A Feminist Critique of Season of Migration to the North

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are to identify the types of female characters found in the novel and to analyse how the female characters are portrayed based on the feminist critique theory. This research employs qualitative method as its research design. Text analysis is used in order to analyse the text which is the novel Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Salih. The results of the analysis show that there are 3 types of female characters found in the novel i.e. modern and sophisticated women with flawed character, older generation women possessing traditional way of thinking, and strong and independent women. Meanwhile, based on the analysis made using the feminist critique theory, it is discovered that there are stereotypical women images used by the author in portraying the female characters in the novel. Besides that, there are also female characters that are portrayed and given the image as the sexual and sensuous Pandora (a female character in the Greek mythology) who has the ability to destroy and punish.

Keywords: Female Characters, Feminist Critique, Pandora.

ABSTRAK

Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti jenis-jenis perwatakan karakter wanita dalam novel ini dan juga untuk menganalisa bagaimanakah karakter-karakter wanita ini digambarkan berdasarkan teori kritikan feminis. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kajian kualitatif sebagai bentuk kajian. Analisis teks digunakan untuk menganalisa novel Season of Migration to the North tulisan Tayeb Salih. Hasil dapatan daripada analisa tersebut menunjukkan terdapat 3 jenis perwatakan yang digambarkan kepada karakter-karakter wanita di dalam novel ini iaitu wanita yang sofistikated tetapi mempunyai kecacatan karakter, wanita generasi lama yang berpegang kepada cara pemikiran tradisional dan wanita yang kental dan bebas dalam menentukan kehidupannya. Sementara itu, berdasarkan analisa yang menggunakan teori kritikan feminis didapati bahawa terdapat imej-imej stereotaip wanita yang digambarkan oleh penulis dalam novel ini. Terdapat juga karakter-karakter wanita yang digambarkan dengan imej Pandora (satu karakter wanita dalam mitos Greek) yang besifat seksual dan sensual. Pandora ini mempunyai kemampuan untuk memusnahkan dan juga menghukum.

Kata Kunci: Karakter Wanita, Kritikan Feminis, Pandora.
INTRODUCTION
There are prominent female characters in the novel *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih that shape the narrative of the story. However, not much investigation and analysis has been done in order to see how these characters are portrayed in the novel. Most of the studies done on *Season of Migration to the North* are about and related to post-colonialism for example studies by Deckard et al. (2016), Gunaydin (2015), Daier and Al-Tinawi (2014), and Raun (2002).

Therefore, there is a need to analyse the novel *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih in order to identify how these female characters are portrayed in the novel and especially to look at these portrayals from the feminist perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Feminist Criticism

Abdul Aziz (2014) states that there are two main approaches to feminist criticism which are feminist critique and gynocritique as discussed by Showalter (1979). Feminist critique focuses on women as reader to male literary works and the main subject matter is the stereotypical images and character of women. This critique is also concerned about the misconceptions that men have towards women and thus the analysis is preoccupied mainly with looking at how women are perceived or treated by men in the context of a literary work.

Meanwhile, gynocritique, according to Abdul Aziz (2014) citing Showalter (1979), is another form of feminist criticism that arises from what is seen to be the failure of feminist critique in describing, highlighting and portraying women justly in a literary work. The stark contrast between feminist critique and gynocritique is that gynocritique focuses only on women as a writer. Gynocritique is also women centered. Thus in gynocriticism the female characters in a literary work are often described to possess daring and bold characteristics and they are not hampered by the stereotypical images created by men. In fact, it aims at bringing down and demolish all the stereotypical perceptions towards women.

O’Connor (n.d.) states that there are several prominent schools of thought in modern feminist literary criticism as said by Yale Professor Paul Fry in his lecture on the Classical Feminist Theory.

1. First Wave Feminism: Men’s Treatment of Women
   It considers male novelists’ demeaning treatment or marginalization of female characters.

2. Second Wave Feminism: Gynocriticism
   There are three major aspects to this feminist literary criticism namely the feminine phase, the feminist phase and the female phase.
3. The Madwoman Thesis
   Because of the society that forbade women from expressing themselves through creative outlets, their creative powers were channeled into psychologically self-destructive behavior and subversive actions.

4. French Feminism
   French feminists postulate the existence of a separate language belonging to women that consists of loose, digressive sentences without the use of ego.

Brizee, Tompkins, Chernouski, and Boyle (2010) meanwhile state that there are only 3 waves of feminism as follows:

1. First wave feminism that highlights the inequalities between the sexes.
2. Second wave feminism that builds on more equal working conditions
3. Third wave feminism that resists ideologies to expand on marginalized populations’ experiences.

Previous Studies: Season of Migration to the North as a Postcolonial Text

Raun (2002) states that Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Salih is a gripping tale of two seemingly parallel postcolonial subjects who each spend a considerable amount of time in England and then both return to Sudan. The novel is very interesting as the reader witnesses the formation of the plots that are further and intricately developed as the author continues this tale of colonial subjects coping with the return to their postcolonial nation.

Gunaydin (2015) also sees the novel a story of two postcolonial subjects who lived as Arab and Muslims expatriates in England before returning to their postcolonial land Sudan. Considering the novel from colonial and postcolonial perspective, the concepts and adjectives of the postcolonial literature are investigated, and it attempts to trace postcolonial references in the novel. The novel directly or indirectly makes criticism of colonialism and displays how colonialism is the germ of violence. Through the end of the novel, every character strives to create their own world by death or rebirth in a patriarchal society on the verge of modernization.

Deckard et al. (2016) highlight the coexistence and clash of customary and emergent social and cultural practices in a traditional society in the throes of capitalist modernization.

Meanwhile Daier and Al-Tinawi (2014) finds that there are clash between traditions of modernity and the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized in the novel.
Previous Studies: Feminist Analysis of Season of Migration to the North

The only study found that highlights feminist issue in the novel is the study by Overmann and Ahmad (2013) that looks at how the female characters fight for women’s empowerment and go against oppression at the cost of their lives, and they consciously choose to revolt.

METHODOLOGY

Text analysis is used in order to analyse the text which is the novel Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Salih from the perspective of feminist criticism. According to Showalter (1979) as cited by Sohaimi Abdul Aziz (2014), there are two main approaches to the feminist criticism which are feminist critique and gynocritique.

For this study, the novel is analysed based on the feminist critique theory as it focuses on women as reader to male literary works. The main subject matters of this study are the portrayal of the female characters by a male writer and the stereotypical images of women in a literary work.

The text used for the analysis is Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Salih which was published by Heinemann International Literature and Textbooks in their 1991 edition. The novel was first published in Arabic in 1966 and translated into English by Denys Johnson-Davis. The English translation of the novel was published in 1969.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Types of Female Characters Found in the Novel

There are 3 types of female characters portrayed in the novel Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Salih.

Table 1 shows that there are some female characters in the novel who are portrayed as being modern and sophisticated women yet possessing flawed character.

Table 1: Modern, Sophisticated Women with Flawed Character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isabella Seymour,</td>
<td>Modern and educated</td>
<td>When I first met her (Ann Hammond) she was less than twenty and was studying Oriental languages at Oxford. – Mustafa (pg.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila Greenwood,</td>
<td></td>
<td>A waitress in Soho restaurant, a simple girl (Sheila Greenwood) with a sweet smile and a sweet way of speaking. – Mustafa (pg.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And</td>
<td></td>
<td>I reckoned I was at least fifteen years her junior, for she (Isabella Seymour) was a woman in the region of forty, whose body – whatever the experiences she had</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
undergone – time had treated kindly. The fine wrinkles on her forehead and at the corners of her mouth told one not that she had grown old, but that she had ripened. – Mustafa (pg.40)

She (Sheila Greenwood) used to work as a waitress by day and pursue her studies in the evening at the Polytechnic. – Narrator (pg.132)

Round of face and inclined to plumpness, she (Isabella Seymour) wore a dress which was too short for the fashions of those days. – Narrator (pg.140)

…Then she (Ann Hammond) begun absenting herself from the University for a month at a time, then two, until she was sent down…’ – Mustafa (pg.142)

She (Ann Hammond) owned a flat in Hampstead overlooking the Heath which she would go to from Oxford at week-ends. – Mustafa (pg.142)

We (Ann Hammond and Mustafa) stopped at pubs on the way, sometimes drinking cider, sometimes beer, red wine, white wine, and sometimes we drank whiskey, and with every glass I would quote to her from the poetry of Abu Nuwas. – Mustafa (pg.143)

| Yet, easily deceived and gullible | What was it that attracted Ann Hammond to me? Her father was an officer in the Royal Engineers, her mother from a rich family in Liverpool. She proved an easy prey. – Mustafa (pg.30) I seduced her (Sheila Greenwood) with gifts and honeyed words, and an unflattering way of seeing things as they really are. It was my world, so novel to her, that attracted her. – Mustafa (pg.35) She (Sheila Greenwood) entered my bedroom a chaste virgin and when she left it she was carrying the germs of self-destruction within her. – Mustafa (pg.35) Such a woman – there are many of her (Isabella Seymour) type in Europe – knows no fear; they accept life with gaiety and curiosity. – Mustafa (pg.37) Sometimes she (Isabella Seymour) would hear me out in silence, a Christian sympathy in her eyes. There came a moment when I felt I had been transformed in her eyes into a naked, primitive creature, a spear I one hand and arrows in the other, hunting elephants and lions in the jungles. This was fine. Curiosity had changed to gaiety, and gaiety to sympathy, and when I stir the still pool in its depths the sympathy will be transformed into a desire upon whose taut strings I shall play as I wish. - Mustafa (pg.38) …she (Ann Hammond) was hesitating between embracing Buddhism or Islam. He (her father) could not say for sure whether her suicide was due to some spiritual crisis or because of finding out that Mr. Mustafa Sa’eed had deceived her. – Mustafa (pg.68) |

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No doubt that was the reason for her (Isabella Seymour) suicide, and not that she was ill with cancer. She was a believer when she met him. She denied her religion and worshipped a god like the calf of the Children of Israel. How strange! How ironic! Just because a man has been created on the Equator some mad people regard him as a slave, others as god. –Narrator (pg.108)

She (Isabella Seymour) had had eleven years of happy married life, regularly going to church every Sunday morning and participating in charitable organizations. Then she met him (Mustafa) and discovered deep within herself dark areas that had previously been closed. –Narrator relate to what Mustafa told him (pg.140)

‘...She (Ann Hammond) was an easy prey...’ – Mustafa (pg.142)

‘And so it was with us : she (Ann Hammond), moved by poetry and drink, feeding me with sweet lies, while I wove for her intricate and terrifying threads of fantasy. – Mustafa (pg.145)

In London I took her to my house, the den of lethal lies that I had deliberately built up, lie upon lie... - Mustafa (pg.146)

| Submissive and weak | In my bed I transformed her (Ann Hammond) into a harlot. – Mustafa (pg.30) |

The critical moment when it was in your power to refrain from taking the first step has been lost. I caught you (Isabella Seymour) unawares; at that time was in you power to say “No”. As for now the flood of events has swept you along, as it does every person, and you are no longer capable of doing anything. – Mustafa (pg43)

In what manner used Isabella Seymour to whisper caressingly to him (Mustafa)? ‘Ravish me, you African demon. Burn me in the fire of your temple, you black god. Let me twist and turn in your wild and impassioned rites.’ – Narrator (pg.106)

I took up the picture of a woman and scrutinized it, reading the dedication written in a flowery hand, ‘From Sheila with all my love.’ – Narrator (pg.139)

I picked up another photograph and read the dedication which was in bold, forward slanting hand: ‘To you until death, Isabella.’ – Narrator (140)

I picked up the photograph in leather frame. This was clearly Ann Hammond, despite the fact that she was wearing an Arab robe and head-dress. The dedication under the picture was in shaky Arabic writing: ‘From your slave girl, Sausan.’ – Narrator (pg.142)

“How happy I am to have found you (Mustafa) at last!” she shouted. “I’m so happy I wouldn’t care if I died this very instant.” – Ann Hammond (pg.144)
She (Ann Hammond) knelt and kissed my feet. “You are Mustafa, my master and my lord,” she said, “and I am Sausan, your slave girl.” – Mustafa related to what Ann Hammond had said (pg.146)

Self-destruct

One day they found her (Ann Hammond) dead. She had gassed herself. – Mustafa (pg.31)

He (Professor Maxwell Foster-Keen) told them (the court) that Ann Hammond and Sheila Greenwood were girls who were seeking death by every means and that they would have committed suicide whether they had met Mustafa Sa’eed or not. – Mustafa (pg.32-33)

She (Sheila Greenwood) died without a single word passing her lips. – Mustafa (pg.35)

They found her (Ann Hammond) dead in her flat in Hampstead, having gassed herself; they also found a note saying; “Mr. Sa’eed, God damn you!” – Mustafa (pg.146-147)

Table 2 illustrates how some female characters in the novel are portrayed as being elderly members of the society who still follow traditional way of thinking.

Table 3 meanwhile shows female characters who possess strong and independent character.

**Table 2: Older Generation Women Possessing Traditional Way of Thinking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bint Majzoub and</td>
<td>Women should not be independent and free to express their own views and make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrator’s mother</td>
<td>their own decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘…She (Hosna) came to your father and her very words to him (narrator’s father)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>were: ‘Tell him (the narrator) to marry me!’ What an impudent hussy! That’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>modern woman for you!’ – Narrator’s mother (pg.123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women are sex objects to please men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘We were afraid,’ she said, ‘you’d bring back with you an uncircumcised infidel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for a wife.’ – Bint Majzoub (pg.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘The infidel women aren’t so knowledgeable about this business as our village girls,’ said Bint Majzoub. ‘They’re uncircumcised and treat the whole business like having a drink of water. The village girl gets herself rubbed all over with oil and perfumed and puts on a silky night-wrap, and when she lies down on the red mat after the evening prayer and opens her thighs, a man feels like he’s Abu Zeid El-Hilali. The man who’s not interested perks up and gets interested.’ – Bint Majzoub (pg.80)
Table 3: Strong and Independent Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Robinson, Jean Morris,</td>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>“You’re ugly,” Jean Morris said to me on the second occasion. – Mustafa (pg.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosna, Bint Majzoub, Mustafa’s</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘If they force me to marry, I’ll kill him and kill myself.’ – Hosna (pg.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother</td>
<td></td>
<td>She (Jean Morris) placed her hand on my cheek and said in a tone that was not devoid of gentleness: “My sweet, you’re not the kind of man that kills.” – Mustafa (pg.159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“What’s stopping you (Mustafa) from killing me? What are you waiting for? Perhaps you’re waiting till you find a man lying on top of me, and even then I don’t think you’d do anything. You’d sit on the edge of the bed and cry.” – Jean Morris (pg.162)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise their rights and make</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘She (Hosna) has refused younger men than him (Wad Rayyes),’ – Narrator (pg. 86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their own choices</td>
<td></td>
<td>‘You know she’s (Hosna) refused many men besides you, some of them younger. If she wants to devote herself to bringing up her children, why not let he do as she pleases?’ – Narrator (pg.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘… She (Jean Morris) used to lie about the most ordinary things…’ – Mustafa (pg.155)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I am tired of your pursuing me and of my running before you (Mustafa). Marry me.” – Jean Morris (pg.157)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong influence on the male</td>
<td></td>
<td>But she (Mustafa’s mother) did not say anything. This was the turning-point in my life. It was the first decision I had taken of my own free will. – Mustafa (pg.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characters</td>
<td></td>
<td>That was our (Mustafa and her mother) farewell: no tears, no kisses, no fuss. Two human beings had walked along a part of the road together, then each had gone his way. This was in fact the last thing she said to me, for I did not see her again. After long years and numerous experiences, I remembered that moment and I wept. At that time, though, I felt nothing whatsoever. – Mustafa (pg.23-24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>…with the woman’s arms round my neck, her (Mrs. Robinson) mouth on my cheek, the smell of her body – a strange, European smell – tickling my nose, her breast touching my chest, I felt – I, a boy of twelve – a vague sexual yearning I had never previously experienced. – Mustafa (pg.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I felt as though Cairo, that large mountain to which my camel had carried me, was a European woman, just like Mrs. Robinson, its arms embracing me, its perfume and the odour of its body filling my nostrils. In my mind her eyes were the colour of Cairo: grey-green, turning at night to a twinkling like that of a firefly. – Mustafa (pg.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>…and on the day they sentenced me at the Old Bailey to seven years’ imprisonment, I found no bosom except hers on which to rest my head. – Mustafa (pg.25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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I would look at the hair of her armpits and would have a sensation of panic. Perhaps she (Mrs. Robinson) knew I desired her. But she was sweet, the sweetest woman I’ve known; she used to laugh gaily and was as tender to me as a mother to her own son. – Mustafa (pg.26)
The smell of the place is strange, like that of a Mrs. Robinson’s body. – Mustafa (pg.27)

‘I pursued her (Jean Morris) for three years. Every day the string of the bow became more taut. It was with air that my waterskins were distended; my caravans were thirsty, and the mirage shimmered before me in the wilderness of longing… – Mustafa (pg.33)

The city was transformed into an extraordinary woman, with her symbols and her mysterious calls, towards whom I drove my camels till their entrails ached and I myself almost died of yearning for her (Jean Morris). – Mustafa (pg.34)

I breathed in the odour of her (Isabella Seymour) body, that odour with which Mrs. Robinson had met me on the platform of Cairo’s railway station. – Mustafa (pg.37)

‘…she (Jean Morris) was exceedingly intelligent, and exceedingly charming when she wanted to be, and wherever she went she was surrounded by a band of admirers buzzing round her like flies.’ – Mustafa (pg.155-156)

If she (Jean Morris) asked that moment for my life as a price I would have paid it. – Mustafa (pg.156)

It was as though she (Jean Morris) had chewed at my very liver. And yet I didn’t care. – Mustafa (pg.157)

This woman (Jean Morris) is my quarry and I shall follow her to Hell. – Mustafa (pg.157)

‘I continued in pursuit of her (Jean Morris) for three years. My caravans were thirsty, and the mirage shimmered before me in the wilderness of longing. – Mustafa (pg.157)

Suddenly I remembered my mother. I saw her face clearly in my mind’s eye and heard her saying to me “It’s your life and you’re free to do with it as you will.” – Mustafa (Pg.159)

I remembered that the news of my mother’s death had reached me nine months ago and had found me drunk and in the arms of woman. – Mustafa (pg.159)

She was my destiny and in her lay my destruction, yet for me the whole world was not worth a mustard seed in comparison. I was the invader who had come from South, and this was my icy battlefield from which I would not make a safe return. I was the pirate sailor and Jean Morris the shore of destruction. And yet I did not care. – Mustafa (pg.160)

On first seeing her my heart was filled with tenderness and I felt that Satanic warmth under the diaphragm which tells me that I am in control of the situation. Where had this warmth been all these years? – Mustafa (pg.163)
Single minded and free spirited

She (Jean Morris) came towards us with wide strides, placing the weight of her body on the right foot so that her buttocks inclined leftwards. She was looking at me as she approached. She stopped opposite me and gave me a look of arrogance, coldness, and something else. I opened my mouth to speak, but she had gone. – Mustafa (pg.29)

Bint Majzoub will be leaning on one elbow, while in her other hand she holds a cigarette. – Narrator (pg.71)

“You’ve buried eight husbands and now you’re an old woman (Bint Majzoub) you wouldn’t say no if you were offered it.” – Wad Rayyes (pg.75)

‘Wad Rayyes, you’re a man who talks rubbish. Your whole brain’s in the head of your penis and the head of your penis is as small as your brain.’ – Bint Majzoub (pg.84)

The day the boys’ circumcision was celebrated, Hosna bared her head and danced as a mother does on the day her sons are circumcised. What a woman she is! – Narrator (pg.106)

When I avoided her (Jean Morris) she would entice me to her, and when I ran after her, she fled from me. – Mustafa (pg.156)

Ann Hammond left in tears, while she (Jean Morris) stayed on, standing in front of me like some demon, a challenging defiance in her eyes that stirred remote longings in my heart. Without our exchanging a word, she (Jean Morris) stripped off her clothes and stood naked before me. – Mustafa (pg.156)

‘She (Jean Morris) used to like flirting with every Tom, Dick and Harry whenever we went out together. She would flirt with waiters in restaurants, bus conductors and passers-by. – Mustafa (pg.161)

I knew she (Jean Morris) was being unfaithful to me; the whole house was impregnated with the smell of infidelity. – Mustafa (pg.162)

Independent

‘…All women change after marriage, but she (Hosna) in particular underwent an indescribable change. It was as though she were another person. Even we who were her contemporaries and used to play with her in the village look at her today and see her as something new – like a city woman, if you know what I mean.’ – Narrator (pg.101)

Fearless and fierce

‘I used to find her (Jean Morris) at every party I went to, as though she made a point of being where I was in order to humiliate me. When I wanted to dance with her, she would say, “I wouldn’t dance with you if you were the only man in the world.” When I slapped her cheek, she kicked me and bit into my arm with teeth like those of a lioness. She did no work and I didn’t know how she managed to live.’ – Mustafa (pg.155)
She (Jean Morris) heaped filthy curses upon Ann Hammond, and when I tried to drive her away with blows she was not deterred. – Mustafa (pg156)

…I suddenly felt a violent jab from her knee between my thighs. When I regained consciousness I found she had disappeared. – Mustafa (pg.157)

She (Jean Morris) glanced at the knife with what seemed to me like longing. “Here’s my breast bared to you,” she said. “Plunge the knife in.” – Mustafa (pg.158-159)

When I slapped her (Jean Morris), she would slap me back and dig her nails into my face; a volcano of violence would explode within her and she would break any crockery that came to hand and tear up books and papers. This was the most dangerous weapon she had and every battle would end with her ripping up an important book or burning some piece of research on which I had worked for weeks on end. – Mustafa (pg.160-161)

“I’m sorry to have to tell you (Mustafa), if this woman’s your wife (Jean Morris), you’ve married a whore.” He didn’t say a word to her. “It seems this woman enjoys making violent scenes.” – Someone Mustafa met a pub (pg.161)

I slapped her (Jean Morris) and in her usual way she plunged her nails into my face. Only after a lot of trouble was I able to drag her off home. – Mustafa (pg.161)

The Feminist Critique

There are 3 subject matters discussed based on the feminist critique theory in the novel Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Salih.

Table 4 indicates that there are stereotypical images of women used by the author in portraying the female characters in the novel.

Table 4: Stereotypical Women Images Used by the Author to Portray the Female Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Scene</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women are submissive and weak</td>
<td>In my bed I transformed her (Ann Hammond) into a harlot. – Mustafa (pg.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The critical moment when it was in your power to refrain from taking the first step has been lost. I caught you (Isabella Seymour) unawares; at that time was in you power to say “No”. As for now the flood of events has swept you along, as it does every person, and you are no longer capable of doing anything. – Mustafa (pg43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Women belong to men, and a man’s a man even if he’s decrepit.’ – Wad Rayyes (pg.99)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In what manner used Isabella Seymour to whisper caressingly to him (Mustafa)? ‘Ravish me, you African demon. Burn me in the fire of your temple, you black god. Let me twist and turn in your wild and impassioned rites.’ – Narrator (pg.106)
‘…Schooling and education have made you soft. You’re crying like a woman…”’ – Mahjoub (pg.133)

I picked up another photograph and read the dedication which was in bold, forward slanting hand: ‘To you until death, Isabella.’ – Narrator (140)

I picked up the photograph in leather frame. This was clearly Ann Hammond, despite the fact that she was wearing an Arab robe and head-dress. The dedication under the picture was in shaky Arabic writing: ‘From your slave girl, Sausan.’ – Narrator (pg.142)

“How happy I am to have found you (Mustafa) at last!” she shouted. “I’m so happy I wouldn’t care if I died this very instant.” – Ann Hammond (pg.144)

She (Ann Hammond) knelt and kissed my feet. “You are Mustafa, my master and my lord,” she said, “and I am Sausan, your slave girl.” – Mustafa related to what Ann Hammond had said (pg.146)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women are fragile</th>
<th>Women cannot determine their own destiny</th>
<th>Women are easily deceived and gullible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who would have thought that Sheila Greenwood would have the courage to commit suicide? A waitress in Soho restaurant, a simple girl with a sweet smile and a sweet way of speaking. – Mustafa (pg.34)</td>
<td>‘…Almighty God sanctioned marriage and He sanctioned divorce. “Take them with liberality and separate from them with liberality,”’ – Wad Rayyes (pg.78)</td>
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<td>No doubt that was the reason for her suicide, and not that she was ill with cancer. She was a believer when she met him. She denied her religion and worshipped a god like the calf of the Children of Israel. How strange! How ironic! – Narrator (pg.108)</td>
<td>‘In any case, the woman needs someone to protect her. Three years have passed since her husband’s death. Doesn’t she ever want to remarry?’ – Narrator’s grandfather (pg.86)</td>
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<td>She (Ann Hammond) proved an easy prey. – Mustafa (pg.30)</td>
<td>‘I shall marry no one but her (Hosna),’ he said. ‘She’ll accept me whether she likes it or not. Does she imagine she’s some queen or princess? Widows in this village are more common than empty bellies. She should thank God she’s found a husband like me.’ – Wad Rayyes (pg. 97)</td>
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<td>It was my world, so novel to her, that attracted her (Sheila Greenwood). – Mustafa (pg.35)</td>
<td>I would do everything possible to entice woman to my bed. Then I would go after some new prey. – Mustafa (pg.30)</td>
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<td>Sometimes she (Isabella Seymour) would hear me out in silence, a Christian sympathy in her eyes. There came a moment when I felt I had been transformed in her eyes into a naked, primitive creature, a spear I one hand and arrows in the other, hunting elephants and lions in the jungles. This was fine. Curiosity had changed to gaiety, and gaiety to sympathy, and when I stir the still pool in its depths the sympathy will be transformed into a desire upon whose taut</td>
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strings I shall play as I wish. - Mustafa (pg.38)

…she (Ann Hammond) was hesitating between embracing Buddhism or Islam. He (her father) could not say for sure whether her suicide was due to some spiritual crisis or because of finding out Mr. Mustafa Sa’eed had deceived her. – Mustafa (pg.68)
She was a believer when she met him. She denied her religion and worshipped a god like the calf of the Children of Israel. How strange! How ironic! Just because a man has been created on the Equator some mad people regard him as a slave, others as god. – Narrator (pg.108)
She (Isabella Seymour) had had eleven years of happy married life, regularly going to church every Sunday morning and participating in charitable organizations. Then she met him (Mustafa) and discovered deep within herself dark areas that had previously been closed. – Narrator relate to what Mustafa told him (pg.140)
‘And so it was with us: she (Ann Hammond), moved by poetry and drink, feeding me with sweet lies, while I wove for her intricate and terrifying threads of fantasy. – Mustafa (pg.145)
In London I took her to my house, the den of lethal lies that I had deliberately built up, lie upon lie… - Mustafa (pg.146)

Some female characters in the novel are portrayed as Pandora. According to Abdul Aziz (2014) this Pandora image is derived from the female character from the Greek mythology called Pandora. Hesiod, the Greek poet, in his poems Theogony and Works and Days narrates that when Zeus decided to punish humans, he ordered the gods to create a being called woman and was named Pandora. Pandora is described as possessing a beautiful body and thus making her sexually attractive to men (Sohaimi Abdul Aziz, 2014).

Table 5 illustrates how in the patriarchal structure of the society, women are portrayed as being the temptress or seductress who use their sexuality and sexual attractions to trap men into committing sins.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Scene</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women are seducers who use their sexiness to seduce men</td>
<td>…and all of sudden I felt the woman’s arms embracing me and her (Mrs. Robinson) lips on my cheek. – Mustafa (pg.25)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>She (Jean Morris) came towards us with wide strides, placing the weight of her body on the right foot so that her buttocks inclined leftwards. She was looking at me as he approached. – Mustafa (pg.29)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
They’re (their village girls) uncircumcised and treat the whole business like having a drink of water. The village girl gets herself rubbed all over with oil and perfumed and puts on a silky night-wrap, and when she lies down on the red mat after the evening prayer and opens her thighs, a man feels like he’s Abu Zeid El-Hilali. The man who’s not interested perks up and gets interested. – Bint Majzoub (pg.80)

Round of face and inclined to plumpness, she (Isabella Seymour) wore a dress which was too short for he fashions of those days. – Narrator (pg.140)

Suddenly I saw a girl of eighteen or nineteen rushing towards me through the ranks of people. She (Ann Hammond) put her arms around me and kissed me. “You’re beautiful beyond description,” she said speaking in Arabic, “and the love I have for you is beyond description.” – Mustafa (pg.143)

When I avoided her (Jean Morris) she would entice me to her, and when I ran after her she fled from me. – Mustafa (pg.156)

Without our exchanging a word, she (Jean Morris) stripped off her clothes and stood naked before me. – Mustafa (pg.156)

‘She (Jean Morris) used to like flirting with every Tom, Dick and Harry whenever we went out together. She would flirt with waiters in restaurants, bus conductors and passers-by. – Mustafa (pg.161)

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**Women as the Cause of Destruction and Reason for Punishment**

Pandora and her seductive image give the sort of idea that women sexuality is dirty and can cause destruction to humans. Pandora image is the symbolism for women who use their seductive image to seduce men. Men then will succumb to the seduction and commit grief error. Due to this, they are punished by the mother-nature (Sohaimi Abdul Aziz, 2014).

We can find this in the novel, for example, the character Mustafa Sa’eed and the Narrator who are strongly affected by the female characters in the novel.

Firstly, Mrs. Robinson can be considered as the one who shapes the character of Mustafa Sa’eed. This is because she is the first person with whom Mustafa develops sexual feelings towards. In one of the scenes from the novel, Mustafa states that Mrs. Robinson is the one who awakens his sexual yearning.

…with the woman’s arms round my neck, her (Mrs. Robinson) mouth on my cheek, the smell of her body – a strange, European smell – tickling my nose, her breast touching my chest, I felt — I, a boy of twelve – a vague sexual yearning I had never previously experienced. – Mustafa (pg.25)

This encounter with Mrs Robinson arouses in Mustafa deep sexual yearning especially for European women and it also shapes what will later be his obsession to “conquer” as many women as possible.
I would do everything possible to entice woman to my bed. Then I would go after some new prey. – Mustafa (pg.30)

Out of all the girls he is involved with, there are four important female characters that strongly affect his life and vice versa. He has been the reason why the three women Ann Hammond, Isabella Seymour, and Sheila Greenwood to commit suicide and he even murders his own wife, Jean Morris.

The man continued skillfully to draw a terrible picture of a werewolf who had been the reason for two girls committing suicide, had wrecked the life of a married woman and killed his own wife – an egoist whose whole life had been directed to the quest of pleasure. – Mustafa (pg.32)

‘Everything which happened before my meeting her (Jean Morris) 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…’ – Mustafa (pg.29)

These female characters possess strong sexual attractions that attract Mustafa to them. They also have a strong influence on him.

She (Jean Morris) came towards us with wide strides, placing the weight of her body on the right foot so that her buttocks inclined leftwards. She was looking at me as she approached. She stopped opposite me and gave me a look of arrogance, coldness, and something else. I opened my mouth to speak, but she had gone. – Mustafa (pg.29)

‘I pursued her (Jean Morris) for three years. Every day the string of the bow became more taut. It was with air that my waterskins were distended; my caravans were thirsty, and the mirage shimmered before me in the wilderness of longing… – Mustafa (pg.33)

…and I myself almost died of yearning for her (Jean Morris). – Mustafa (pg.34)

She (Sheila Greenwood) entered my bedroom a chaste virgin and when she left it she was carrying the germs of self-destruction within her. – Mustafa (pg.35)

I took up the picture of a woman and scrutinized it, reading the dedication written in a flowery hand, ‘From Sheila with all my love.’ – Narrator (pg.139)
Round of face and inclined to plumpness, she (Isabella Seymour) wore a dress which was too short for the fashions of those days. – Narrator (pg.140)

I picked up another photograph and read the dedication which was in bold, forward slanting hand: ‘To you until death, Isabella.’ – Narrator (140)

I picked up the photograph in leather frame. This was clearly Ann Hammond, despite the fact that she was wearing an Arab robe and head-dress. The dedication under the picture was in shaky Arabic writing: ‘From your slave girl, Sausan.’ – Narrator (pg.142)

Suddenly I saw a girl of eighteen or nineteen rushing towards me through the ranks of people. She (Ann Hammond) puts her arms around me and kissed me. “You’re beautiful beyond description,” she said, speaking in Arabic, “and the love I have for you is beyond description.” – Mustafa (pg.143)

According to Abdul Aziz (2014) citing Showalter (1979), female characters in a literary work that possess strong sexual attractions are referred to as possessing the Pandora image.

Mustafa’s involvement with the women (the Pandoras) leads to his downfall when he is convicted for murdering his wife, Jean Morris. Lucky for Mustafa, his former teacher helps him willingly while the court case is in progress. Therefore, he is saved from being sentenced to severe penalties. He escapes with only 7 years of imprisonment.

…as I sat there listening to my former teacher, Professor Maxwell Foster-Keen, trying to save me from the gallows, that I should stand up and shout at the court: “This Mustafa Sa’eed does not exist. He’s an illusion, a lie. I ask of you to rule that the lie be killed.” But I remained as lifeless as a heap of ashes. – Mustafa (pg.32)

“…These girls were not killed by Mustafa Sa’eed but by the germ of a deadly disease that assailed them a thousand years ago.” It occurred to me that I should stand up and say to them: “This is untrue, a fabrication. It was I who killed them. I am the desert of thirst. I am no Othello. I am a lie. Why don’t you sentence me to be hanged and so kill the lie?” but Professor Foster-Keen turned the trial into a conflict between two worlds, a struggle of which I was one of the victims. – Mustafa (pg.32-33)

‘The jurors,’ he (Mustafa) said, ‘saw before them a man who didn’t want to defend himself, a man who had lost the desire for life…’ – Narrator (pg.67-68)
On coming out of prison he wanders from place to place, from Paris to Copenhagen o Delhi to Bangkok, as he tries to put off the decision. And after that the end came in an obscure village on the Nile; whether it was by chance or whether the curtain was lowered of his own free will no one can say for certain. – Narrator (pg.69)

However, there is no escaping for Mustafa Sa’eed from his sins. Even though he manages to escape the severe punishment, he is again punished and this time by the mother-nature where he is drowned in the Nile during the flood.

This can be related to Sohaimi Abdul Aziz’s (2014) analysis of the novel Tivi by Shahnun Ahmad. In Shahnun’s novel, due to Chah’s (Pandora) new-found sexuality all the other characters are also influenced by it and they become engulfed in sexual misadventures. For example Chah’s father, Mat Isa, commits incest with his own daughter (Chah) because he is not able to contain his sexual desires after seeing Chah wearing sexy and alluring clothes. Due to this, the whole family receives their punishment as they are all destroyed by the mother-nature, where they are all struck by lightning.

It is clearly seen from both novels that the Pandoras are the cause for the destruction of the characters. Characters from both novels are punished for their vices and these punishments are meted out by the mother-nature.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the findings that there are 3 types of female characters found in the novel. First, there are some female characters described as being modern and sophisticated yet they possess a flawed character. Then, there are female characters who are portrayed as being the elderly members of the society who still follow the traditional way and hold the traditional belief that women should be at the service of men. Finally, there are also female characters who are portrayed as being strong and independent women.

While in the feminist critique analysis, the findings show that there are stereotypical women images created by the male writer in portraying the female characters in the novel. But most interestingly is the use of the Pandora image to portray the female characters who are also portrayed as having the ability to cause destructions and to mete out punishments.

In the sense of the presence of the female characters with the Pandora image, there is a similarity between Season of Migration to the North with the novel Tivi by Shahnun Ahmad (1995) where in both novels the characters are punished for their vices and in the case of both novels too, these punishments are meted out by the mother-nature (the flood and lightning strike respectively).

Also prominently highlighted in the novel is the women issue especially the issue that is often associated with a third-world country especially a Muslim country like Sudan where there is the lack of freedom for women to exercise their rights. The cause of the women’s inferior position in the society is sometimes linked to religious creeds and teachings.
However, Islam, the religion referred to in the novel, does not condone suppression of women’s rights. For example, Islam gives women absolute power in making decisions about their marriage. According to Al-Qaradawi (2014), in Islam a girl’s consent to her own marriage is very important. It is not permissible for a father to give his daughter’s hand in marriage to someone she disapproves. It is a must that she agrees explicitly or implicitly.

Al-Qaradawi quotes the saying (Hadith) of the Prophet as narrated by Malik and Ahmad through Ibn ‘Abbas in Sahih al-Jami’ al-Saghir regarding this: “A widow’s authority over herself is higher than her guardian; a virgin must be asked about herself, and her (positive) silence implies her approval.”

References:


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