209), can be defined as a Schizophrenic state of the migrant in which s/he tries to combine two different cultures, one that is originally his/her own and another that belongs to another, usually host, country (literariness). This also speaks clearly of the how colonisation has found its ways to the very ways of thinking and expressing of the colonised and, consequently, the colonised’s vulnerability to the intrusive culture of the coloniser. In his turn, when in England, Mostafa Sa’eed lectured for London University. When he disappeared, and was thought of to have drowned in the river, the narrator entered his house in Sudan and found that all his books were in English (Salih 76).

Obi came back to Nigeria with ideal thoughts and firm determination to do whatever he could to bring about important changes that would lead to the development of his beloved Nigeria. He thought he is entitled to play a role in the progress of his nation and believed he should be one of the pioneers leading the country to progress. He was such a young man full of enthusiasm and idealism looking ahead and seeing the potential progress and prosperity of his country that he actually started contributing to by rejecting a bribe. His response to a man who offered him a bribe was showing the man the door; he felt triumphant (Achebe *No Longer* 66).

The story, in Achebe’s novel, is told in a flashback technique that takes readers all through the course of action that has led to a tragic end on Obi’s part. The novel opens in the courtroom with Obi on trial for having accepted a bribe, then goes back to the pre-trial past to give us an idea about how Obi ended up there and it ends with the story coming full circle. Obi, the narrator, tells us how on

returning to Nigeria he was asked many questions by his village people about England and Europe. The questions are important in that they reveal the villagers' admiration of England. More important even are Obi's replies. "The white man's country must be very distant indeed," suggested one of the men. Everyone knew it was very distant, but they wanted to hear it again from the mouth of their young kinsman" (Achebe *No Longer* 41). Obi's replies to the admiring audience reveal his own infatuation with England:

There is no darkness there,' he told his admiring listeners, 'because at night the electric shines like the sun, and people are always walking about, that is, those who want to walk. If you don't want to walk you only have to wave your hand and a pleasure car stops for you.' His audience made sounds of wonderment. Then by way of digression he said: 'If you see a white man, take off your hat for him. (Achebe *No Longer* 12)

Similarly, when the narrator in Salih's novel returned home from England after doing his PhD in England, about "an obscure English poet", as he says (Salih 42), he is asked many questions that reveal the Sudanese admiration of the white man:

They had asked me about Europe. Were the people there like us or were they different? Was life expensive or cheap? What did people do in winter? They say that the women are unveiled and dance openly with men. 'Is it true,' Wad Rayyes asked me, 'that they don't marry but that a man lives with a woman in sin?' As best I could I had answered their many questions. They were surprised when I told them that Europeans were, with minor differences, exactly like them, marrying and bringing up their children in accordance with principles and traditions. (Salih 12)

Unlike Obi's replies, however, Salih's narrator does not really show admiration of the English people. Rather, the narrator sees the English to be quite ordinary people:

'Yes, there are some farmers among them. They've got everything — workers and doctors and farmers and teachers, just like us...Bint Majzoub laughed. 'We were afraid,' she said, 'you'd bring back with you an uncircumcised infidel for a wife'. (Salih 12)

Idir comments on this by explaining that the narrator's words deconstruct and efface "borders of difference between Africans and Europeans". He further points out that the narrator tried to construct a sense of confidence and equality in his fellow Sudanese natives (Idir).

### **The Coloniser-Colonised Relationship**

The relationship between the coloniser and the colonised directs and determines the courses of action in both novels. In Achebe's novel, more than in Salih's, the relationship is largely a question of superiority and inferiority. At this point it is important to ask the question of who is inferior/superior to the other? This is an important question that determines a good part of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised throughout the two novels.

As the two novels of this study make clear, certain strategies are adopted by the British coloniser in the countries they colonised so that the tight grip of the coloniser over the colonised lands is asserted. The relationship between the coloniser and the colonised is determined through a number of factors that are important to consider. As acknowledged by the characters in the novels, certain policies are adopted. In addition to the actual presence (occupation) of the coloniser on the land of the colonised, these include dividing the loyalties of the colonised people on different bases such as education and religion. Further, as stated by one of the characters, sowing hatred among people of the same nation is also one of the strategies adopted in this respect.

Education is one of the ways through which the coloniser frames, controls and manipulates the colonised. It is largely a question of inputs that lead to predictable outputs. As both novels make clear, education has been used by the coloniser as a means by which the coloniser pacifies and molds the minds of the colonised. Mostafa Sa'eed remembers that when he was a young boy people in Sudan associated schools, established by the coloniser, with colonisation. People then looked at education, provided by the coloniser, as "a great evil that had come to them with the armies of occupation" (Salih 22). Elsewhere, he says, "the schools were started [by the coloniser] so as to teach us how to say "yes" in their language" (Salih 53). In Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, Mr. Green teaches and orders Nigerians working with him to call him "sir" because he is their "superior" (Achebe *No Longer* 50). He actually expects one answer from all Nigerians, "Yes, sir" (Achebe *No Longer* 50).

In its turn, religion was employed by the coloniser to assert dominance over the colonised. The coloniser built churches on the lands they occupied to guarantee the loyalties and support of those who convert to Christianity. It is important to point out that the coloniser used religion to serve political purposes. Franz Fanon, thus, asserts that churches established by the coloniser are not meant to show people the way to God, but, rather, to show them the way to the white man:

The Church in the colonies is the white people's Church, the foreigner's Church. She does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few chosen. (Fanon 42)

Far from its true spirit, religion is a means of manipulating and controlling colonised nations. The spirit of Christianity does not cast its mercy on the conquered, rather, it teaches them blind obedience and full submission to the coloniser, not to God. In addition to other means of manipulating colonised nations, Christianity pacified them

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and Missionaries taught them to give up violence and disclaim whatever violent behavior or reactions they learnt or inherited from their ancestors, “those were days of darkness from which we have been delivered by the blood of the Lamb of God” (Achebe *No Longer* 10). Nigerians have, thus, turned into an amicable and tamed nation quitting violence outright. Resisting the coloniser, that brought them Christianity and enlightenment, even though such enlightenment is only illusory (Conrad *Heart* 119), was considered an act of violence.

Sowing the seeds of hatred among people of the same nation is a means adopted by the coloniser to keep the colonised nations divided. At this point, it is important to consider the reactions of some characters from the colonised nations as shown in the novels. Dividing loyalties of the colonised, usually referred to as divide and rule, is one of the policies adopted by the coloniser. The idea is clearly expressed in Salih’s *Season*. Abdul Mannan believes that the Sudanese postcolonial government is utterly useless, “it’s a hopeless government”; his succeeding comments imply even that “the days of the English” were better (36). The narrator’s grandfather tells him the British colonisers “sowed hatred in the hearts of the people for us, their kinsmen, and love for the colonisers, the intruders” (Salih 40).

Some examples of divided loyalties can be provided of that from novels. While some citizens are totally against occupation others are on the other extreme and a third group seems to be oscillating halfway (Achebe *No Longer* 52). In Achebe’s novel, Sam says, ‘White man don go far. We just de shout for nothing.’. Then he seemed to realise his position. ‘All the same they must go. This no be them country.’ He helped himself to another whisky, switched on the radio and sat down (Achebe *No Longer* 52). It should be noticed that the comment is in pidgin, a notable feature of hybridity that is a result of colonialism. Salih was probably influenced by Fanon’s notable book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Under the title “Colonial War and Mental Disorders”, Fanon says, “that imperialism which today is fighting against a true

liberation of mankind leaves in its wake here and there tinctures of decay which we must search out and mercilessly expel from our land and our spirits” (Fanon 249).

### **Arrogance of the Coloniser**

The image Achebe draws of Mr. Green all through the novel is typically meant to stereotype callousness of the coloniser. All Mr. Green said or did is marked by an unobscured sense of contempt and violence towards Nigerians. He, thus, insists on dwarfing and belittling, and even frightening, the “Africans”, a word that he always used derogatorily to refer to Nigerians, working under his management. The way he deals with Nigerians around him does not show the least respect or consideration to human beings. To give one example, “Mr Green slammed the door behind him and Mr. Omo carried the file personally to him. When he returned he began to rebuke a junior clerk who, it seemed, had caused all the trouble” (Achebe *No Longer* 50). Just after acting in such a threatening manner, Mr. Green reminds Obi, in a more appalling way, that he should call him sir, “‘You say *sir* to your superior officers, Mr Okonkwo,’ and the telephone was dropped with a deafening bang” (Achebe *No Longer* 50). In his article, ““Postcolonial” literature in a neocolonial world: Modern Arabic Culture and the End of Modernity”, S. Makdisi refers to the “violent dialogical process of imperialism” (Makdisi 105). Mr. Green is, thus, so keen on asserting his superiority to all the “Africans” working with him. The choice of the word superior, rather than senior, is strongly indicative of the meaning Mr. Green is keen on conveying, a sense of othering and “nonsignificance”, to Nigerians around him and instilling that very sense in them:

Mr Omo jumped to his feet as soon as Mr Green came in. Simultaneously he pocketed the other half of the kola nut he was eating.

'Why hasn't the Study Leave file been passed to me?' Mr Green asked.

'I thought ...'

'You are not paid to think, Mr Omo, but to do what you are told. Is that clear? Now send the file to me immediately.'

'Yes, sir.' (Achebe *No Longer* 50)

“Yes, sir” are the two very words the hegemonic coloniser expects to hear from the colonised. Furthermore, that Mr. Omo is not paid to think, as stated in the quotation, unveils Mr. Green’s ideas that such are mindless creatures.

Notably, in Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* as well, Mr. Green insists on passing that very sense of contempt on to Nigerians around him. Contempt is a clue to understanding the way Mr. Green looks at and deals with “Africans” around him. His very choice of the word “Africans” rather than Nigerians unveils the way Mr. Green insists on seeing Africans to be all alike, this is stereotyping that unveil the coloniser’s deliberate insisting on amassing all colonised African nations within a frame in which national identities, cultures, languages and idiosyncrasies obliterate and vanish.

Mr. Green’s aggressive way of dealing with the Nigerians reminded Obi of a childhood incident. Obi remembers well how, when he was a school boy, Mr. Jones, the British Inspector, in an insulting manner, slapped Mr. Nduka the Nigerian headmaster before the students. This remarkably sets the example of the arrogance and haughtiness of the coloniser:

The headmaster, Mr Nduka, was all the while trying to explain something.

'Shut up!' roared Mr Jones, and followed it up with a slap. Simeon Nduka was one of those people who had taken to the ways of the white man rather late in life. And one of the things he had learnt in his youth was the great art of wrestling. In the twinkling of an eye Mr Jones was flat on the floor and the school was thrown into confusion. Without knowing why,

teachers and pupils all took to their heels. To throw a white man was like unmasking an ancestral spirit.

That was twenty years ago. Today few white men would dream of slapping a headmaster in his school and none at all would actually do it. Which is the tragedy of men like William Green, Obi's boss.

(Achebe *No Longer* 49)

Obi believes that Mr. Green, his boss, is not really dissimilar to British Mr. Jones, but times have changed. They do not slap Nigerians now; they only scorn and rebuke them. It is in that very contemptuous and arrogant manner that Mr. Green decided to deal with all the Nigerians around him. To Obi, Mr. Green is a man who “could only curse and swear” (81) and if he had lived in Nigeria at some earlier time, he would have slapped Nigerians (81). Indeed, times have really changed. Paradoxically, change can, and should, be understood differently. The quotation above reveals how older generations readily reacted to insults and how wrestling was a “great art” to them. Times have made Nigerians more and more submissive to the white man, and it seems Nigerians came to accept this.

It should be remembered that Mr. Green has another personality that he shows when dealing with his British secretary Marie Tomlinson. The latter admits that:

'I had tea with the Greens yesterday,' she might say. 'They are a most delightful couple, you know. He is quite different at home. Do you know he pays school fees for his steward's sons? But he says the most outrageous things about educated Africans.'

'I know,' said Obi. 'He will make a very interesting case for a psychologist.'

(Achebe *No Longer* 80)

Importantly, this is the same way the British Commissioner acted in Salih's *Season*. The narrator of the novel tells us that the



Commissioner, and the British in Sudan, thought highly of himself and looked down on the Sudanese. The narrator describes the British in Sudan as “gods”:

Commissioner was a god who had a free hand over an area larger than the whole of the British Isles and lived in an enormous palace full of servants and guarded by troops. They used to behave like gods. They would employ us, the junior government officials who were natives of the country to bring in the taxes. (Salih 40)

The coloniser’s arrogance in Salih’s *Season* reaches a climactic point when the coloniser claims ownership of the country of Sudan and denies natives the right of treading on his land. What is worse is that, when accused of being an intruder, the Sudanese citizen lowers his head which is not only suggestive of the Sudanese citizen’s consent to what is said but of his sense of being guilty as well:

When Mahmoud Wad Ahmed was brought in shackles to Kitchener after his defeat at the Battle of Atbara, Kitchener said to him, "Why have you come to my country to lay waste and plunder?" It was the intruder who said this to the person whose land it was, and the owner of the land bowed his head and said nothing. (Salih 63)

In Salih’s novel as well, the colonised is unable even to claim his very right to the land that is his. The Sudanese land is not the natives’ own, rather, it is the coloniser’s and the Sudanese are not allowed to tread on the lands of the Sudan as it is not theirs! British Kitchner even accuses the Sudanese Mahmoud Wad Ahmed of dirtying his land. Natives can be displaced since they do not have the right to live on a land that the coloniser claims to be his own.

Importantly, dialogue is almost absent between the coloniser and the colonised in both novels. In a hegemonic, patronizing

manner, Mr. Green orders and dictates in a way he deliberately adopts to make “the Others”, i. e. the Nigerians around him, feel inferior and intimidated. In Achebe's novel, the (superior coloniser) Mr. Green roars and growls rather than speaks and the (inferior colonised) Nigerians working with him listen and act accordingly. He, thus, takes to conquering and vanquishing the Nigerians in a way scrupulously noted and analysed by Obi himself (Achebe *No Longer* 81); one that he finds really humiliating to the colonised Obi.

It should be remembered that Obi is a descendant of a fearless fighter who roared like a lion. “He is the grandson of Ogbuefi Okonkwo who faced the white man single-handed and died in the fight. Stand up!” (Achebe *No Longer* 42). Nigeria portrayed in *No Longer at Ease* is a silenced, Okonkwoless one; it is an all-submissive, devoiced nation. Obi remembers the words of a Umuofian who said to him, “[i]n times past...Umuofia would have required of you to fight in her wars and bring home human heads” (Achebe *No Longer* 10). How have Umuofians, it should be asked, become pacified like that? How have they become that submissive? The radical change that took place in the Umuofians, with Obi being one of them, can somehow be inferred through the fact that the very name Obi can be read as reversal of Ibo, the language which Igbo clans and tribes spoke. Ironically enough, Obi's name is the short form of “Obiajulu” which meant, in Ibo, “the mind at last is at rest” (Achebe *Longer* 8).

Mr. Green does not miss a chance to snobbishly remind Nigerian citizens that they are slave-like to their master Mr. Green, the British boss, himself representing of British colonialism:

The meeting had practically agreed to this when it was disturbed by Obi's arrival. The President was just giving Joshua a piece of his mind on the subject of sleeping in the office, as a preliminary to lending him public funds. 'You did not leave Umuofia four hundred miles away to come and sleep in Lagos,' he told him. 'There are enough beds in Umuofia. If you

don't want to work, you should return there. You messengers are all like that. I have one in my office who is always getting permission to go to the latrine. (Achebe *No Longer* 60)

That Mr. Green should be looked at as epitomizing British imperialism of Nigeria, and that Achebe deliberately, so to speak, fashioned this very character to represent that occupation can be inferred from the following quotation, “[i]n the case of Green it was difficult to see what his deadline was, unless it was Nigeria's independence. They said he had put in his resignation when it was thought that Nigeria might become independent in 1956. In the event it did not happen and Mr Green was persuaded to withdraw his resignation” (Achebe *No Longer* 81).

### **Dwarfing Colonised Individuals and Nation**

Dwarfing individuals and, henceforth, the nation in its entirety is targeted by the coloniser. It is a two-way process: to persuade the colonised people of their backwardness and, at the same time, to show them how great the coloniser is; the road runs both ways. Mr. Green does not hesitate to describe one of the employees who used to work with him in the same office as an “ant” (Achebe *No Longer* 52); i. e. a tiny insect. This is quite revealing of Mr. Obi's dehumanizing of the Nigerians around him.

Dwarfing a colonised nation is also targeted. Mr. Green's comments are important in this respect. He looks despairingly at the Nigerian nation as a whole, “They are all corrupt” (Achebe *No Longer* 5). He goes on to assert that “the African is corrupt through and through” (Achebe *No Longer* 5). Further, he easily finds an excuse for his seeing of them as being mentally retarded, i. e. the way he wants to see them, “the fact that over countless centuries the African has been the victim of the worst climate in the world and of every imaginable disease. Hardly his fault. But he has been sapped mentally and physically” (Achebe *No Longer* 5).

Stereotyping is an act of confining and dwarfing; it stunts any possibilities of developing one's image. In Salih's novel as

well, Mr. Maxwell reminds Mostafa Sa'eed that, "our civilizing mission in Africa is of no avail. After all the efforts we've made to educate you, it's as if you'd come out of the jungle for the first time" (Salih 63). In his turn, Mostafa Sa'eed is aware of the despising look of the coloniser at the colonised. "The white man, merely because he has ruled us for a period of our history; will for a long time continue to have for us that feeling of contempt the strong have for the weak" (Salih 44).

The act of dwarfing colonised nations is accompanied by maximizing and stressing the important, justifiable presence of the coloniser. This idea is expressed in the two novels. As a Umuofian speaker says, "Greatness is now in the things of the white man. And so we too have changed our tune. We are the first in all the nine villages to send our son to the white man's land (Achebe *No Longer* 42). In Salih's novel, Richard says to Mansour, "you cannot manage to live without us. You used to complain about colonialism and when we left you created the legend of neo-colonialism. It seems that our presence, in an open or undercover form, is as indispensable to you as air and water" (Salih 44).

### **The Obi-Mr. Green Relationship**

The Obi-Mr. Green relationship is exemplary of the coloniser-colonised relationship. When Obi first got his job, he was grimly met by Mr. Green. It was not difficult for Obi to figure out the Manager's cheerless face and to get the impression that he is a *persona nongrata*, i. e. an unwelcomed person. Mr Green did not rise from his seat or shake hands with Obi. He just muttered few words that filled Obi with negative feelings:

Obi had already met Mr Green that morning. As soon as he had arrived he had been taken in to be introduced to him. Without rising from his seat or offering his hand Mr Green muttered something to the effect that Obi would enjoy his work; one, if he wasn't bone-lazy, and two, if he was prepared to use his loaf.

'I'm assuming you have one to use,' he concluded.  
(Achebe *No Longer* 49)

One thing buzzed Obi greatly. He could not understand why despite his detesting of Nigerians, Mr. Green was that dedicated in his work. Obi never hesitated to express his contempt and disrespect of the Nigerians in general, and of the educated Nigerians in particular. It was only later in the novel that Obi came to discover the reason:

Here was a man who did not believe in a country, and yet worked so hard for it. Did he simply believe in duty as a logical necessity? He continually put off going to see his dentist because, as he always said, he had some urgent work to do. He was like a man who had some great and supreme task that must be completed before a final catastrophe intervened.  
(Achebe *No Longer* 81)

British colonial paws won't let go of a prey like Nigeria, a country that in addition to its strategic location at the heart of the African continent, is quite rich in natural resources.

In the colonial countries, on the contrary, the policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. (Fanon 38)

### **Mostafa Sa'eed's Outlook on the Coloniser**

Mostafa Sa'eed's personality and his outlook on the coloniser are different from Obi's. Sa'eed is not any humble; rather, he is full of pride, a sense empowered by history and tradition that are always present in his conversations with English. He tells one of the women he loved in England:

Doubtless one of my forefathers was a soldier in Tarik ibn Ziyad's army. Doubtless he met one of your ancestors as she gathered in the grapes from an orchard in Seville. Doubtless he fell in love with her at first sight and she with him. He lived with her for a time, then left her and went off to Africa. There he married again and I was one of his progeny in Africa, and you have come from his progeny in Spain" (Salih 34)

Elsewhere, he reminds the English that he is not a person with frailty that can easily be vanquished. He stands his ground firmly. If it were not as an opponent that he spoke to them, it is as a man of greater history shielded by great tradition. Even when being tried and accused of having killed an English woman and leading a number of English women to commit suicide, he never lowered a head or asked for pardon or a favour in whatever way:

“Were you the cause of Ann Hammond's suicide?”

“I don't know”

“And Sheila Greenwood?”

“I don't know”

“And Isabella Seymour?”

“I don't know”

“Did you kill Jean Morris?”

“Yes.”

“Did you kill her intentionally?”

“Yes.” (Salih 29-30)

Mostafa Sa'eed's outlook on the coloniser does not reveal the least admiration; indeed, the opposite is true. His self confidence all through the novel speak of a sense of superiority and self confidence that Achebe's *Obi* remarkably lacks.

### **Conclusion**

C. Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* and T. Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* are two prominent novels that expose the aftermaths of British colonialism of the authors' countries, Nigeria and Sudan. Many similarities underlie the authors of the novels. In their turn, the works and the protagonists have many features in common. Such similarities include, the coloniser's contemptuous outlook on the colonised, and the humiliating way of dealing with the colonised, the coloniser's hegemonic way of dealing with the colonised. The novels' protagonists travelling and studying in England in addition to other points and the hybridity of the protagonists' identities.

Despite the importance of the shared grounds underlying both novels, the protagonists and the authors, the reactions of the protagonists to the coloniser's dominance and arrogance are significantly different. While Achebe's Obi is all-submissive to Mr. Green, representing British colonization, of Nigeria, Salih's Mostafa Sa'eed never lowers his head to the coloniser.

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