CONTEXTS OF RETURN MIGRATION AND DISILLUSIONMENT IN TAHER **BEN JELLOUN'S *A PALACE IN THE OLD VILLAGE***

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Abstract.
Migration, exile, globalization and their attendant discontents have remained global phenomenon which writers especially from Africa have persistently continued to address in their narratives. While so much has been written about migration to the West in search of better living conditions, or even for mere aspiration, not enough has been done in the area of return migration. This paper reflects on the seeming less discussed issues pertaining return migration and disillusionment in Africa as seen in Tahar Ben Jelloun's *A Palace in the Old Village*. This is opposed to the previous interpretations which scholars have made of the text. To achieve this, the paper employs the psychoanalytic theory. The paper finds that there is a specific link between migration, return migration, development of home country and the mental health of returnees. While economic and political corruption, religious fanaticism, illiteracy, social expectations and so on in home countries mitigate against return migration, the paper argues that obsession, neurosis and aridity of some African space portend serious challenge to return home.
Keywords: Return migration, Disillusionment, Obsession, Psychosis, Taher Ben Jelloun

Introduction

Postcolonial Africans have continued to find life more difficult as they grapple with the challenges of post-colonialism. These are in terms of economic instability, poor social and medical infrastructure, insurgency, banditry, poor leadership, unemployment, civil wars, illiteracy and general disillusionment.

These Africans, while living in their home countries aspire for residency in the West, Europe and America especially. They cast their minds to the West as a place of succour, success, accomplishment and fulfilment of their dreams. Therefore, the challenge of their lives at this point is to escape Africa which seems like a trap. It does not matter if their cultural identities would be lost in the process.

Nevertheless, while the eventual migration to more developed countries is most times a relief from the economic and security discomfort in Africa, it comes with its attendant trauma of migration in terms of mental and psychological problems which in turn create a sense of nostalgia and a yearning to go back home. Return migration at this point becomes the narrative.

Migration and its psychosocial implications constitute a recurrent theme in contemporary
Maghrabian fiction written in French (Mehta, 1994:79). Literary writers from the Maghreb like Taher Ben Jelloun have steadily problematized the notion of home in their productions. Just like other writers, he often creates psychosocially alienated characters that migrate from one location to the other in search of not only a better life but importantly, a place where they can call home.

He wilfully brings to the fore the motive of the Moroccan abandonment of their native home, Morocco to move to Europe. We see high rate of unemployment among the youths in Morocco. This is coupled with lack of access to healthcare and further welfare as should be provided by the government. Moroccan migration is both diverse and revolutionized that Ennaji and Fatima
(2008: 63) opine that it "includes poor and illiterate migrants; middle and upper class unemployed migrants and professional migrants".

Jelloun in his migrant novels of which *A Palace in the Old Village* is one, reconstitutes the idea of home and belonging. For Kayode, (2021: 45), "home, within the African cultural context is a very symbolic element in the discourse of every individual, migrant inclusive".

The intricacy of migration in Africa, where youths leave the continent in droves in search of better lives, and returnees being disillusioned on returning home remain a task which writers must persistently pursue. In the words of Chinua Achebe, (1976:78),

> It is clear to me that the African creative writer who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary Africa will end up being completely irrelevant. Like the absurd man in the proverb who leaves his burning house to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames.

Return Migration

According to Mohamed, and Asmat-Nizam (2020:233), "push factors refer to motivational factors that drive immigrants to leave from the host country while pull factors are those in the home country that attract immigrants to return". Research shows that 63% of all emigrants consider returning home, and that most actual returnees succeed in going back to their home regions (78% of all returnees) (Lang, et al. 2014: 19), "Migrants' Capacities and Expectations"). In the words of Mohamed and Abdul-Talib, "discrimination, marginalization and a lack of opportunities in the host country could force immigrants to return to their homeland" (Mohamed, & Asmat-Nizam (2020: 232). Africa continues to exert its stronghold on the members of the diaspora not considering the distance. Falola, (2014:11) opines concerning the influence which Africa wields on immigrants:

> Located in other parts of the world, Africa creates a meaning for their existence as a cultural source to draw on in order to live and survive, or even as a point of reference to compare and contrast their new places of abode with their places of origins, their successes and failures, the meaning of life, and the understanding of their destinies.

Scholarly interest has focused mainly on migration to the West and the discontents of migration. Nevertheless, there is a seeming dearth of scholarship on the discontents of return migration which demand urgent and sustained attention. Although economic, political and social instability of many African nations lend credence to migration, however, the behaviours of Africans towards their fellow Africans who are returnees, to a large extent either encourage or discourage return migration. The case of the 'returnee' or 'been to' differs from the exile, "who leaves their country of origin, not for education or employment, but to escape political oppression… there may be no way back" (Cousins & Pauline, 2016:4).

Morocco has throughout history shown migratory intersections between Europe and subSaharan Africa. Often times, Moroccan migration constitutes sub-Saharan migrants who move to Morocco for the purpose of using it as a transit country to enter Europe. Nevertheless, most of them eventually settle in Morocco while perpetually awaiting their imaginary passage to the North. This sort of migration is quite different from Moroccans' quest to migrate to the West.

Experience of migration shows that high-skilled emigration can be beneficial to the countries of departure when the migrants eventually return home. This is in terms of 'gain' or what others refer to as 'brain circulation'. According to Awumbila (2009), return migration benefits home country when returnees confer the acquired skills back home leading to job improvement. Also, the outcome of 1995 migration survey in Ghana shows that returnees contribute meaningfully to human capital formation for their country as a result of the higher level formal education which they received abroad (Awmbila 2009:17).

Cerase, (1974) identifies four different types of returnees, emphasizing their aspirations, expectations and needs:

i. Return of failure. This pertains to those returnees who could not integrate in their host countries owing to the prejudices and stereotypes they encountered abroad. Their difficulties in taking an active part in the receiving societies or in adapting themselves to host societies were strong enough to motivate their return.

ii. Return of conservatism. Such includes migrants who before emigrating had planned to return home with enough money to buy land with a view to liberating themselves from loathsome subjection to the landowners (Cerase, 1974:254). Because of these aspirations and strategies, conservative returnees only tend to satisfy their personal needs, as well as those of their relatives. Conservative returnees do not aim at changing the social context they had left before migrating; rather, they help to preserve it.

iii. Return of retirement. This refers to retired migrants who decide to return to their home countries and to acquire a piece of land and a home where they will spend their old age.

iv. Return of innovation. This type is no doubt the most dynamic category of return migration. It refers to those who are prepared to make use of all the means and new skills they have acquired during their migratory experiences with a view to achieving their goals in their origin countries (Cerase, 1974:251). These returnees view themselves as innovators, for they believe that the skills acquired abroad as well as their savings will have turned them into carriers of change.

The above scenario indicates a prerequisite to determining whether a return experience is a success or a failure.

Psychoanalytical Theory

Psychoanalysis is a set of psychoanalytical and psychotherapeutic theories and related procedures, created by an Austrian physician, Sigmund Freud. It however, stems partly from the clinical work of Joseph Breuer and others. Psychoanalysis has over time been revised and developed in different directions. Some of Freud's colleagues and students such as Alfred Adler, Eric Erickson, Karen Horney and Carl Jung, went on to develop their own ideas independently. This paper, employs the Freudian theory in understanding the actual reasons why people migrate, eventually return and the implications of these on their identities, fulfilment and entire psyche.

According to Dobie, (2012: 54) "Efforts to explain the growth, development and structure of the human personality are psychological". Until the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, such speculation lacked the broad theoretical basis that would support those early attempts at understanding ourselves. It was then that Sigmund Freud advanced his startling theories about the workings of the human psyche, its formation, its organization and its maladies. His students and followers such as Alfred Adler, Otto Rank and Carl Jung, later built on Freud's ideas of probing the workings of the human psyche to understand why people act as they do.

Freud looks closely at the unconscious drives that motivate people to act in certain ways. He repeatedly talked about the role of the mind. He believes that the mind is responsible for both conscious and unconscious decisions based on drives and forces. Unconscious desires therefore to him motivate people to act. This includes the desire to migrate from one location, region or country of origin to another. He believes that people are simply actors in the drama of their own minds pushed by desire and pulled by coincidence. Included in this theory is the idea that things that happen to people during childhood can contribute to the way they later function as adults. Freud believed that the mind is made up of two parts – the unconscious and the conscious mind – and that the unconscious mind often prompts people to make certain decisions even if they do not recognize it on a conscious level.

In relation to this, Eagleton, (2008: 130) avers that the turmoil of the relationship between developments in modern literary theory, political and ideological turmoil of the twentieth century does not end with wars, economic slumps and revolutions. For him, it is also experienced by those caught up in it in personal ways, "it is a crisis of human relationships and of the human personality, as well as a social convulsion". He believes that in this period, such experiences have become constituted in new ways as a systematic field of knowledge which is now known as psychoanalysis.

According to Freud, in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, '*the motive of human society is in the last resort an economic one'. This is the quest for greener pastures and a better life. The need to work and labour has dominated human history and for Freud, that harsh necessity means that we must repress some of our tendencies to pleasure and gratification.

Every human being has to undergo this repression of what Freud named the 'pleasure principle' by the 'reality principle', but in this study, and arguably for whole societies, the repression may become excessive and might lead to culture shock, obsession, neurosis, repression, loneliness, psychosis, alienation, exploitation and others. These are the senses in which psychological implication of return migration will be interrogated. Again, Eagleton (2008:132) is of the opinion that most times as humans, "We are prepared to put up with repression as long as we see that there is something in it for us; if too much is demanded of us, however, we are likely to fall sick". This form of sickness is known as neurosis. It has to do with the causes of our unhappiness, even if we direct them towards a more socially valued end like a return home for self-belonging. Humans are not conscious of this fact because, they relegate the desires which they are unable to fulfil to a place where Freud calls the unconscious. To Eagleton (2008:138),
"The aim of psychoanalysis is to uncover the hidden causes of the neurosis in order to relieve the patient of his or her conflicts, so dissolving the distressing symptoms".

Eagleton further opines that, "We live in a society which on the one hand pressurizes us into the pursuit of instant gratification, and on the other hand imposes on whole sectors of the population, an endless deferment of fulfilment" (Eagleton 2008:167). This paper enquires into the dynamics of pleasure and pain as experienced by African immigrant returnees. There is the need to know how much repression of the pain of disillusionment which returnees likely tolerate in their home country.

The focus of the paper, therefore, is on how the inner ego in terms of the psyche, that is, identity, essential nature, soul, spirit and the innermost self of the human nature works. It interrogates the ideals, dreams, visions, desires

which propel the human psyche to desire to migrate. In order words, the push factor and also these inner feelings that afterwards pull them back home or make them desire to return home. This aspect of psychoanalysis draws more from early works on neurotic symptoms of which hysteria is key. Hysteria, in the sense of mental distress, occupies centre stage in the representation of the characters in the text. Freud (1953-74) believes that neurotic symptoms are mainly activities in the memory which were repressed and so lived mainly in the unconscious.

Psychoanalysis focuses on Neurosis which is a psychological disorder and includes hysteria, obsessive and compulsive disorders, depression, phobias and others (Castle 2007:163). Those disorders can be treated. Furthermore, for Freud, dreams are of two levels – the manifest and the latent. The manifest level is the dream which is the object of interpretation while the latent level is that thought which has been repressed and so cannot be known or expressed on a conscious level. According to Freud, "A dream is not an intention repressed as having been carried out, but a wish represented as having been fulfilled" (SE 7:85)

Having accomplished the desire for which migration was attempted in the first instance, another drive sets in. The unconscious desire to go home. The West no longer satisfies the immigrant. Unconscious phenomena include repressed feelings, automatic skills, subliminal perceptions, thoughts, habits and automatic reactions and possibly also complexes, hidden phobias and desires. The unconscious mind according to Freud can be seen as the source of dreams and automatic thoughts/ those that appear without any apparent cause), the repository of forgotten memories (that may still be accessible to consciousness at some later time), and the locus of implicit knowledge, that is, the things that we have learned so well that we do them without thinking).

It is necessary to bypass psychological resistance in the form of defence mechanisms when bringing drives into awareness. These processes that manipulate, deny, or distort reality may include the following: repression or the burying of a painful feeling or thought from one's awareness even though it may resurface in a symbolic form; identification, incorporating an object of thought into oneself and rationalizing the justification of one's behaviour and motivations by substituting "good" acceptable reasons for the actual motivations. In psychoanalytic theory, repression is considered as the basis of other defence mechanisms. In addition, conflicts between the conscious and the unconscious or with repressed material can materialize in the form of mental or emotional disturbances, for example, neurosis, neurotic traits, anxiety, depression and so on. Liberating the elements of the unconscious is achieved through bringing this material into the conscious mind (Example – Skilled guidance, that is, Therapeutic Intervention).

Disorientation, trauma and the state of being demented are concepts in psychoanalytic theory.
This is in tandem with Said's, (2000:173) postulation on exile, "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealing rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted".

Return migration brings trauma to some returnees as against the peace they envisaged they would get at home having escaped the trauma of migration to and while living in the West. Ego, in its wake bears neurosis which in turn eradicates the autonomy of self. In this paper, it will involve dealing with the disillusionment of return migration in its various senses as will be considered.

Ben Jelloun's *A Palace in the Old Village*

The novel revolves around the major character, Mohammed who having emigrated from Maghreb in Morocco to France in search of better living conditions spends forty years of his life working in a car assembly plant. Upon retirement, he begins to feel sorry for himself for having to retire in the first place and further for losing his children to the civilization in France. He however consoles himself with the fact that he has not lost his religious commitment to Islam despite his long period of stay. He resolves to return home to Morocco. On arrival, he uses his entire life's savings to build the biggest house in the village with the expectation that his children and grandchildren who he left in France would return home even if not permanently but for Eid al-Fitr. He is heartbroken and disappointed that none of them shows up. He dies in a chair waiting for their return.

Retirement as Context for Return Migration in Jelloun's A Palace in the Old Village Mohammed all along has always envisaged death, evil, and a trap upon his retirement. On the other hand, his religious commitment does not also allow him to falsify his age so as to continue working in France, therefore he returns home. He laments, "Why forbid a man in good health to work? It was too late now, though, to fiddle with his papers. He might even risk prosecution for having lied. He gave up his idea; he wasn't the kind to commit fraud. Said not a word to his wife or children" (92).

Mohammed is likewise distraught that his children do not enjoy being home like he expects. His children easily get bored of the activities at home. They look forward to returning to France barely few days after they arrive the

countryside. In Mohammed's words, "they're uncomfortable and don't understand why we love being there while they complain about the dust, the flies, the starving cats, and the old people who do nothing" (24).

Most of Mohammed's friends have accepted the fact that their children who were born in France might not accept Morocco as their country like their parents do. These children see Morocco through the eyes of foreigners because they do not even speak the language. Their parents make the mistake of not teaching them Arabic or Berber. Mohammed's friend who is in the same dilemma as he is concludes, "I'm not going back, that's for sure. When I get my 'tirement', I'm setting myself up here, I'll open a small café and wait for them to give me some grandchildren!"(24). Incidence of migration makes children to, "become little Europeans, looking out for themselves, pushing their parents into the background" (28).

Mohammed while living in France has his children, Mourad, Rachid, Jamila, Othmane and Rekya resent his personality and lack of exposure. He recalls when his son Mourad talked back at him saying that he does not want to turn out like his father (31). After Mohamed's children grow up and leave his house except the youngest Rekya, he begins to feel lonely as reality hits him, "Angry at himself for not having paid more attention, he took comfort in the fact that other parents were in the same boat" (31).

Mohammed desires to be in Morocco despite the supposed better life he gets in France. He says, "When I'm back in Morocco, I don't ask myself all these questions. There I'm in tune with nature even when it's yellow with drought. I'm at home. This feeling has no equal anywhere in the world" (48). This can be compared to the character Karin in Habila's *Travellers*, who continues to grapple with the challenge of living in Europe which does not relieve his economic and psychical anguish. Being originally from Somalia, he begins to desire a return home despite its imperfections. In his words, "I was afraid, I was tired, I miss my home and I miss Mogadishu and my shop and my simple life, selling little things with my family" (Habila 178). So when Mohamed sees that there is nothing he can do about his retirement, he resigns to going back home to die rather than dying in France, "to die at home, not with strangers, foreigners who know nothing of my religion, my traditions" (62).

Mohammed even while living in France as an immigrant, who has continued to manage life and his status,

> Had always dreamed of a house, a big, beautiful house where his whole family could be together in happiness, harmony, and mutual respect. A house nestled among trees and gardens, awash in light and colour, an open, peaceful house where not only would everyone feel content but all conflicts and difficulties would be resolved as if by magic (7).

This dream informs Mohammed's decision to return to Morocco after he retires from work in France. He goes ahead upon return to invest his life savings on building his dream house, howbeit atypical. Retirement which is the cause of return migration for Mohammed is something he so much dreaded. He likens it to, "An incurable illness, a prognosis of endless ennui – that's what it was, a curse, although he knew other workers longed for it impatiently" (19).

Mohammed desires to have his kids by his side when he eventually dies in Morocco so that they can perform the Islamic rights by him. This is unlike the cemetery burial given to immigrants in France (63). Mohammed's plan on return is to "tackle the construction of the house as soon as he returned to the village, in that flat, arid, pitiless countryside without a trace of green" (110). Before now, Mohammed has always invested in his home country, Morocco by sending home part of his salary. This is fuelled by his age long dream of returning home with his family later in life (113). Therefore, when he returns home and settles, albeit without his children, he congratulates himself, "I've succeeded, yes, I've made a success of it – proof that a man can go abroad and return to his village unchanged; it's wonderful"(121).

Obsession, Neurosis and Aridity as Disillusionment of Return Migration in *A Palace in the Old Village*

Disillusionment of return migration for the major character, Mohammed starts in France even before he returns home. Nevertheless, this paper will focus on the disillusionment he and other returnee characters encounter on the shores of Morocco upon return. Firstly, we see Mohammed's uncle who upon return home, brings back appliances like electric oven and iron from France. He forgets that his village is yet to have electricity. They are known to use candles and kerosene lamps. Therefore for want of what to use the electric oven and iron for, "They used the oven for a pantry. It was so funny!.... The iron was useful for flattening dough to make perfectly thin crepes" (Jelloun, 2011:41).

Again, when Mohammed's nephew returns from France, he arrives with gifts like underwears and silk bras which his mother does not wear rather she keeps them for his future wife. Unfortunately, the villagers rather than appreciate their son that migrated and returned, resort to making fun of him because he stammers. This mockery

he receives from his own people who should love him unconditionally demoralises him. He regrets returning home, "He said that in France no one mocked him and the next time he'd go spend his vacation with some peasants in Brittany! He never came back to the village- we lost touch with him" (Jelloun, 2011:41).

It is a pity that notwithstanding all Mohammed does to give his children a better life, they resent him. He works hard to maintain his integrity, religious commitment and probably get his children to emulate his way of life despite being in a foreign land. Nonetheless, the beauty of modern living in France cancels all his efforts. He wonders, "Perhaps it's our way of life that puts them off. They don't like us anymore. We're no longer cool; we're behind the times. They feel ashamed of us" (Jelloun, 2011:47).

It is unfortunate that Mohammed's hometown in Morocco is nothing to be proud about, "Mohammed's country was dry, bare; it had nothing, and this nothing had followed him even to France" (Jelloun, 2011:68). Moroccan countryside often does have acrid and dry land that does not favour settlement and buildings. This often propels people to choose to resettle and build their houses in the urban cities of Morocco. The urban cities as against the countryside maintain superior investment climate and standard of living. In the work of Daniel Lapsley and Paul Stey, the Ego "is the range of defensive stratagems that can deflect, repress, or transform the expression of unrealistic or forbidden drive energies" (Jelloun, 2011:1). Mohammed's ego fails to impress on him the commonsense which he required to know that his unrealistic dream of getting his Western-born children to return to the acrid village would be nullified painfully.

Most times when he is on vacation in his hometown with his children, they lose control of their manners and home training. Mohammed attributes this lack of self-control to the life they pick up from France especially when, "The neighbours said they hadn't been brought up properly, didn't respect anyone or anything" (Jelloun, 2011:76). It is sad that Mohammed does not make sure to remedy this. He has become weak in being firm with his children even in his village because of the laws protecting children in France. His family members do not accept the way of life of Mohammed's children. In fact on one occasion, Mohammed's elder sister, Fattouma asks him, "Why don't you slap them? They've got bad manners, those kids, and when they come here they upset our children, teach them things I can't believe" (Jelloun, 2011:77).

This is the kind of people and environment which Mohammed eventually returns to. They are non-tolerant and so do not hesitate to talk down on a returnee instead of helping to reintegrate him back into the society. They have no patience with strange cultures. This is in addition to the underdevelopment in the village. Here, things are totally different, from the climate, landscapes to the care which one gets in LaFrance. In fact, before Mohammed migrates he is warned that, "Over there, you'll have free medicines and medical care, not like back home where there isn't even a nurse looking in on you from time to time"(Jelloun, 2011:85).

Mohammed after spending forty years in France eventually retires. As an African and a Muslim, he feels that he owes himself and his family a duty to return home to Morocco from where he migrated to France. It is at this point that he realizes that he has lost his children to the civilization in France. He has raised his children for France to inherit and not for him to return home with, "When he thought about his children, he had the feeling he'd lost them. It was more than a feeling: a certainty, a definite certainty" (Jelloun, 2011:97).

There is no doubt that he made money from France at least in terms of his retirement benefit which he hopes to return to Morocco with. Mohammed's son, Mourad against his father's wish, marries a Spanish Christian woman who was born in France like himself. His eldest girl, Jamila also defies his father and marries an Italian, a non-Muslim. Jamila leaves the house and never returns. Mohammed on his part forbids her name to be mentioned in his house, "She had wounded him so deeply that he could not forget his pain" (Jelloun, 2011:102). As if these are not enough, Mohammed learns that the remaining of his two sons had dropped out of high school so that they could work with the state government. So none of his children apart from the last daughter, Rekya and his foster son, Nabile are home to celebrate the Eid al-Kebir. He feels too bad, lonely and empty. These are all the results of migrating to the West, leaving one's homeland in search of a better life. One raises children abroad who end up forgetting their parents. Nevertheless, "Mohammed consoled himself with the thought that life was like that: You have children, you spoil them, then one day- off they go" (Jelloun, 2011:103).

He is already disillusioned before he even returns home. More so, on returning home, Mohammed meets home the same way he left it. There is no visible development apart from the butane-gas-powered television sets which people often gather to watch. The environment is dry, dull and hot. People lie around having nothing much to do because of the acrid weather. In Mohammed's words, "Life is simple and simply terrible" (Jelloun, 2011:111).

Consequently, he sees that poverty is strewn all over the place. There are more beggars on the street than there are people who have jobs that they do. These beggars range from children to adults, from women to men, from healthy to handicapped folks. Mohammed flusters and thinks , "This country has lost its pride – it's overwhelming, there are too many beggars, too much corruption and injustice, and the longer it goes on, the more it becomes too much"(Jelloun, 2011:116).

Mohammed's wife has resigned to her fate upon the realization that their children have been carried away by the allure of the city in which they were born. She sees this as natural and not a deliberate plan by France to steal their children from them. In her words, "…but it was only natural for kids to love their native land, and Mohammed's wife knew she stood no chance against such an attachment" (Jelloun, 2011:119).

The underdevelopment in Mohammed's village is made persistent by the corruption in the leadership cabinet. Mohammed is not able to light up his house because electricity is yet to be in his village. But how can his children who were born and raised in a city with high standard of development choose to return to a dark and drought filled village? For instance, the Minister whose responsibility it is to bring in water and electricity focuses on satisfying his own wife's endless materialistic desires, "He thinks instead about earning himself a little money and his wife's respect, which are more important than the house of Mohammed Thimmigrant"(Jelloun, 2011:125). He believes that the villagers who are already used to not having water and electricity should remain in that situation, the returnee inclusive.

Mohammed's disillusionment is further worsened by his headstrong personality. He finds it difficult to acknowledge the realities on ground even while pursuing his dreams. He only sees what he wants to achieve but does not consider the circumstances surrounding the realization of his dreams. In the course of Mohammed completing his house, he experiences an attack or spell cast on him, "Mohammed knew that envy and hypocrisy thrived in his village, and his wife had even given him talismans to wear against the jealousy of his own family" (Jelloun, 2011:128).

They believe that the building project in the village and the fact that he is a returnee is capable of stirring jealousy and envy targeted to hurt him. Nevertheless, the presence of the black thing that attacks Mohammed cannot be traced to any source however, its appearances destabilize him, "…but his emotional turmoil grew as he heard the black thing murmuring, grinding its teeth as it came and went"(Jelloun, 2011:129). He has to spend time to pray before it goes away. This attack happens repeatedly making him loose his mind. It is strange that he never experienced the presence of these demonic spirits in the forty years he spent in France. It is ironical that it is when he returned to his people that he is being attacked by the demons. He wonders what wrong he has committed by choosing to return home after retirement and to build a house which can accommodate every member of his family upon their return. Mohammed is told that the land upon which he has built his house is inhabited by some jinns and that they will run him out of the place. He makes effort to keep the jinns at bare by bringing several readers of the Koran to read the word of God in the house after which incense is burnt but these demons persists.

On the other hand, apart from the superstitious beliefs of Mohammed's family and friends, his neurosis as a result of his deep anxiety to complete his building project and receive his children there could be the cause of the psychosis which he experiences. The hallucinations and delusions of seeing 'the black thing' is only peculiar to Mohammed's vision. This is because nobody else sees nor hears it except Mohammed. Neurosis works well with psychosis to expose a psychological disorder.

The belief in jinns, demons and witchcraft in Mohammed's village destabilizes and confuses him. To make matters worse, none of Mohammed's children agrees to return home for the Eid- al-Kebir. They do not even want to come home to see the house their father has spent so much money building for them. Mohammed is disappointed; he queries them, "What do you mean you can't? You're saying no to your father, who spent months building a little palace for you?"(Jelloun, 2011:137). He continues to plead with his children believing that they will surprise him and return home. The day of the Eid- el-Kabir comes and goes by and his children do not come, "No one came. No sound of a car engine, no cloud of dust, nothing. The silence was unnatural. No birds or insects flew by. Nothing moved. Everything froze in place" (Jelloun, 2011:140-41).

As Mohammed continues to wait for the arrival of his children, he relapses into depression when there is no sign that they will show up. He refuses to be comforted, he refuses to speak to anyone nor to bath or even eat food. Mohammed is obviously paranormally obsessed with the idea of his children returning home to the palace he built for them. The villagers assume he has developed a mental condition and so desert him. When he is almost drown into the pit of despair he struggles to come out by physically raising his hand. His wife rushes over to him and takes him away to where he is given a haircut and washes his already stinking body. Mohammed compares in his

mind the treatment he would have gotten in France assuming he were there and the one he is getting in the village, "LaFrance is a wonderful country because it takes good care of its sick. Here you're better off never setting foot in a hospital; I'm telling you for your own good!"(Jelloun, 2011:148).

Mohammed tries to forget his disappointment by moving closer to the villagers who have never left the village. Their lives consist of merely praying in the mosque, "They prayed like robots, babblings things only God could understand" (Jelloun, 2011:148). This does not really help. There is nothing much to do in the village apart from sitting and stirring into the air if one is not praying. Not quite long, Mohammed relapses again into his obsession of seeing his children in the house he has built for them in the village. He constantly dreams of this obsession coming to reality. This dream weakens his body further such that he is not even able to stand up from his seated position. Mohammed knows that he is sick but he cannot place his finger on what ailment it is that is tormenting his body. He soliloquises, "This malady has no name, striking without warning and from all sides. No one here can diagnose it" (Jelloun, 2011:149-150). The dream and thought of missing the arrival of his children should he decide to visit PitieSalpetriere hospital in Paris to discover a cure to his ailment keeps Mohammed from moving an inch from the chair. With each passing day, the arm chair slowly sinks into the earth. It gets rooted firmly to the ground by unseen forces, "Its leather had greatly aged, and through new gashes, the springs now appeared as keen blades that cut him when he moved. Drops of his blood mingled with his urine and tears. Mohammed wept like a child and could not stop" (Jelloun, 2011:151).

Nobody ascertains if it is Mohammed who is refusing to leave the armchair or if there is an invisible force which is holding him down there. The villagers filing past do not do anything tangible to rescue him from that chair, they merely ask him to get up and when he does not respond they utter prayers and move on. He gradually sinks under and is gradually being covered by the earth. Prayers are offered for him. His family members gather together to pray and they further cast all the blame on his emigration to France. They believe that France is responsible for the death of Mohammed because it succeeded in taking away all Mohammed ever lived for his children. It is ironical however that it is in their presence that their brother dies. They do not make any conscious effort to stop France from taking away their brother even if it has succeeded in taking away his children. They only lament and pray. Mohammed's cousin laments "Look at poor Mohammed! He was a wise man, a good Muslim, and here he is today, abandoned, miserable, at the edge of a madness that has already begun to claim him. We will say a few prayers so that God will come to his rescue…" (Jelloun, 2011:154).

Mohammed dies of depression, seeing that he has lost his children. The villagers are ignorant of depression as an ailment. They are rather ample believers in witchcraft and jinn manipulation. There is further no hospital in the village which can treat Mohammed's type of ailment by means of therapy or drugs in order to aid dreamless sleep. In fact, by the fourtieth day when the earth completely covers Mohammed's head, the villagers interpret his death as a noble sign because in their thinking, "Mohammed has gone to God! The village has a saint! We have our saint!...God has not forgotten us! The house has not been built for nothing; it will be his tomb, his marabout!" (Jelloun, 2011:156).

This is the interpretation the villagers create of the sad demise of a healthy returnee who has spent forty years in France in good health. The dream of having his children in his hometown culminates into neurosis which is not detected as a psychological disorder until it sniffs life out of Mohammed. He spends only an average of six months in his homeland which he has dreamt of returning to and which he invested his life savings before he dies. Poverty, illiteracy, corruption, fanaticism, superstitious belief and others join hands together to put an end to the life of Mohammed the returnee. There is also the arid nature of the land which does not encourage construction of structures.

Conclusion

This paper reveals that, Jelloun's *A Palace in the Old Village* captures the experiences of return migration and disillusionment as they affect returnee characters. This is done through the lens of Sigmund Freud's notion of psychoanalysis. It portrays the disillusionment of return migration in the areas of obsession, neurosis, aridity, poverty, religious fanaticism, illiteracy, superstitious beliefs, and other ills bedeviling a developing country. Mohammed like other returnees realises that France did not quench the longing for a sense of belonging nor did it provide an enabling environment for religious proclivity and African cultural beliefs. However, on returning to Morocco, the environment succeeds in stifling their dreams such that he begins to wonder if he made the best decision in coming home. Mohammed's home country is arid and drought-filled. His illiteracy and refusal to accept modernization makes him insist on building his palace in an arid environment without the supervision of a construction engineer. Were he educated and liberal religiously, probably he might have opted to build his palace in the city which is more developed with water and electricity rather than in the village. This would be close to the civilization which his children are used to. It would have motivated them to return home. Mohammed's people

are also not able to understand that he was suffering from neurosis rather they attribute it to the workings of jinns and the evil of migration to the West. He dies barely six months after he returns home.

The paper finds that the depiction of returns migration occurs as a result of retirement. The characters became disoriented and traumatized (psychosis) as a result of the challenges of the lived return migrants experience in their countries. It reveals that return migration has also presented disillusionment to the returnees due to certain challenges such as lack of integration, obsession, neurosis, aridity, depression, repression, psychosis, insecurity, poor governance, corruption in government and so on. These discontents of return migration leave the returnees physically dehumanized, emotionally demented, disoriented and traumatized.

Consequently, the paper submits that Jelloun ventriloquizes the returnees' narrative to create compassion for returnees who voluntarily decide and eventually return home. For further studies, it is the researchers' view that more researches should be done in the area of return migration using other developing theories. This will give other perspectives to the understanding of the novel used.

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