

**Displacement and Belonging in Miral Al-Tahawy's
Brooklyn Heights and Tayeb Salih's *Season of
Migration to the North: A Comparative Study***

التهجير والانتماء في روايتي بروكلن هاييتس لميرال الطحاوي وموسم الهجرة
الى الشمال للطيب صالح: دراسة مقارنة

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Master's Degree in English Language and Literature**

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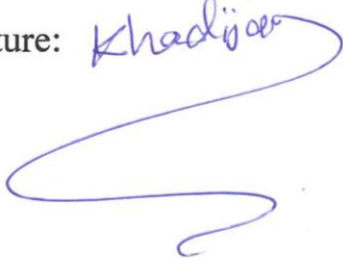
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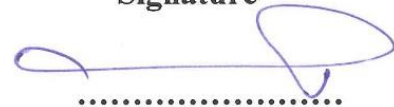
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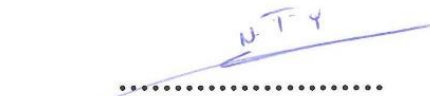
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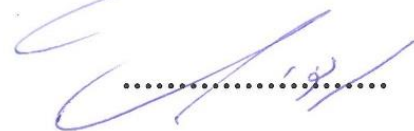
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In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my family; My husband Nabel, for his continuous encouragement, support and faith in me, without you I would never have gotten this far.

To my daughters, that light up my life, Hawra, Joman and Wareed for their patience and understanding throughout.

To my mother for always believing in me and my father, who always encouraged me to read. Also to my brothers Muaad, Mohammed, Feras and Rufa although thousands of miles apart your support always meant a lot

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Displacement and Belonging in Miral Al-Tahway's *Brooklyn Heights* and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This study focuses on finding and analyzing the meaning behind identity and how it is linked to belonging and displacement in Egyptian author Miral Al-Tahawy's *Brooklyn Heights* and Sudanese author Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. Both authors have been displaced and have dealt with this concept in their work separately. Using a content descriptive-analytical methodology, an in-depth analysis of both novels sheds light on the issues evolving around the concept of identity and belonging that immigrants undergo as they move from their familiar culture to a culture that is completely different.

While analyzing and comparing both novels it was found that certain factors contribute to what eventually lead up to the loss of identity and belonging that are often direct or indirect, such factors include religion, family, tradition, culture, and post-colonialism. This study also finds that a particular conflict arises between two identities that the protagonists try to develop. This conflict develops into an internal struggle that could either end with the protagonists' complete detachment from the previous identity, or the opposite occurs by persisting to the previous identity and living in its shell, rejecting what the second identity may carry in terms of renewal, additions, and openness. The third and last outcome is that it could end with a balance of two conflicting identities.

Keywords: Identity, Displacement, Belonging

دراسة مقارنة بين روايتي " بروكلن هايتس" للكاتبة ميرال الطحاوي و "موسم الهجرة

إلى الشمال" للكاتب الطيب صالح

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الملخص

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى إجراء نوع من المقارنة التحليلية الأدبية والفكرية باستخدام أساليب بحثية منهجية بين الروايتين: (موسم الهجرة الى الشمال (للكاتب السوداني المغترب الطيب صالح ، و (مرتفعات بروكلين) للكاتبة المصرية المغتربة ميرال الطحاوي.

هذه الدراسة تعمل على فهم وتحليل معنى ومفهوم الهوية و الانتماء تحت وضع الهجرة في الروايتين ، خصوصاً وأن الكاتبين هاجرا من بلديهما الأم وتعامل كل منهما مع الاغتراب والهجرة على طريقته ووفق ظروفه وحالته الإنسانية والفكرية الخاصة .

لقد عمدت هذه الدراسة من خلال التدقيق الأدبي واللفظي العميق إلى تلمس ما يمكن أن يكون قد تسببت به حالة فقد الهوية والبعد عن الانتماء التي كثيراً ما يتعرض لها المهاجر لبلد وثقافة جديدة لا تشبه الثقافة والبلد التي ولد فيها وقدم منها.

وجد من خلال هذه الدراسة بعد القراءة المتعمقة لي الطيب صالح وميرال الطحاوي في روايتيهما يجب ذكر أن هناك مجموعة من المراحل والعوامل التي تؤدي في النهاية إلى حالة أشبه ما يعرف بفقد الهوية والانتماء أو لنقل زعزعتهم في أحسن الأحوال عند المغتربين والمهاجرين والتاركين لأوطانهم بشكل عام وعند المفكرين والأدباء بشكل خاص ولو بدرجات متفاوتة ، تدور في أغلبها حول مفاهيم وقيم كانت راسخة وغير قابلة أبداً للتشكيك في مجتمعاتهم الأولى ، لها ارتباطات مباشرة وغير مباشرة بالدين والمجتمع والتحرر والعائلة وآثار الاستعمار وغيرها .

كما تخبر الدراسة أنه هناك في الغالب تنشأ حالة من المواجهة بين الهوية المهاجر منها والهوية المهاجر إليها وما يصحبها قطعاً من انتماء في نفس هذا المهاجر ، تصل هذه المواجهة الداخلية ذروتها في بعض المراحل إلى صراع نفسي بين الهويتين ينتهي إما بانسلاخ تام عن الهوية الأولى والتكسر لها بل ومحاولات إدانتها والانتقاص من قدرها ، أو يحدث العكس تماماً التمسك فيها والعيش في توقعاتها ورفض ما قد تحمله الهوية الثانية من تجديد وإضافات وانفتاح ، أو أن ينتهي الأمر إلى حدوث توازن بطريقة ما بين الهويتين المتنازعتين تحدثه هدنة داخلية لا يقاوم فيها التمسك بالجزور القبول بالنمو في اتجاهات ثقافية وإنسانية وفكرية أخرى .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الانتماء، التهجير والهوية.

Chapter One

1. Introduction

It is difficult to simply define the word identity, as it is made up of different components that each individual possesses to make him unique. These components include culture, tradition, beliefs, family, etc. and each plays a vital role in building up identity. However, colonialism and its ensuing changes to traditions and old ways of life, tends to be at the forefront when discussing the concept of identity especially in the East. Though colonialism occurred as early as the 17th century, the East is still afflicted. Hogan (2000) identifies this by stating that colonization introduced anguish, loss and despair into its colonies, "it suddenly destroys indigenous systems of work, law, politics, ritual, and thus shatters the people's practical identities" (105).

Usually a sense of belonging is formed in the early years of an individual's life, and occurs when generations have been living in the same country living by certain culture and traditions. When one individual decides to separate them self from this familiarity this action is usually referred to as being displaced. Displacement is defined as the act of moving or being moved out of the original place. Displacement may be perceived as voluntary or involuntary and can take many forms, depending on the contextual circumstances in which it happens. Migration, desertion, exile, diaspora, exodus, eviction, banishment, travel,

discovery, imprisonment, escape are all different forms of ‘displacement’ and, as such, these conditions share many traits. Displacement frequently forces subjects to confront a sense of loss, alienation, and disorientation, but it may also lead displaced subjects to experiment a taste of newly gained power and freedom.

The concepts of identity, belonging and displacement, explored in this study are a relatively new yet are a recurring theme in modern literature. It can be found among many well-known novels such as Hanif Kureishi’s *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) that has won an award and been translated into 20 languages. *The Buddha of Suburbia* is regarding a boy of mixed race struggling to find his identity in London. Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* (2000) is also another example, it evolves a family that emigrated from Bangladesh to the United Kingdom. The novel is centered around Britain's relationships with people from formerly colonized countries in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Another example is the widely recognized Nigerian novelist, poet, professor and critic, Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958). The novel surrounds characters and events that take place in Nigeria, the plot twist is when the characters’ lives are turned around by the introduction of the British colonies.

There are many more novels involve the concepts of identity and belonging from different languages and backgrounds that include the characters experiencing the same struggles related to identity and displacement.

This study is surrounding how the concepts of identity, belonging and displacement are portrayed by two Arab authors who have resided in the West, and therefore share similar experiences to their characters. The first is Egyptian Miral Al-Tahawy's *Brooklyn Heights* (2010) and Sudanese Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966).

1.1.1 Miral Al-Tahawy

Miral Al-Tahawy was born and raised in a Bedouin society in Egypt, but is now residing in the USA. Al-Tahawy wrote four novels, *Al-Khibaa (The Tent)* published in 1996, followed by *Al-Badhingana Al-Zarqa (Blue Aubergine)* in 1998. The third titled *Naquarat al-Zibae (Gazelle Tracks)* that came out in 2008 and most recently her novel *Brooklyn Heights* published in 2010. *Brooklyn Heights* is a novel about a woman named Hend along with her eight-year-old son who has just emigrated from Egypt to the United States and the struggles they encounter throughout. The novel reflects a semi-autobiographical reality of the author's own life, as Al-Tahawy has also experienced the transition between two contrasting cultures.

1.1.2 Tayeb Salih

Tayeb Salih was born and raised in a small village in Sudan, which was the inspiration behind the majority of his writing. Salih has published six novels including, *Doumat wad Hamid* published in Arabic in the year 1960, along with

Urs al-Zayn (The Wedding of Zain) in 1964, followed by his short story *A Handful of Dates* that he had written in English in the year 1964, *Mawsim al-Hijra ilash-Shamal* (*Season of Migration to the North*) published in Arabic in the year 1966, *Daw al-Bayt* (1971), and lastly *Maryud* (1976) which were both published in Arabic. The novel, *Mawsim al-Hijra ilash-Shamal*, which was translated into English as *Season of Migration to the North*, is narrated by an anonymous narrator, yet revolves around another man by the name Mustafa Saeed and his controversial life. Both protagonists were raised in Sudan during the colonization period, but due to their intelligence, pursued an education in the United Kingdom. Upon returning to their homeland Sudan, both protagonists suffer an identity crisis and find it too difficult to cope with.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

All individuals struggle with their identity and purpose, this is however highlighted when an individual experiences displacement. Life was built on certain expectations that were based upon customs and traditions that an individual grew up with. This however, changes once residing in a foreign country where everything is reversed, an individual being to experience a conflict rising with their sense of identity and belonging. This study explores the concepts of identity, belonging and displacement by analyzing the novels *Brooklyn Heights* by Miral Al-Tahawy and *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate the following points:

1. To examine the concepts of identity and belonging in Miral Al-Tahawy's *Brooklyn Heights*.
2. To examine the concepts of identity and belonging in Tayeb Salih's *Season Migration to the North*.
3. Comparing how the protagonists in Tayeb Salih's *Season Migration to the North* and Miral Al-Tahawy's *Brooklyn Heights* convey the themes of identity, belonging and displacement.

1.4 Questions of the Study:

1. How concepts of identity, displacement and belonging are portrayed in Miral Al-Tahawy's *Brooklyn Heights*?
2. How concepts of identity, displacement and belonging are portrayed in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*?
3. How the protagonists of *Brooklyn Heights* and *Season of Migration to the North* portray the concepts of identity, belonging and displacement?

1.5 Significance of the Study

In *Season of Migration to the North* the reader witnesses that both the narrator and Mustafa Saeed receive an education in England while traveling between two contrasting worlds they struggle to find a balance. As is the case in *Brooklyn Heights*, although Hena the protagonist is not directly affected by post-colonialism, upon moving to Brooklyn, she loses her strong ties with her home country, Egypt. In both novels the characters experience losing the very foundations of culture and tradition linked to their home country in turn impacting their identity and sense of belonging.

1.6 Limits of the Study:

The current study is limited to the concept of identity and belonging in Miral Al-Tahawy's *Brooklyn Heights* and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. Both novels were originally written in Arabic the native language of both authors but only the English translations were used in this study.

1.7 Definition of Terms:

Comparative Literature: Comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field whose practitioners study literature across national borders, across time periods, languages, genres, other disciplines (literature and psychology, philosophy, science, history, architecture, sociology, politics, etc.). Defined most broadly, comparative literature is the study of "literature without borders". What scholars

in comparative literature share is a desire to study literature beyond national boundaries and an interest in languages so that they can read foreign texts in their original form. Comparative literature in the 21st century draws on disciplines such as literary theory, cultural studies, post colonialism, world literature, translation studies and more. It overflows with ideas as to how to conceive the role and purpose of the verbal acts in an ever more visual world. (Hutchinson, 2018)

Displacement: It is the act of moving or the act of being moved under various circumstances, either voluntary or involuntary. Displacement may lead a person to feel lost, confused or in a state of disarray, although in other cases it may lead to a person feeling free, unrestrained and content (Blistein, 2016).

Identity: The word identity comes from the French *identité*, from Late Latin *identitas*, coined from Classical Latin *idem*, the same, akin to. In a sense all individuals are the same however each individuals' different experiences shape them into who they are. Essentially identity is a process of developing through memories and experiences.

Belonging: Belonging refers to the sense or feeling of being rooted in a person's homeland among their close and extended family. It also revolves around the concept of being accepted in a society along with feeling familiar with the

surroundings. Belonging is a basic human need and as Simone Weil once noted that, "to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul." (41) Belonging is usually experienced and valued by migrants and exiles, that have lost their sense of home, when the feeling of belonging is lost, individuals undergo intense emotions that cause distress and anxiety.

Chapter Two

2.0 Review of Literature:

This section is dedicated to providing information gathered by the researcher for guidance and to develop this thesis accordingly. This section is divided into two parts, the first is a review of theoretical which concerns the theories and areas of studies accomplished around the concepts related to this study while the empirical literature focuses on studies completed also related to this study. Both approaches concern the matters of identity, belonging and displacement, what each concept means and how they are linked.

2.1 Review of Theoretical Literature:

Erikson (1964) noted existing research suggests that religion is associated with identity development, stating that a high connection to the divine is linked to adolescent identity formation and well-being. It provides an individual with meaning and the guidance required to make certain choices and options during adolescence period of one's life. Erikson believes that a critical part in identity formation are the beliefs, worldview, and religious values a young person requires in order to obtain a sense of meaning, order, and place in the world. Some forms of religion and spirituality could be unfavorable in a sense that they elevate the individual over a greater good, promoting a sense of narcissism, entitlement, and lack of connectedness and contribution to society.

Edward Said (1993) expands on the topic of exile in his book *Reflections on Exile: and Other Essays* by stating that exile reveals itself to us by having two sides, one could be majestic the other unbearably distressing to experience. An person who has underwent exile undergoes traumatic experience of irreversible loss. Said adds that the literary work regarding the topic of exile does not fully comprehend what it means to live as an exile, as it has a historic past that has torn millions of people from the foundations of tradition, family and geography that every person has a basic right to obtain.

Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (1996) in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, that identity is a complex term that cannot be defined easily. Identity is connected to complex psychological matters therefore identities can never be singular or unified easily. The book also expands on the concept of identity further and asks plausible questions such as, what would an identity mean in isolation? Is it not through other people that an individual comes to terms with who they are? Essentially interactions are crucial and one must confront their fears and anxieties "to recognize the other as a culture apart, not a projection or extension of one's own culture." (79)

Patrick Colm Hogan (2000) notes that during the colonial period, the colonized suffered a deep sense despair as certain rituals, traditions and customs were

banned and often even seen as threatening. The colonized observed at how their former aspirations were no longer achievable. Hogan states that colonialism breeds despair, "it destroys indigenous systems of work, law, politics, ritual, and thus shatters the people's practical identities"(106). The ordinary villager would act out of habit according to the village's law and regulations but then the British would impose another law, condemning the villager. Changes in environments or circumstances can lead to great suffering and confusion so extensive that the new circumstances exclude the identity on which one has based one's life. Hogan observes that colonial contact harmed the identity which was formed on the basis of tradition and culture passed down generations. Under colonialism, the conflicts were so extensive that they challenged any individuals' cultural identity, that must be replaced by a new identity imposed by the new rules and regulations set, feuding a conflict between two identities.

Leticia Guardiola-Saenz and Frank M Yamada (2010) observe that identities are rather fragmented and complex. Politics often has a role in this issue of ruptured identities, as people often identify themselves with their governments and are also split among political allegiances. Sáenz and Yamada note that one way to approach this issue of fragmented identity in an unfamiliar surrounding is to locate a community similar to the one an individual grew up with and speak the same language, dialect, or accent. When an individual speaks their native language, it can express their identity and culture in a way that no foreign

language can. Language is linked to identity; when languages disappear, cultures die. Losing a native language could mean losing aspects of a culture and identity. On the other hand, speaking other languages has the potential to create the opportunity for different or multiple identities as individuals immerse themselves into other cultures.

Saman Dizayi (2015) finds that the question of identity submerged in the postcolonial era and is a rather complex issue. A shift in identities in postcolonial time and literature is evident as the people's identity which was apparent, has been disrupted. The identity of an individual or a group or a nation in postcolonial terms is linked to the "other" meaning they recognize themselves as 'us' with the existence of the "other".

Lahcen Ait Idir (2019) notices how in *Season of Migration to the North* characters are divided between two cultures. They experience displacement and alienation and through this have developed hybrid identities and equivocal attitudes. Through the hybridizing process the characters have evolved into disoriented people. Ait Idir also finds Salih's characters all experience elements of migration, exile and dislocation, which had led to fragmented and hybrid identities, losing their sense of self in the process. Hence, the cultural hybridity in their case proved to have negative imbalanced outcomes such as alienation, disorientation, all eventually leading to their tragic ends.

2.2 Review of Empirical Studies:

Mona Takieddine-Amyuni (1980) detects that Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* is both a historical and symbolic novel. The novel is about a quest to seek one's place in life, and identity while being torn between two worlds an African Muslim in a Christian European world. It proceeds to ask the uncomfortable yet basic questions regarding the meaning of life, human development and violence. Takieddine-Amyuni also identifies the small fictional village, Wad Hamid, in Sudan is a symbol of stability.

Shadi Neimneh (2012) discusses how the native identity merges through contact with colonial power, it is reinvented and restored by rejecting the colonizer's system. This is evident particularly when the narrator in *Season of Migration to the North* returns to his native Sudan. The reader observes the narrator rejecting any sort of union with Europeans, and exorcizes Mustafa as a man whose life has been tainted by colonial contact. The narrator becomes obsessive and bewildered, and proceeds to plunge into the deep waters the Nile just as Mustafa had done. Neimneh views this as a symbolic act of purification and regeneration.

Hussein Hasan Zeidanin (2015) finds that the protagonist, Mustafa Saeed, accordingly asserts his rejection of the fundamental and binary ideologies of nationalism and imperialism. Saeed's manifestation of a hybrid identity is

expressed in his attempt at an autobiography that the narrator finds in his mysterious room which only states "to those who see with one eye, speak with one tongue and see things as either black or white, either eastern or western" (150-151). Zeidanin notes that this is suggesting that Mustafa views himself as neither black nor white, nor is he simply eastern or simply western. Rather, he surpasses binary constructions of identity put by society which essentially classify people into black and white, nations into civilized and barbaric, languages and cultures into developed and developing. Mustafa rejects any form of hybrid identity that respects and endures racial, ethnic and gender differences.

Katie Logan (2016) views that Al-Tahawy explores the ways in which female city walkers feel a certain attachment to particular places. This attachment also connotes sentimentality. Logan also observes that in *Brooklyn Heights*, colonialism is a more distant and less direct experience. Logan states that, "the varied times, places, and experiences evoked by recollection create a map that registers space's subjective, virtual, and unstable properties. *Brooklyn Heights* follows Hend's memories back and forth, following a literary trajectory that blends past and present" (77).

May Alabed (2017) notes that *Brooklyn Heights* borders on the issues of exile and struggle to reconstruct one's identity. To do this Al-Tahawy projects on the past giving the reader an idea regarding the psychological state of mind in rural Egypt and of those around her in Brooklyn. The novel touches on a wide scale of

crucial elements in today's world such as nostalgia, patriarchy, feminism, post-colonialism and cultural hybridity. Through her character, Hend, Al-Tahawy gives readers an insight of the traumatic aspects of living in exile. Hend suffers from depression and anxiety which leads up to isolation all the while living in constant nostalgia of the past. Alabed found that "in order to define your identity while in exile one must let go of their former self, values, beliefs, or traditions for the sake of adaptation" (75).

Önder Çakırtaş, Antolin C. Trinidad and Şahin Kızıldağ (2018) Al-Tahawy's novel explores a series of themes and issues that are relatively new such as alienation, loneliness, and the fragmented identity. People who have been displaced, such as Hend, often referred to as migrants or exiles, experience a sense of alienated identity both within their home and host countries. These feelings of estrangement and foreignness which affect the narrative, bear witness to the protagonist's loss and disorientation. In this context Hend's withdrawal and unease reveal the existence of impenetrable boundaries keep her disconnected from the society in which she lives. Her trauma occurs of multiple levels with the nature of debilitating memories of Egypt being closely intertwined with and simultaneously embedded in her disappointments abroad.

Chapter Three

3.1 Methods and Procedures

This study uses a content descriptive analytical methodology, comparing two novels, Miral Al-Tahawy's *Brooklyn Heights* and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. This study aims to focus on finding how the concepts of identity, belonging and displacement are portrayed in the texts after the analysis of events, characters, places, means of narration and cultural differences.

3.2 Sample of the study:

The sample of the study consists of two novels, the first is *Brooklyn Heights* by Miral Al-Tahawy and the second is *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih.

3.3 Procedures of the study:

The research followed these procedures in order to conduct the study accordingly:

1. Reading and analyzing *Brooklyn Heights* by Miral Al-Tahawy .
2. Reading and analyzing *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih.
3. Research studies completed related to this topic.
4. Analyzing the two novels by using appropriate literary devices.
5. Discussing the findings.
6. Documenting references using APA style.

Chapter Four

4.1 Introduction:

Identities come in all forms, there are also many factors that contribute to any identity such as language, culture, customs and traditions and more, however for most identity is an internal struggle, especially for people who have been displaced. When an individual grows surrounded by extended family, life becomes much easier to navigate, family also provide individuals with a sense of self-assurance and confidence. When an individual is displaced, they are separated from family and homeland forced to live in isolation in turn making an identity become fragmented while life becomes difficult to cope with.

An individual's identity, cannot be defined simply, but Sáenz and Yamada (2010) state that "identities are not unified; they are fragmented, ruptured, discontinuous, and contradictory. We are split among political allegiances; we have multiple identities that sometimes struggle within us. Identities are constantly in flux; they are always changing, not fixed products; they are productions in process" (7-8).

The characters in the chosen novels such as Hend in *Brooklyn Heights* and Mustafa and the narrator in *Season of Migration to the North* have been displaced, they acknowledge that their world, which once seemed very familiar and comfortable, has become disrupted. Hend, Mustafa and the narrator portray how

being displaced had in turn brought about intense emotions such as feeling disconnected to their sense of identity.

It is unquestionable that the events that unfold in *Season of Migration to the North* had been a direct result of post-colonialism, as the events that took place in the novel are during and straight after Sudan had been colonized. The novel is therefore deemed a post-colonial novel however such factors are directly linked to identity and displacement. *Brooklyn Heights* however, the aftermath of post-colonialism was less direct, as the protagonist navigates her way through the streets, parks, people, and cafes of Brooklyn she is reminded of her past childhood in Egypt, deeming it a memory novel.

It is essential here to connect the factors of belonging and identity and as John McLeod (2000) argues that the concept of "home" often performs an important function in everyone's lives. It acts as a valuable means of orientation by giving people a sense of belonging in the world. It tells people where they come from originally and where they belong. Migrants usually see their home country as an idyllic place, symbolizing security and shelter. It is a place where they know they will always be welcome and accepted. In this regard, migrants might have an ideal mental image of home that is different from their reality. They would in some cases romanticize their homeland so that it becomes difficult to return home without any disillusion of the reality. Home becomes primarily a mental image

built from the fragmented image that survived from the memory of the past and would therefore exist in a fractured form. McLeod concludes that there must be a possibility to create new concepts of home and belonging for those people who live in-between cultures.

4. 2 Season of Migration to the North:

4. 2. 1. Introduction

Season of Migration to the North, published in 1966, was originally written in Salih's native language, Arabic, to show his siding with his national identity. It has since been translated into almost 30 different languages, but as Salih had a high command of the English language, he worked closely on the English translation alongside the translator Denys Johnson-Davis, whose translation is used in this study. The novel, published just around 10 years after Sudan gained independence from the British, is heavily influenced by this element and deemed a postcolonial novel, often compared with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Edward Said, a prominent academician, had described the novel as being among the six finest novels of modern Arabic literature.

Salih's life greatly impacted his writings in which he attempted to bridge the gap between east and west. Salih was born on the 12th of July, 1929, in Sudan and passed away on the 8th of February, 2009, in the United Kingdom. He was known to be a quiet and cordial man who also had a lot of respect for tradition. He took

great pleasure in intellectual discussions. Born in Karmakol, near Al Debba, Salih moved to Khartoum as a young man to attend Gordon Memorial College (later Khartoum University). In 1952 he travelled to London as part of the first generation of Sudanese educated in Britain in preparation for independence, which came in 1956. Salih's encounter with the west was to mark his fiction and his life, though his depiction of village life in northern Sudan formed the centerpiece of most of his fiction. Salih was to remain abroad for most of his life. He joined the BBC Arabic Service, becoming the head of drama, followed by a period with the Ministry of Information in Qatar before he joined the UNESCO in Paris. Britain was to provide a fixed point of reference on his errant course. He married a Scottish woman, Julia Maclean, in 1965 and settled in south-west London (Mahjoub, 2009).

4. 2. 2. Unnamed Narrator

It is no question that post-colonialism is intertwined with the concepts of identity, belonging and displacement. Post-colonialism has created a paradox world where the East and West clash; this is the condition which both of the main characters in this novel experience. The novel opens with the narrator who is relieved to be surrounded by familiarity after returning from a long period spent studying poetry in England. Shortly after, the narrator's life begins to fall out of place when he is introduced to an outsider of the village and is continuously compelled to seek the

truth behind his presence. He becomes engulfed by the character Mustafa Saeed and inevitably loses himself in the process.

The first page of the novel begins with the narrator emphasizing the solitude he feels to be back in his homeland. He is aware of who he is, where he comes from, and what his purpose in life is.

"The important thing is that I returned with a great yearning for my people in that small village at the bend of the Nile. For several years I longed for them...it was an extraordinary moment to see myself standing amongst them" (1).

The reader does not obtain much information regarding the narrator himself, including the very basic elements that define a person or their identity such as his name, age, or regarding his past, other than the fact that he studied poetry in England for several years. Also, the narrator never reveals his dreams, ambitions or what he plans to do with his Ph.D. The narrator continues to emphasize his peace with being home, a sense of belonging brings about feelings of security, "and I feel a sense of stability; I feel that I am important,...No, I am not a stone thrown into the water but seed sown into the field" (5).

Christina Heckmann (2006) found that traditionally, home and belonging are defined as the place where our ancestors lived, the place of our origin. Home is known to be a fixed place; it is this traditional idea that implies people should

define their identity according to their roots. Migrants see their home country as a utopian place of security and shelter where they are welcome and people are like them in terms of values, traditions, beliefs and culture. "I felt not like a storm-swept feather but like that palm tree, a being with a background, with roots, with a purpose" (3-4). This quote is crucial in linking the connection between identity and belonging, that when the narrator was abroad, he felt he had lost his purpose. He did not know who he was in life, but now feels more grounded with clear goals in mind. Heckmann (2006) also finds that home has a significant function in people's lives. When a person reflects on the meaning of home, they associate it with notions of shelter and comfort, just as the narrator does. People think of home as a safe haven, open and welcoming. While McLeod (2000) argues in this sense that "to be 'at home' is to occupy a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves" (1).

All the villagers gather around the narrator asking probing questions on his experience abroad and are curious to know just how different the English were, and if what they heard about them was true. The narrator does not describe how different they are to the simple villagers, but rather describes them as being the same.

I preferred not to say the rest that came to mind: that just like us they are born and die, and in the journey from the cradle to the grave

they dream dreams some of which come true and some are frustrated (3).

Whilst sharing his experiences abroad with the villagers, who are strikingly fascinated, the narrator spots Mustafa Saeed, and is immediately compelled by him for two reasons; the first being that he does not recognize him and second because Mustafa is not interested in what he has to say regarding his experiences abroad. The narrator tried asking friends and family members for more information regarding Mustafa but this proved to be difficult as he keeps to himself but his friends and family are not alarmed by him as he is a hard worker.

4. 2. 3. The Narrator meets Mustafa Saeed:

The narrator is increasingly intrigued by Mustafa, and finds that he is polite which is unusual among inhabitants of the country and suggests that he should have been from "different clay" (12). This indicates that in the narrator's mind, politeness and good manners are associated only with the west, suggesting that the colonizers succeeded in implementing this ideology amongst the colonized. To briefly expand on this concept, it must be noted that post-colonialism played a key role in implementing this idea inside the colonized's world, where the west's mission was to educate and eradicate primitive behaviors in the East, which they viewed to be uncivilized. Edward Said's innovative book *Orientalism* (1978) further pushes the boundaries built around this subject. His book informs readers

how stereotypes were assigned to Oriental cultures, and that the East was viewed as oppressive and small-minded. Orientals were viewed as exotic in the strangest sense. Said examined this idea of the Oriental and found that it is a particular kind of myth produced by European thought, especially in and after the 18th century. In some sense, his book *Orientalism*, aims to dismantle this myth, but more than that, Said's goal is to identify Orientalism as a discourse (Singh, 2004).

After and also during colonialism however, it was clear life needed to change, but for those who followed the rules it created an unstable life. This is shown through the main characters of the novel, who live in a paradox world, no longer sure of where they come from and where they belong.

A shift begins to take place in the novel when the narrator no longer feels grounded and connected as he did when the novel first began, as he begins to question himself on Mustafa's identity.

The narrator finally has an opportunity to study Mustafa closely while out with friends drinking at a bar. Mustafa enters and is pressured to drink with them, eventually becoming drunk and recites a poem in an impeccable English accent. The poem is *In October 1914 Antwerp* by Ford Madox Ford, a poem surrounding the events that happened in World War 1 when the Germans wanted to take control of the Belgian city of Antwerp. The poem as analyzed by Elyay (2018) is found to be a representation of men without countries and countries without men.

In other words, a paradox world just as the one in which the characters in this novel live in, a conflict of national identities, torn during World War 1.

The narrator decides to confront Mustafa, who is initially hesitant then decides to open up about his past, and begins by saying, "It's a long story, but I won't tell you everything" (19). This response suggests that Mustafa had purposely left out details for the narrator to ponder on later. The narrator will later spend years of his life going over Mustafa's story, replaying it in his mind, relentlessly aiming to fill in the blanks.

4. 2. 4. Mustafa Saeed Religion and Family:

The long-anticipated story of Mustafa Saeed unfolds, and we are told that he grew up with modest beginnings, a single mother and no siblings. This alone demand to be further analyzed at, as family in Sudan and in the Arab world in general, is a sign of stability and is of great importance to a culture that is embedded within traditions and throughout generations. Family relies on one another and in Arab cultures, there are many aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins and it is normal and common for all family members to be living together in one household and to rely on one another. This also solidifies a person's identity and feeling of belonging as observed by the narrator. Through his family members, he resembles himself to the roots of trees intertwined with one another.

When Mustafa was just a child he is approached by an English soldier, (a common occurrence during that period) informing him of the concept of school and that he should attend. Although education was considered a form of "evil" (20) to the country of Sudan during that specific period. Mustafa was curious and pursued an education given by the English educators, becoming a sharp student and mastering the English language along with any other difficult task put his way. Eventually Mustafa is offered an opportunity to pursue further advanced education which at the time was Egypt. Since Mustafa had hardly or no extended family members, he had never developed a sense of belonging, and as discussed before, family and a sense of belonging are entwined. Mustafa's only family was his mother, who he did not hesitate or fret on informing her he would be leaving for good.

Upon receiving the news, Mustafa's mother does not show any concern or distress rather she only tells him that his father would have wanted the same. Mustafa reflects on this moment briefly and tells the narrator, "after long years and numerous experiences, I remembered that moment and I wept. At the time, though, I felt nothing whatsoever" (23). When children familiarize themselves rapidly with a dominant culture and begin embracing some of the values that are in opposition to their parents' beliefs, it can lead to tension and conflict within the family or community. This creates a sincere sense of identity alterations

followed by uncertainty, all the while leading up to conflicting perspectives, loyalties and expectations (S. A. Deng & Marlowe, 2013).

This event appears to have highly affected Mustafa's identity, as family provides the structure required to stabilize any individual and helps give guidance and a strong sense of belonging. In Sudanese culture, and Arab cultures in general, families rely on one another greatly, and families, unlike in Western culture, do not encourage their children to leave when they grow older, but rather they often leave only when they want to marry and create a family of their own, and even then in a majority of cases people tend to stay with family.

After informing his mother of his departure, Mustafa travels to the next destination, Cairo and meets his English family,

The district of Cairo they loved best was al-Azhar. When our feet wearied of walking about we'd take ourselves off to a cafe close by the al-Azhar Mosque where we would drink tamarind juice and Mr Robinson would recite the poetry of al-Ma'arri (23).

While with the British family in Cairo, the Salih cleverly mentions an ancient mosque, and one of the first mosques built in Cairo, this mosque is a symbol of the beginning of Islam in Egypt. The mention of the skeptic poet Al-Ma'arri here is critical, especially as they are reading his poetry in a very religious site, this indicates an internal struggle with religious identity within the characters and the

author. Religion is an important element when discussing the foundation of identity and belonging, as it provides the guidance an individual requires when unsure or distressed. Erikson (1964) noted that although the research is not yet extensive, existing research suggests that religion is associated with identity development. A high connection to the divine is linked to adolescent identity formation and well-being. It provides an individual with meaning and the guidance one requires as making certain choices and options during adolescence can lead to confusion and despair. Erikson believes that a critical part in identity formation are the beliefs, worldview, and religious values a young person requires in order to obtain a sense of meaning, order, and place in the world.

4.2.5 Language and Identity:

The next element crucial to build identity formation and also used to show solidarity is language.

The language, though, which I now heard for the first time is not like the language I had learnt at school. These are living voices and have another ring. My mind was like a keen knife. But the language is not my language; I had learnt to be eloquent in it through perseverance (28-29).

Mustafa immersed himself and spent many years living with natives of the language, yet he feels disconnected from such a culture. Mustafa is aware that although he has perfected the language as much as he could, he is aware he will never be like them.

The character of Jean Morris is introduced during Mustafa's life story and he identifies her as a turning point in his life. She mirrors a European female version of Mustafa, for she, like him, is cunning, smart and tells lies constantly. In England, Mustafa met many different English women, some ended their lives tragically and mysteriously. When he met Jean Morris who at first appeared to be different yet alluring, he married her. Shortly after their marriage, he puts a dagger through her chest and kills her.

Everything which happened before my meeting her was a premonition; everything I did after I killed her was an apology; not for killing her, but for the lie that was my life. In her eyes I was a symbol of all her hankerings. I am South that yearns for the North and the ice. (29)

The event suggests that Mustafa is cruel and irrational, but rather the killing out of passion for he was that he wanted to kill a part of himself, but felt cowardly and guilty that he did not kill himself instead. When put on trial Mustafa contemplates telling the jury, " sentence him to be hanged." (33)

De Guzman (2006) notes that the killing was a fatal loss to Mustafa's identity. His trial further turns into a struggle between two worlds and identities, neither

of which Mustafa can recognize as belonging to him. De Guzman finds that this trial is another battle of colonization, but it is not the English who are the conquerors: "I came as an invader into your very homes: a drop of the poison which you have injected into the veins of history" (95) Gandhi (1998) connects colonialism with identity by stating that it, "does not end with the end of colonial occupation. However, the psychological resistance to colonialism begins with the onset of colonialism. Thus, the very notion of a 'colonial aftermath' acquires a doubleness, inclusive of both the historical scene of the colonial encounter and its dispersal..." (17). In battling the English, he has modeled himself on them, defined himself by their actions, and thus defined, he finds himself with no true identity. He is unable to write anything of his life story but the dedication: "To those who see with one eye, speak with one tongue and see things as either black or white, either Eastern or Western (150).

Mustafa's dedication implies that there is no in-between, only two contrasting worlds. He had spent his life trying to find the balance, and aiming to base his identity on the balance of both worlds, but in the end he concluded that there was never an in-between to strive towards, so he dedicated his book to the people who never had to experience his experiences, for people who know where they belong and base their identity around it.

By putting a dagger through his wife's chest out of passion and rage, Mustafa resembles a well-known character Othello, a play by none other than

Shakespeare. *Othello* believed to have been written the year 1603, the very beginning of the British empire. Mustafa admired and shares some similarities too Othello but he comes to realize that he is nothing like him, "I am no Othello. Othello was a lie" (95).

The protagonist did not want to be connected with Othello, the brave African hero who fell in love with a white woman, for his world and hers did not coincide. Shakespeare's Othello was madly in love with Desdemonda whom he murdered when lead to believe she was betraying him, but when he realizes his mistake the guilt and anguish consume him and he takes his own life. There are similarities between Mustafa and Othello but essentially there are differences too. Othello was a brave knight ready to give his life to a worthy cause, while Mustafa lingered, unsure of who he truly loved. De Guzman (2006) translates this into an obsession with self-definition and control of those around him that has made his only hope for happiness a partner complicit in his created reality.

4. 2. 6 Fear of the Unknown:

The novel turns back to the narrator, some time has gone by since Mustafa had told his story, and Mustafa has mysteriously disappeared, assumed dead by drowning in The Nile, which is where he was last seen. Mustafa has required the narrator to be the guardian of his land, sons, and wife. But the narrator in a desperate attempt, leaves everything behind and travels to the capital of Sudan,

Khartoum, far enough but not too far. However, on the way and even as he arrives, he hears and even believes he sees Mustafa wherever he goes.

Occasionally the disturbing thought occurs to me that Mustafa Sa'eed never happened, that he was in fact a lie, a phantom, a dream or a nightmare that had come to the people of that village one suffocating dark night, and when they opened their eyes to the sunlight he was nowhere to be seen (46).

The narrator begins to question Mustafa's existence and suggests that he had come one dark night and in the morning he had disappeared. He then proceeds to question his own existence and his identity, which once he knew very well, but has become an illusion:

Was it likely that what had happened to Mustafa Sa'eed could have happened to me? He had said that he was a lie, so was I also a lie? I am from here ... But I am from here, just as the date palm standing in the courtyard of our house has grown in our house and not in anyone else's (49).

The above quote demonstrates that belonging and identity are inevitably intertwined; he relates with the palm tree standing tall in the courtyard with roots deep down into the soil.

The concept of identity and belonging are also linked to the idea of nationalism. McLeod (2000) describes the idea surrounding a person's home-land as "community, belonging, a sense of rootedness in the land, home- each is relevant to the construction and purpose of nationalist representation" (9). McLeod also finds that nations are imagined communities and they evoke a feeling of belonging, while home provides a sense of community for people. While Enayati (2012) notes that it is crucial for every human to feel as though they belong. She finds belonging as fundamentally linked to happiness and well-being.

The narrator begins to feel conflicted on what to do with Mustafa's belongings and his wife which he had been granted custody of after his mysterious passing. Trinya (n.d) noted that the narrator is not altogether here, nor altogether there, rather somewhere in-between. This is suggested in his final experience while swimming in the Nile, where he attempts to eliminate his rage by swimming. He begins to swim towards the north, but as Trinya notices that midway between northern and southern shores, he begins to lose consciousness and begins to surrender to the currents of the south. Suddenly he makes the realization he does not want to die and shouts for help while in the middle of the Nile, neither here nor there, but certainly more here than there.

In another study De Guzman (2006) similarly found that as the narrator finally opens the locked room in Mustafa's house, he begins to comprehend that the disease of identity that affected Mustafa afflicts him as well; that they are two

men of a type: men from Sudan who have gone to the north and upon returning have lived as if they had not been changed by their experience. Far from having returned to an unchanged way of life, the narrator shockingly realizes he has been nurturing an illusion of reality in his mind: "I myself had become the world, no world existing outside of me" (134). In the room in a Sudanese house, where preserved is a life in the north, the narrator struggles to place himself in the world, that he no longer feels connected to as strongly as he did at one point, referring to himself as a palm tree standing tall and proud to belong to a small village in Sudan. Fazed and as disoriented as ever, he proceeded to leave behind Mustafa's past life and everything else, "I was halfway between north and south," he writes, "I was unable to continue, unable to return" (167). Coming out of this paralysis, the narrator realizes, "All my life I had not chosen, had not decided. Now I am making a decision" (168). His decision to cast off his self-obsession, to reach out and be affected by the outside world and possibly change it through his action is one that he can make only after he leaves off trying to construct the world and himself in such a way that shields him from the contradictions of his identity.

Season of Migration to the North introduced us to the main characters Mustafa and the narrator, the narrator once home in his village Sudan feels deeply rooted however this change once he meets Mustafa. Mustafa's eventful story unfolds and since then the reader has not been able to move on with his life. Long after Mustafa's disappearance, the narrator is unsure of what his life was about and his purpose is therefore plunging into The Nile himself but in the decides that he will

begin to take his life into his own hands. Salih's novel also shows that despite Britain's influences in Sudan, there is a shared heritage that cannot be ignored nor easily dismissed. (White, 2008).

4. 3 Brooklyn Heights:

4. 3. 1. Introduction:

Miral Al-Tahawy was born 1968 in a small Bedouin village in Egypt. She has been named as the first Bedouin woman to publish modern Arabic prose. Al-Tahawy has published four novels, along with many short stories, *Brooklyn Heights* (2011) however is her most recent. The novel won the 2010 Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature and was short-listed for the 2011 International Prize for Arabic Fiction. The novel, originally written in Al-Tahawy's native language, Arabic, has been since translated into other languages. In this study the English translation made available by Sameh Salih is used.

Al-Tahawy grew up in a conservative Bedouin life. She lived her childhood in a gender-segregated context and never left her village without a male relative or guardian. However, when she grew older, she was lucky to obtain an advanced education, for which she credits her liberal-minded father.

Al-Tahawy's semi-autobiographical novel, *Brooklyn Heights* (2011) explores the challenges a young mother experience. Hend, who has come from a Bedouin background, receives the opportunity to move to New York in hope of a better

life. The novel at first is a memory novel as she reminisces on her early childhood memories of her parents up until their deaths, her nicknames, her childhood friends, her marriage and divorce, her teachers, her first menstrual period and other experiences of her body, and her childhood dreams, her childhood and her home country, Egypt. Along with being a memory novel as mentioned previously Brooklyn Heights can be considered a Diaspora novel as it deals with issues such as displacement, exile, home and identity. Diaspora In all cases, is a term that carries a sense of displacement. Any person who for whatever reason finds themselves separated from their homeland, and usually this diasporic person has a desire to return home at some point in their lives. There are many novels under the theme of diaspora similar to *Brooklyn Heights* such as Laila Halaby's *West of Jordan* (2003), Ahmed Fagih's *Gardens of the Night* (1995), Jamal Mahjoub *Travelling with Djinn*s (2003) and Leila Abulela's *The Translator* (1999) and many more. These novels are centered around characters that deal with the issues of navigating identities through location as they are torn between East and West. Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek (2010) finds that," the notion of in-between peripherality can be also applied to diaspora, migration, and ethnic writing as a parallel macro theory based on the large corpus of writing in existence. Life writing demonstrate memories and interpretations of migration and diaspora, as well as aspects of ethnicity and they are texts which are explicable best in the context of postulates within the framework of comparative cultural studies in their relevance of diaspora, migration, and ethnic minority writing to literary and

culture history — despite or, rather, because of — their in-between relocated location" (86-95).

The road to renewal for Hend, is not easily obtained as her worlds of East and West are in constant collision. Most chapters in the novel are titled after streets within the city Brooklyn, but as the protagonist roams the streets of Brooklyn, she reflects on her childhood and the memory of her family. The protagonist often reflects on matters related to her identity, on the meaning of life and why she is where she is, but she continuously finds herself sidetracked. It is clear that her identity has become fragmented after certain events, the main one being displaced from a culture into a completely unfamiliar setting.

My name is Hend. I came here from Cairo - why, I don't know exactly. I'm trying to learn English. I love the Arabic language
(11).

In a very abstract way, the reader is briefly introduced and presented with the basic qualities of her identity, sitting amongst a group of refugees like herself, who have gathered from all over the world for various reasons. Hend, however, is not quite sure of the reasons behind traveling halfway across the globe and settling in the US.

The reader later learns of how often she feels depressed and isolated longing for someone to connect with, which could be found unusual, considering she is surrounded by refugees, all coming from the Middle East, with similar backgrounds. Edward Said, in his book *Reflections on Exile: and Other Essays* (2000) found that while exile is a solitary experience and dissimilar to nationalism, exile is inherently a discontinuous state of being. Exiles suffer a remarkable loss as they have been separated from their roots, their land, and their past. He notes that exiles feel an urgent need to rebuild their fragmented lives. The most critical thing is that the state of feeling free from this conquering ideology, designed to reassemble an exile's shattered history into a new whole is intolerable, and virtually inconceivable in the world we live in today. In other words, to recreate a sense of belonging in a place far from your homeland is virtually impossible. Hend finds it strenuous to rebuild herself and de-attach from her homeland, therefore she experiences flashbacks of the past, longing to relive the moments she felt more comfortable and as though she belonged.

4. 3. 2. Language and Faith:

She tells them that she is an Arabic teacher, that Arabic is an endangered language, a language that is slowly dying out, but she clings on to it because unfortunately, she tends to get insanely attached to things and love defies forgetfulness (13).

When Hend expresses her emotional attachment to the Arabic language she is also referring to the attachment surrounding the culture that comes with the language. Language and culture are intertwined and are a part of a person's identity and feeling of belonging. McLeod (2000) found diasporas as communities of people living together in one country who 'acknowledge' that 'the old country'- is a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore-that usually appears to have some claim on a person's loyalty and emotions. This is especially true in the case of Hend, who feels a deep attachment and a sense of loyalty towards her native language. She fears that the possibility of forgetting it could mean that she would be neglecting her home country, a big part of her identity. Guardiola-Sáenz and Yamada (2010) point out that by speaking the same language with others can show solidarity, "our native languages express our identity and culture in ways that no foreign language can. Language is a maker of identity; when languages disappear, cultures die. Losing a native language is equal to losing aspects of a culture and an identity. On the other hand, speaking other languages creates the opportunity for different or multiple identities as we immerse ourselves into other cultures'' (4).

In Hend's new surroundings she feels obliged and pressured to learn the new language with impeccable pronunciation. She also finds herself worried that by doing so she may forget her native tongue of Arabic. To Hend, the Arabic language is largely not only connected to the culture of her country, but to her memories and childhood. In an article written by Nicola Prentis (2017), Prentis

investigates the notion that individual's personality and feelings undergo changes when speaking different languages. As different languages are associated with different cultures, speaking in a new tongue can cause a person to look through a new cultural lens. Prentis concludes that often times, people's perception of themselves and their lives, change when speaking a foreign language.

That faith and identity go hand in hand is especially true in the case of the Middle East, as religion and faith play a huge role in cultures and societies. In Islamic faith, the covering of head and dressing modestly is to signify your faith in God and that it is in one's best interest, meaning it is used to ward off unwanted attention. HEND has lived in separate worlds and cultures but the reader witnesses HEND letting go of religious beliefs she once took very seriously by discarding the black niqab, and now walking freely down the streets of another country where modesty is not a priority.

"Sometimes she prays at night to ward off her loneliness"(115), but as mentioned before, HEND expressed her freedom by not being confined to dress modestly; she continues to have a belief in The Divine, in what form it is unclear, but this belief keeps her from feeling lonely and less disconnected in a place where she longs for something or someone to connect with.

4. 3. 3. Astrology:

I had one friend in the whole world. He was kind and gentle. He was born one day under the sign of Capricorn. He died today."

"Your friend?" She nods her head. It's the way of the world, always living in the hope of discovering a truth that doesn't exist (133).

As mentioned previously all chapters in the novel are named after certain places in Brooklyn, such as parks, cafes, streets. This is the case throughout the novel apart from one chapter under the name 'Pluto in Capricorn', which is repeated in the novel to signify the author's strong belief in astrology and has implanted it in her protagonist, Hend. There is a particular stigma when it comes to astrology in the Arab world, as some are strong believers in it while remaining faithful to their religious belief. Pluto is often associated with the Phoenix bird as it dies and is regenerated to begin again, while Capricorn is the sign for the builder and achiever. Capricorn is rooted in the material world and the understanding that life on earth requires practical approaches in order to earn a living. Capricorn also signifies that the achievement of one's goals is a crucial aspect (Hayes, 2007). When Pluto goes through Capricorn, as the novel mentions, Hend can expect the transformation of all things ruled by that sign. The author acknowledges Hend's difficulty in starting over as she is deeply attached to the past but the star sign is telling her that some things must be buried deep down in order for new things to appear.

Hend reads her horoscope persistently with a negative view towards life. She fears that everything will be taken away from her as she has already been through the pain of losing both parents and is worried that great loss is a part of her life. She worries for her son's sake, and who will care for him if she leaves the world. McLeod, (2000) notes that the migrant, "is in a better position than others to realize that all systems of knowledge, all views of the world, are never totalizing, whole or pure, but incomplete, muddled and hybrid. To live as a migrant may well evoke the pain and loss of not being firmly rooted in a secure place but it is also to live in a world of immense possibility with the realization that new knowledge and ways of seeing can be constructed" (215).

4. 3. 4. Past, Memory, and the Homeland:

As Hend walks and reflects on the past she finds it difficult to describe the way she feels, there is a strong passion but along with it high anxiety and fear. She wishes she could release all her intense emotions onto a manuscript but essentially fails to do that too,

She only did it because all she wanted to do was write, so much so that she felt she would die, if the bitter mountain of words stayed trapped inside her. She had to finish her first and only manuscript, *I am like no other*, but writing is intractable, like a wounded woman, and at some point, she realized that, after all was said and done, she was incapable of healing those wounds. She cried all the time and

she desperately searched in every corner for that little girl who used to live inside of her (108).

Hend roams Brooklyn's streets, passing by other communities, trying to find her place in other communities such as the Latinos, the Chinese, or the Italians, in search of a sense of connectedness and belonging within these communities. Sheetrit (2013) considers that there is a particular type of tension surrounding Hend when she extensively revisits her past memories of her home town. She is drawn into a paradoxical world that emerges from her need to revisit her memories of her hometown while living in exile and a sense of urgency rises by wanting a new beginning. Sociologist Anne Marie Fortier (2002) claims that remembering defeats the idea that the homeland is a continuous sense of longing, but it is also tied to the reconstruction of the identity attached to places. For Hend, Egypt is a place that exists only in memory, it is through her memory that she relocates places and people that she had built parts of her identity on.

It is only in chapter ten that the focus of the novel shifts away from Hend and focuses on other characters. These characters are Arabs who are also living in exile in Brooklyn. The author presents this chapter in the same way she presents Hend, through their past, their memories and their previous selves built around the place where they grew up, making the link that is the place which identifies them.

When she was in Egypt, Hend dreamed of traveling to faraway places, getting her suitcase and leaving on the next flight. But as now she finds herself situated in this circumstance, she finds herself continuously trying to connect with her past and ironically of Egypt, trying to understand why she dreamed of leaving. Home in Egypt is created as a place of exclusion, and a feeling of not belonging. Hend undeniably feels out of place, yet she makes an effort to embrace her new environment and, identifies with it and feels "at home" within it. In so doing she casts her original homeland as foreign, as a place in which she does not belong.

4. 3. 5 Feminism and Identity:

Although from a small Bedouin community Hend is aware of what was going on around her, especially regarding the treatment of women. But as a grown woman Hend leads an independent life, living alone with her son in a small apartment and working to pay bills. Although as the novel progresses, Hend reveals to be extremely self-consciousness of herself seeing herself as ugly also looks at herself in the mirror uncertain of her womanly figure as she has stretch marks and scars from bearing a child and also suffering a miscarriage. Therefore, it is difficult to narrow whether Hend is feminist or feminine, however throughout the novel the reader will notice that Hend supports causes related to feminism such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, women's suffrage, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.

The mother sat in the balcony watching the children grow up and move further and further away from her, leaving her with long wrinkles under her eyes and minute and flexible lines on the forehead, the threads of insomnia ... then she walked into her room and shut the door behind her, and that was the end (176).

In Bedouin communities' women are usually married off very young by setting up an arranged marriage to bear children, preferably male. The children grow up and the mothers are left behind to hold the pain and scars from enduring years of certain hardship. Hend had been rebellious and did not want to fall into the same despairing cycle her mother had endured. This leads the reader to believe that this is what inspired Hend to leave and pursue a better life for herself and her son. She wanted to be something more by leaving a legacy behind to not be forgotten. It motivated Hend to write the story of her life. She constantly looked out the window and yearned to be free, leave her own life behind and start a new one with new dreams and goals. Now that she finds herself in a place where boundaries are limitless, she finds it difficult or even painful to let go of her past, the past she spent much time yearning to escape from. For instance, Sheetrit (2013), found that Hend also remembers her Coptic grandmother, called "The Guest," who was an outsider until death, never accepted into the Bedouin Muslim family into which she married, and significantly was denominated "The Guest." Only after her death does Hend come to realize that she was her grandmother. It

is through these particular terms that the concepts of estrangement and belonging are connected.

In the novel, mention of her father are clustered yet reoccurring. The reader begins to form an idea of him, as he is portrayed as a figure with distinctive personalities. The smell of beer would usually trigger the memory of her father. There were also vague mention of how he would treat his wife unjustly and unfairly, even the house suffers from her father's abuses as the closed door of the physical house barely manages to contain the "heavy thud of groans and kicks" (62) coming from behind it. Her father's friends departed the Bedouin community to foreign countries in search of better jobs and opportunities, but Hend's father persisted in remaining patrician, residing in his homeland, although finances were often an issue. Hend's father is surrounded with a dark ambience.

4. 3. 6 Fear of the Unknown:

Fear of the unknown strikes when least expected. Fear drives the protagonist away from being a confident independent woman and from rebuilding herself. As the novel mentions, her mother passed away from breast cancer and her father suffered a stroke at age forty. Witnessing these tragic events had left her living in fear, that at any moment her life could be taken away from her, and that just as what happened with Lilith, her belongings would be boxed out on the streets, available to any passerby and the remaining tossed. Lilith represents everything

Hend fears, as she resembles Lilith in some ways, therefore sees herself inevitably becoming her.

Hend's head spins. She looks at the photograph of a boy who is the same age as her son now... Hend lowers her head. Her dizziness gets worse suddenly and a feeling of Deja vu sweeps over her.

"Emilia, I know these papers... and I know that I've written every word of them myself, she thinks. This is my handwriting they belong to me" (181).

Hend had always longed to pursue a life full of dreams and ambition in contrast to the society in which she grew up in, therefore she acknowledged that she needed to leave the community in which she grew up in and knew so well so that she could pursue her dreams.

Many questions arise as to how Hend obtained a US visa, but all the reader is informed is that she inherited it from her husband. The reader is also uninformed as to why the US was chosen, or why they wanted to leave their homeland and apply in the first place. But the United States has always been a symbol for freedom and the land of dreams. Hend came to the US thinking that pursuing her dreams would be effortless but was faced with many difficulties instead. Hend experiences similar indications as she experiences loss of identity and self-worth brought about by the idea of how the US will be the foreground of all her dreams and ambitions but instead finds herself lost and out of place. Although she was

not directly associated with a colonized Egypt, the colonized would usually find difficulty in knowing their culture and traditions once known very well and would place themselves easily around society and its expectations of them. Hogan identifies that changes in environments or circumstances can lead to great suffering and confusion so extent that the new circumstances exclude the identity on which one has based one's life, forcing a person who once knew themselves very well to reconstruct their world and their identity. Hogan gathers that colonial contact harmed the identity which was formed on the basis of tradition and culture.

In *Brooklyn Heights*, Al-Tahawy captures the confusions and conflicts that immigrants undergo. The novel depicts the true colors of alienation, loneliness, and isolation often obfuscate the lives of immigrants who come with big dreams, only to discover that such dreams are out of reach. The difficulties other characters face determines the 'new' identities they come to adopt. Through Hend the author uncovers the fluid and dynamic nature of the identity of an individual which transcends boundaries of time and space.

Çakırtaş, Trinidad and Kızıldaş (2018) clarify that people that were displaced, often referred to as migrants or exiles, experience a sense of alienated identity both within their home and host countries. These feelings of estrangement and foreignness which affect the narrative, bear witness to the protagonist's loss and disorientation. In this context Hend's withdrawal and unease reveal the existence

of impenetrable boundaries keep her disconnected from the society in which she lives. Her trauma occurs on multiple levels with the nature of debilitating memories of Egypt being closely intertwined with and simultaneously embedded in her disappointments abroad. After moving to America, Hend is initially elated by her newfound freedom away from what she perceives as her family's stifling Bedouin social environment and the unwavering gazes of Egyptian society all of which are seen as an obstacle to success in Hend's new struggle to achieve an autonomous identity. She feels that she is free now just as she has "always longed to be." (169) Yet the experience of displacement, with its associated socio-cultural and psychological trauma, tends to be very difficult and painful to cope with. In America, Hend lives a sad, isolated and fragmented life that is nonetheless full of intensity. In her attempt to counter these feelings of alienation, in her puzzlement over her own identity, her difficulty recognizing herself in her thoughts, or in her mirror. Hend feels "unbearably heavy with a longing to open up and talk" 'but when she looks around, she sees only "women sitting by themselves, like her"(69).

4. 4. Comparison:

4. 4. 1. The Beginning

Despite the different settings of the novels, yet both reveal that being displaced has similar consequences. In *Season of Migration to the North* and *Brooklyn Heights*, both protagonists deal with their identical experiences in both similar

and contrasting ways where the past represented the ideal essence of belonging to the homeland. It is essential to recognize that people who migrate to a completely dissimilar environment undergo considerable stress, impacting their mental health along with losing their cultural, religious and social support, impacting an individual's state of mind and a shift in identity takes place. This drastic change causes issues in regards to mental health, which both protagonists experience (Bhugari and Becker, 2005).

It is critical to mention that long ago exile was seen as a rather romantic concept, but times have changed since then and it has become combined with such factors as 'imperialism and the ambition of totalitarian rulers - it is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass immigration'" (Edward Said, 2000, 138).

Season of Migration to the North is set during and directly after Sudan gained independence from the British colonies. At that time, the country had high hopes for true liberation of the people. The novel presents a renewed interest in the influential Arabic novel about post-colonial times (Shehadeh, 2011).

The story is told through a narrator, the reader will never know much about. It is through the narrator the reader gains insight to not only his struggles but also the struggles of another character, Mustafa. Both characters undergo an education in England. Upon the narrator's return, he does not experience a wave of perplexed emotions apart from relief in regards to being back around familiar settings that make him feel secure and connected to his roots. Mustafa, on the other hand,

throughout feels lost and disconnected to his roots and identity, eventually mysteriously disappearing without a trace.

In *Brooklyn Heights*, the protagonist Hend, has only recently left her small Bedouin community in Egypt. She leaves behind the only life she has ever known, also leaving behind her traumatic past to start anew. Hend dreams of becoming a writer and she travels to the place she knows is full of dreams and opportunities, Brooklyn, USA. Set in the year 2011 when Barak Obama was elected president, Hend reminisces on the past she was eager to escape from wherever she goes.

4. 4. 2. Language, Values and Social Norms:

Bhugari and Becker (2005) explain that displacement brings with it loss of the familiar, including language, values and social norms. Migrants who experience the loss of their culture and guilt over leaving their homeland may find that, as the acculturation process proceeds, a sense of belonging in their new homeland occurs.

The West and the East present many differences regarding language, values and social norms. In both novels the characters struggle to find the balance as they travel between the past, present and the future. Unlike, the narrator in *Season of Migration to the North*, Hend experiences the setbacks of being displaced almost immediately. She draws on this while introducing herself, by expressing her deep connection to the Arabic language and fears she may forget it eventually. She

also lives in fear of the future in general resulting in her suffering from anxiety and panic attacks, even ending up at the hospital as she fears the worst.

Language and identity intertwine, as languages are usually connected to culture, this culture is what becomes a part of any individual's identity and in *Brooklyn Heights*, the reader observes Hend only surrounded by people who have also fled their pasts in hope for a better life or a better opportunity, in hope to pursue their dreams and ambitions where before they may have been neglected. The other immigrant characters presented in the novel are persistent in perfecting the English language leaving their native language behind. Meanwhile Hend is hesitant in investing too much time to learn the English language fearing she will forget the Arabic language, which is a large part of who she is, she is also disappointed when she finds that while she does know English many people do not understand her as well as she would like. Similarly, in *Season of Migration to the North*, the reader observes Mustafa admitting that even though he had spent years learning the English language, and even believed he had spoken it just as they did, when he arrives to England he comes to the realization that he will never be able to speak just as they do, and will always be viewed differently. Both characters are eager to speak the English language just as they do, but are disappointed by how they have not been accepted as they have yet to speak English eloquently.

4. 4. 3. Post Colonialism and Identity:

The narrator, of *Season of Migration to the North* at the beginning of the novel has absorbed Western culture easily and has come back from his experience a polite and dignified gentleman. He projects that he has obtained the balance required, by showing a deep respect for family and identifies himself with the village as being a part of his identity, though he mentions at the beginning that the West and East are ultimately the same. However, his deep sense of belonging disappears once he becomes engulfed by Mustafa. Mustafa, on the other hand, has lived differently to the narrator. He grew up while the British were still colonizing Sudan, and was sent to complete his education abroad at a very young age. This impacted him greatly, as he feels no sense of belonging towards his home-country of Sudan.

In *Brooklyn Heights* however, the novel is set during an important period in US history by electing their first African American president, Barak Obama, after many years of oppression and neglect towards this race. This is an indication for change, which the protagonist really needs in her life. This is not to say that the novel has no relation to colonialism rather it is a post- post-colonial novel, as Logan (2016) suggests that, "although Hend settles in a global economic and cultural capital, which suggests a move from the center to periphery, al-Tahawy foregrounds Brooklyn's Dutch colonial history. Hend notices these vestiges in longstanding farmers' markets, antique shops, maps, and buildings. Historical

landmarks remind the reader that New York was itself once a colonial outpost for the Dutch and British." (Logan, 2016. 116)

4. 4. 4. Memory of the Former Self:

For in *Brooklyn Heights*, all the chapters are named after places Hend walks by. Hend walks through the streets of Brooklyn, and into cafes and parks meeting new people, but the smallest detail results in her having a flashback into her past. One chapter however is named Pluto in Capricorn, in which Hend introduces an imaginary friend she talks to while walking around, but this imaginary friend must leave as he no longer aligns with her astrological reading.

For the narrator, however it differs, he sees Mustafa wherever he goes even long after his death. He finds it difficult to focus on his life as one part of him feels obliged to Mustafa and the other wants to flee and disregard the responsibility Mustafa had out on him. Eisenbruch (1991) identifies this as cultural bereavement by defining it as follows,

Cultural bereavement, is the experience of the uprooted person - or group - resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values and self-identity: the person - or group - continues to live in the past, is visited by supernatural forces from the past while asleep or awake, suffers feelings of guilt over abandoning culture and homeland, feels pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but finds constant images of the past (including traumatic images) intruding into daily life, yearns to

complete obligations to the dead, and feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life. (Eisenbruch, 1991, 11)

Hend focuses on the images of family, friends and school, and what they represented. She fears letting go of these memories will lead to losing part of her identity and sense of belonging to her former state.

The narrator in *Season of Migration to the North*, lives through Mustafa's past, remembering him, long after his mysterious disappearance. The narrator's own life and identity becomes questionable as he questions the purpose of his life which was once deemed so clear. At the beginning of the novel his identity and sense of belonging were vividly linked to the concept of rootedness to his village. This strong sense of belonging created a clear state of mind. Weil (1949) recognized early on that, "to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul" (41). Weil finds that it is difficult to define this essential requirement, but roots in other words, the concept of the homeland in a person's mind, often has attached to it the participation in the community which now plays a part in shaping any individual as it becomes a solid part of their past and it holds expectations for the future. In *Brooklyn Heights*, Hend always dreamed of leaving her village behind, unlike her father who felt very rooted and connected to his homeland, firmly refusing to leave even when the conditions required such action. For Mustafa in *Season of Migration to the North*,

he had never felt a deep connection to his homeland therefore he left as soon as the opportunity presented itself.

Both protagonists are tormented by images of the past and experience guilt for leaving their homeland despite their eagerness to leave it when the opportunity presented itself. Thus, in both novels the protagonists share the same aspirations of leaving and creating a new-self. Once they leave however, the focus becomes on the past and memory of their previous self.

The narrator of *Season of Migration to the North* had never enclosed any details surrounding his study in the United Kingdom however the reader does know that he had only experienced something similar to the surface of what Mustafa had experienced as Mustafa had a more enriching experience; he travelled the world, gave lectures at Oxford University, published a few books, married and murdered his first wife Jean Morris.

Mustafa questioned his existence; this is evident when he tried to be a person other British woman saw him through the Orient perception, often involving seeing Arab culture as exotic, backward, uncivilized, and at times dangerous.

Edward W. Said, (1978) defines this as an array of false assumptions underlying Western attitudes towards the Middle East. Mustafa had accepted this concept and portrayed himself as being a different person each time he met a different woman.

In *Brooklyn Heights* Hend, saw herself through Lilith, an old Egyptian woman, who also had a son but left him behind to start a new life leaving her husband and comfortable life behind. Lilith had a great passion for music and life; she felt she was being held down by society's expectations and the responsibilities required of her as a married woman. She wanted to be free and to be adventurous. She left behind her only son, and moved to New York where some speculated she was an artist, others just a lonely woman who received monthly paychecks from her ex-husband, but nobody was ever really certain. At the end of the novel Lilith loses her life after becoming terminally ill and losing all her memory. On seeing Lilith's belongings in boxes outside her apartment, Hend fears that her and Lilith's life are intertwined, just as the narrator in *Season of Migration to the North* fears that his life is intertwined with Mustafa. Mustafa and Lilith's lives ended in dissimilar ways, as Lilith lost her life after living a full life while Mustafa disappears one dark night by The Nile is never seen again, but similar in the sense that they were both alone when it happened. Hend and the narrator reflect themselves in both characters and see themselves ending their lives the same way, alone. This fear is a manifestation stems from being displaced.

Displacement essentially means being alone, away from a person's community and familiar surroundings. Weil (1949) observes that up rootedness is by far the most dangerous infection that humans uncover. She observes that for people who are really displaced, there remains only two possible sorts of behavior: "either to fall into a spiritual lethargy resembling death,... or to hurl themselves into some

form of activity necessarily designed to uproot, often by the most violent methods, those who are not yet uprooted, or only partly so." (44)

Both protagonists in the novels tend to reflect often, and put a lot of focus on the past and their memories of people in the past. In *Brooklyn Heights*, Hend goes for long walks around Brooklyn's streets, parks and cafes only dreaming of her village and its people, while in *Season of Migration to the North* the narrator has come back from living a lengthy period abroad and directly upon returning he feels a deep sense of belonging and acceptance by describing that "a fog has cleared"(1). Fog refers to his feeling of disarray while abroad but now cleared as there is no confusion while being around his familiar surroundings. The narrator, unlike Hend, as time passes, begins to feel less connected and rooted.

4. 4. 5. Creating a Sense of Belonging in the Future:

Hall (1989) stated that identity in Diaspora signifies, those historical experiences, those cultural traditions, those lost and marginal languages, those marginalized experiences, those peoples and histories which remain unwritten. Those are the specific route of identity. On the other hand, identity itself is not the rediscovery of them, but what they as cultural resources allow a people to produce. Identity is not in the past to be found, but in the future to be constructed.

The future of Mustafa and Hend have aspirations, but view them as impossible or difficult to achieve. As Said (2000) it is not surprising that many exiles become novelists, poets and intellectuals. These particular occupations require a person

who is adaptable and skillful. An exile's new world, as Said puts it, resembles fiction. In *Brooklyn Heights*, Hend has always dreamt of making herself into something more; she finds herself drawn to art to express her complex wave of emotions such as being an actress or a writer. She has even begun her manuscript but is unable to complete it as she feels at a loss for words to define her current state. Mustafa has published a few books ranging various subjects from economy to politics to religion. He, like Hend, has also attempted to write his own life story. However, what the narrator finds amongst his belongings in his English room was a notebook that read, 'My Life Story - By Mustafa Saeed,' followed only by an ambiguous dedication, 'To those who see with one eye, speak with one tongue and see things as either black or white, either Eastern or Western' (151). For Mustafa who lived an eventful life to say the least, that was all he could write, for he could never see things as either black or white.

Therefore it is important to highlight the significance of both Mustafa and Hend who are eager to express themselves in words but are unable to release the intense emotions carried out by being displaced. By being displaced they have the ability to express themselves through two languages or rather on the grounds of two different cultures, but this only makes it more complex for characters are unable to find an in-between state.

On the next grounds of this essay, it is crucial to mention that both protagonists from the novels are from village communities where very close relations to

extended family members is an essential way of life. In *Brooklyn Heights*, for instance Hend, feels lonely and longs to make a connection with someone who will understand her complex world. Although she is surrounded by friends and her son who respects and admires her, she finds it difficult to build any sort of healthy relationship. Hend is also a woman with few words, as throughout the novel she is approached by friends wanting to build a connection with her but she quickly disregards them. These events usually cause Hend to reflect on her relationships in the past with her friends and family. It was a time when she was more open and sociable, despite her friends' being torn away from her, to conform to society's expectations of no longer being a young girl playing with her friend, but rather someone who has come of age and therefore must prepare themselves for marriage accordingly. These outcomes disappointed Hend and made her into the more reserved woman she has become. Residing in a new environment, Hend is reminded of the memory of her community and family that contributed to the very foundation of her identity. From birth, children develop a sense of who they are. This is largely contributed by the relationships built with family members, other adults and children, friends and members of their community that are an essential part of constructing their identities. Aistear (2009) conducted a research that found that "children's sense of who they are is shaped by each individual's characteristics, behavior, and understanding of themselves, family and others. Belonging is about having a secure relationship with or a connection with a particular group of people. When children feel a sense of belonging and sense of

pride in their families, their peers, and their communities, they can be emotionally strong, self-assured, and able to deal with challenges and difficulties" (25). This is crucial to remember as the reader witness in *Season of Migration to the North*, Mustafa and the narrator show differences on the concept of family and community. Mustafa's mother became a widow shortly before he was born, and since he was also her first born he had no siblings. Mustafa and his mother never shared any real affection or connection, to a point where he had felt no sympathy upon being informed of her passing while he was abroad. This matter should be taken into consideration when discussing the issue of loss of belonging, because Mustafa never had any family and he was never connected to his roots or community, unlike the narrator, and Hend who both had deep respect for family. The narrator upon returning from abroad states, "I returned to my people" (1). Being surrounded by a familiar community especially when an individual obtains close relations with family members, creates a secure sense of belonging and identity to their homeland. Both characters are dissimilar to Mustafa, who although was married with two sons and built a reasonable life in the small village, did not feel connected, and felt out of place wherever he went, weather it was England or the capital of Sudan where he was raised or the small village of Wad Hamid. However, even when the narrator's stance changed once he met Mustafa, while Hend only felt as though she belongs in the past and among her people in her homeland, the narrator of *Season of Migration to the North* shows that this is not the case, as once the narrator had come back from England and

met Mustafa he no longer felt connected to life. This shows that Hend was only connected to her past self and a feeling of belonging will not be as it once was if she were to go back to the homeland.

4. 4. 6. The Tragic Endings:

The ending of both novels takes tragic turns as both protagonists fail to rise and confront what is desperately required of them for their sanity and well-being; to find the balance between East and West. At one point in *Season of Migration to the North* the narrator experienced a serene sense of being and belonging, even noting when he witnessed his grandfather praying at dawn (Fajir), "a sense of richness as though I am a note in the heartbeats of the very universe"(73). But as John and Taraweh (1986) argue, the narrator's obsession with Mustafa was in fact an eager search of his own identity, for when the reader witnesses the narrator entering Mustafa's room he uncovers and discovers his identity which is reflected in the mirror,

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

face to face with myself. This is not Mustafa Sa'eed — it's a picture of me frowning at my face from a mirror (135).

Salih cleverly chooses to locate his characters in a small village at the bend of the Nile. The Nile is significant in that the river flows north, just as birds and animals migrate north, as Mustafa also travels in the same direction, north, to pursue his education, first to Cairo, then on to London. He returns to this river and spends the last moments of his life in it (Viene, 2017). The novel ends with the narrator attempting to do as Mustafa had done, plunges into the deep waters of the river Nile but as he gets to the middle neither south nor north, he realizes that he must get out and yells for help, if it is too late or not remains unknown. What Salih is saying through his ambiguous ending is that for the narrator there will always be struggle for identity.

For *Brooklyn Heights* ending is similar as Hend also views herself becoming another character, Lilith who passes away an old woman with no recollection of her past. Essentially for Hend, her memory and her past are what make up Hend's identity so to lose them also means losing her identity.

The river Nile flows through eleven countries but its primary sources are in Sudan and Egypt, thus the two countries are not only connected by the great river but with tragic endings, as in *Brooklyn Heights*, although Hend reflects on the memory of her former self to a period and place she most felt comfortable, she is

confronted by the inevitable truth, that even in her Bedouin village she never had a strong sense of belonging. She was continuously attempting to find ways to fit in amongst her friends and relatives but she was always an outcast. *Brooklyn Heights* ends with Hend fearing that she will find herself with a similar ending as Lilith, dying alone with all the memories that she treasures and reflects on continuously gone, along with all that she has ever owned in boxes thrown on the side of the road.

Chapter Five

5.0. Conclusion:

Both novels, *Season of Migration to the North* and *Brooklyn Heights* have many dissimilarities, as *Brooklyn Heights* carries a diaspora approach, while *Season of Migration to the North* has a post-colonial approach. Despite the novels differences the researcher has come to conclude that both novels discuss the theme of identity and belonging under displacement.

In *Brooklyn Heights*, while Hend and her young son navigate through the streets of Brooklyn that they have only just settled in. Throughout the novel Hend reflects on the past and her memories of the small Bedouin community she grew up in. Hend yearns to move on and start a new, to the point the title of each chapter in the novel is named after parks, cafes and streets in Brooklyn, she wonders around these unfamiliar places where everything reminds her of the past. Hend's past is undeniably a big part of her identity, she fears losing her memory that she strongly values along with her mother tongue Arabic. The end of the novel Hend never finds a balance of her past and present, but rather lives in fear of the future, even suffering from anxiety and panic attacks. This fear develops through the event of being displaced.

While in *Season of Migration to the North*, the narrator has just come back from the UK to Sudan. From the beginning the reader observes the narrator feeling relieved, content and connected to his homeland, this all changes when he meets

Mustafa. Mustafa Saeed unfolds his eventful life story to the narrator who is intrigued and becomes obsessed. Soon after, Mustafa goes missing presumably dead leaving everything he had left behind in the narrator's care. The narrator no longer feeling connected to his homeland, leaves Wad Hamid behind but is unable to avoid Mustafa's name or image, thus the narrator begins a relentless quest for his own identity. The narrator questions every aspect of his life, but in the end eager to leave behind Mustafa he plunges into the Nile, at the last moment however decides that he wants to live and tries to swim while yelling for help.

Both novels have characters that struggle to find any sense of identity and belonging, characters struggle to rebuild themselves and find a balance between their old self and new self, nor are they comfortable with their previous identity in the past.

Season of Migration to The North and *Brooklyn Heights* represent the highly complex shift that occurs in the event of an individual being displaced. Characters in the novels become disoriented, conflicted between past and present, unable to balance, and face high anxiety of what the future might unfold. The characters in both novels do not find a balance or peace they wished to obtain between their past and present identities.

5.1 Recommendations:

The researcher recommends that there should be studies connecting identity and belonging through displacement in Miral Al-Tahawy's *Brooklyn Heights*, for Hend as a first-generation migrant and if Hend's son would undergo a similar conflict of identity considering he is a second-generation migrant.

There are many studies surrounding the second novel, *Season of Migration to the North*, but not many studies surrounding other literary works by Tayeb Salih.

Both Tayeb Salih and Miral Al-Tahawy had experienced displacement, as Al-Tahawy's *Brooklyn Heights* is a semi-autobiographical novel also while originally Sudanese author Tayeb Salih had resided in London for many years therefore researcher recommends analysis of other works by both authors regarding the subject of identity and belonging if evident.

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