

# The Translator as a Colonial Agent: Reframing the South in the English Translation of *Season of Migration to the North*

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**Abstract**—This paper sets out to examine the translation of Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* in light of Narrative theory. In his work, Salih is writing back to the empire as a form of resistance against British Colonialism. The translation seems to tone this resistance down by constructing a narrative that underlines the superiority of the North over the South. The paper attempts to offer a fresh perspective as it explores how the South is reframed in the target text to be represented to the target audience. It also attempts to answer the question of how the East/South is narrated and whether it has been (dis)empowered in the novel's translation. Given the importance of the text, it is essential to investigate how the novel has been introduced in the West using a strong and adaptable framework capable of capturing the complexities of the interactions among various powers involved. Narrative theory offers such a framework and is particularly suitable for the current study.

**Index Terms**—postcolonial translation, narrative theory, Tayeb Salih, reframing, *Season of Migration to the North*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between language, translation and colonialism became a key topic for research in translation studies (Robinson, 2011, p. 38). In a colonial context, translation plays a vital role in reconstructing power imbalance and representing the image of the colonized, on the one hand, and the colonizer, on the other. In this paper, we examine the English translation of Tayeb Salih's most seminal novel *Season of Migration to the North* (1966). In his novel, Salih is reporting back to the British Empire, as a form of resistance against the colonial powers, and he is claiming an equal position to the colonizer (Said, 1994, p. 211). Despite the importance of this classical postcolonial Arabic novel, few researches (Hammad, 2016) have discussed the disempowered representation of the South/East in the translation of this novel. This paper tries to find if the translator has used the translation to eroticize the target text, disempower the Orient and produce an exotic image of the colonized. Thus, it attempts to answer the question of how the East/South is narrated and whether it has been (dis)empowered in the translation. To examine patterns of discrepancies between the source text *Mawsim Al-Hijra Ela Al-Shamal* and its English translation *Season of Migration to the North*, we use Mona Baker's (2006) narrative theory that examines how translation can be used to promote alternative or less dominant narratives of reality. This paper utilizes narrative theory to find out whether the translator, might have produced a narrative that undermines Salih's resistance provided in the original text.

In his work, Salih is writing as a way of resistance against the Western's hegemony over the South. Yet, the translator seems to subdue the author's voice in occasions where the latter directs criticism towards the West. The translator, in different occasions, appears to frame the narrative that the colonized (Sudanese people) do not reject colonial powers. This is read as a method to manipulate the reader by constructing a narrative that is different from the one produced in the source text. Salih's original text aims at empowering the South and at the same time, claims an equal position to the colonial North. Nevertheless, in the narrative generated by the translator, the former looks up to the latter and acknowledges its superiority. This paper examines strategies used by the translator to change the narratives that resist colonizer into narratives of exoticism and eroticism; and thus, undermining the resistance intended by the author.

### A. *Season of Migration to the North*

In the words of *the Guardian*, Tayeb Salih is “one of the best known Arabic novelists of the 20th century” (Alison, 2009). His *Mawsim Al-Hijra Ela Al-Shamal*, published in Beirut 1966, is significant for resisting British colonialism and reinterpreting the power dynamics between the North and the South. The novel is concerned with the imposition of European modernity on contemporary Arab societies. Makdisi describes Salih’s seminal work as “a radical intervention in the field of postcolonial Arab discourse, which has long been centered on the debate between “traditionalism” and “Westernism”” (Makdisi, 1992, p. 805).

Denys Johnson-Davies translated the novel in 1969. The translation received mostly a great response in Western and Arab literary circles. Yet, some Sudanese scholars, like Aisha Musa, still believe the translator to have “failed” in providing an accurate translation of the novel, particularly, in rendering the Sudanese cultural-specific terms despite the important value they add to maintain an original taste to the novel. Johnson-Davies, instead, changed these terms into Western concepts of rhetoric (al-Fayya, 2013).

### B. *Season of Migration as a Form of Resistance*

In his work, Tayeb Salih is writing back to the British empire as a Sudanese person who has received his education in the UK and went back to Sudan. Writing back to the empire serves as a form of resistance, reclaiming personal ownership by challenging hegemony and dismantling Orientalist tropes. This act overturns imperial narratives and disrupts colonial discourse (Burney, 2012, p. 106). In his *Culture and Imperialism* (1994, p. 216), Said identifies writing back to the empire as form of resistance. He explains how this type of writing is used by the subaltern to resist colonialism and to create a counter-discourse against power and imperialism. Said further explains that writing back to metropolitan cultures disrupts European narratives about the East and Africa, replacing them with a more powerful style (Said, 1994, p. 216).

Salih, in his text, strives to claim an equal position to the British colonizer and criticizes its existence in his country. Salih’s work “is and is not a novel; it is and is not a ‘Hakawati’ oral tale; it is like *Heart of Darkness* as much as it is unlike it; it draws its formal inspirations from Europe as much as it seeks to distort and undermine them; it remains, finally, an unstable synthesis of European and Arabic forms and traditions” (Makdisi, 1992, p. 815). For many Arab critics, *Season of Migration to the North*, projects a “final closure of imperialism.” They interpret the novel as a strong voice against Westerner’s influence and interference in the East (Makdisi, 1992, p. 815). Ba’li Hafnawi explains that “Saleh wanted his protagonist to be strong enough to settle accounts between the East and the West” (Hafnawi, 2015, p. 34, our translation).

Other critics contend that accepting the novel as a work against imperialism is imaginary (Makdisi, 1992, p. 815). It is rather in a limbo between the West and East. Nonetheless, the work is seen by most critics, even those arguing its stand in between the North and the South, as an attempt to distort and undermine connections to the West (Makdisi, 1992, p. 815).

Through comparing between Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* and Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, Said explains that Conrad’s river is now the Nile whose waters “rejuvenate its people” (Said, 1994, p. 211). In Salih’s novel, there is a reversal of the theme of the river “as rejuvenating, rejoicing and healing is in stark opposition to the dark and ominous river of the *Heart of Darkness*” (Burney, 2012, p. 112). Conrad’s European protagonist and first person British narrative are also reversed through the use of Arabic. Similarly, the trip is reversed; instead of going from North to South, Salih’s protagonist goes from Sudan to Europe; that is South to North. As for an unnamed narrator, he does not speak as a Westerner, but from the perspective of a Sudanese villager from the East. Thus, the margin becomes the center of the novel (Burney, 2012, p. 112). In light of this, one can argue that, in Salih’s work, the oriental represents himself and speaks for himself instead of being represented by the West and spoken for by Westerners.

Postcolonial works can be translated to propose cultural inequalities and to suggest power imbalances between colonizers and colonized. In a postcolonial context, translation has three “subsequential but overlapping roles”. It is a “channel of colonization,” a “lightening-rod for culture inequalities continuing after the collapse of colonialism” and a “channel of decolonization” (Robinson, 2011, p. 31). This can be achieved by constructing, highlighting, or undermining certain realities about the South and North in the novel. It can create narratives that do not exist in the source text, which ultimately contributes to the creation of other realities that the original text did not insinuate. The translation of Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* can be an example on this emphasized/deemphasized power struggle that the translation provides.

## II. NARRATIVE THEORY

After the cultural turn in translation studies, translation is no longer seen as a prescriptive model that dictates how translators should translate; it rather describes how translators function. The importance of this descriptive approach in translating is seen in the inclusion of the extra-linguistic factors that influence the production of the translation. An important backdrop of the descriptive approach is Baker’s narrative theory.

In 2006, Baker, in her *Translation and Conflict*, introduces the concept of narrative in translation studies by describing translation as narration with the translators acting as narrators to the original text. Baker develops her theory based on the work of Somers (1992) and Somers and Gibson (1994, p. 41). They perceive the narrative as “the principle

and inescapable” mode of communication through which we experience the world rather than an optional mode of communication. Hence, everything we know is “the result of numerous crosscutting story-lines in which social actors locate themselves.” Baker uses that narrative approach from a sociological perspective (Baker, 2006, 2013, 2014; Harding, 2012). Baker's approach is founded on the constructive understanding that narrative is the exclusive means by which we can relate to the world and our place within it (Baker, 2014, p. 159).

Baker (2006) elaborates that translators contribute to the constructing and circulating of narratives about the world. Whereas other scholars have emphasized the importance of examining the final product of the translation to reveal the impact of the translator's interference (Toury, 1995; Venuti, 1995; Schäffner, 2003), it is Baker who first suggests examining the translation, as a renarration that does not represent the source text, but rather constructs events and characters in another language. According to Baker, narratives are “public and personal ‘stories’ that we subscribe to and that guide our behavior. They are the stories we tell ourselves, not just those we explicitly tell other people, about the world(s) in which we live” (Baker, 2006, p. 19).

Narrative theory allows us to move beyond a longstanding tradition, in the field of translation studies that examines the pattern of abstract decisions made by translators such as Toury's norms theory (1995) and Venuti's theory of domestication and foreignization (1995). It uses, instead, the “narratives being elaborated within and across texts allows us to engage with the potential motives for both repeated and individual (one-off) choices, and encourages us to look beyond the text into the political and social context of interaction” (Baker, 2014, p. 159).

Baker identifies four types of social narratives: ontological, public, conceptual, and meta-narratives. Ontological, or personal narratives, are the stories individuals tell themselves about their place in the world and their personal experiences throughout history (Baker, 2006, p. 28; 2010, p. 350). For example, biographies, including autobiographies, are all considered to be personal narratives. Public narratives are a group of ontological narratives shared by people as a group and circulated among social and institutional formations such as family, religious institutions, and media (Baker, 2006, p. 28; 2010, p. 350). The third type is conceptual or disciplinary narratives, which consist of concepts and explanations that academic scholars and researchers elaborate for themselves and others about their object of inquiry. The last kind of narrative is meta-narratives (master narratives) which are “public narratives that persist over long periods of time and influence the lives of people across a wide range of settings” (Baker, 2010, p. 351; Allawzi et al., 2018, p. 3). Meta-narratives can be about capitalism versus communism, the individual versus society, and barbarism/nature versus civility.

In her work, Baker (2006, 2007, 2010, 2013, 2014) uses the concept of frame as a tool to explain how the source text can be narrated in different ways by different translators. Translators exploit features in the source text to “frame or reframe a text or utterance for a set of addressees” (Baker, 2007, p. 158). They can achieve this in the body of the translation by using techniques such as lexical, semantic, and syntactic changes or around the translation and by using paratextual elements; like the insertion of images and footnotes, and spatial arrangement (Baker, 2007, p. 158).

Baker perceives this act, or framing, as a work of activism since it directs the way people see certain events by choosing specific meanings or words in a dominant discourse (Allawazi et al., 2023, p. 1327). She adds that “narrative is often linked to the moralizing impulse in human beings, which is partly what makes it an attractive framework for engaging with forms of activism” (Baker, 2013, p. 24; Dubbati & Abudayeh, 2017, p. 150). This position allows the studying of a translator's partiality in a postcolonial context; and thus, enables colonized nations “to participate in the dialectic of power, the ongoing process of political discourse, and strategies for social change” (Tymoczko, 2000, p. 24; Dubbati & Abudayeh, 2017, p. 150). In the junction between postcolonial studies and translation studies, translators, like colonized objects, realize that cultures of different narratives are not equal in power since one overpowers the other (Tymoczko, 2007). In this context, a target text either perpetuates or resists the colonialist discourse (Dubbati & Abudayeh, 2017, p. 150). Let's take the example of al-Bujairami's translation of Joe Sacco's graphic novel *Footnotes in Gaza*. In his translation, al-Bujairami sees himself as “an activist who has a mission to reframe his people's cause as a struggle for independence. We locate several patterns of interferences that aim to affect readers' perception of the Palestinians and Israelis in Sacco's recounting of the events of Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip in 1956” (Dubbati & Abudayeh, 2017, p. 147). This shows how the translator becomes an editor to the source texts, and his/her ideologies impact the translated text.

### III. TRANSLATION AS A TOOL OF COLONIZATION

Translation is a means to express the cultural power of the colonizer (Simon & St-Pierre, 2000, p. 10). Colonizers; including orientalists, anthropologists and missionaries, translated specific text that are compatible with the image they wanted to construct of the subjugated world (Simon & St-Pierre, 2000, p. 10). Munday demonstrates that “translation to have always played an active role in the colonization process and dissemination of an ideologically motivated image of colonized people” (Munday, 2006, p. 134). Translation has always been used as a tool to colonize and deprive the colonized from voicing themselves (Behnam et al., 2017, p. 566). In this context, one of the cultures claims a superior role by gaining control over the subservient culture, the culture of the colonized. Thus translation, in such occasions, shifts the scale of power in favor of the colonizer (Bassnett & Bush, 2006, p. 4).

By the same token, Niranjana, in her *Sitting Translation, History, Post-structuralism, and the Colonial Context*, clarifies how translation was used in order to establish and preserve imbalanced relations of power and dominance

(Niranjana, 1992). A particular case is manifested in the translations of Indian texts into English for the interests of British colonizers (Snell-Hornby, 2006, p. 94). The work of the orientalist Sir William Jones makes a clear example as he used translation to “domesticate the Orient and thereby turn it into a province of European learning” (Said, 1978, p. 78). Niranjana further adds that Jones’s work had a “long lasting impact” on scholarly work explaining that it contributed to the construction of a false image of a submissive and idle Hindu nation adopted by later writers (Snell-Hornby, 2006, p. 94). The same assumption is made, here, about the translation of Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* whereby the translator seems to be changing the power balance and refuting the equal position that Salih claims in his novel.

Bassnett and Trivedi (1999) demonstrate that translation is not an innocent act, but is rather associated with the various phases of colonization. Accordingly, they assert that defamiliarising the language highlights the source text differences to readers. Similarly, Niranjana (as cited in Hodges, 2010) believes that translators must preserve the source text peculiarities even if seemingly difficult to readers, claiming that the opposite would foster the Western orientation and further pave the way for domination.

This postcolonial aspect to translation is further enriched by Jacquemond (1992) when he examines translation inequalities between France and Egypt. One of Jacquemond’s hypotheses in this context suggests that a dominant culture will only translate works from a subordinate culture that align with its preexisting perceptions of that culture (Jacquemond, 1992). Robinson (2011, p. 34) notes that when dominated culture-texts are translated by hegemonic cultures they are typically presented as mysterious, esoteric, and interested to only a small group of specialists or full of critical apparatus to impose an academic or specialist interpretation on the reader. Jacquemond, further, elaborates that by providing the example of the Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz whose fame in the West can be attributed to adopting European values in his writings. The chosen texts fit the European preconceived image of the Egyptian society (Jacquemond, 1992, p. 34).

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

The narrative approach utilized by Baker (2014, p. 159) does not conduct analysis based on “recurrent linguistic patterns”. Instead, it considers the body of analysis an independent narrative representing a certain perspective of an event “with characters, settings, outcomes or projected outcomes, and plot” (Baker, 2014, p. 159). This fits with Harding’s view, who maintains that “it was especially revealing to discover, through the textual analysis, how eyewitness accounts were marginalized, manipulated, selectively appropriated into, or simply deselected from, each primary narrative text” (Harding, 2012, p. 292).

The paper, therefore, adopts a textual approach to address the main question of how the East/South is narrated and whether it has been (dis)empowered in the translation. The analysis is carried out through a comparison between the narrative constructed by the Arabic source text and the one constructed by the target text.

In order to demonstrate a coherent narrative, translators may employ linguistic and non-linguistic features to detect translational behaviors used in reframing realities (Baker, 2014, p. 159). The researchers thus observe changes at the linguistic level by finding examples of omission, addition and shift in the connotative meaning. The examples are classified into categories corresponding to the strategy used to convey a different meaning. After comparing the source text with the target text, it has been found out that the translator changed the meaning of the target text in 25 instances.

In light of the aforementioned, and in selecting the examples, the researchers’ first attempt was to look for repetitive linguistic choices such as omission, addition, shift in connotative meaning, etc. Nonetheless, in most of the examples the difference in the meaning revealed in target text was conveyed through shifts in the meaning. Thus the researchers’ then relied on two measures to select the examples based on Jacquemond (1992) and Robinson’s (2011) submission (see Translation as a tool of colonization): Firstly, examples that appear to change the meaning of the text to emphasize Western’s hegemony over the East by using linguistic features that emphasizes the West’s superiority and mitigate critical accounts of the West.

Secondly, examples that use linguistic features and, in some occasions, highlights sexual references to produce an image that disempowers the Orient and satisfies European’s expectations of Eastern societies, particularly, that the Sudanese one.

##### A. Empowering the North

In his work, Salih is writing as a way of resistance against the Western’s hegemony over the South. Yet, as can be observed in the table below, the translator seems to subdue the author’s voice in occasions where the latter directs criticism towards the West. The translator frames the narrative that the colonized (Sudanese people) do not object the colonizer’s existence. In the narrative generated by the translator, the former looks up to the latter and acknowledges its superiority. For example, the following phrase in the source text, *تأكد أنهم احتضنوا أرواح الناس*, describing the English colonizer (Salih, 2005, p. 50) means “be assured that they embraced the most despicable of people”. Yet, it is translated as “be sure they will direct our affairs from Afar. This is because they have left behind them people who think as they do” (Salih, 2003, p. 53). Salih is herein encountering the colonizer to claim superiority according to Foucault’s interpretation of interlingual power relations when he has often highlighted the authority power has on all forms of communication; that is to say there is really no neutral or politics-free encounter. To achieve this, Salih introduces the

character of the protagonist Mustafa Said who avenges his colonized homeland through his mischievous and vicious behavior in the land of colonizer. Mustafa Said is, thus, presented as “evil, savage, exotic, mysterious black god” pursuing for his desires and pleasures just to reverse the colonial phase as a way of taking revenge on colonizers” (Süreci, 2015, p. 476). The translator, in comparison to the source text, changes the meaning the author intends to convey by choosing milder terms to describe Western interference in the East. He uses the word “direct” to refer to Western colonization of the East, in particular, Sudan. The translation in this example is a more passive version of the novel that originally reads as a postcolonial text aspiring to reshape the relationship between the North and the South. Shamma, on this account, does not redeem this interlingual encounter (translation) in a postcolonial context as a power-free mode. He rather elaborates that power asymmetry could be emphasized and brought to focus. A translator from an ex-colonizing nation can thus use translation as an arena to re-establish power relations and claim dominance as an ex-colonizer over the ex-colonized (Shamma, 2009, p. 187). By interfering with the narration and re-narrative processes, the translator does not copy texts but creates cultural realities (Baker, 2013).

In another example, one of the characters in the novel describes the practices of the English colonizer in Sudan saying: /أردال الناس هم الذين تبوأوا المراكز الضخمة أيام الإنجليز كنا واثقين أن مصطفى سعيد سيصير له شأن يذكر: tabawa’ū almarākiz aḍakhma ‘ayyam alinglīz kunnā wāthiqīn anna muṣṭafā sa’īd sayāṣīr lah sha’n yuthkar (Salih, 2005, p. 50). The statement means that the most despicable of people are the ones attained the best positions during the English rule. Nevertheless, the aforementioned statement is translated as “this because they left behind them people who think as they do. They showed favour to nonentities” (Salih, 2003, p. 53). The translator once more, in this example, reduces the criticism that the source text is directing toward the English colonizer. He selects certain terms to describe those who were assigned best positions during the English colonization only as people of no importance. Reducing criticism in this instance might indicate that the translator is changing the meaning of the text to construct a less negative narrative of the English colonizer. According to Baker (2010, p. 61), translators and interpreters accentuate, undermine or modify aspects of the narrative(s) encoded in the source text or utterance to create a narrative different from the source text. The translation reframes a narrative that empowers the North and makes it stronger than the South.

In the source text, one of the Sudanese characters named Mansour rhetorically asks Richard, an English man: ماذا /أعطيتونا غير حفنة من الشركات الاستعمارية نزفت دماءنا وما تزال our blood – and still do?” The translator selects “capitalist companies” (Salih, 2003, p. 60) to replace شركات /استعمارية/colonial companies (Salih, 2005, p. 56). On this account, Young (2015, p. 278) explains that the word ‘colony’ is “(introduced into English in the mid-nineteenth century, into French at the beginning of the twentieth) increasingly lost the positive aura that had been retained from the Roman *coloniae* and by 1919 came to be used as a derogatory term by its opponents, with the implication that all colonialism represented a form of exploitation of subaltern peoples by too-powerful nations”. Capitalism, on the other hand is defined as “an economic and political system in which property, business, and industry are controlled by private owners rather than by the state, with the purpose of making a profit” (Cambridge Dictionary). As a result, the translator seems to be eliminating any references to colonialism attached to Britain and thus, dismissing allegations of colonialism against Britain. One can argue that using capitalist companies instead of colonialist companies alleviates the criticism intended by the author against the West and Britain in particular. Using the word ‘capitalist’ can also give the implication that by controlling Sudan, Britain brought capitalist companies that contributed to the growth and development of the African country. Based on the aforementioned, it can be opined that the translator frames a narrative that doesn’t associate Britain with colonialism and exploitation, but rather seems to commend it for bringing capitalist companies, investment and progress in Sudan. This is substantiated by Baker (2006, 2007) who elucidates that translators alter their translations to reframe a narrative different from the one delivered in the original text.

Although the translation received mostly a great response in Western and Arab literary circles, the translator seems to have “failed” in providing an accurate translation of the novel, particularly, in rendering the Sudanese cultural-specific terms despite the important value they add to maintain an original taste of the novel. He, instead, transferred Western concepts of rhetoric. For example, for the word اهلي, which means ‘my family and relatives’, the translator chose ‘my people’, eliminating the intimate dimension the Arabic text has (al-Fayya, 2013).

TABLE 1  
EXAMPLES DEMONSTRATING EMPOWERING THE NORTH

Source text	Target text
تأكد أنهم احتضنوا أردال الناس. أردال الناس هم الذين تبوأوا المراكز الضخمة أيام الإنجليز كنا واثقين أن مصطفى سعيد سيصير له شأن يذكر ta ākkad ānnaḥum iḥṭadanū ‘ardhāl annas. ‘ardhāl annās him allathīn tabawa’ū almarākiz aḍakhma ‘ayyam al’inglīz kunnā wāthiqīn ‘anna muṣṭafā sa’īd sayāṣīr lah sha’n yuthkar	Be sure they will direct our affairs from afar. This is because they have left behind them people who think as they do
شركات استعمارية Sharikāt isti’ māryya	Capitalist companies
وكانوا يتصرفون كالآلهة، يسخروننا نحن الموظفون الصغار أولاد البلد لجلب العوائد. Wakānū yattaṣarrafūn kal’āliha, yusakhirūnana naḥn almuwaẓfūn aṣighār ‘awlād albalad lijalb al’awā’id	- Omitted
أم تحسب أننا خواجات ām taḥsab anna khawājāt	Or do you reckon we’ve become anglicized.

### B. Disempowering the South

As demonstrated in the table below, the translator seems to highlight sexual references even if they are implied in the text. For example, the protagonist Mustafa Sa'eed states "سأحرر أفريقيا بـ...ي" /sa ūḥarrir 'afriqiā bi... (Salih, 2005, p. 111) which can be translated as "I will liberate Africa with...". The protagonist here alludes to his phallic organ without making any explicit reference to it. Nevertheless, the translator is changing the implied meaning to an explicit one by selecting the word 'penis' in order to translate the statement as "I'll liberate Africa with my penis" (Salih, 2003, p. 111). The translator here creates an erotic image by highlighting the discourse of pornography. The discourse of sex might gain currency in the West and can be easily commercialized in a Western context. The translator seems to have manipulated the text and highlighted the discourse of eroticism to meet the expectations of the target readership. This fits hand and glove with Robinson who explains that texts translated from dominated cultures into European languages often conform to European values and canons of writing (Robinson, 2011, p. 35). He, thus, constructs a narrative that reinforces an orientalist image of the East as an exotic and inferior non-European other. The discourse of eroticism seems to be one of the reasons that have motivated the translator Denys Johnson-Davies to translate the novel. The translator, in an interview by Ferial Ghazoul, states: "yes erotic has always interested me [...] while the humorous, the dramatic, the tragic only too often fail when translated across the linguistic frontiers, the erotic remains effectively erotic" (Johnson-Davies & Ghazoul, 1983, p. 83).

In the following examples, the translator selects the word 'infidel' to refer to the Arabic term نساء النصارى which means 'Christian women'. The term Christian is positively used in the Quran and in the Arabic culture, and Muslims are commanded not to abuse the term since they believe in Christianity as a religion.

“حريم النصارى لا يعرفن لهذا الشيء كما تعرف له بنات البلد. نساء غلف, الحكاية عندهن كشراب الماء. بنت البلد -تعمل الدلكة و الريحة و الدخان” (Salih, 2005, p. 67).

ḥarīm annaṣārā lā ya`rifn lihāthā ashai` kamā ta`rif lah banāt albalad. nisā` ghulf, alḥikāia `indahunn

kashurb almā`. Bint albalad ta`mal addalkha wa arīḥa wadukhān

'The infidel women aren't so knowledgeable about this business as our village girls,' said Bint Majzoub.

'They're uncircumcised and treat the whole business like having a drink of water. The village girl rubbed herself all over with oil and perfume [...]. (Salih, 2003, p. 81).

- قالوا نسوان النصارى شئ فوق التصور - (Salih, 2005, p. 73)

Qālū niswān annaṣārā shai` fawq attaṣawur

They say the infidel women are something Unbelievable (Salih, 2003, p. 80)

- هذا يكفي. خمر النصارى هذه جبارة. ليس كعرق التمر - (Salih, 2005, p. 114)

Hādhā yakfī. Khamr annaṣārā hādhīh jabbara, lais ka`irq attamr

That is enough of the heathen's drink, said Bint Majzoub, it's certainly formidable stuff and not a bit like date arak. (Salih, 2003, p. 125)

The translator disregards using the word 'Christian' and instead he opts for the word 'infidel' that applies to nonbelievers. This word creates a derogatory image of Christians and imposes violence on the source text. Using this term highlights the binary opposition that categorizes people as believers vs. infidels and thus, the translation constructs a narrative projecting the colonized (people of the South) as extreme and fanatic. However, one wonders "how far can we argue that the village in the Sudan is so dogmatic, indoctrinated, and fanatic, bearing in mind that Islam is not a major force in their everyday life inasmuch as the social rituals they vehemently adhered to?" (Hammad, 2016, p. 119). The translator of the novel, based on the aforementioned, seems to be producing a text that disempowers the South. He generates a target text that, instead of challenging the ethnocentricity and interference of the North, describes the subjects of the South as submissive and, to some extent, content with the colonial presence. The reader of the translation, consequently, becomes "a disempowered spectator" (Scott, 2000, p. 71).

In a different occasion, the narrator of the novel describes the protagonist Mustafa Sa'eed as ابن الإنجليز المدلل /ibn alinglīz almodallal which means 'the spoilt son of the English' (Salih, 2005, p. 49). Yet, this statement is translated as 'He was the spoilt child of the English' (Salih, 2003, p. 52). Selecting the word 'child' instead of 'son' depicts the protagonist as immature, naive, unskilled and inexperienced subject. Accordingly, the hero, whom the author wanted to be strong and intelligent to confront the West, is now projected as an immature, vulnerable and weak hero who will never be able to stand against the colonizing West.

Similar studies by Shamma (2009), Faiq (2001), and Sengupta (1996), examine translations from the periphery to the centre, i.e. translations into hegemonic languages, reaching a similar conclusion. These studies explain how the culture of the colonizer enforces its norms and expectations upon works coming from former colonies. These works "are expected to conform to a particular set of images of what an "authentic" representation of that culture should be" (Shamma, 2009, p. 190). Rafael, in a similar note, argues that translation corresponded with the colonial powers during colonization (Rafael, 1988, p. 213). Cheyfitz agrees by illustrating that translation was 'the central act of European colonization and imperialism in America' (Cheyfitz, 1991, p. 104).

The deliberate choices of exoticism and eroticism that the translator has made seem to construct a narrative that provides an exotic representation of the Other, Orientals in this case, leading one to question the ethical credibility of similar texts representing different races, societies and cultures. In a similar link, Jaber explains that Western media

channels construct an exotic narrative of the Other to be represented as inferior in comparison to Western cultures. He opines:

Using particular linguistic and translational choices during the global media's representation of the Other can impose ethical dilemmas since they represent different humans, races, religions, and civilizations. In this sense, Western media represents and sometimes stereotype Eastern cultures and societies as inferior in comparison to Western cultures and societies. They emphasize "the West's" political, economic, and cultural domination over "the East". (Jaber, 2016, p. 69)

The narrative framed by the translation reflects an acknowledgment of the superiority of the North or the West and, and at the same time, inferiority of the East or the South. Hence, it can be best described as disempowering the South. The translation of Salih's novel can be described as exotic, mysterious and difficult to understand. When a dominant culture translates a work produced by a dominated culture, the translation is usually seen as exotic, mysterious, difficult and in need of intellectuals to interpret them (Robinson, 2011, p. 31). Furthermore, hegemonic cultures will only translate works by authors that are compatible with the former's preconceived notions of the latter and that conformity to hegemonic stereotypes. Through the act of translation, hegemonic cultures make colonized cultures abide by their will (Robinson, 2011, p. 31).

Another assumption developed by Jacquemond (1992, p. 152) is that authors in dominated cultures, who seek fame and publicity, tend to write for their work to be translated into hegemonic cultures. This requires a certain degree of conformity with Western's perception of the East. Jacquemond (1992, p. 153) provides the example of the Nobel Laureate Naguib Mahfouz who gained fame because of his compliance with European values in his works. The translations of Mahfouz's works are compatible with the European's preconceived image of Egyptian society. On the other hand, Mahfouz's other works, particularly his post-1967 short stories, do not seem to meet European's expectations values and are hence not selected to be translated into European languages (Jacquemond, 1992, p. 153).

Jacquemond's assumption can be applied to Salih's *Season of Migration to The North*. Though Salih mainly writes this work as a form of resisting colonial powers by reporting back to the empire, he adds includes sexual scenes throughout the novel. This work was published in the age of sexual revolution 1960s-1980s in which many European writers and authors included erotic segments in their works to meet the expectation of the audience. These European expectations might have motivated Salih to add eroticism to his novel. Salih is writing back to the empire as a form of resistance against the hegemonic colonial discourse and for this resistance to gain publicity in the west, he tries to satisfy European taste by including eroticism in his work. Accordingly, eroticism in this case becomes a means of resistance, yet, the translator is not only using, but also emphasizing eroticism as a means to sexualize the Orient and to fit the North's preconceived notions of the South.

TABLE 2  
EXAMPLES DEMONSTRATING DISEMPowering THE SOUTH

Source text	Target text
حريم النصاري لا يعرفون لهذا الشيء كما تعرف له بنات البلد. نساء غلف الحكاية عندهن كشرب الماء. بنت البلد - تعمل الدلكة و الريحة و الدخان ḥarīm annaṣārā lā ya`rifn liḥāthā ashai` kamā ta`rif lah banāt albalad. nisā` ghulf, alḥikāia `indahunn kashurb almā`. Bint albalad ta`mal addalkha wa arīḥa wadukhān	The <u>infidel women</u> aren't so knowledgeable about this business as our village girls," said BintMajzoub. "They're uncircumcised and treat the whole business like having a drink of water. The <u>village girl</u> rubbed herself all over with oil and perfume
قالوا نسوان النصاري شيء فوق التصور Qālū niswān annaṣārā shai` fawq attasawur	They say the <u>infidel women</u> are something unbelievable.
هذا يكفي. خمر النصاري هذه جبارة. ليس كعرق التمر Hādhā yakfi. Khamr annaṣārā hādhīh jabbāra, lais ka`irq attamr	That is enough of the <u>heathen's</u> drink, said Bint Majzoub, it's certainly formidable stuff and not a bit like date arak.
سأحرر أفريقيا ب...ي sa ūḥarrir `afirīqiā bi	I'll liberate Africa with my penis
علي الطلاق هذه أجمل حمارة في البلد كلها `alai atalāq hādhīh `ajmal ḥimārah fī albalad kullaha	I swear I'll divorce if she isn't the most beautiful donkey in the whole place
وأنا سوسن جارياتك wa`anā sawsan jariatuk	I am Sausan, your slave girl.

### C. Undermining a Reversed Colonialist 'Attack'

Salih writes his novel as a form of resistance as he attempts to create a counter-discourse against the colonial North. He tries to establish a position that is equal to the colonizer. In the source text, the protagonist Mustafa Sa'eed addresses English people (colonizers) saying: إني جئتكم غازيا (Salih, 2005, p. 56) which means "I have come to you as an invader". The translator, nevertheless, chooses the word فاتحا 'conqueror' instead of غازيا 'invader' and the translation, is thus, read as "I have come to you as a conqueror" (Salih, 2003, p. 60). According to Collins Dictionary the word غازيا 'invade' means to "enter forcibly or hostilely; come into as an enemy"<sup>1</sup> and 'conquest' is defined as "to overcome (an enemy, army, etc); defeat"<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/invade>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/conquer>

The target text changes the way the protagonist views himself in the colonial West from an invader to a conqueror. Salih, in his novel, wants the protagonist Mustafa Sa'eed to be strong enough to stand against the West (Hafnawi, 2015, p. 34). Thus by using the word 'invader' he is claiming the role that the English colonizer is playing in the South. He is describing the Southern subjects as colonizers invading the North by force and accordingly claiming a higher position than that of the English ex-colonizers. Additionally, the author seems to have deliberately used غازي and not فاتح as the latter has a positive connotation in Arabic indicating legitimacy and noble cause that usually comes with the Islamic conquests. It is used in Arabic and Islamic history when referring to the conquer of Mecca مكة فتح, the conquer of Jerusalem القدس فتح, and the conquer of Constantinople القسطنطينية فتح. The author seems to have deliberately selected غازي 'invader' seeking revenge from the colonial and invading North. Yet, the translator, despite his knowledge of Arabic language, history and culture and despite his probable knowledge of the difference in meaning and connotation between both words in Arabic, uses 'conqueror'. In English the direct equivalents for غازي is 'invader' and the one for فاتح is 'conqueror'. In light of this, and instead of conveying Salih's claim of achieving an equal, even superior, position to the North, the translation uses a milder tone by selecting the word 'conqueror' rather than 'invader'. While Salih claims the people of the South to forcibly enter and take control over the North (British colonizers), the translator's choice seems to dismiss the author's claim and keeps the North's superiority over the South. Accordingly, the translator denies the power of the once colonized other to which Salih attempts to attribute power and authority. The translator's choice of conqueror vs. invader reframes a narrative that empties the text from reversed colonialist 'attack'. "Conqueror," especially in a sexual context, does not have the same historicist impact of the word "invader." This supports the argument of translator's attempt to protect the western culture and power from being emasculated, which is the intention of the novel's protagonist's "invasion". This example illustrates Faiq's submission which considers translation to be a powerful tool in constructing representations of foreign cultures. The selection of the texts to be translated and the choices taken during translation can sometimes create domestic canons of foreign literatures and cultures. These canons assimilate to domestic values in the new culture that might be inaccurate representations of the canons of the original culture and literature (Faiq, 2004, p. 37).

In a different example, Bint Majzoub, one of the female characters in the novel, is describing one of her former husbands' sexual potency. Bakri, is making fun of Bint Majzoub's husband, doubting his sexual power as he says كانت العنز تاكل عشاhe/kanat al'anz ta'kul `ashāh. This is an idiomatic phrase in Arabic which is said to describe one's weak physical potentials. Wad Rayyes, in this example, forges a link between Bakri and goats indicating that Bakri is as physically weak as a goat. Instead of choosing an equivalent idiom in English, the translator opts for a literal translation that represents the other exotically. This exotic image, constructed by the translation, feeds into the narrative that satisfies the European expectation of an exotic version of an Oriental Sudanese society. The translator's refusal to attempt to properly appropriate a Sudanese/Arabic idiom, produces an exoticized image of the Sudanese culture, making it unrelatable and unfamiliar; thus, presenting it as untranslatable. The exoticization of the Sudanese culture reframes a narrative that others it and makes it unequal for confrontation and reverse colonization. The same view is shared by Hammad on the translation of the same example as she explains that translating this idiomatic expression literally in English, instead of paraphrasing, explicating, or finding a reasonably corresponding expression, is "an act of colonization" (Hammad, 2016, p. 115).

## V. CONCLUSION

This study examined the translation of Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* in light of Mona Baker's (2006) narrative theory. It attempted to answer the question of how the East/ South was narrated and whether it was empowered in the translation. The translation produced by Johnson-Davies can be an attempt to manipulate the text in the service of emphasizing a stereotypical image of the South. The findings demonstrated that, Johnson-Davis makes certain selections in his translation to change the narratives resisting the North to ones claiming power and hegemony over the South. As it unfolds, the narrative of the English version changes the power-balance, that Salih claims in his novel, by representing the South as an inferior non-European other. The translation also manipulates the reader by fabricating a narrative different from the one produced in the source text. This new narrative produces the discourse of eroticism and reflects an exotic image of the colonized. Even though the source text attempts at empowering the South, the English version disempowers the South and seems to empower the colonial North instead.

One final and concluding question is that why Johnson-Davies made these changes in translating Salih's novel. To answer the question, we came to the conclusion that Johnson-Davies made an attempt to construct a narrative that, as Jacquemond explains (1992, p. 154) fits into the European preconceived knowledge of the South. He therefore involved himself in the translation in an act that Tymoczko (2007) describes as 'self-reflexivity'. In an interview, Johnson-Davies expressed that the discourse of eroticism was the main motive behind the translation of the novel into English. Despite the importance of the current study's finding, a further analysis of texts translated by Johnson-Davies may reveal more interesting discoveries and shed more light on how the translator's choices may have informed the narratives of other translated works.



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