RE-ORIENTALIZING THE ORIENT: A SELF-ORIENTALIST PERSPECTIVE ON AFGHAN ANGLOPHONE FICTION

By

WAJID RIAZ

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Thesis Title: Re-Orientalizing the Orient: A Self-Orientalist Perspective on Afghan Anglophon Fiction

Submitted By: Wajid Riaz **Registration #:** 593/PhD/Eng/S-16-Lit

Dr. Nighat Ahmad _____

Name of Research Supervisor Signature of Research Supervisor

Dr. Farheen Ahmed Hashmi _____

Name of HoD Signature of HoD

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan _____

Name of Dean (FAH) Signature of Dean (FAH)

Maj. Gen. Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI (M), (Retd.) _____

Name of Rector Signature of Rector

_____

Date

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I Wajid Riaz

Son of Muhammad Nawaz

Registration # 593/PhD/Eng/S-16-Lit

Discipline English Literature

Candidate of **Doctor of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Re-Orientalizing the Orient: A Self-Orientalist Perspective on Afghan Anglophone Fiction** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of PhD degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Re-Orientalizing the Orient: A Self-Orientalist Perspective on Afghan Anglophone Fiction

This dissertation is a postcolonial study of Afghan Anglophone fiction. It is delimited to Khalid Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and *And the Mountains Echoed* and Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone*. Located on a larger scale in Afghan Anglophone literary tradition and focused on narratives written by diasporic writers, this investigation is in the area of Orientalists discourses, contributed by Afghan Anglophone writers. The main argument of this study is that, through their construction of relational, hybrid, multiple, and shifting subjectivities/identities in their narratives, diasporic writers have appropriated the Western cannon. In this context Afghan Anglophone writers; Khalid Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi endorse Orientalists discourses and coin the self-othering concept of the Orient.The concept is called Self-Orientalism while the process is called Re-Orientalism. The main argument of the research is the Re-Orientalization the Orient from self-Orientalist perspective. Afghanistan has always been an arena for international conflicts and has served as a buffer zone for the world powers wherein to settle their disputes. The decades long wars and turbulences have left the country devastated and its people vulnerable. And as such it has not yet passed that phase ofbeing a lucrative part of the orient, worthy of the representation and stereotyping of the west, as well as its own people. The present study tries to examine what such self-representations might entail. Forthis purpose, Hosseini' s *The Kite Runner, And The Mountains Echoed* and Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* have been selected which are the stories of men and women's tormented inner self in search of voice and many other stereotypes labeled on Afghans. Orientalism theory by Edward Said, Re- orientalization theory by Lisa Lau, Dirlik's theory of Self-Orientalism have been used as theoretical framework. Said's Orientalism has been consulted as a background theory. The findings of the study underline that the culturally indiscrete portrayal of Afghani identity is actually a colonial portrayal, by the author in a postcolonial era. Moreover, the claim for authentic representation ends up in self-stereotyping and misrepresentation of the

diverse ethnic groups within the country because the strategies of representation used by the authors are not devoid of their inherent politics and are, thus, ethical and political in nature. Furthermore, the sense of self in a postcolonial era and the hegemony of "us" and "them" within the self in the context of Afghanistan have also been highlighted in this analysis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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DEDICATION

My dear parents,

My Wife

Borthers

Sisters

&

My Grandmother (Late)

for your unconditional love, endless support and prayers

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: RATIONALE AND PLAN OF RESEARCH

This dissertation deals with the topic "Re-Orientalizing the Orient: A Self-Orientalist Perspective on Afghan Anglophone Fiction", delimited to Khalid Hosseini's *The Kite Runner, And the Mountains Echoed*, and Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone*. This section of the research introduces the research argument, research topic, problem statement, research questions and research objectives. Moreover, this chapter delves into a comprehensive exploration of the lives and literary contributions of the selected authors. This detailed examination serves to furnish a foundational understanding and contextual background for the research questions. Additionally, the chapter elucidates the significance of the research, highlighting its distinctiveness and novelty in comparison to other studies within the same domain.

1.1 Argument and rationale of the Study

The research explores how Self-Orientalism has been employed in Afghan Anglophone fiction, Khalid Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and *And the Mountains Echoed* and Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone*, to Re-*Orientalize the Orient.* These narratives surrounding Afghanistan, predominantly perpetuate Orientalist tropes, while the two notable individuals, Khalid Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi, who are geographically distant, adopt distinct contexts and portray Afghanistan in contrasting ways. However, they reframe Afghanistan through the lens of Orientalist tropes and perspectives. Hence, the portrayal does not persistent to an individualistic or idiocentric representation, but rather a collective depiction. The two writers from the diaspora delve into their Afghan heritage through their creative works, closely emulating Orientalist concepts of the East. It is observed that despite their distinct origins and storytelling styles, both writers engage in the exoticization, essentialization, and homogenization of Afghan culture and identity.

This study analyses the identical tropes to Orientalism as both writers in their narratives, employing Edward Said's concept of Orientalism. Afghanistan, largely has been representing through the same lens by Orientalists since long, however, this study is the re-inscription of Orientalist discourses from Oriental perspectives which is called self-Orientalism and Re-orientalism. The study also investigates the influence of Western perspectives and audience expectations on the portrayal of Afghanistan, highlighting the challenges associated with negotiating identity in diaspora and transnational literature.

Self-Orientalism is a diverse approach, influenced by Edward Said's classical Orientalism. The term Self-Orientalism simply refers to reconfiguration of Orientals in different perspectives to Orientalism or, in many ways, a reverse process of Orientalism. Self-Orientalism proposes that Orientalism is no more an autonomous and isolated creation of Orientalists to construct and represent the Orient but Orient itself is now adopting the same procedure of Orientalism to construct itself and represent its own self from the same lens of Orientalism. Therefore, Orientals themselves are practicing the process of Orientalism to construct, circulate, reinforce and represent through the discourses of Orientalism. Influenced by Edward Said's *Orientalism,* Arif Dirlik used Self-Orientalism as a term for the first time in his "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism". According to Dirlik "Asian intellectuals are now using the same style and techniques of classical Orientalism that is in other words, the self-orientalization of Asian intellectuals, which is not a sign of powerlessness but rather of freshly acquired strength." (Dirlik 96)

Dirlik was not the first who contemplated the term for the first time, although, he is a pioneer, and has explicitly identified that the reverse process of Orientalism is called Self-Orientalism but other prominent intellectuals have identified this reverse process earlier than him. Said himself pointed out in *Orientalism* that Orientals themselves are the part of Orientalism. Matthew Jaber Stiffler in "Consuming Orientalism: Public food ways of Arab American Christians" used the process of Orientalism for Arab Americans who constructed themselves from the perspectives of Orientalism. Gayatary Spivak's conception of native informant is similar to Self-Orientalism. Similarly, Hamid Dabashi's notion of "native informant" presents the same perspective and features of Self-Orientalism in "Native Informers and the Making of the American Empire". Lisa Lau and

in collaboration with Ana Cristina Mendes have coined a similar term, "re-Orientalism," which too is parallel to Self-Orientalism.

Various philosophical and literary concepts, analogous to Orientalism but viewed from a reverse perspective, have been formulated at different historical junctures and in diverse intellectual spheres, addressing the exigencies articulated by critics and theorists. Nonetheless, the term Self-Orientalism, intricately aligned with Orientalism in both its operation and characteristics, constitutes the central focus of this current research. Chapters two and three will extensively explore and expound upon the intricacies of Self-Orientalism, examining its function and features within the context of the research framework.

1.1.1 Background of the Study

In this study, Afghanistan is scrutinized as a cultural representation consumed in the West, with a specific focus on the images it projects, particularly in terms of Afghanistan's identity, that perpetuate itself as the desirable 'Other' to the Occident. Afghanistan has been a central concern for Orientalists who predominantly depict the region with stereotypical images, often essentializing Afghans with negative characteristics such as brutality, barbarism, and illiteracy. Notably, these depictions extend to limiting Afghan women to domestic roles and restricting their access to education, contributing to the persistent portrayal of the region in the Western imagination as the 'Wild-East,' marked by danger and insecurity (Riaz and Hussain 15).

A plethora of Western writers has contributed to the perpetuation of stereotypical images of Afghans through their literary works. For instance, Mountstuart Elphinstone's travel narrative *An Account of The Kingdom of Caubul* delves into Afghanistan, offering a detailed portrayal of its people and places, with a particular focus on the Pashtun people. Similarly, Colonel H. D. Hutchinson's *The Campaign in Tirah 1897-1898: An Account of The Expedition Against The Orakzais And Afridis*, J.G. Elliott's *The Frontier 1839-1947 - The Story of the North-West Frontier of India*, and Colonel Sir Robert Warburton's *Eighteen Years In The Khyber 1879-1898*, among others, contribute to the Orientalization process by presenting Afghans as the 'Other.'

A multitude of literary works, spanning various genres and time periods, including Michal Barthorp's *Afghan Wars and the North-West Frontier, 1839-1947*,

Hobbes Vincent's *Khost*, Jason Elliot's *An Unexpected Light: Travels in Afghanistan*, and Deborah Ellis's *The Breadwinner*, engage in the Orientalization of Afghanistan by perpetuating stereotypical images. Whether these are novels, travel narratives, or historical accounts, these works collectively contribute to shaping a particular narrative that reinforces the characterization of Afghans as the 'Other.' The orientalization process, as evident in these works, plays a pivotal role in constructing a specific perception of Afghanistan in the Western imagination. The stereotypical portrayals, rooted in historical and cultural narratives, not only essentialize Afghans but also contribute to the perpetuation of a skewed image that aligns with Said's notion of Orientalism. This examination of literary representations provides a lens through which to understand the intricate dynamics of cultural construction and the role of literature in shaping perceptions of the 'Other.'

The previously mentioned Orientalist works adhere to Said's Orientalism, as discussed earlier. However, Afghan Anglophone writers actively participate in this process by presenting their own representation from an Occidental perspective. This form of self-representation serves to deconstruct Said's Orientalism and is termed Self-Orientalism, a phenomenon to be explored within the selected novels.

Furthermore, the research delves into the intricate interweaving of the Self-Orientalism process in Afghan Anglophone fiction, aiming to unravel how postcolonial writers contribute to the re-orientalization process. Acknowledging that self-orientalism is essentially a reconfiguration and extension of Orientalism, the thesis posits that Orientalism is not solely the autonomous creation of the West. Instead, it suggests that the Orient actively engages in the construction, reinforcement, and circulation of orientalist discourse. The research contends that Self-Orientalism emerges when individuals from the East employ Western thought patterns and stereotypes for self-definition—a mode of Orientalism practiced by the Orient itself. This phenomenon is seen as an outcome of the East representing and expressing itself through the eyes of the West, adopting the image that the West has fictionalized for it. William Feighery in *Tourism and self-Orientalism in Oman* aptly describes this as the image creators of the Middle East writing from "an Occidental Script" (269).

Said's conceptualization of Orientalism encompasses its three dimensions: a discourse that constitutes a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient, concerned primarily with the 'Orient' as the 'Middle East', that is, with Islamic South-West Asia; an academic study of the 'Orient', a geographical marker that divides the world into 'Orient' and 'Occident', and a geographical marker that divides the world into 'Orient' and 'Occident' (Said 11). Postcolonial research and literature extensively engage with Orientalism, with Said's seminal work, *Orientalism*, serving as a foundational and authoritative text in the field. This work scrutinizes preconceived notions about the people of the Orient, their beliefs, and actions, arguing that the knowledge produced about the Oriental 'Other' are inherently subjective, reflecting specific interests and a Western-centric worldview. Said emphasizes that the West, particularly Europe and the United States, perceives and conceives countries in the Orient through a lens that distorts the reality of those places and their inhabitants, terming this distorted perspective "Orientalism" (Said and Jhally 2).

The evolution of Orientalist discourse has led to the emergence of various terminologies closely aligned with Said's original perspectives on Orientalism. These include Neo-Orientalism, Re-Orientalism, Self-Orientalism, Internal Orientalism, Reverse Orientalism, and Ethno-Orientalism. These terms maintain a direct connection with Said's foundational ideas on Orientalism. Notably, both 19th-century early Orientalism and post-9/11 neo-Orientalism are rooted in essentialist constructions and reconstructions of Islam, Muslim societies, and Muslim communities in Western societies. The tendency to overlook the diverse Islamic trends, traditions, religious and secular views, social and cultural varieties, and the multitude of political and social actors within Muslim countries has created a void filled by an essentialist and culturalist reading grid, portraying a monolithic and unchanging Muslim world. The Western construction of Islam has given rise to neo-orientalism, representing a modern incarnation that asserts moral superiority over the Orient, leading to a shift in the binary opposition from West and East to West and Islam.

The binary relationship has been fortified by the Oriental elite class or individuals facilitated by the West, such as native informants and comprador intellectuals incorporated into the Western canon, as astutely identified by Said in *Orientalism*. These

figures have adopted similar approaches in their writings, contributing to the depiction of the Orient as discarded by Western perspectives. Their mode of representation is termed re-orientalization, directly aligning with the original Saidian perspectives of Orientalism. However, the contemporary period grapples with issues of representation, employing diverse methods to represent various individuals, including self-representation by the people themselves. Consequently, researchers highlight that the Orient has undergone re-orientalization, either by its own initiatives or with the active participation of Oriental voices in shaping the representation and construction of the Orient.

The Orientalizing practice is intricately tied to representation, with the aforementioned terms serving as tools for shaping the image of the Orient. Moreover, in the contemporary context, the Orient possesses the capacity to articulate its own representation based on ethnicity, language, society, culture, and identity, distinct from Western portrayals. This autonomy negates the need for Orientalist representation. However, the post-9/11 shift in the World Order, coupled with direct American intervention in various global regions, has altered this dynamic. Among these regions, Afghanistan holds particular significance due to its centrality and importance in international politics. Consequently, Afghanistan, as part of the Orient, has been subjected to both Orientalization and re-Orientalization in recent decades. This has resulted in stereotypical representations of Afghans by Orientalists, depicting them as illiterate, barbaric, irrational, revengeful individuals engaged in criminal activities such as extortion and kidnapping. Intriguingly, Afghan Anglophone writers now paradoxically employ these very same stereotypical images in their works, contributing to the representation of Afghan people and culture.

1.1.2 Literary Works of Afghanistan

The significance of literary works by Afghan writers lies in their membership within a heterogeneous group grappling with the preservation of cultural identity and the continuity of the literary tradition. Afghanistan boasts a rich literary history, but the signing of the Durand Line pact in 1896 resulted in the geopolitical separation of Afghanistan from the present-day province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan. Following this pact, Afghan fiction writers engaged in the creation of novelettes, novels,

and short stories in their native languages from 1900 to 1992. Unfortunately, this literary production experienced setbacks during the civil war and the Afghan-Russian conflict (Sadat 291). The subsequent chapter of the Taliban era did not yield significant literary output either. Nevertheless, the preceding 92 years witnessed an extensive period of literary productivity in Pashto, Persian, and Dari languages, with a focus on Afghan domestic issues and political history. This literary output can be categorized into stages reflecting political awakening (1900-19), patriotic sentiment (1919-29), sentimental socialism (1929-52), realism (1953-63), socialist realism (1963-78), revolutionary activism (1978-89), and reconciliation and domestic resistance (1990-92) (Ibid: 291).

The literary works by Afghan writers serve as poignant expressions of their consciousness, struggles, and the broader Afghan experience. Through their invaluable insights, these writers offer a unique reaction to and exploration of the tumultuous times that have shaped them. Functioning as cultural proxies of the Afghan experience, these writers courageously address social issues and the challenging human conditions that resonate with the experiences of most Afghans. The narratives often serve as a retelling of the authors' personal lives, where the writers themselves occasionally emerge as characters in these stories. In their literary contributions, Afghan writers symbolically embody the conscience of the Afghan collective experience.

The era of the Taliban (1995-2001) proved inhospitable for fictional writers, prompting many to seek refuge abroad to express their sentiments and shed light on the issues afflicting their homeland. Writers such as Khalid Hosseini, Atiq Rahimi, Parween Pazhwak, Zalmia Ara, and numerous others sought exile in the United States, France, Canada, and Britain, utilizing their platform to convey the complexities of Afghan life to a global audience. These exiled Afghan writers delved into various issues related to the civil war, including Talibanization, marginalization, violence, rape, injustices, migration, and exile.

Afghanistan, labelled the 'graveyard of empires' (Innocent and Carpenter 1), has never experienced a literary renaissance due to the enduring 40-year conflict. The nation's peace has been disrupted by the presence of figures such as Osama Bin Laden, Al-Qaida, Mujahideen, and religious fundamentalists (Imran and Xiaochuan 66). This densely populated country encompasses diverse ethnic groups, with Pashtuns constituting

the majority at 40 to 45%, followed by Tajiks at 25%, Uzbeks at 10%, Hazaras at 10%, and Aimaqs at 10% (Goodson 1). Furthermore, foreign invasions have destabilized the nation's peace since 1837 until 2001, with various powers vying for dominance over the country (Imran and Xiaochuan 2015, Katzman 2010, Goodson 2001, Tanner 2009, Maass 1999).

The country assumed the name Afghanistan in the mid-1700s, during Ahmad Shah Durrani's unification of various tribal factions. Since its inception, Afghanistan has been marked by prolonged wars, resulting in collateral damages, infrastructural reparations, and social, economic, and political instability. The protracted crises compelled millions of Afghans to seek refuge in neighbouring and Euro-American countries. These challenges created a challenging environment for Afghan literary writers to express themselves from a central perspective. Different stages of Afghan writing have been delineated, primarily addressing themes of war, trauma, Talibanization, Islamic fundamentalism, migration, subjugation, exploitation, and diaspora. Due to the prolonged state of war, a significant portion of literature has emanated from the diaspora. However, Afghan writers hold a pivotal role in reshaping the social, political, and economic landscape of the country, guiding Afghanistan towards modernity. Fiction writers, in particular, bear the responsibility of raising awareness by attentively addressing social realities. The literary tradition, commencing in the Dari language from the region of Khurasan, has evolved over time.

Classical literature in Afghanistan, primarily comprising fairy tales, fables, and prose collections, has played a foundational role. Notable among these works is Abdul Qasim Ferdowsi's Shahnamah, an epic narrative portraying the hero as both protagonist and antagonist, intertwined with supernatural elements reflecting Oriental fantasies. Classical stories explored themes such as self-sacrifice for the community, eulogies for monarchs, revenge, justice, and honour.

According to Nancy Hatch Dupree, literature from the classical period through the 19th century predominantly delved into various themes like hospitality, nang and gherat (honor and pride), humanity, respect, tolerance, love, education, spirituality, Sufism, revenge, justice, and honour (76). During this era, Afghan literature primarily existed in Dari, Persian, and Pashto, with no trace of literature written in English.

In the early 19th century, the influence of English literature began to manifest as Afghan literary works were translated into the English language. An example of this influence is found in "Qisa-Ha-e Ustad" (The Stories of the Master), published in the 1890s, depicting the unwavering devotion of a woman to her family while maintaining self-determination.

In 1903, Mahmud Tarzi returned to Afghanistan after an extended exile in Damascus and Istanbul. During his travels to various regions, he sought to enhance his understanding of writing and subsequently initiated the composition of "Torch of the News" in 1906. Tarzi played a pivotal role in shaping Afghan literature under the guidance of Islamic ideology, ushering in a period of modernism in the country. Nancy Hatch Dupree highlighted Tarzi's impact in *The Conscription of Afghan Writers: An Aborted Experiment in Socialist Realism*, stating: A revival of Islam, which includes the idealistic combination of modernism and Islam, as well as the inclusion of a scientific and ideological basis for reforms within Islam, and the endorsement of the entirety of social justice that is taught in the Holy Quran, which is interpreted according to contemporary realities and future needs (75).

Mahmud Tarzi, well-versed in French, Turkish, and English literatures, introduced Afghans to European literature. His work, *Torch of the News*, served as a gateway for Afghan readers to explore foreign literature. Ghani noted in *The Persian Literature of Afghanistan, 1911-78*, in the Context of Its Political and Intellectual History" that Tarzi introduced Afghans to foreign poetry, literary essays, novels, novelettes, and short stories for the first time (Ghani 436). An example of this influence is the translation of the French work *Les Tragedies De Paris* (*The Tragedies of Paris*), which appeared in the first volume of Tarzi's "*Torch of the News*," underscoring the impact of foreign literature on Afghan literary endeavours.

Subsequently, *Torch of the News* published four Western novels, with Ghani asserting that Tarzi's motive for translating these novels was to provide aesthetic pleasure and delight to the King. Ghani categorizes these novels as technical due to their contribution to global geography comprehension. The novels, with their fairy-tale-like structures, captivated Afghan readers and aligned with the prevalent interest in Oriental fairy tales at the time (Ghani 436).

Mahmud Tarzi is widely acknowledged as the father of literature in Afghanistan for introducing foreign literary works to Afghan writers. During this period, Afghan writers recognized the importance of meeting the needs of Afghan readers to promote literature and education, aiming for social reforms. Despite these efforts, Afghan literature struggled to secure a prominent position. Ghani notes that Afghan storytellers primarily focused on exaggeration values, superstitions, and supernatural elements, emphasizing fairy tales. This orientation did not position them at a reference level or establish them as a canon. In contrast to European writers who prioritized rational aspects, early Afghan writings tended to oversimplify the Orient, echoing representations introduced by Orientalists. Nevertheless, foreign literature played a crucial role in introducing Afghan writers to modern literary techniques, incorporating new methods into their works. This foreign influence brought different approaches to character representation and other literary techniques into Afghan literature, enhancing the portrayal of social realities.

In addition to Mahmud Tarzi, pivotal figures like Abdul Hadi Dawi, Ali Ahmad Kohzad, and Mir Ghulam Muhammad Ghobar played significant roles in fostering and elevating Afghan literature. These notable contributors focused their writings on various themes such as epics, heroism, patriotism, the veil, death, torture, and imprisonment. Notably, Maulawi Muhammad Hussain Panjabi's influential work, "*Jihad-e Akbar*" (*The Great Jihad*), published in 1920, addressed colonial interference in the region, prompting locals to initiate jihad against the colonizers. The novel, employing a modern writing style, delves into the social realities of the time and emphasizes the significance of the Holy Quran. Traditional storytelling, local dialects, phrases, and poems further enrich the narrative.

Another significant novel from this era is *Tasswir-e Ebrat* (*Learning Image*), authored by Muhammad Abdul Qadir Effandi and published in 1922. As the son of exiled Prince Ayub Khan, Effandi wrote this novel in exile while residing in Madras. The narrative addresses social issues in Afghanistan, particularly critiquing the elite class for abusing power. Moreover, the novel advocates for women's rights, aiming to uplift them, eradicate enslavement, and combat sexual exploitation. It takes a strong stance against

polygamy, marking an initial step towards modernization and critiquing the Islamic law regarding multiple marriages.

Wali Ahmad in *Modern Persian Literature in Afghanistan*, highlights the first work of fiction written by Murtaza Ahmad Muhammadzai, later translated into Dari language. Titled *Independence Celebration in Bolivia*, it was published in 1927 and introduced English literary influences to Afghan literature. The novel explores various aspects of social life, with a particular focus on the celebration of independence. This English-language novel marked the formal phase of Afghan literature in English.

In the same year, Afghanistan was on the path to modernization when a pivotal incident occurred— the assassination of King Nadir Shah. This event significantly altered the landscape of literary expression as journalists, literary writers, and others fell under strict censorship. According to Ghobar, the government prohibited socio-political discussions in writings, leading to a surge in the influence of foreign literature (20). Dupree commends Tarzi for his efforts during these challenging times, noting that in Afghan literature, the fervour for reform that was launched by Tarzi gave way to the safer routes of romantic aesthetics and the exaltation of nature during the relatively sterile regimes of Nadir Shah and Hashim Khan (76). Dupree further commends that this occurred during the time period when the authoritarian governments were operating.

Tarzi, in response to adversity, introduced romanticism to Afghan literature, infusing it with emotionally charged stories of love. The 1930s witnessed the blossoming of romance literature in Afghanistan, with notable works such as "Islam" (Reforms), "Aryana," and "Kabul" published in 1912. Anis posits in his essay "Art of Story Writing" that storytelling is "the true art and the most ancient teacher of humanity," emphasizing the enduring significance of literature in society.

In the late 1930s, Sulaiman Ali Jaghori's novel *Begum* emerged, focusing on a woman from the Hazara region of Afghanistan. This work delves into a local folk story, portraying the struggles of a village woman in her quest for emancipation, challenging Islamic fundamentalism. The novel's nature and theme confront patriarchy, depicting how the female protagonist contends with harsh local traditions and societal customs, navigating a complex life. Despite her illiteracy and perceived weakness, the character

stands as a resilient pillar against the harsh realities of patriarchy. This period in Afghan literature is characterized as the era of patriotic sentiment (1919-29).

The second phase of Afghan literature spanned from 1929 to 1952 and is labelled as sentimental socialism (1929-52) by Dupree. During this period, the literature focused on themes such as social inequalities, kindness, virtue, hospitality, duty to the nation, personal honour, and national honour. The underlying theme of the era was the awakening of national consciousness, with a strong emphasis on critiquing the elite classes and advocating for basic human rights (Dupree, 76-77).

The fiction of this phase predominantly featured translated works from foreign languages into Pashtu and Dari, signifying the influence and dominance of foreign literature on Afghan literary production during this time. Interestingly, this phase did not yield any English writing, and subsequent periods like realism (1953-63), socialist realism (1963-78), and revolutionary activism (1978-89) also did not witness the emergence of English literature from Afghanistan. Even during the leftist coup in 1978, which led to the establishment of the Khalq regime, foreign literature and books were banned, and collections were confiscated from various libraries. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1978 to 1989 further strained literary creativity, resulting in a period marked by a lack of extraordinary literature. However, it spurred writers in 1980 to form a union of Afghan writers, contributing to the publication of more than two thousand books. Primarily, the fiction published during this period was a significant contribution to Afghan modern fiction. Additionally, Afghan television played a central role in improving the quality of Afghan fiction through broadcasts, and later, local literature was adapted for films as well.

According to Faridullah Bezhan in his thesis “The emergence and development of modern fiction in Afghanistan” writes about Latif Nazimi who wrote a research paper in 1982, analysing modern Afghan fiction, paving the way for subsequent research on Afghan modern fiction (40). Faridullah Bezhan further noted that between 1982 and 1989, Afghan researchers and scholars presented their research in different seminars and symposiums conducted at the international level. This era marked a time of reconciliation, with the government permitting critical works to be written, although it demanded constructive efforts. The Ministry of Information and Culture was tasked with

overseeing these endeavours, and the contribution of the Afghan writers' union played a crucial role in uplifting Afghan literature (Ibid, 60).

The literary movement in Afghanistan witnessed a decline during the Taliban's rule, as educational centres, publishing houses, and broadcasting facilities were targeted with bombs, and numerous writers faced execution. This tragic period marked the conclusion of the last phase of Afghan literary writing. Subsequently, the end of the Taliban era, following America's intervention in Afghanistan, ushered in a new phase of Afghan writing known as diasporic writing. This genre is predominantly written in the English language by Afghans residing in the West.

1.1.3 A Brief overview of Afghan Anglophone Literature

An overview of Afghan Anglophone Literature reveals that English writing did not hold a prominent position in Afghanistan due to persistent warfare, with only a handful of writers contributing to this genre. The production of Afghan Anglophone literature primarily stems from the diaspora. Colonel Ali Ahmad Jalali, a former member of the Afghan army, authored "Afghan Guerrilla Warfare: In the Words of the Mujahideen Fighters" in 1996, offering insights into the Afghan war and the role of Mujahideen fighters.

The landscape of Afghan English literature experienced a notable shift after the events of 9/11, with the emergence of prominent figures like Atiq Rahimi and Khalid Hosseini, both belonging to the diaspora. Despite their physical absence from Afghanistan, these writers significantly contributed to Afghan English literature, gaining international recognition and placing it within the global literary sphere. Azam Kazemiyan emphasizes the significance of Khalid Hosseini's work, citing its widespread readership, translations into various languages, and positive prepublication reviews (5).

The recognition of Afghan Anglophone fiction gained momentum post-9/11, with numerous writers documenting stories related to Talibanization and the war in Afghanistan. Atiq Rahimi's debut fiction, *Earth and Ashes*, published in 2000, delves into the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. The novel vividly portrays the Russian army's presence and exploitation of the native Afghan population. The protagonist, Dastaguir, witnesses the devastating impact of the Russian war, with villages destroyed, and lives lost. The narrative captures the deafening sounds of bomb explosions, leaving few

survivors. Despite the grim circumstances, the characters in the story maintain optimism, expressing hope for the elimination of war and the restoration of perseverance. Rahimi's novel powerfully conveys the human toll of the protracted Afghan conflict.

Despite Afghanistan enduring the grip of the Taliban and facing on-going crises, including prolonged wars, the profound richness of its cultural values has been eloquently expressed in its literary works. *Afghan Cuisine*, a notable work by Nafisa Sekandari published in 2000, delves into the realm of Afghan foods prepared with dedication and devotion. Highlighting the delicious and healthy nature of these dishes, the book emphasizes the significant role played by Afghan women in the culinary traditions. While presenting local cuisine, the perspective adopted in the book is influenced by the West.

Another impactful female writer, Latifa, penned *My Forbidden Face: Growing up Under the Taliban: A Young Woman's Story* in 2002. This personal narrative explores the challenging experiences of life during the Taliban regime. Set in the city of Kabul, the story revolves around a woman oppressed and marginalized under Taliban rule. At the age of sixteen, as the Taliban assumes control of Kabul, she finds herself confined to her home, stripped of her basic freedom, and restricted within the confines of the house walls. The novel unveils the plight of women forced to cover themselves in burqas, with severe punishments for violations. Latifa's narrative reflects optimism veiled by oppression and terror, embodying a pursuit of women's emancipation.

Another female writer, Zoya, offers a similar portrayal of life in *Zoya's Story: An Afghan Woman's Struggle for Freedom*, published in 2003. The book vividly describes the beauty of Kabul, with its muddy houses and streets where goats and chickens serve as the primary sources of food. The allure of Afghanistan is heightened when the mountains of Kabul are blanketed in snow. However, amidst the beauty, the narrative delves into the depiction of terror and war. Zoya's life is marked by tragedy, shaped by the impact of war as her father becomes victim of the robbery and murdering caused by religious fundamentalists. Forced to flee to Pakistan with her grandmother, Zoya becomes part of an organization named RAWA (Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan), formed to resist Talibanization in Afghanistan. Eventually, Zoya takes charge of a clandestine war, fighting for her nation's freedom and liberation from the clutches of the Taliban.

Another female writer, Nelofer Pazira, chronicles a similar narrative of wars and Talibanization. The story unfolds with a young girl growing up in the early 1970s in Afghanistan as a liberal and open-minded individual, optimistic about a bright future. The initial period is filled with happiness as she describes the beauty of Afghanistan. However, the situation takes a drastic turn when her father is imprisoned for rejecting the communist stance. The crises escalate with the Soviet invasion, lasting for ten years and bringing destruction to the entire country. War, continuous attacks, rockets, explosions, bombings, and tanks become a daily reality in Afghanistan.

The novel introduces another female character, Dyana, befriended by Nelofer. Both girls boldly stone Soviet army tanks, displaying their resistance against the Soviet Union. Nelofer's courageous act leads her to join the resistance movement, receiving guerrilla warfare training. Eventually, her family has to flee to Pakistan. Nelofer portrays the Mujahideen as freedom fighters dedicated to Afghanistan's liberation, but she becomes disheartened by the oppression and exploitation imposed by the Taliban during their regime. Finally, she leaves for Canada and returns to Afghanistan to rescue her friend Dyana from the clutches of oppression and exploitation.

The resilience of Afghan women persisted, and their voices reverberated across the globe. Farah Ahmedi, a fiction writer, adopts a similar approach to shed light on the oppression and exploitation experienced by Afghans, particularly Afghan women. In her work, *The Story of My Life: An Afghan Girl on the Other Side of the Sky*, published in 2005, Farah Ahmedi shares the narrative of an Afghan girl, contributing to the depiction of Afghan girls, akin to other women writers who had done so before.

The ongoing struggle is further reflected in the writings of Zarghuna Kargar, another woman writer, who compiled a collection of short stories titled *Dear Zari: The Secret Lives of the Women of Afghanistan*, published in 2012. The book delves into the lives of Afghan women who endured various forms of exploitation during the era of Talibanization. Zarghuna Kargar gives a voice to Afghan women, acknowledging their emotional, devoted, and loving nature while highlighting the immense challenges, pain, and suffering they endure. The narrative underscores the ongoing struggle of Afghan women, emphasizing that their political activism is integral to overcoming their pain and misery.

Fawzia Koofi, another prominent woman writer, shares the account of her personal life in *The Favoured Daughter: One Woman's Flight to Lead Afghanistan into the Future*, published in 2013. In her narrative, she unveils the exploitation and suffering she endured at the hands of different patriarchal proxies, including the tragic loss of her husband, brother, and father. Fawzia Koofi not only exposes the personal suffering but also sheds light on the broader exploitation and suffering within the country. While advocating for the women of Afghanistan, she later supports the American invasion to eliminate the Taliban. Her perspective, aligning with the Western intervention, positions her as a writer who communicates from a Western standpoint.

Saira Shah, an Afghan Anglophone writer residing in the United Kingdom, penned a memoir titled *The Storyteller's Daughter: One Woman's Return to Her Lost Homeland*, published in 2004. The narrative unfolds in two parts: the first capturing the beauty of Afghanistan, with vivid descriptions of Kabul's gardens and snow-covered mountains, while the second delves into the exploitation and suffering endured by Afghan people, particularly Afghan women. Facing dual oppression from both patriarchy and the Taliban, Afghan women become victims of the prolonged and unending war in Afghanistan. Shah lends her voice to the women of Afghanistan, discussing the challenges associated with the burqa culture, and expresses support for the American invasion of Afghanistan.

Despite the fall of the Taliban, Afghan women continued their struggle for improved conditions. Zohreh Soleimani, in her film *To Kill a Sparrow: Afghan Women Jailed for Love*, reflects on the post-Taliban era, noting, during the time that the Taliban were defeated, everyone had the expectation that the situation of women in the country would improve. In spite of this, practically little has changed in the past ten years. In point of fact, many people are concerned that the rights of women in Afghanistan are in risk of being eliminated." (Cited in Saghar L. Naghib's *The Afghan Women's Writing Project* 21). The reality confirms that Afghan women have faced ongoing challenges and limitations, persisting even after the Taliban's downfall.

Other Afghan women writers echo similar perspectives, with Nadia Hashimi's novels, *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* and *A House Without Windows*, addressing themes of exploitation and suffering. Hamida Ghafour's work, "The Sleeping Buddha: The Story

of Afghanistan Through the Eyes of One Family," tackles similar issues. Hafizullah Emadi acknowledges the resilience of Afghan women in his book *Repression, Resistance, and Women in Afghanistan*: Women have also used local folk songs as a means of expressing their feelings of resistance. These songs convey the women's amorous and sensual dreams, as well as their dissatisfaction and fury at their lower position in the society. These songs have the potential to be interpreted as a threat to the existing social system (p.54).

Afghan Anglophone writers have played a significant role in shedding light on various issues plaguing their country, such as the Taliban era, civil war, the Russian War, and the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. While Afghan male writers also critically examine issues of oppression, suppression, and exploitation faced by the native population, it is notable that both male and female Afghan Anglophone writers often approach these subjects from different perspectives.

Observations indicate that Afghan Anglophone women writers tend to present a viewpoint aligned with Western perspectives, supporting the American invasion of Afghanistan as a means to eradicate the Taliban. This portrayal is seen as contributing to a somewhat bleak and distorted image of the country. However, a similar trend is noticed among Afghan Anglophone male writers.

Khaled Hosseini, a prominent figure in Afghan Anglophone writing, has significantly shaped the discourse on the exploitation and suffering of Afghans through his notable works. His four well-known books delve into social, political, and economic issues, with a major focus on the impact of war and Talibanization. Hosseini's debut novel, *The Kite Runner*, published in 2003, brought him enduring acclaim. The narrative revolves around three central characters: Amir, the protagonist; Hassan, Amir's friend and illegitimate step-brother; and Assef, the antagonist. The story unfolds against the backdrop of a society divided along ethnic lines, with Amir belonging to the elite Pashtun community, and Hassan hailing from the marginalized Hazara ethnic group. According to Khaled Hosseini, the novel explores the oppression and marginalization faced by the Hazara community at the hands of the Pashtuns.

The novel unfolds multiple narratives, spanning different periods in Afghan history. It begins with a depiction of peace before the Soviet invasion, then delves into

the Mujahideen's resistance against the Soviet Union, followed by the Taliban era, and finally touches on the American attack on Afghanistan. Amir, the protagonist, initially shifts to Pakistan during the Soviet-Afghan war and eventually settles in California, where he becomes a writer. Rahim Khan calls upon Amir to return to Pakistan and rescue Sohrab, Hassan's son, from the Taliban. Amir complies, successfully rescues Sohrab, and brings him to America.

Khaled Hosseini's second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, published in 2007, is a poignant portrayal of Afghanistan's tumultuous situation over the past thirty years. Covering the period from the Soviet invasion to the post-Taliban era, the novel explores themes of faith, patriotism, humanity, hope, fear, violence, and oppression. The narrative spans two generations, intricately weaving personal lives with national history. Similar to "The Kite Runner," this classical novel spans three decades of Afghan history, emphasizing friendship, family, and love.

Hosseini's third novel, *And the Mountains Echoed*, published in 2012, is also hailed as a classic. Set in the early 1950s, the story follows Abdullah and his sister Pari, who reside with their father Saboor and stepmother in the village of Shadbagh. The family faces consistent poverty, with Saboor perpetually seeking stable employment. The novel introduces the profound love between brother and sister, showcasing Abdullah's willingness to sacrifice for Pari. A significant plot twist occurs when both siblings depart from Kabul to Paris, symbolizing a shift from backwardness to modernity. Despite the narrative gap, the novel concludes with a powerful exploration of themes such as love, family, friendship, and reunion.

Sea Prayers, another notable work by Khaled Hosseini, published in 2018, addresses the crises and challenges faced by refugees. The narrative revolves around the father-son relationship as they embark on a journey to confront the issues confronting refugees. The story is predominantly conveyed through letters, providing a unique perspective on the unfolding events. *Sea Prayers* vividly portrays the perilous journey across different seas, originating in Syria and eventually transforming the notion of home into a war zone. The heart-breaking incident of a three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned on the shores of Turkey in 2015 is memorialized in the narrative, paying tribute to the millions of families affected by such tragedies. The work delves into the complexities of

war, moral dilemmas, exploitation, and the profound suffering endured by refugees. Hosseini, through his organization, plays a role in supporting and aiding the Syrian people in their time of need.

Atiq Rahimi, another prominent male Afghan writer, has contributed significantly to Afghan literature with three notable books, with *Earth and Ashes* and *The Patience Stone* holding particularly prominent positions. *The Patience Stone* amplifies the voices of marginalized and oppressed women who have endured exploitation in various contexts in Afghanistan. The narrative encompasses themes of war, marriage, sex, love, and honor. The title, *The Patience Stone*, is derived from the Persian term "Syngue Saboor," denoting a black magical and mythical stone. This stone supposedly absorbs the confessions of those who reveal their deepest pains and hardships, culminating in its explosive release—an event likened to the apocalypse. "Syngue Sabour" metaphorically refers to a man lying on his deathbed. Shot in the neck, the protagonist's wife sits beside him, revealing secrets, pains, desires, and profound thoughts. The novel showcases the resilience of a courageous woman facing oppression imposed by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Rahimi's third novel, *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear*, is based on a local story intertwined with the layers of the Soviet war. The protagonist, Farhad, is a mysterious character experiencing various superstitious and supernatural hallucinations that disturb his mind. Despite his enigmatic nature, Farhad is drawn to poetry, women, and wine. A significant flaw in his character is the rejection of religious beliefs. Following the Soviet attack, Farhad is compelled to flee to Pakistan. The narrative explores themes of memory loss, hallucinations, and fears. In alignment with the voices of Afghan women portrayed by female writers, Rahimi also advocates for Afghan women in his literary works.

Qais Akbar Omar, another Afghan writer, penned *A Fort of Nine Towers: An Afghan Family Story*, which was published in 2013. The novel unfolds the tale of a once-happy family, enchanted by the beauty of their country, until the outbreak of war transforms their joy into misery. Likewise, Tamim Ansary's "Games without Rules: The Often Interrupted History of Afghanistan," published in 2012, provides insights into the stories of war and the Taliban, illustrating how local people grapple with crises and

challenges. Abdul Salam Zaeef's non-fiction work, *My Life with the Taliban*, published in 2010, offers a comprehensive portrayal of Afghanistan's landscape in relation to the rise of the Taliban and their interactions with the populace.

Additional works such as *Come Back to Afghanistan: A California Teenager's Story* by Said Hyder Akbar and Susan Burton, and Akram Osman's *Real Men Keep Their Word: Tales from Kabul, Afghanistan* delve into similar themes of exploitation and suffering, predominantly triggered by war and the Taliban. These themes are central concerns for Afghan Anglophone writers who have personally experienced or witnessed exploitation and suffering. In many instances, the stories are derived from lived experiences or confessional tales narrated by others.

Afghan Anglophone literature often critiques the Taliban, war, and their repercussions, generally endorsing American intervention in Afghanistan. This stance has led some to characterize these writers as comprador intellectuals, as they are perceived to embrace Euro-American culture, its ideals of peace and survival, while portraying the local culture in a bleak and distorted manner. These writings imply that the Orient cannot thrive independently, necessitating the inevitable presence of America in Afghanistan. The overarching argument in this research—self-Orientalism—is prominently evident in Afghan Anglophone fiction.

The focus on Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi from the pool of Afghan Anglophone fiction writers is deliberate. These two authors have achieved canonical status in America, enjoying widespread readership and exceeding 100 million readers collectively. Additionally, their works have been extensively translated and adapted into films. This recognition, combined with the popularity of their works, underscores the primary reasons for their selection in this context.

1.1.4 Life and Works of Khalid Hosseini

Khaled Hosseini, a widely acclaimed novelist in the contemporary post-modern world, is recognized for his impactful contributions as an Afghan diasporic writer. Hailing from the picturesque landscapes of Afghanistan, he weaves narratives that depict the struggles of women, the anguish of the natives, and the myriad problems faced by the people in a beautifully crafted style. Through his literary works, Hosseini actively

engages in the mission of illuminating Afghanistan's plight and potential to the global audience.

A practitioner of his convictions, Hosseini endeavours to uplift Afghanistan from its challenging circumstances, portraying the country's beauty and potential for prosperity. His narrative canvas extends beyond the borders of Afghanistan, reaching into the diasporic world and fostering a profound connection with modernity, aligning Afghanistan's narrative with that of global nations.

Hosseini's novels delve into the stories of various individuals—children, women, and men in Afghanistan—especially those ensnared in the clutches of war, terrorism, politics, and religious fundamentalism. Three of his influential works, namely *The Kite Runner*, *And the Mountains Echoed*, and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, vividly illustrate the exploitation and suffering experienced by Afghans. The impact of his novels is evident in their remarkable sales figures, exceeding fifty-five million copies and reaching readers in 70 countries (Williams 1).

Born in 1965 in Kabul, Hosseini is the eldest among five siblings. Hailing from a prosperous family in the Wazir Akbar Khan district of Kabul, his early life unfolded during a period when Afghanistan enjoyed peace and liberalism. During this time, girls attended schools and colleges, and the veil (hijab) was not mandatory for them, reflecting a more open and inclusive society. This era of peace and openness in Afghanistan during Hosseini's birth is noted by Akshay Sharma and Dr. Amitabh V. Dwivedi: Over the course of the 1950s and 1960s, a significant amount of effort was put into promoting a lifestyle that was more liberal and westernised, while simultaneously providing backing to the local conservative factions. At a time when factories were being erected in Kabul alongside older traditional buildings, when burqas became optional, and when the nation appeared to be on the route towards a more liberal society, the period in question was a tranquil age. This may sound unbelievable, but it is true. Women in Afghanistan were pursuing jobs in the scientific field; men and women could be seen hanging out together at theatres and universities in Kabul, while companies in the countryside were producing fibres and other commodities. An administration that was capable of implementing massive national projects such as the construction of hydropower stations and streets were in place, and there was a peace convention that was conducted with the utmost

regard for law and order inside it. People had faith in education, believing that it would facilitate the creation of new opportunities for everyone. Further, the people had faith that a prosperous future was waiting for them ahead. However, the path that led to that bright future was diverted in the 1970s ("Re-reading Khaled Hosseini's Works: A Revival of the Lost Afghan", 2).

Hosseini's father, employed as a foreign ministry officer with the Afghan government in Kabul, and his mother, a Persian literature teacher, played pivotal roles in shaping his early literary inclinations. Hosseini's exposure to Persian literature, coupled with his fascination for Persian poetry, kindled his interest in exploring the non-Islamic, pagan history of regions surrounding Afghanistan. This interest found fulfilment when he accompanied his father to Iran, where his father was assigned to work at the Afghan embassy in Tehran. The immersion in Persian literature provided him with a foundation to cultivate his passion for diverse world literatures, with a particular emphasis on foreign languages.

Residing in Tehran during his formative years, Hosseini began his literary pursuits at an early age. At eight years old, amidst the declaration of Doud Khan as the new king of Afghanistan, a period of misery descended upon the nation. Seizing an opportunity to escape this hardship, Hosseini's family moved to Paris when his father assumed a post at the Afghan embassy. In 1975, the communist coup resulted in the demise of King Daud Khan and his family. Subsequently, Afghanistan plunged into further turmoil with the Soviet Army's invasion in 1979, followed by the ravages of civil war. Millions of Afghans sought refuge across the globe, and in 1980, Hosseini's family settled in San Jose, California, as political refugees. At the age of fifteen, grappling with limited English proficiency, Hosseini honed his language skills through extensive literature reading. His admiration for John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* served as inspiration, prompting him to embark on crafting his own short stories—an endeavour that later bore fruit in the form of three significant novels.

Hosseini's family initially encountered economic challenges upon their arrival in America, having lost everything during their escape. However, their financial difficulties were alleviated through welfare assistance, enabling them to establish a small business. As time passed, the family's financial situation improved, allowing Hosseini to pursue

higher education at Santa Clara University with aspirations of becoming a doctor. After completing his medical studies, he commenced medical practice in Pasadena, California, and embarked on a new life with his wife, Roya. Although content in America, Hosseini remained passionate about writing, seamlessly balancing his medical career with the creation of stories. Returning to his native Afghanistan was not a part of his envisioned future.

Despite a demanding schedule, he started writing short stories rooted in his childhood memories, eventually expanding these narratives into full-fledged novels. The invasion of Afghanistan by the United States post-9/11, attributing responsibility to the Taliban for the Twin Towers' destruction, provided the backdrop for his first complete novel. *The Kite Runner* was published in 2003, swiftly gaining international acclaim as a bestseller across eighty nations. The novel delves into the trauma experienced by Afghans. Following the success of *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini decided to transition away from his medical profession and dedicate himself to social welfare causes. Collaborating with the United Nations, he assumed the role of a special envoy for the High Commission for Refugees.

A significant turning point in Hosseini's life occurred when he directed his writing towards Muslim women victimized by Islamic dictatorship. Witnessing the challenges faced by Afghan women under religious theocracy, he sought to shed light on their struggles. "A Thousand Splendid Suns," published in 2007, echoed similar themes and features, surpassing the success of *The Kite Runner* in terms of bestseller status.His third novel, *And the Mountains Echoed* published in 2013, is the story of Afghan migrants in different countries, instigated by civil war and Talibanization. Hosseini's entire life is witness to the sufferings of Afghans' people and their exploitation from very close. Therefore, he gave an apt description of the suffering and pains of common people; including women, men, children and the people lives affected by civil war and Talibanization—the immigrants.

1.1.5 Life and Works of Atiq Rahimi

Atiq Rahimi, a significant figure in Afghan Anglophone fiction, was born in 1962 into the household of a senior public servant in Afghanistan. Raised in Kabul, he attended Lycee Esteqala School. Due to escalating tension in the country following the Soviet

Invasion, Rahimi's family migrated to Pakistan. After a brief period in Pakistan, Rahimi further relocated to France, seeking political asylum in 1985. Upon completing his higher education, he seized an opportunity to join a production company in Paris. This endeavor allowed him to document seven documentaries and a few commercial advertisements for French television.

In terms of literary contributions, Rahimi's debut work, *Earth and Ashes*, published in 2000, stands as a insightful exploration of Afghan society. The book achieved bestseller status in Europe and America. Rahimi subsequently directed a film adaptation of the same title in 2004, receiving the esteemed "Golden Dhow Award" for the movie. This cinematic accomplishment propelled him into the limelight, leading to involvement in other projects, including two additional novels. Rahimi's "Syngue Sabour" (*The Patience Stone*) earned the prestigious Prix award, a 105-year-old literary honor in France, for its portrayal of Afghan women. He followed this success with another novel, *A Thousand Rooms of Dream and Fear*, in 2006, revolving around the enigmatic character Farhad and his constant dreams of supernatural and superstitious visions.

After living in the diaspora for seventeen years, Rahimi returned to Afghanistan in 2002, following the Taliban's exodus from Kabul and the subsequent establishment of the Afghan government with American assistance. During his visit to various parts of Afghanistan, Rahimi utilized his 150-year-old camera to capture images of diverse landscapes and objects. Six of these photographs were exhibited in the Albert Museum and Victoria Museum in London.

Upon returning to Afghanistan, Rahimi assumed the role of a senior creative advisor with Moby Group, the country's largest media conglomerate. Launched by Saad Mohseni, Zaid Mohseni, and Jahid Mohseni, Moby Group operated TV channels and magazines such as Arman FM, Kaboora Production, Tolo TV, Lemar TV, Barbud Music, Afghan Scene Magazine, and various other media outlets. Rahimi's involvement significantly contributed to the group's success. However, he remains caught between the two countries, frequently moving between them.

Rahimi's impactful efforts with Moby Group led to a significant achievement—the creation of Afghanistan's first soap opera, "Secret of this House." Rahimi played a

key role in designing, creating, and developing the project, which aired on the group's TV channel, Tolo. The show gained immense popularity and received multiple awards. Rahimi's career in direction and production continues, with his current focus on various movie projects and adaptations.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Literary depictions of Afghanistan often fall into the trap of reinforcing Orientalist tropes. Despite their differing backgrounds and narrative styles, prominent authors such as Khalid Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi contribute to this phenomenon by presenting Afghanistan through a lens that exoticises, essentialises, and homogenizes its culture and identity. This study seeks to analyse how both writers employ stereotypes like the hapless victim, exoticised women, and the barbarous outsider, drawing on Edward Said's concept of Orientalism. Additionally, it aims to explore how the Western gaze and audience expectations influence their portrayals of Afghanistan, highlighting the challenges of negotiating identity in diaspora literature. By comparing the depictions of Afghanistan by Hosseini and Rahimi, this study hopes to unveil the subtleties and contradictions inherent in Orientalist motifs within modern literature, thereby contributing to discussions on cultural authenticity, power dynamics, and the impact of self-Orientalism on global perceptions of Afghanistan.

1.3 Thesis Statement

In the chosen works of Afghan Anglophone fiction writers such as Khalid Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi, an exploration of the re-orientalization of Afghanistan is evident. They employ a Western style of Orientalism, contributing to the re-orientalization of the Orient within the framework of self-Orientalism. Examining these selected texts through a Self-Orientalist perspective proves valuable for discerning the presence or absence of elements of classical Orientalism employed by the Orientals.

1.4 Objectives of the Research

1. To investigate the process of Self-Orientalism that re-orientalizes the Orient in the selected works.
2. To explore the consistency of stereotypes in Self-Orientalism and Orientalism in Afghan Anglophone Fiction.

3. To show the Afghan Anglophone writers mutually reflect Self-Orientalism and Re-orientalism in their selected works.

1.5 Research Questions

1. In what ways have self-orientalism been reflected to re-orientalize the Orient in the selected Afghan Anglophone fiction?
2. How far stereotypes in Self-Orientalism have remained consistent with stereotypes in Orientalism as depicted in the selected fiction?
3. How do the Afghan Anglophone writers reflect mutualist dynamics of Self-Orientalism and Re-Orientalism in the selected works?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The present research holds significance as prior studies have acknowledged the Orientalizing process in Afghanistan, given its status as an Oriental region. However, the investigation into the reconfiguration of Orientalism into Self-Orientalism by Afghan Anglophone writers remains unexplored. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the Orient has been re-orientalized by its own inhabitants. This aspect, previously overlooked, becomes a focal point of exploration, shedding light on a significant dimension that warrants scholarly attention. Additionally, the introduction of the term Self-Orientalism contributes an effective framework for comprehending the re-orientalization of the Orient, marking a valuable addition to academic discourse across disciplines.

1.7 Delimitation of the Research

The current research is delimited to Afghan Anglophone fictional works, Khalid Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and *And the Mountains Echoed* and Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone*.

1.8 Research Plan

Given the significance and expansive scope of the research, meticulous attention has been devoted to the research design. The thesis is structured into seven chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework, Analysis of Primary Text One, Analysis of Primary Text Two, Analysis of Primary Text Three, and the final chapter that concludes the study.

The introductory chapter (Chapter 1) outlines the research argument, introduces the research topic, presents the problem statement, and formulates research questions and objectives. A detailed exploration of the life and works of the selected writers is provided to establish a foundational understanding and background for the ensuing research questions. Additionally, this chapter delves into the significance of the research, highlighting its distinctiveness and novelty in comparison to previous studies in the selected field.

Chapter two assumes pivotal importance from various perspectives. Given the heterogeneous nature of the research, a comprehensive literature review becomes imperative. This chapter serves as a critical repository of theories and arguments relevant to the research, offering a contextualization and justification of the study. By identifying gaps in existing works and research, the literature review aims to pave the way for a conclusive and authentic investigation.

Chapter Three elucidates the chosen research methodology and the framework underpinning the study. It delineates the methods employed for analysing the primary texts and establishes the theoretical groundwork. The emphasis is placed on the significance of Edward Said's Orientalism as the primary theoretical framework, supplemented by the auxiliary theories of Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism. These theories provide crucial support for the research arguments and operational approaches.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six delve into the detailed analysis of the three primary texts, elucidating the process of re-Orientalization from a self-Orientalist perspective. The primary focus is on unravelling stereotypes and clichés, investigating how representations, constructions, and reconfigurations of the Orient unfold from an Oriental perspective. Each chapter systematically dissects the selected texts to reveal nuanced insights.

Chapter Seven synthesizes the entire research, offering a recapitulation of the argument and highlighting the significance of the chosen perspective in approaching the primary texts. This section extracts key ideas and data from preceding chapters, presenting the research findings. It not only addresses the research objectives and questions but also underscores the contribution of the study to the existing literary landscape. Furthermore, it suggests potential avenues for future research in related areas.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter reviews the available literature related to the topic to contextualize the current research within existing knowledge. It also contemplates that the selected topic has significant scholarship by pointing out the gap and the niche for carrying out the current research. The literature review provides the rationale upon which the research stands within the existing body of knowledge.

2.1.1 Contextualizing the current research

The Orient has traditionally been considered the negation of the West, representing the other side of rationality, science, development, economic growth, prosperity, and so forth. In simpler terms, it would be appropriate to describe it as the superiority of the Occident over the Orient. Controversies merge predication and rational approaches to outlaw the negation of the West; it is no longer negation but acceptance of the Orient (Huntington, 56). The civilizing mission was an integral policy among different strategies of the West to construct and civilize the Orient. The process of civilization led the Orient to a submissive and inferior position, as noted by Said in *Orientalism*. The originality of the Orient is no longer static but liable to certain changes caused by the process of Orientalism. Orientalism eroded the ontological position of the Orient and constructed it according to the West, while Orientals have been labeled with stereotypical images. In this regard, the Orientalizing process has remained consistent for a long time and has helped to promote its legacies and practices.

The complex network of political, economic, academic, cultural, or geographical realities in the Orient, known as Orientalism, is a way of coming to terms with the Orient or, to be less geographically specific, the Other. Said's *Orientalism* begins with assumptions about the Arab world through the experiences of Franco-British encounters.

The Western representation of the Orient was intended to categorize Orientals as the "other"; however, according to Said, the depiction of Orientals was not a reflection of reality but rather a textual or imaginative construct.

Said noted about Orientalism that it is based on the idea of being foreign to the Orient. This means that the Orientalist, whether he/she is a poet or a scholar, gives voice to the Orient, describes it, and makes its secrets understandable to the Western world (21). It is crystal clear that the connotational approach aims to eliminate the subjective position of Orientals as they are unable to represent themselves; thus, they need to be represented. Said's analysis suggests that the Western approach is not a genuine representation but rather a linguistic and political illustration by Westerners, leading them to a textual Orient rather than the real one (*Orientalism,* 21).

In this regard, the Orient has been 'Orientalized' by Orientalists in Western writings for a considerable time. It is depicted as inferior, degenerated, irrational, and various other stereotypical images have been associated with the Orient. Said acknowledges this Orientalizing process in *Orientalism*, emphasizing that Orientalism makes sense primarily in the context of the West rather than the Orient. This understanding is directly influenced by various Western techniques of representation that render the Orient visible and clear because "there" in discourse about it (*Orientalism* 22).

Orientalism refers to the imitation of aspects of Eastern cultures in the West and was initially devised to establish authority over the Orient. However, the process has now reversed, with 'Orientals' being seen to perpetuate Orientalism no less than 'non-Orientals.' Furthermore, this perpetuation involves maintaining certain selected types and practices of Orientalism. Essentially, it is a reconfiguration and, in many ways, an extension of Orientalism.

As mentioned earlier, it is proposed that Orientalism is not merely the autonomous creation of the West. Instead, the Orient itself actively participates in its own construction, reinforcement, and circulation. The re-orientalization of the Orient itself is termed self-orientalism, a concept that has been circulating in academia for at least the last three decades. It has been referred to as 'Carrier's ethno-orientalism' Dirlik's self-orientalism, Schein's internal orientalism, Tony Mitchell's 'reverse Orientalism' and Lau's re-orientalism (see Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework).

2.2 Euro-American Orientalists scholarship and Understanding Orientalism in the Representation of Afghanistan

The current section addresses three crucial aspects essential to my dissertation:

I. How Euro-American scholarship developed the Orientalist movement to commence writing about the Orient and how the Orient is presented and perceived constitutes the content of the discussion. This aims to provide insight into Euro-American Orientalist scholarship.

II. The second section delves into the representation of Afghanistan concerning Orientalism. This part reviews and focuses on a discussion about Afghanistan from the perspective of Orientalists, particularly exploring stereotypes.

III. The third section encompasses a review of information from synthesizing, criticism, and literature regarding Re-orientalism and Self-Orientalism, along with their practices, all examined in relation to stereotypes.

2.2.1 The Development of Orientalist Studies and Discourses

"The Oriental Institute" by Henry Breasted was established in 1919 at the University of Chicago to develop understanding in Oriental Studies. Later on, the Department of Islamic Near East was inaugurated at Princeton University by Philip Hitti (1886-1979) to understand Arab cultural studies. It was the first time that Orientalists changed their perspective from the philological approach of Orientalism to a historical one. However, the process of Orientalism began in this period with Islamic studies and studies about Middle Eastern countries to understand and incorporate them into Orientalism. Leading scholars among the Orientalists in Islam and Middle Eastern countries are Joseph Schacht and Ignaz Goldziher.

Duncan Macdonald (1863-1943) acknowledges in *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam* the Islamic and Muslim piety, but even then, his writing is consistently a one-way representation of Muslims. He is considered to be the pioneer who Orientalized the Orient, especially the Muslim community. He draws a distinction between the two poles, East (Orient) and West (Occident). He clearly essentializes Orientals, as he was of the opinion that Muslim scholars are unable to understand the complexity of life. Macdonald's essentializing factor creates stereotypes of the Muslim community, suggesting they are not rationally competent or capable of managing their affairs.

The shift from leisureliness was significant in Orientalists' studies, moving from Islamic and Arabic studies to social studies and the background of Orientals. Gibb and Bowen are pioneers in this regard, publishing *Islamic Society and the West: A Study of the Impact of Western Civilization on Moslem Culture in the Near East* about the Middle East and Islamic society, examining how both writers deal with the Orientals who constructed bleak images of them.

Joseph Schacht (1902-1969), a British-born German professor at Columbia University, shared the same connection with Western Orientalists, focusing on Hadith Literature and Islamic law. His writings are considered Orientalist in nature. Another prominent figure dealing with Orientalism is Bernard Lewis, a professor at Princeton University, specializing in Eastern Studies. His main contribution suggests that Middle Eastern countries should seek affiliation with the US administration (159) because, as Said acknowledged in *Orientalism*, Orientals are not capable of running their affairs. In line with Middle East representation, Said critiques Bernard Lewis in an interview with Al-Ahram Weekly, according to the statement that 'Bernard Lewis has not made a step to the Middle East, in the Arab world, for at least 40 years, Lewis's understanding of the Middle East was so biased that it could not be taken seriously. I've been told that he has some knowledge of Turkey, but that he has no knowledge whatsoever about the Arab world (noted in Bonney 264). Lewis's hypothesis is a major aspect of Orientalism and develops stereotypes of Orientals' inability to run their administration.

Furthermore, Lewis questions Said and the assumptions of Postcolonial writers by attributing social, political, and economic deprivation of the Orientals to Orientalists and colonizers. He develops counterarguments by associating terrorism with Muslims and holds them responsible for bomb blasts. In his book *What Went Wrong: The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in The Middle East*, he also suggests that 9/11 marks the decline of Muslim and Islamic civilization.

In another book, *Crises of Islam*, Lewis asserts again that the mind-set against Muslims is unchangeable, viewing every Muslim as the representative of the entire Islamic community. Therefore, similar to *What Went Wrong*, Lewis is attacking the Muslim community. Lewis fails to provide an apt historical background about the Muslim world, undermining his understanding of Muslims and Arab worlds, as he diverts

readers from reality, creating the notion that Muslims and the Middle East are old enemies of the West. Lewis legitimizes military campaigns and policies against Muslims and Arabs. While the process of Orientalism is different from classical Orientalism, both classical and neo-Orientalists are largely concerned with Islam and Middle Eastern countries, depicting them as irrational and incapable of governing themselves. Muhammad Samiei discusses Lewis in his research work, stating that the Muslim ruler's authority, regardless of how it is acquired or exercised, is believed to be directly ordained by God (1151). Additionally, the Muslim political community is seen as the constant means through which God's counsel is conveyed (1151). Lewis promptly understood the concept and tried to replace the division between the Cold War powers with a division between the Western world and Islam (1152). For Samimie, Lewis dismisses the diversity and dynamism of Islam because he does not pay attention to modern Muslim societies while exaggerating Muslim identity and misrepresenting Islam.

Orientalist scholarship was successfully contemplated by Lewis, Hitti, Schacht, Gibb, Bowen, and many others with different practices. These scholars particularly studied and researched Islam and the Middle East in Europe (Said: *Orientalism*). They envisioned different departments in well-esteemed universities like Near Eastern Studies, the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, and Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford. These departments focused on the history, art, and anthropology of Orientals. European Orientalism slowly and gradually transferred to American Orientalists as they adopted and reinforced practices operated and rationalized by Western Orientalists (27).

In 1951, the Foreign Area Fellowship program was inaugurated at the Ford Foundation in New York, though the foundation was established earlier than the program, to study the Orientals (Immanuel Wallerstein in Chomsky 196-97). Later, in 1952, International Training and Research were initiated in the University Area Studies center in America for Oriental Studies. Similarly, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) was established to launch a program on Middle Eastern studies. Later on, five of the topmost universities in America, including Princeton, Columbia, and Michigan, started different programs and established centres for Middle Eastern studies (196-197).

During different programs launched by American universities about Oriental Studies, Gibb suggested using Social Science as a methodology rather than Philology, as adopted by early Orientalists. Gibb believed that social science provides a better understanding of Oriental Studies. However, it was a tough task for American universities to initiate and run such programs because American scholars had never been experts in both social science and philology addressing the Orient. Therefore, it had been made compulsory for those Western Orientalists who were specialized and expert in Islam and Middle Eastern Studies (Dallal Ahmad, 2012).

As an emerging superpower, America had to maintain its influence in the Middle East and Islam. In 1958, the American Congress passed the National Defence Education Act (NDEA) to study and research the Middle East and Islam. The Act provided high incentives and funding to higher education for revisiting Oriental Studies, mainly in the Middle East and Islam. However, it was identified as a nominal body for the entire globe to understand Oriental cultures and languages, but the essence of the program was mainly promulgated to deal with the Islamic world and Middle Eastern countries. NDEA funded $167 million per annum from 1959 to 1987, spending $22 million for Middle Eastern studies alone (Wallerstein in Chomsky 196-97).

In 1955, Gibb directed the Middle Eastern Studies Center to appoint some experienced scholars; German Scholar Frantz Rosenthal was appointed by Yale in 1956, Gustave Von Grunebaum (1909-1972), an Austrian Orientalist, was hired in 1958 by UCLA, and Columbia University hired Joseph Schacht (1902-1969) in 1956. After the 1960s, American universities inaugurated the establishment of Middle Eastern studies. However, the newly started programs failed at the start. Subsequently, Gibb suggested adopting new methods for Orientalists to work together with social scientists to promulgate Oriental Studies, but the attention of the programs mainly turned to Islam rather than promoting Oriental Studies.

According to scholars of Oriental Studies, the initiated programs were largely the direct outcomes of the Cold War, which is no longer in practice but was intended to promote Eurocentric prejudices and later envisaged to serve the political interests of America. However, the essence, value, and rationale of Oriental Studies seem to be in trouble, and scholars were blamed for spoiling national integrity during the

documentation of Oriental Studies. They denigrate other societies that were already subordinated to Euro-American scholarship in accordance with political and economic prosperity. Michael Edwards, an activist and editor of Transformation, appropriately asserts that different ideas are created, used, and disseminated just like Oriental Studies have been initiated, utilized, and disseminated.

From the above review, it has become evident that Oriental Studies, at the beginning, was initiated for studying cultures and philology, but later it was purposed to study and research Islam and the Middle East, making a close link with the Muslim world and its politics. Therefore, the struggle with political instability always created bias, racism, prejudices, and stereotypes of Orientals. Largely, the writings of Orientalists are explicit with a similar representation of the Muslim world and Orientals, and Orientalists are mainly interested in combating Islam rather than studying it. To conclude the discussion about Euro-American Orientalist scholarship is to say that the notion has been developed that Orientalists have mainly shown racism, biases, prejudices, and stereotypes in their writings and other discourses, as undertaken in this research from a Self-Orientalist perspective.

2.2.2 Manipulation of, and Representation in Orientalist/Neo-Orientalist Discourses

Orientalism revolves around the representation and construction of the Orient in various discourses, primarily, though not exclusively, in written scripts. Media, television, and films have also played pivotal roles in representing the Orient. Said criticizes the Occident's representation of the Orient as inappropriate. This section delves into different works and discourses of the West, demonstrating a one-way representation of the Orient, whether through textual misrepresentation or other means. The focus is primarily on the stereotypes of the Orient perpetuated by Orientalists. The current research is concerned with Afghanistan, exploring various works related to Afghanistan within the context of Orientalism and stereotypes.

A substantial catalogue of books on the Orient and Orientals is available, indicating the long-standing interest of Orientalists in this region. This interest is evident in Richard Knolle's *General History of the Turks*, written in 1603, around the beginning of colonialism in India. Another notable work is *History of the Saracens* by Simon

Ockely, composed from 1710 to 1718, contributing to the academic discipline of Orientalism. Similarly, two other significant books are *Natural History of Aleppo* by Alexander Russell, written in 1756, and *A Description of the East* by Richard Pococke, composed from 1743 to 1745. These books reveal Orientalist discourses about the Orient from the early stages, contributing to the progress and development of Orientalism through a substantial body of literature and related works. However, the path for English Orientalists was paved by the oral poetry of the medieval period in France, known as *Chanson De Geste* (mentioned in Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens: A Reinterpretation of the Chanson de Geste*). This series of poetry, primarily aimed at providing aesthetic pleasure and entertainment, inspired English writers with an image of the Islamic world represented as inhuman, unofficial, and lacking a role in social life, constructing an identity for the people. Islam was portrayed as distorted, emphasizing segregation, with women depicted as major victims subjected to sexual promiscuity, polygamy, divorces, and harems.

A significant literary work fully embracing Orientalism is Jonathan Scott's *Arabian Nights*, written in 1811. The work differs substantially from other Orientalists' works, combining information about the Orient with delightful entertainment provided by the Arabian Nights, including belly dances. Beyond the philosophical underpinnings of Orientalism present in the book, the most significant aspect is exoticism, portraying the entire scene in an alien manner. The exotic and romanticized elements like fairies, magic, jinn, and talismans are creations attributed to Orientals by Orientalists. *Arabian Nights* presents a wide range of prospects, including elaborate construction, delicate styles, sensibility, adventure, philosophy, eroticism, fantasies, and irony. The stories interweave with legendary tales reminiscent of Greek, Celtic, and Teutonic traditions. However, *Arabian Nights* is considered the first work through which Orientalists came into direct contact with the Orient, even though the Orient had been introduced during the Middle Ages. Translators from European countries translated *Arabian Nights* and established the work as an Oriental tale, rich in satire, imagination, moralism, and various philosophies.

The Arab Mind is a non-fiction work written by cultural anthropologist Raphael Patai in 1973. According to Colonel Norvell B. De Atkine, the book is straightforward, discussing Arab civilization with profound knowledge, organization, and chronological

order (47-55). Furthermore, the book highlights different facets of Arab culture, along with its language, literature, and various practices, presented in an exaggerated form. The book, an educational study, simply stereotypes the Arabs, filled with essentialism, and is flawed, generic, unscientific, out-dated, irrational, and a dishonest effort against the Arabs. *The Arab Mind* is based on Orientalist discourse, contributing to Orientalism's misrepresentation of the Arab world in the broader context of Orientalists (47-55).

Evelyn Alsultany's *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11*, published in 2012, depicts Orientals as 'other' and stereotypes them. The United States, in comparison, is portrayed as a state full of equality and justice in various aspects of human life. Orientals are portrayed as full of injustices, primarily with a patriarchal society, oppressing women, and being associated with anti-Semitism, Muslim fundamentalism, suicide bombings, and irrational violence against the West. A conflation is developed against the Muslim community, presenting an inverted and contrasting image of America, full of unity, harmony, peace, equality, democracy, civilization, and justice. Alsultanty creates a binaristic world where America is portrayed as developing men and dealing with the liberation of women. The book inclusively presents the phenomenon of 'Othering' as Orientals are depicted as barbarian, savages, wild, and irrational, while America is shown as a superior, rational, and civilized society. The concept of 'Us' and 'Them' is very explicit in the discourse, a major debate in Orientalism.

Graham Fuller's *Breaking Faith* is a spy novel published in 2015. The story is told through an American spy named Alex who visits Pakistan. Alex acquaints himself with Pakistani culture initially but later becomes friendly and shows loyalty to Pakistan. Apart from Pakistani culture, language, ethnicities, different traditions, cultures, religious practices, and many other aspects, the novel is more about the war on terror, where different Pakistani characters are fictionalized against the backdrop of the entire novel. Characters like Zubayada, Kamala, Salman, and Majeed are significant, representing Pakistan and its diverse aspects. The novel consists of twelve chapters, depicting the relationship between America and Pakistan. While the novel is not entirely a mixture of Orientalism and its different modes of representation of the Orient, it still explicitly exhibits the concept of 'Othering' when Pakistani Muslim characters are represented with

stereotypical images. Furthermore, the issues of the Taliban, Kabul, and Waziristan add an Orientalist flavour to the novel. Therefore, the novel presents stereotypes and clichés but in a diverse way, where sympathies and loyalties are shown with Pakistan, despite the explicit display of stereotypical aspects.

Blood Money by David Ignatius is also a spy novel published in 2012, providing a similar description of the Pakistani community as presented by Fuller but in a different way. The book consists of 43 chapters, dealing with different countries and cities globally, including Pakistan, California, London, the United States, Belgium, New York, Moscow, Tajikistan, Dubai, Qatar, Washington, and Islamabad. The novel tells the story of Orientals with reference to the Pakistani community, particularly focusing on Islamabad and Waziristan due to Orientalist affiliations. The central theme of the novel is the war on terror, depicting the killing of people in Pakistan through bomb blasts, suicide attacks, and drone attacks. The people who have been killed are now portrayed as taking revenge through their families; their relatives are shown seeking revenge from both America and Pakistan because both countries are allies in the war on terror. The novel depicts Pakistani people as corrupt and savages, especially Pakistani Army and ISI's officers, shown as corrupt individuals who misuse American economy and charity given by America due to their alliance in the war against the Taliban. Furthermore, the people of Waziristan, who have suffered from the exploitation and victimization of war, are also depicted as wild and barbarian. Thus, the novel presents a neo-Orientalist stance, stereotyping Pakistan, its people, and Army, where Muslims and the Taliban are shown as religious fundamentalists. Moreover, the superiority of America and Western culture is given more importance, where Pakistan plays a submissive role, fulfilling the criteria of Edward Said's Orientalism, developing the concept of 'Us and Them,' and Othering Pakistan.

Orientalism and the Spectacle of the Other: Japan and the Japanese in Wie is de Mol? (2011) is a published thesis by Martijn Huisman presented at the Rotterdam Erasmus School of History, Culture, and Communication, Erasmus University. The research work delves into Orientalism, specifically focusing on the representation of Japan, its culture, and society in Western media. The researcher adopts an Orientalism theoretical framework and selects the Dutch reality television game show 'Wie is de

Mol?' (Who is the Mole?) for analysis. The show, which took 10 celebrities to Japan during its anniversary season in 2010, is extensively examined for Orientalist representation and stereotypes. The research addresses Japan's culture, society, viewers' perceptions, images, and ideas portrayed in the show. Despite the interactive nature of the game, offering what seems to be a fair depiction of Japan and its people, the show often employs clichés and stereotypes, presenting Japan and its culture from a Dutch point of view that may be recognizable to Dutch viewers.

Aayesha Rafiq, in her research article "From European to American Orientalism", provides a parallel representation of Orientals as envisioned by both American and European Orientalists in their writings. The research paper's focus is primarily grounded in political instability. Rafiq supports Said's concept of Orientalism, asserting that both American and Western Orientalists initiated their mission through the stereotype of the Orient.

Ensieh Shabaniradl and Seyyed Mohammad Marandi in their paper "Edward Said's Orientalism and the Representation of Oriental Women in George Orwell's Burmese Days" argue that Edward Said's Orientalism critiques Western writing, particularly that of Orientalists. The scholars discuss the stereotypical images and clichés of Orientals presented by Orientalists, using George Orwell's *Burmese Days* as a textual representation. Orwell's novel is examined for injustices, gender discrimination, and the representation of subaltern women oppressed, seductive, voiceless, promiscuous, and submissive in Orientalist discourses.

Jukka Jouki's published thesis titled *Imagining the Other: Orientalism and Occidentalism in Tamil-European Relations in South India* focuses on Tamils living in a Tamil village in India. The ethnographic discussion explores the relationship between Tamils and Europeans in Auroville, referencing Orientalism and Occidentalism. The gathered data reveal that Europeans in Auroville align with Orientalist stereotypes, representing their Tamil neighbours. The research indicates that the term 'Tamil' is narrated as an ancient, irrational being not known to the civilized world of Europe, thus developing the concept of Othering. Additionally, the research portrays Tamil culture as entirely unfamiliar while presenting Western culture as highly attuned to the financial and capitalist world, reinforcing the concept of 'Us and Them' through Orientalist discourse.

2.2.3 Representing Afghanistan, and its People in Orientalist/Neo-Orientalist Discourses

Afghanistan is a more attractive place for Euro-American Orientalists who have attempted to represent Afghans, mainly the Pashtun community, in their writings. The first Orientalist, Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779-1859), landed on Afghan soil for the first time and produced two significant books about Afghans and Afghanistan, both named *An Account of The Kingdom of Caubul, and its Dependencies, in Persia, Tartary, and India: Comprising A View of The Afghaun Nation and A History of The Dooraunee Monarchy*, with the first volume published by Serah publisher in 1815 and the second by Richard Bantley in 1842. Elphinstone is considered to be the first Orientalist who accurately represented Afghans and Afghanistan with appropriate information, though later, Mohan Lal, the personal secretary of Sir Alexander Burns, the first Political agent of Kabul, declared both Alexander Burns and Elphinstone as representatives of the British Government, sent for the purpose of dominating and conquering Afghanistan. Later on, Alexander Burns himself confessed about Elphinstone's information being beneficial for his mission to conquer Afghanistan. Mohan Lal exposed the mission of Alexander Burns and Elphinstone by asserting that English writers disguised the reality of promoting commerce in Afghanistan for their colonial mission and territorial aggrandizement (300-1).

Elphinstone was the first Britain to explore Afghanistan and wrote in his two travelogues about different regions of Afghanistan, introducing different tribes, languages, ethnicities, culture, rituals, political systems, and different practices of Afghanistan. He provided actual information to the British government to open ways for colonialism in Afghanistan. In his travelogue about Afghans, he states, "they are gentle and good-tempered in their intercourse with their guests, and with each other. Such is their veracity" (386). Afghans have been called by different names by the British. According to Paul Clammer, noted in *Afghanistan. Ediz. Inglese*, a travelogue, "the British called them Pathans, while Pashtuns have often simply referred to themselves historically as 'Afghans'… Pashtuns live mainly in east and southern Afghanistan, spreading into North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan in Pakistan (p. 42).' Although Paul Clammer found the people loving and caring during his visit to

Afghanistan, he provides stereotypical images of Afghans in his travelogue, contributing to the discourse of Orientalism by representing Afghans as the 'Other.'

Alexander Burns was the first Political Agent of Kabul, who successfully defeated Afghans in the first Anglo-Afghan war from 1837 to 1842. After the public assassination of Sir Alexander Burns, who was beheaded in front of a huge mob, the British had to face severe antagonism from the Afghans. Among the captured prisoners of war, 15,000 were freed, but only one man survived and successfully reached Delhi. It was during this time that Orientalists started to misrepresent Afghans and portray them as barbarians. Even Burns had given an inclusive representation of Afghans in his two books: *Travels into Bokhara* and *Cabool*.

Like Elphinstone, Alexander also provided veracious information to the British government. He was sent twice to Afghanistan, first to collect information, and secondly to conquer Afghanistan. He successfully accomplished his missions. During his visits, he provided information about Afghanistan and its people with the same narration provided by Elphinstone and stereotyped Afghans' people (McLaren 30). According to Burns, "we were moving among a savage tribe" (128). Again, he says, "the country, which is mountainous, and is barren, being held by wild Afghan tribes, who are all independent of each other" (ibid, 374). At one position, he says again that "from Ismael Khan, north to Peshawar, there is no direct traffic. The roads are bad and the people predatory" (ibid, 81). Inclusively, Alexander Burns calls Afghans savages, barbarians, and cruel people; even the leaders of Afghans had been shown as corrupt and savage. Although the first man, Elphinstone, provided positive information to the British government, he never used such words for Afghans. Henry Walter Bellew deconstructs Alexander Burns here by appreciating the great Amir in his book *Afghanistan and The Afghans*. According to Bellew, the leader of Afghans, Amiri Kabir, has his own unique style to deal with people who are successful in administration and popular among the people. He is skilled in war and simpler in his daily routine, showing a simplistic attitude to people and is famous for hospitality, and the more powerful is justice in his character, prevailing for the entire subjects (44-45). Alexander Burns was criticized by Mohan Lal as well in his book that the only thing I can say is that no British officer who was entrusted with the wellbeing of his country and charged with such important tasks of his government as Sir Alexander

Burns was would perform such a heinous act as to falsify the material in order to support his beliefs (214).

Henry Walter Bellew is a critic of works on Afghanistan. He provided a comprehensive review of different works along with his own standpoint, but he too stereotyped Afghans in his work. Therefore, in the early 19th century, different works can be seen with the misrepresentation of the Afghans. Similarly, many other writers and scholars as Orientalists came across Afghanistan, represented Afghanistan and its people from different perspectives. Afghans have been represented either with highly positive images like hospitality and sometimes entirely negative like revenge. However, Orientalists had set out their missions to achieve, and it was the dire need either to appreciate or scold them.

Although Afghans have shown strong resistance against its infidels and never gave up. Therefore, their narration is entirely addressed according to the demand of the time. One electrical engineer who came to Afghanistan for development works in his prescribed field found the opportunity to talk about the Afghans. According to Electrical Engineer Mr. Jewett, Afghanistan is a very backward and bad place, and even the people living in Afghanistan are corrupt, savages, barbarians, and they are full of different bad characteristics like greed, ignorance, shaitani. Further, they are thieves, looters, and liars (Noted in Bell M. J. (Ed.) *An American Engineer in Afghanistan: From the letters*' 30).

Sir William Kaye reports in his book *History of the War in Afghanistan* about an incident that took place in Herat, where a British person was kidnapped and put to death barbarously by Afghans. He expresses his hatred for Afghans when reporting the incident, stating that the dirtiest people on the earth can be found among Afghans, who do not show any sympathy for anyone. Colonel Hutchinson gives a similar representation of Afghanistan in his book: Pashtuns are ruthless and cowardly robbers, as well as cold-blooded and devious murderers, are the essence of existence. Having been raised since his early years in an environment characterised by extreme deceit and brutal acts of vengeance, he (Pashtun) is unalterable. He dies in the same manner that he lived - as a shameless, brutal beast (106).

Hutchinson's book is a detailed documentary about the Afghan people, portraying them as savages and barbarians who were not under control of the British government. Afghans provided a tough time for the British and disturbed them. Therefore, the British government contemplated operations against different tribes of Afghans. Colonel Hutchinson contributes to Orientalist discourses, representing Afghans with stereotypical images.

Henry Bellew, a significant figure in British administration, was deployed in tribal areas and observed the local inhabitants up close. In his book about Afghanistan and Afghans, he shared his opinion, stating, "the Afghans hold different traits, being skilful and superstitious characters with cupidity and pride as dominant factors of their character. No doubt they are people of great glory, despite robbing and looting others and showing faithlessness for any reputation to gain avaricious goals, as they do not deny any reputation to show faithlessness and put aside their loyalty" (Noted in Johnson's *The Afghan Way of War: How and Why They Fight*, 24). The faithlessness of Afghans is again highlighted by Bellew. According to him, after the second Afghan-Anglo war, peace was restored to some extent, and the British government showed sympathy and generosity toward Afghans. The British government sent goods that were in dire need by Afghans, along with many other different gifts, one million pounds of cash, two rifled artillery batteries with munitions, thirty thousand muskets, and their army was given training by British Army officers. He further states, "we trained them in war skills, how to fire the gun and cannon, and finally, we gave shelter to the exiled family. But what was done by the Amir in reward, he never allowed us to enter Afghan territory and showed severe enmity towards the British government" (25). Therefore, they can never be loyal and faithful to anyone.

Marsh, in his PhD thesis titled *Ramparts of Empire: India's North-West Frontier and British Imperialism 1919-194*, portrays Afghans and their tribes as the worst people of the region, who are Islamic fundamentalists and never deny sacrificing for Islam and their land. He further mentions that the British always faced problems from Afghans who are rebellious, showing their resistance during Afghan Wars, Russian Wars, and American wars. Afghans largely belong to Pathan tribes, which are of great importance because they maintain Islamic fundamentalism and an ideology to sacrifice

for Islam and their motherland. This is substantiated by Ghani Khan in his book, where he asserts that "every Pathan imagines he is Alexander the Great and wants the world to admit it" (p. 41). Marsh again says in his thesis that "since Islam, rather than a political structure, stands as the primary tie within Pathan society as a whole, religious leadership often comes to the fore in times of stress or war" (p. 5). The opinion of Marsh aligns with Euro-American Orientalist scholarship, showing their interests in Oriental Studies and Islam (See section 2.3 Euro-American Orientalist Scholarship).

Afghan people are usually represented as a separate ethnic group, identified with their unique identity linked to the concept of Pashtunwali. Although Afghanistan has other large ethnic groups like Tajik and Hazara, the facet of Pashtunwali is found in the entire Afghan community, including those living in Kabul and its surroundings. The principle of Pashtunwali is referred to as a code, a sophisticated set of principles that include honour, morality, ethics, personal attitude and relationships, steadfastness, martial bravery, faith in Islam, and a welcoming attitude, meaning hospitality. Charles describes the Afghan principle of Pashtunwali in *the Encyclopaedia of Postcolonial Studies*, stating, "Pashtunwali is an uncompromising social code so profoundly at odds with Western mores that its application constantly brings one up with a jolt" (119). Clunan and Harold offer their opinion on the principles of Afghans and relate these facets to basic identity, stating, "A Pashtun must adhere to the code to maintain his identity as a Pashtun" (p. 99). One serious problem faced by Afghans is that if they violate the basic codes of their principles, they are humiliated, and sometimes they have to leave their motherland to migrate somewhere far away. Orientalists assume entirely that Afghans can sacrifice themselves for their basic principles.

Among Afghans' principles, hospitality holds a prestigious position because all Afghans are identified with the basic principle of "hospitality," maintained throughout the region on both sides of the borders between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Hospitality is parallel to Afghans' honour, and they are willing to die for their honour. Afghans receive and welcome their guests with an open heart and smiling faces. They facilitate and entertain their guests with their best efforts, as their custom demands. Simply put, if a man does not fulfil the criteria and is unable to maintain the basic principle of hospitality, he is no longer considered a suitable man for Afghan society. Therefore, it is of great

importance and concern that Afghan hospitality is narrated and appreciated several times by Orientalists. Leighton Pennell writes in his book *Among the Wild Tribes of the Afghan Frontier* about Afghan hospitality. Although the book portrays Afghans as savage and barbarian, despite their cruelty and barbarism, they facilitated and showed great concern for their guests (25). Pennel very sincerely described Afghan hospitality instead of their cruelty and barbarism. He portrays Afghans from different tribes as full of enmity, antagonism, and rudeness, but when it comes to hospitality, Afghans have a great interest and serve their enemies with multiple dishes, along with great honour and respect. Despite the basic and positive aspect of Afghans' hospitality, Pennel still contributes to the discourses of Orientalism and stereotypes Afghans.

The great Pashto poet, Ghani Khan, appreciates and defines the basic facet of hospitality in his book *The Pathan*: "He (Afghan) was generous and hospitable and had a thunderous big laugh with which he welcomed and flattered you" (p.41). Like Pennel, Ghani Khan shares the same opinion that Afghans always welcome their guests with a smiling face and wholeheartedly. Alexander Burns writes in his travelogue *Cabool*, "When I reached one of the popular places near Kabul, Dera Ghazee Khan, now situated in Pakistan, a messenger was sent by the king of Cabool, Dost Mahommed Khan, to visit Afghanistan" (p. 54). Further, he delineates the hospitality of an Afghan named Bhwul Khan of Minnuncote, who hosted Alexander Burns as a princely host (p. 67). Burns appreciates the hospitality of Afghans in his narration of King's brother Akbar Khan, whom he finds a cordial and hospitable man in the entire region (p. 140).

One example of Afghans' hospitality is reported by Fida Younas in his book *Abdul Ghaffar Khan: Pashtunistan and Afghanistan*, when the Pakistan consulate located in Kabul was attacked by extremists on March 31st, 1955. The King of Afghanistan, Sardar Daud, condemned the attack with the statement, "the attack is against the norms and code of Afghans' principles (hospitality), violated the tradition of Afghan hospitality, and I declare the principle an international law" (p. 38). It means Afghans' hospitality is considered international law by Afghanistan's King.

Afghans' hospitality is universally accepted, and nobody can deny the fact of their generosity. Elphinstone landed on Kabul's soil and narrated Afghan hospitality in his book *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*. He provides a comprehensive note on

Afghans' hospitality; according to him, hospitality is the greatest and most remarkable facet of Afghans. Afghans observe hospitality from the core of their hearts, and it is one of the sources of honour for them. Anyone among Afghans who fails to entertain his guests is eliminated from the codes and principles. Elphinstone observed one of the unique aspects in Afghanistan during his stay; he found people without money who still entertained their guests with typical Afghans' hospitality and provided them shelter.

The majority of Orientalists represented Afghans with hospitality, also essentializing them with different stereotypical images. Elphinstone, the first man to introduce Afghanistan to the Western world, provided appropriated information; however, despite this, he essentialized and employed the strategy of Othering for Afghans. According to Johannes Fabian, who wrote about Elphinstone in his book *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*, Elphinstone can be replicated as a true and explicit Orientalist. Though he is not a racist, he employed the strategy to essentialize Afghans and portray them as "Others" through notions of temporality. Elphinstone was a semi-colonial administrator, well-equipped with ideas on how to control Afghans. Therefore, stereotypes were inevitable to label Afghans with bleak images and misrepresent them. Sir William Kaye, in his book *History of the War in Afghanistan*, refers to Afghans as wild horses whose reins cannot be controlled by Silken Birds. The book is a criticism of Afghanistan and its people, evaluating different works on the country. It represents a stereotypical view of Afghanistan.

George Campbell in his book *Afghan Frontier: The Substance of a Speech not Delivered* develops criticism on Afghanistan which is based on different stereotypes of Afghans and their culture, tradition and different characters. George Campbell says about Afghans; the Afghan people are of a completely different nature, one that is turbulent, one that is bred from infancy to the use of guns, and one that has a love for independence that is unrivalled by any other people in this world. This is something that we have learned through experiences that have been extremely painful. They are intolerant of practically any form of national, tribal, or family rule because of their passion of independence, which makes them intolerant not only of foreign tyranny but of any rule at all. Every individual in their community would be considered a law unto himself (12).

Further, he says, "they have the character of being avaricious, mercenary, treacherous, and predatory" (24). Additionally, George Campbell states that Afghans are fanatical about their religion. Their faith is paramount to them, as they do not believe in any law except the Mohammedan Code. They are ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their religion and engage in conflict against non-believers (25).

Henry Walter Bellew writes in his *Journal of a Political Mission to Afghanistan in 1857* about Afghans, eliciting stereotypes that portray them as troublesome neighbours who must be taught a lesson due to their perceived barbarism. Bellew suggests that they should not be left to their own devices but should be seriously subjugated, as they are deemed unworthy of self-rule. Similar to other Orientalists who targeted the religion of Afghans, Islam, Bellew follows suit in his book "Races of Afghanistan" (1880). He states that the sole unifying factor among them is their shared religious affiliation, which they ardently adhere to due to their profound lack of knowledge and the overall primitive state of their society (p. 12). Henry Walter Bellew is considered a significant contributor to Orientalist discourses developed on Afghanistan, contributing to the extensive stereotyping of Afghanistan and its people. Islam appears to be a major focus in his writings.

Thomas Holdich adopts a fanatic approach towards Afghans with religious zeal, calling them "the worst human beings ever" in his book *The Indian Borderland: 1880–1900*. He notes that the Pathan is an extreme republican. He possesses a strong sense of autonomy and, although being heavily influenced by the Mullahs, he consistently demonstrates a keen interest in business, even at his most fervent outbursts (184-5).

Peter Tomsen, in *The Wars of Afghanistan*, asserts that violence is a pervasive phenomenon among Afghan tribes (4), and the country is a land of bloodshed (214). Afghans' revenge is a topic often discussed by Orientalists who have long felt threatened by it. According to Bergsma, Afghans must retaliate when provoked (*The Opium Eaters* 255). West notes that an Afghan is not considered a true Afghan unless he retaliates when provoked (651). According to Barth, this action is supported by their religion (*Political Leadership among Swat Pathans*, 136). Colonel Hutchinson talks about Afghans' use of revenge against their foes during the colonial period: Not only are these men highly outrageous, but they are also extremely intelligent and clever in addition to being

audacious. They exhibit a great deal of patience when observing and waiting for their prey, and when they get the opportunity to attack, they do it with a great deal of zeal and impudence (*The Campaign in Tirah 1897-1898*, p. 98).

Similarly, Marsh discusses the brutality and revenge of Afghans in his Ph.D. thesis entitled *Ramparts of Empire: India's North-West Frontier and British Imperialism 1919-1947*. He contends that British colonizers never encountered a people like the Afghans during their entire period of colonialism. Afghans descended from the hills, routinely plundering and burning British villages, killing soldiers, and kidnapping officers from British territory (7). Throughout British colonialism, Afghans were deemed indestructible pillars to control and were often compared to tigers. Christian Tripodi acknowledges in *Khyber: British India's North-West Frontier*: The eyes of a hawk, the beak of a vulture, and the mouth of a shark were contained under a shaggy, scrofulous black beard that was piled with dust and a blue turban. The person who possessed these characteristics moved with the unassuming grace of a tiger perched on a stalk (3).

Oberson presents an ambivalent position on Afghans, delineating both positive and negative aspects. While acknowledging their actual position, Oberson simultaneously contributes to the creation of stereotypes. According to Oberson, Afghans exhibit warlike characteristics, belong to a large ethnic group, and have a history of defending their homeland without allowing outsiders to enter. They are naturally trained as guerrillas, unafraid to engage in killing, robbery, and kidnapping. Despite their tribal system, Afghans do not unite; instead, they fight for the sake of their honour, with three notorious family grudges—zar (gold), zan (woman), and zamin (land)—being the actual causes of disputes among them (4-5).

The representation of Afghans with reference to stereotypes has transitioned from Orientalists to Neo-Orientalists, as the first catalogue of travel writings appeared with travellers who spent a short period of time in Afghanistan but stereotyped Afghans in their writings. In James Michener's novel *Caravans*, published in 1963, Afghanistan is portrayed as the land of bad and wild people. The novel perpetuates Orientalist discourses, presenting a romanticized Afghanistan full of barbarism. The story features a character from America, Mark Miller, portrayed as a diplomat working in the US Embassy in Kabul. The protagonist seeks a career in the Orient, experiences negative

encounters, and the novel delves into both pre-WWII and post-WWII stories of Afghanistan. It depicts stereotypical images and clichés of Afghanistan and its people. The creative writing, presenting stereotypes and clichés, is based on generalization and lacks concern for cultural representation, serving to promote the interests of colonizers.

Norwegian journalist Åsne Seierstad wrote a non-fictional book, *The Bookseller of Kabul*, about Shah Muhammad Rais, a book seller whose name is changed to Sultan Khan. Seierstad entered Afghanistan after the fall of the Twin Towers in America and started living with Shah Muhammad Rais' family in Kabul. The book has a novelistic nature, providing information about the lives of Afghans, with a focus on patriarchal norms. It depicts the poor condition of Afghan women in general. The writer discusses polygamy in Afghanistan, a practice in the postmodern world despite the meta-narratives of Western claims. After the publication of the book, Shah Muhammad filed a case in Norway against the writer for defaming his honour, as the writer could not provide appropriate information in a short span of time about Shah's family and many other Afghans. The controversy arose when questions were raised about Afghan culture and tradition, to which the writer was not familiar. Seierstad was declared guilty of misrepresenting Afghan women. Furthermore, Shah also appealed for seeking asylum in some Western countries because Afghanistan is no longer a safe place for him. The uncertainty in Shah's life was caused by Seierstad's book, and he published his own book titled *Once Upon a Time There was a Bookseller* to clarify his position and expose the true intentions of the writer of *The Bookseller of Kabul*. Seierstad's work is proven to be an Orientalist text, and her textual representation of Afghans is not appropriate or accurate. Simply put, she stereotyped Afghanistan and its people in her book.

The Taliban: War, Religion, and the New Order in Afghanistan is a book written by Peter Marsden about the Taliban, their origin, progress, and war against the Soviet Union. According to Peter Marsden, the entire Afghan community is involved in Talibanization due to their strong affiliation with Islam. Therefore, terms like Mujahedeen, Taliban, and Islamic fundamentalists are deemed suitable for Afghans. Peter Marsden further explains that seven sub-groups of Mujahideen can be observed in Afghanistan. While documenting about the Taliban, Peter Marsden essentializes Afghans, and their stereotypical images are given throughout the entire book.

Women of the Afghan War is a non-fictional work by Deborah Ellis about the women of Afghanistan who are marginalized and exploited by the Taliban. The Taliban are directly linked with Madrassa and Islamic fundamentalists. According to Deborah Ellis, the Taliban are the creation of Islamic studies, packing orphans from refugee camps in Pakistan. They are given education in Pakistan under the guidance of Mullahs in different Madrassas along with war training. Deborah Ellis contributes to Orientalist discourses strongly engaged with Orientals and Islamic studies. She represents and stereotypes Afghans and Afghanistan, though showing her interests and sympathies for Afghan women.

Susan Froetschel's *Fear of Beauty*, a novel published in 2013, narrates the story of Helmand, a faraway province of Afghanistan. The story has different perspectives, with the Orientalist one being more significant. An American soldier is depicted, while from the Afghan perspective, the story of Sofi, an Afghan woman who lost her oldest son in an accident, is given. The death of the schoolboy depicts a mysterious relationship between Americans and Afghans because the culprit may be named as a local Afghan or American. An American special ranger, Joey Pearson, is deployed to solve the death but fails in the initial stages. Mita, an agriculture officer, has been kidnapped by Sofi to inquire about her son's killing. The story is mysterious, and the writer struggles to bridge the gap between Americans and Afghans but fails because of the Orientalist script. The writer develops the concept of Us and Them, highlighting the installation of different farming, industries, schools, and many other developments brought by Americans, portraying America as a teacher teaching Afghans. Said's concept of big brothers can be seen in the novel. The novel is significant from postcolonial perspectives as different relationships between the Orient and Occident are explored through the concept of Alterity and Ambivalence (See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin's *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, second edition). Therefore, the novel presents stereotypes and clichés of the Afghan community, portraying America as a superior country.

Words in the Dust is a novel by Trent Reedy, published in 2011. The novel is about the story of an Afghan girl, Zuleikha, who has been exploited and suffered throughout the narrative. The writer, a former American soldier, writes the story from a

personal and factual perspective, having observed the story closely. While the exploitation and suffering of Afghan women may have true stories, it is questioned how a male soldier could represent the true story of a Burqa-clad woman who is even hidden from her relatives. Therefore, from the initial assumption, the story is based on fiction, and the representation of women through the patriarchal lens is not true but stereotyped and essentialized.

Dominic Davis' "Exploiting Afghan Victimhood" is an article about Afghanistan that stereotypes and essentializes it, portraying the country as war-torn, exploited, wild, and brutal. It suggests that Afghanistan is a centre of interest for Westerners and Americans who write novels, produce documentaries, and create films about the nation. Dominic Davis acknowledges his position as an Orientalist, confirming that Orientalism is the process of constructing and reconstructing Afghanistan (the Orient). Afghans are only represented in front of Western and American audiences to elicit sympathy. Orientalists often perceive themselves as superior and consider Afghans inferior, developing the concept of "Us and Them." Furthermore, they employ the concept of "Othering" in their writings. Gillian Whitelock raises the ontological position of the West and America, stating that the United States and America can be defined relationally; they are loci of grounded and symbolic power and are not bound by any specific geographical positioning. Therefore, they are considered superior, and Afghans are deemed inferior and can be presented as "the Other" ("Review Essay: The Power of Testimony" 149).

"Review: Put to Rights: Testimony, Witnessing and Human Rights in Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition" is an article by Judith Coullie about literature and other writings concerning Afghanistan, addressing the themes of suffering, displacement, exploitation, marginalization, survival, and trauma of Afghans. The article justifies the creation of Euro-American-based industries publishing such books, clearly implying that the stories constructed by the Euro-American canon are purely fabricated (140). This means that Orientalist discourses about Afghanistan mainly deal with stereotypes, and the representation given in these discourses is not true and appropriate but constructed and imaginative. Judith Coullie is further supported by Gillian Whitelock in "Review Essay: The Power of Testimony": In the context of the war on terror, narratives from Afghanistan are disseminated as commodities, and they are

subsequently incorporated into a discussion concerning the politics of intervention and resistance. The forces of commercialization have the ability to harness them, and they may also be utilised to bolster aggressive intervention in national communities that are seen to be primitive or dysfunctional. In spite of this, they are capable of being utilised to characterise intolerable forms of tyranny and violence that occur across cultural boundaries; they make a forceful plea for human rights. (149)

Coeli Fitzpatrick's "New Orientalism in Popular Fiction and Memoir: An Illustration of Type" clearly signifies the importance of New Orientalism with reference to the representation of Afghans. Fitzpatrick highlights similar problems to classical Orientalism, but it relies mainly on native and semi-native storytellers who, in the same way as Orientalists, generalize and misrepresent the Orient (245). The same approach was taken by Khalid Hosseini in *The Kite Runner* (Meghan O´Rourke, "The Kite Runner: Do I Really Have to Read It?" 25).

In the next section, native and semi-native storytellers are included, incorporating similar stories and contemplating Orientalism in their writings. The technique used by Orientals is called Re-Orientalization from the perspective of Self-Orientalists, which will also be discussed in the next section of the literature review.

2.3 Orientals scholarship and Understanding Self-Orientalism in the Representation of Orient

The current section deals with two different perspectives. The first one provides a review of Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism, and the second one provides a review of the representation in Oriental scripts. The second section also shows how Oriental scholarship develops and contributes to the Orientalist script to start writing about the Orient. The central part of the discussion in this section is how the Orient is presented and perceived. The review addresses the self-Orientalist perspective in the available literature. Furthermore, the section deals with Re-Orientalism taken as a process, not as a theory (See Lisa Lau as theory: section 3.9.1). When Orientalists represent the Orient in their writings and discourses, the process of the construction and representation of the Orient is called Orientalism or Orientalization of the Orient. On the contrary, representations from the perspective of Orientals themselves and their construction of the Orient in this research will be called re-Orientalization.

Lisa Lau introduced Re-Orientalism in her paper "Re-Orientalism: The Perpetration and Development of Orientalism by Orientals," published in 2009. The inspiration she gets is from Edward Said's "Orientalism." Re-Orientalism is the reverse production of the Orientals using the Orientalist script by the Orient itself, which is similar and identical in practices to Orientalist discourses. The discourses of Re-Orientalism claim that Orientals are re-Orientalizing themselves when they endorse the stereotypes and clichés used by Orientalists. Furthermore, Re-Orientalism claims cultural products of the Orient as Orientalized East to now call it a Re-Orientalized Orient. There is no need for Orientalism because the Orientals are now doing the same job for the construction and representation of the Orient that was previously done by Orientalists. Another term, Self-Orientalism, has been introduced by Arif Dirlik in his article "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism" and Prasenjit Duara in her article "Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China". It was identified as Self-Orientalism in their articles by Grace Yan and Carla Santos Almeida in their articles "China Forever: Tourism Discourse and Self-Orientalism". Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism are mainly the same phenomena but slightly different in nature from one another. Re-Orientalism is taken as the process of Re-Orientalization with the same construction provided by Self-Orientalism, which is called the participation of the Orient in its construction. Taking the processes of Orientalization and Re-Orientalization, self-Orientalism does not offer any process but is simply about the construction and representation of the Orient from the Orientals' perspective. Therefore, Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism are the same processes of representing the Orient from the Orientals' perspective, but re-Orientalization and re-Orientalizing will be used in the entire dissertation for the construction and representation of the Orient from the Orientals' perspectives.

In the previous section, it has been discussed that Orientalism is consistent with American Orientalism, presenting an identical ideology already depicted by classical Orientalists in their writings. However, the role of local people (Orientals) is complicit in constructing and representing the Orient or providing information about the Orient to the Orientalists. Providing information about local problems and issues to Orientalists is important, as Said already noted that the Orient is accepting what is imposed by the

Orientalists, which means that the Orient itself is constructing and Othering itself. Edward Said's *Orientalism* is a significant book in the discipline of Postcolonialism because he introduced the domain to postcolonial and third-world countries. According to Edward Said, the West has been colonizing and subjugating the East for a long time, mainly after decolonization, through the modern mode of colonialism known as "imperialism," which is used to subjugate the Orient with new tactics—political, social, and economical being the dominant factors. The discourses of colonialism and imperialism are powerful, helping to essentialize, stereotype, and caricature the negative representation of the Orientals. According to Said, the discourses of Orientalism are the accumulation of different knowledge systems such as anthropology, taxonomy, travelogues, and religious studies through which the West demonstrates its supremacy over the East. However, the East is equally responsible for its construction because it has accepted the stereotypes and has submitted to the supremacy of the West. Thus, Said highlights the role of Orientals in the Orientalization process.

Harjot Oberoi notes in his article "Empire, Orientalism, and Native Informants" that it is not accurate to say that the generation of colonial knowledge was solely dependent on the accomplishments of knowledge practitioners in the Western world. Even if they were not equally influential, indigenous thinkers and ancient knowledge traditions played a significant role in shaping the imperial agenda. As a result, we are no longer able to talk with complete assurance of a hegemonic western narrative (95). Harot Oberoi identified Orientalist discourses used for identical agendas that have been planted by Orientalists. These discourse providers are also called native informants who inform about the Orient to colonial masters and other Orientalists, who (Orientalists) never visit the Orient and start writing about it. A native informant is a person who belongs to a particular place or race and is an expert in Oriental Studies, mainly understanding Oriental culture, language, tradition, rituals, and many other aspects. Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* and Said's *Orientalism* are significant contributions to Postcolonial studies, referring to the term native informant. Said asserts in *Orientalism*, "as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West" (5). It is not only about the construction and representation of the Orient by

Orientals but also about deconstructing the process of Orientalism, as the Orient needs the West to speak for the Orient. What they call “a triumph of Orientalism” (323) means that the Orient itself is ready to accept the representation of Orientalists.

Spivak goes for a divergent interpretation; according to her, a native informant is a person found in other places, and their information is treated unquestionably, based on objective evidence. The Oriental (native informant) provides information to the West through comparative religion, ethnography, ethnolinguistics, and many other sources, which become factors in the marginalization of the Orient. The person providing information related to the Other itself becomes controversial because the information provided to the West may have exaggerated values that go against the facts (“The Post-colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues,” 1993).

According to Spivak, native informant is an imaginary character that putting her into question that who is native informants? She refers to native informants as imaginary characters, which she comes up with after meticulous and conscientious planning. Subaltern Woman is the most significant creation of native informant. Spivak, who defines three different types of native informants: Postcolonial Migrant, Native Informant, and Subaltern Woman (*Outside in the Teaching Machine* 71). Native Americans who supply knowledge to Westerners through a variety of sources are known as "native informants." On the other hand, the Postcolonial Migrant was a product of American ingenuity that was developed with the intention of interfering with and providing support for American cultural politics as well as the United States canon of wars (*Outside in the Teaching Machine* 71). Spivak herself created the character of the Subaltern woman in the course of the recent debate “Feminism and Marxism” (“Can the Subaltern Speak?”). She tries to use the Subaltern to interact with the aforementioned theoretical discussion based on multiculturalism, identity, politics, and appropriation to the United States (*Outside in the Teaching Machine* 71). Apart from the aforementioned debate, Spivak considers the native informant a weak and submissive character with paradoxes who always puts the issues of representation into troubles, constructing discrimination. Further, unequal power relations are depicted through the representator who represents the Other in a larger historical, cultural, political, social, and economic

context. Thus, the native informant himself is an "Other" contributing to master discourses.

The native informant is actually the first mode of Self-Orientalism who Re-Orientalizes the Orient through different strategies as they provide information to the Euro-American canon about the Orientals. According to Euro-American Orientalists, there is no need for further envisaging of the Orient as the information is reproduced by Orientalists with certain amendments and changes to alter the course of representation. The role once played by the Orientalists is now performed by the native informants. Paul Ricoeur acknowledges in his book *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* that native informants are actually informing the West to show their appropriation and understanding of others, not themselves. He further confirms that native informants are developed on a metaphorical level, saying something about something already envisaged with deviational information. The doer and the actions are interrelated, putting the actions on the record to document. The metaphors are actually the social actors who understand how actions are performed. They are actual native informants who observe themselves and inform about themselves to the Euro-American canon. Paul Ricoeur goes for a hermeneutic interpretation, stating, "a kind of objectification similar to the fixation which occurs in writing. . . [objectification] constitutes a delineated pattern which has to be interpreted according to Native informant as Impossible Perspective and its inner connections" (203). Following Paul Ricoeur, Clifford Geertz writes, the ethnographic description can be segregated into three distinct characteristics: It is interpretative; the flow of social conversation is what it is interpretive of; and the interpreting that is entailed consists of attempting to rescue the 'said' of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in words which are comprehensible." (*The Interpretation of Cultures*, 20).

When Orientalism turned into Neo-Orientalism, the representation of the Other was also affected, and new modes of representation were adopted. The West, which was initially concerned with the Muslim world and Orientals in terms of textual representation, shifted to direct conflicts with Islam and the Muslim world in the modes of American Orientalists. The role of the native informant also underwent changes with these shifts in the mode of Orientalization. Now, native informants are those postcolonial and subaltern writers who are heard by the West, speaking on behalf of the Occident.

This shift became more evident in literary writing after the 9/11 attacks. Scholars such as Fitzpatrick, Margaret Mills, Leila Ahmad, Hamid Dabashi, and Saba Mahmood have extensively highlighted the texts penned by natives after the 9/11 crises.

To illustrate the roles of these scholars, Leila Ahmad focused on fiction and non-fiction produced by natives after 9/11, which remained consistent in practices that developed similar stereotypes about the Muslim world as those initiated by Orientalists (*A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, From the Middle East to America*, 225). Similarly, Margaret Mills noted in "Victimhood as Agency: Afghan Women's Memoirs" that Afghan female writers, especially autobiographers, have found their way into the West and America, gaining recognition and appreciation (197). This indicates that they are at the centre of discussion because Afghan female writers provide stereotypical information on burning issues for Orientalists and the West. These female writers are given a prestigious position and become popular in the West. However, their texts often fit into Orientalist tropes, continuing the Orientalization of the Orient. This phenomenon is referred to as Self-Orientalism in the overall debate, as what has been written about the Orient is now scripted and perpetuated through the works of native writers.

Margaret Mills raises questions about the authority and agency of native writers (Orientals) as they traverse from local ethno-history to global politics through their autobiographies and memoirs. These works shed light on both the exploitation and agency of Orientals, gaining popularity in the West. Afghan women, initially exploited and victimized by men of their own community, find acceptance and publication in the West, granting them a subjective position and popularity (Ibid, 118-119). She further emphasizes that interpretations should strive to avoid a simplistic reading of these accounts, which may be tinged with latent or overt Orientalist or Eurocentric feminist perspectives (Ibid, 219).

In contrast, Saba Mahmood expresses a nuanced optimism about the texts of Orientals, acknowledging their fully planted nature that represents the standpoint of the West in "Feminism, Democracy, and Empire: Islam and the War on Terror". However, both Coeli Fitzpatrick and Hamid Dabashi contend that contemporary texts embody the perspective of New Orientalism. Fitzpatrick, in "New Orientalism in Popular Fiction and Memoir: An Illustration of Type," argues that New Orientalism closely mirrors classical

Orientalism, addressing similar issues and problems. The significant difference lies in the reliance on native and semi-native narrators. New Orientalism perpetuates stereotypes and generalizations about a place and its people, similar to classical Orientalism. While classical Orientalism remained consistent over two centuries, portraying the Orient with stereotypes and clichés, primarily as a negative opponent, American Orientalists take a different approach. Stereotypes and clichés are continually confirmed and reaffirmed in their writings, portraying the Orient as morally deficient. The authenticity of this representation is rarely challenged, making it an accepted narrative due to frequent confirmation in Orientalist writings. The representatives of New Orientalists include U.S. foreign policy and American military intervention, contributing to the portrayal of the Orient as morally corrupt and recalcitrant. Native and semi-native narrators play a central role in this representation, termed as Self-Orientalism and Re-Orientalism.

I have already discussed that the native informant is a person who reports to the Euro-American canon, while the aforementioned scholars refer to them as native and semi-native narrators. The central debate in this scenario revolves around Islam and its representation. Various literary writers, including autobiographers and memoirists, have played a significant role in shaping the representation of the Orient. Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* serves as a notable example of Self-Orientalism, where she acts as a native informant and colonial agent. Her work aligns with the mission of re-Orientalizing the Orient, particularly the Islamic state, which is held responsible for the exploitation, suffering, and injustices faced by Iranian women. *Reading Lolita in Tehran* became a bestseller in the Western world for highlighting the perceived oppression of women in the Islamic state, focusing on themes like the veil and women's education (Paköz, 57). As a university teacher, Nafisi started teaching female students in a clandestine setting, later exposed and jailed for revolting against the state. The book delves into the writer's entire life spent in Tehran.

Hamid Dabashi contends that Azar Nafisi's work personifies New Orientalism, aligning with the same project as a colonial agent and native informer (Self-Orientalism), positioning herself within the framework of American New Orientalism. Dabashi states, "the comprador intellectual does her or his share to normalize the imperial Centre and cast its peripheral boundaries as odd, abnormal, and grotesque" ("Native Informers and

the Making of the American Empire," 2006). According to Dabashi, Nafisi plays a central role in contributing to the Western canon. Furthermore, Azar Nafisi is seen as reconstructing and rehabilitating Bernard Lewis's standpoint, re-accrediting it with previously dismantled imperial ideologies. Nafisi herself acknowledges this shift, stating, "I was against Lewis during my student life and leaned towards Edward Said. However, upon returning to Tehran as a university teacher, I reconsidered and concluded that I was wrong. My assumption against Lewis was not appropriate. What Lewis provided was true, and it was his right to write against Islam, and I now hold the same opinion." This reflects the stance of Self-Orientalism initiated by Azar Nafisi in her book.

Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes' "Re-Orientalism and South Asian Identity Politics: The Oriental Other within" explores the Orientalization of the Orient from the perspective of Orientals themselves. The term and the techniques of re-orientalism are introduced because the editors of the book were inspired by Edward Said's Orientalism. Furthermore, the contributors of the book aim to identify practices of re-Orientalism in contemporary novels, television, and films produced in South Asia and South Asian diasporic cultural formations. They utilize the theory of re-orientalism as they analyse various Oriental works such as novels, films, and television, coining the term "Self-Orientalism" to describe the strategy of re-Orientalization.

In her thesis, Lucia Tupá in *Re-orientalism as a Writing Strategy: Generational Gaps or Cultural Differences in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake and Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club* proposes that diasporic writers, influenced by Western culture while residing in the West, draw inspiration from Orientalists' writings. The thesis suggests that diasporic writers, experiencing a sense of superiority due to generational gaps and the privileges bestowed upon them in the West, often write about the Orient from a diasporic setting. Furthermore, Tupá argues that these writers adopt a strategy of Re-Orientalizing the Orient from a Self-Orientalist perspective, exemplified in the works of novelists Jhumpa Lahiri and Amy Tan.

In her essay "The Ethno-Orientalism of Sardinian Culture", Silvio Carta expresses the opinion that Sardinia was once portrayed by Western Orientalists, resulting in misrepresentation and stereotypical images categorizing it as the "Other." Over time, this narrative has been taken up by Sardinian travelogue and novel writers who are now

engaged in re-Orientalizing Sardinian culture. These Sardinian writers have developed indistinguishable stereotypes, and the essay identifies instances of self-Orientalism in Sardinian travel writings and novels. The writers are actively contributing to the re-Orientalization of Sardinian society and culture.

Lisa Lau's "Resisting re-Orientalism in Representation: Aman Sethi Writes of Delhi" is a research article that explores the fiction and non-fiction works of Indian English writers from major cities in India, such as Mumbai and Kolkata. The article provides a detailed list of prominent writers and their significant works. According to Lau, Indian writers are deeply involved in addressing issues related to the representation of India in their writings. Lau notes that these writers have often presented distorted images of India and its cities. Therefore, Lau argues that Indian writers are actively participating in the re-Orientalization of Indian culture and subalterns, with a broad spectrum of authors contributing to this perspective.

Ana Cristina Mendes and Lisa Lau, in their article "India through Re-Orientalist Lenses", discuss Indian films and literature that perpetuate Re-Orientalism. The filmmakers and literary writers depict a darker side of India, not merely as a re-Orientalist perspective but as a strategic contribution to discourses aligning with Orientalist views. They draw upon Daura's concept of Self-Orientalism for modernism, highlighting a desire for affiliation with the West. The movies and literary works emphasize heroism and the superiority of colonizers' culture, termed strategic re-Orientalism by Lisa Lau and Self-Orientalism for modernism by Daura. Notable works such as Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, Kavery Nambisan's *The Story That Must Not Be Told*, and Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* are identified as important examples of re-Orientalizing the Orient from a Self-Orientalist perspective, as noted by Mendes and Lau.

In their article "Hospitality and Re-Orientalist Thresholds: Amit Chaudhuri Writes Back to India", Lisa Lau and Christina Mendes discuss Amit Chaudhuri's novel *Calcutta: Two Years in The City*. The novel engages in Re-Orientalizing the Orient, focusing on the concept of hospitality and the relationship between guests and hosts, as outlined by Lau and Mendes. The paper explores how Amit Chaudhuri portrays the Indian community as inferior and submissive to the Western world, challenging the explicit connection to the modern world. The novel, according to the authors, represents a

self-Orientalist perspective aimed at Re-Orientalizing India, as discussed in their research article.

In her article "Re-Orientalism and Indian Writing in English," Ana Cristina Mendes discusses re-orientalism from various perspectives. One example noted in the article is Pramond K. Nayar's "Postcolonial Studies: An Anthology", a collection of classical texts that sparked the postcolonial theory debate. While the book primarily focuses on postcolonial debate, the inclusion of Lau's theoretical aspect, developed in "The Perpetration and Development of Orientalism by Orientals", transforms it into a post-postcolonial work. Despite the debate, Lau's description of Re-Orientalism is likened to Said's Orientalism, a comparison affirmed by Wiley-Blackwell.

The article delves into Lau and Dwivedi's "Re-Orientalism and Indian Writing in English," highlighting how it evades Western hegemony and showcases Orientals seeking self-definition and self-representation. Lau and Dwivedi examine power dynamics evident in both Orientalism and resistance literature. The article further confirms various aspects of Indian English literary writers who seek affiliation with the West due to their publications in Western markets. Consequently, these writers adopt re-Orientalist and self-Orientalist perspectives to gain recognition in the West, often portraying dark images of Indian culture as crime-ridden, poverty-stricken, and backward. The examples from two different books, Somnath Batabyal's *The Price You Pay* and Manil Suri's *The City of Devi*, are cited as contributions to the discourses of Self-Orientalism to re-Orientalize the Orient.

The contribution of Lisa Lau and Christina Mendes is documented by Vamsee Juluri in her article "Lisa Lau and Ana Christina Mendes (eds.), Re-Orientalism and South Asian Identity Politics: The Oriental Other Within". Both Lau and Mendes identified the era of Oriental's construction by the Orientals themselves, a process termed either Self-Orientalism or Re-Orientalism. Both writers have identified powerful Western discourses planted to highlight their ideologies through local native informants, often the elite Other. South Asia serves as an example, where cultural production contributes to Orientalist discourses spreading across the region. Sometimes, the "Others" are members of Subaltern groups, one of three groups of native informants nominated by Gayatri Spivak. Various movies and fictional works contribute to the Re-Orientalist mission,

noted in Vamsee Juluri's article, such as Akhil Sharma's novel *The White Tiger* and Gurinder Chadha's film *Bride and Prejudice*.

In his article "Islamophobia and Postcolonialism: Continuity, Orientalism, and Muslim Consciousness", Nasar Meer notes that Islamophobia has been introduced to the Western world through three major channels. Primarily, postcolonial writers played a crucial role in its introduction. The first channel explores how colonial legacies were introduced and produced by postcolonial environments, contributing to the introduction of the term. Secondly, the translation of different texts into the English language informs the West about Islamophobia, and the third channel is related to Muslim consciousness. The postcolonial perspective of the article informs the Western world about Islamophobia, aligning with the discourses of self-Orientalism as postcolonial writers re-Orientalize the Islamic world. New Orientalism and classical Orientalism mainly deal with the Muslim world, portraying Muslims as the "Other" and constructing their stereotypical images. The article supports the concept of Self-Orientalism to re-Orientalize the Muslim world.

Melissa Lam's "The Politics of Fiction: A Response to New Orientalism in Type" is an article that discusses New Orientalism in two significant works, Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. According to Melissa Lam, both writers have developed different stereotypes labelled on their local culture from Orientalist perspectives. The paper provides a detailed description of *Reading Lolita in Tehran* while discussing Hosseini's novel with reference to the representation of Afghan women. Although the article is about New Orientalism, my research work focuses on Self-Orientalism, which aligns with Lam's perspective in her article. Therefore, both writers in the selected article are shown to Re-Orientalize the Orient from a self-Orientalist perspective.

In her article "Indo-Anglian Fiction: The New Orientalism," Anis Shivay identifies different principles that are universally accepted when reading certain Indian novels written for Western readers and audiences. She coins the term "exoticized Orientalism" as a new name for the Orientalist strategy employed by Indian English writers. This strategy aligns with Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism. The article does not delve into the interpretation from a Self-Orientalist perspective but rather engages

Indian English writers with the ethnic and symbolic practices of Indianness. Shivay not only presents the local culture but also hybridizes Western cultural practices with the local ones to offer a unique flavor to the discussion. She references famous Indian foods, universally accepted and appreciated, using them as symbols of Indianness. Bollywood movies are also given a significant position by Shivay, enriching the essence of Indian culture. Although these features symbolize Indianness, they also portray India as exotic due to their close association with exoticism. Shivay observes various features of exoticized writing in Indian fiction, influenced by different stereotypes and clichés attributed to Indian culture. However, Shivay does not interpret the usage of stereotypes from the writers' perspective; instead, they are seen as reused stereotypes in Indian fictional writing. Consequently, the Orientalization process is highly prevalent in Indian Anglophone writings. While Shivay does not explicitly use the terms "re-orientalism" and "self-Orientalism," her discussion implies a form of Re-Orientalization of the Orient from a Self-Orientalist perspective.

Considering the Orientalists' construction of exotic images of the Orient, the development of an alien or different culture occurs. This is what happens in re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism, where shared reductionist representations of the Orient are referred to as "exoticism." Graham Huggan uses the term exotic in a similar context, noting that those living in the West who publish books about alien and foreign cultures, what we might call "the cultures of the Orient," contribute to the literature of the exotic. This literature is enjoyed and cherished in multicultural environments, and Huggan highlights the appreciation of exotic literary works in late-twentieth-century Western multicultural settings due to their ability to simplify and equalise diverse histories, while also aesthetically celebrating diversity, which masks the absence of socio-historical progress (117).

"Indianness and Contemporary Cosmopolitan Fictions: of Bookers and Spice and Everything Nice" by Amit Roy is an analysis of Indian fiction that sarcastically examines literary works portraying disproportionate aspects of India. Roy discusses postcolonial literature, particularly Indian English writings, and ironically labels them as postcolonial, highlighting the irony that both Rudyard Kipling and Rabindranath Tagore's works essentialize India. The writings of Kipling and Tagore share features of geographical and

cultural essentialism. Additionally, Roy explores Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, a Man Booker Prize-winning book that exoticizes India. Rushdie introduces "characters and descriptions of exoticism that offer sly gibes at those who might simply consume his fiction for its 'otherness'" (Roy 132). Roy advocates for constructing the Orient from the perspective of Orientals. The article outlines a pattern of exotic geography and culture prevalent in Indian English writing, emphasizing that Indian writers now employ the same strategy once used by Western writers to represent India (Roy 129).

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* is a novel by an Indian writer that reveals a similar ideology of self-Orientalism. The book quickly became the Booker Prize winner, gaining popularity beyond Indian borders. The story follows a young girl named Sai from the mid-1980s. After her parents are killed in a bus accident in Moscow, Russia, where her father was on a space career training mission, Sai, at the age of eight, leaves her convent school in Dehra Dun, India. She becomes an orphan and the readers are introduced to her character at the age of 18, now living with her maternal grandfather, Jemu, in West Bengal at a hilly station. Jemu is a retired Indian Civil Judge. The narrative is fragmented, shuttling across geography and time, encompassing three stories: 1) Sai's life with her grandfather in a peeling house, 2) Cho Oyu, the cook and son of Jemu, traveling to America as an undocumented worker, and 3) Sai's grandfather's journey to England and back to India. The novel constructs two rubrics: Western and Non-Western. The Western narrative is characterized by overwhelming secularism, offering more opportunities and benefits from globalization, while the West is depicted as having no economic disparity but equipped with economic prosperity. On the other hand, the Non-Western narrative is portrayed as prone to religious dogmatism and violence. The Orient is depicted as clinging to social conventions, different mythologies, and antiquated ideologies. The novel emphasizes the importance of Britain for economic progress, with Orientals seeking to boost their economic prosperity in Britain. Desai's work clearly presents the image of self-Orientalism, re-Orientalizing the Orient, as the concept of self-Othering is presented in the novel. Desai engages with Orientalist discourses in her work, incorporating different stereotypes and clichés.

Kamila Shamsie's multigenerational novel *Burnt Shadows* presents the complexities of 9/11 and various other traumatic events, constructing different qualities

based on binaries such as culpable and innocent, right and wrong, good and bad, East and West, Orient and Occident, among others. Shamsie constructs these binaries due to the multi-geographical descriptions in the novel, exploring cities and countries like Pakistan, America, Afghanistan, Japan, and India. The novel delves into the war on terror, initiating the stories from Nagasaki and culminating in 9/11 New York. While the war on terror is considered an American hegemonic stance, Shamsie does not decentre the American perspective or blame them, but rather accepts what has been initiated by America. According to the novel, Shamsie looks to history to reframe the War on Terror, asserting that it was not America who started the war. Instead, she suggests relating the stories of war in Pakistan during the 1980s when Jihad was used as a basic tool against the Soviet Union by Pak-American allies. The term Jihad, once accepted, is now replaced by terrorism. The novel criticizes followers of Islamic fundamentalism who started Jihad against the Soviet Union but failed to raise their voices against dictatorship in Pakistan. Shamsie supports her standpoint against the War on Terror, highlighting its origins in the complex political landscape of Pakistan. Furthermore, the novel addresses the silencing of women's voices in Muslim communities, depicting women as oppressed and suffering entities. Pakistan is portrayed as a country without a voice for women, contrasting with the West, which is depicted as providing basic rights to women. The novel also emphasizes the economic superiority of the West, portraying the East as inferior in various contexts. Overall, the novel reflects the stance of self-Orientalism, re-Orientalizing the Orient.

Rabih Alameddine's *The Hakawati* tells the story of young Osama, traveling from Los Angeles to Beirut to see his father who is on his deathbed, awaiting his son's arrival. The writer provides descriptions of various stories, giving equal coverage to all characters based on their roles. Some stories belong to Arabic traditions like "Arabian Poetry," "A Thousand and One Nights," Israel, Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, the Lebanese civil war, and various political upheavals in different countries, forming central aspects of the narrative. The conflict in the story arises when Osama chooses to live in the US after his mother's death, defying his father's orders and leaving his motherland. As a bright student, Osama successfully qualifies for an engineering degree from UCLA through a US scholarship, now residing in Los Angeles. The novel describes

Osama's love for Los Angeles, portraying him and his parents in modern America. The elements of Self-Orientalism dominate the novel when Osama's father expresses his disdain for Arab cafes, associating them with swindlers, drunkards, and gamblers. These three words serve as stereotypes contributing to Orientalist discourses that have already been assigned to Arabs. Similarly, Osama's mother prefers to hear him play American music on the piano rather than Arabian music on the "Oud." This reflects the family's eagerness to Westernize and assimilate into American culture. Furthermore, the geography of Lebanon is portrayed as distorted, exotic, and a distant land. The novel constructs binaries, representing the Orient as irrational and uncivilized, while the Occident is depicted as rational and civilized. Rich with classical Oriental stories, the novel depicts the Orient as brutal, uncivilized, and distorted, contributing to Orientalist discourse from a Self-Orientalist perspective to re-Orientalize the Orient.

Yan and Santos's "China Forever: Tourism Discourse and Self-Orientalism" delves into the literature on tourism representation, showcasing how the West initially aimed to represent the Other in their discourses. Although this is of great importance, the article highlights how Orientals themselves have reversed the process of Orientalization, now termed as Re-Orientalization. The article emphasizes a core issue, suggesting that China has asserted its representation within Orientalist discourses. Yan and Santos state that the text unveils an unchanging, sentimental, legendary, and feminised depiction of China that appeals to a Western perspective influenced by Orientalism. Additionally, it portrays a contemporary China that is subordinate to Western comprehension and dominance in terms of modernity. The argument posits that modern non-Western tourism discourses acknowledge the commercial appeal of Otherness and effectively cater to Western visitors by reimagining, reconstructing, and re-evaluating marketable Chinese identities, a phenomenon referred to as 'self-Orientalism' (297). Thus, Yan and Santos define Self-Orientalism as either an attempt to achieve modernity and equality with the West, or as a practice where the Oriental individual's understanding is already substantially shaped by Western ideas. (298).

"Tourism and Self-Orientalism in Oman: A Critical Discourse Analysis" written by William G. Feighery believes that the literature and art of the Orient aim to provide a self-image from the standpoint of Orientals, while recognising the dominance of the

West. The article indicates that experts from the Middle East acknowledge that local image creators in the region still adhere to the Orientalist script, which involves perceiving and portraying the world in terms of dichotomies such as us and them, West and East, Orient and Occident, and so on. Additionally, the study discusses the implementation of neo-Orientalist tactics that are used to Orientalize the Orient. The paper discusses the Omani film "Welcome to My Country" and how it portrays Orientals from a Western perspective, which is considered a type of Self-Orientalism by William G. Feighery. (280).

Mirt Komal's article "Re-orientalizing the Assassins in Western Historical-fiction Literature: Orientalism and Self-Orientalism in Bartol's Alamut, Tarr's Alamut, Boschert's Assassins of Alamut and Oden's Lion of Cairo" examines the diverse depictions of the Assassins. The term "Assassins" is derived from the original nickname of the Islamic sect Nizari Ismailis, popularized in the West due to Orientalist assumptions. The article emphasizes novels where Assassins transition from Islamic fundamentalism to Western followers, transforming from Orientalized villains to Occidentalized heroes. Additionally, the article focuses on self-othering, particularly Arabo-Islamic Other. It challenges the double-bind of Orientalization, referring to it as Self-Orientalism as part of a self-Othering process.

Another article by the same scholar, titled "Orientalism in Assassin's Creed: Self-Orientalizing the Assassins from Forerunners of Modern Terrorism into Occidentalized Heroes" directly addresses the issue of how the game Assassin's Creed is re-orientalizing the Orient using a Western style. The article discusses two series of Assassin's Creed, a video game that distinguishes itself by depicting the concept of Orientalism in video games. The game strategically portrays a negative image of the Oriental "Other," particularly the Assassins. The article argues that Assassin's Creed adopts self-Orientalist approaches, particularly in relation to the Arabo-Islamic Other, depicting Muslims and Islam as modern terrorists.

Sadiq Jalal Azm's "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse" delves into the concept of Self-Orientalism, examining its various manifestations. According to Azm, Self-Orientalism can be broadly understood in terms of post-colonial self-exploitation and as an anti-colonialist attempt to provide cultural self-definition. Either way, it

functions as a modus of Orientalism practiced by the Oriental Other itself (Azm, 218). Azm introduces two interpretations of Orientalism: ontological Orientalism, linked with the physical and geographical aspects of Orientals, and epistemological creation of Orientalism, related to Orientalization through ideas and knowledge. The former involves the physical construction of both Orientals and Occidentals attempting to Orientalize or Occidentalize, while the latter is created through knowledge, specifically textual representation. Orientals themselves initiate both representations of the Orient from the Orientals' perspective, referred to as self-Orientalism.

According to Seller-Young, Self-Orientalism signifies a reversal of Orientalism—an adoption of Western "style of thought," whether complicit-willing or unwilling—through a process of self-othering. Notable cases of self-orientalization include various present-day commercial activities modeled for the Western eye. An example is belly dancing, once stereotyped by Orientalists in relation to Arabs, which has been embraced by Arabs for commercial purposes. Belly dancing, previously viewed negatively when documented by Orientalists, has become a source of income for Orientals, illustrating a form of Re-Orientalization through a Self-Orientalist approach and fulfilling the concept of Self-Othering.

Rebecca Suter's *Orientalism, Self-Orientalism, and Occidentalism in the Visual-Verbal Medium of Japanese Girls' Comics* explores how Japanese Manga composers engage in Orientalizing the Orient, aligning with Edward Said's Orientalism. The article addresses Orientalism, Self-Orientalism, and Occidentalism. It emphasizes that the Orient itself is re-Orientalizing through the visual-verbal medium of Japanese girls' comics, replicating the processes identified by Edward Said's Orientalism. The same stereotypes and clichés explicit in the novel are scrutinized in the context of Orientalism.

Susan S. Noh presented her thesis entitled *Nostalgia in Anime: Redefining Japanese Cultural Identity in Global Media Texts*, focusing on Japan's anime as an integral part of global media. Noh contends that Japan is no longer an outsider to the global village, emphasizing the necessity for the Japanese people to create texts and anime aligned with a universal canon, predominantly influenced by Western approaches. Global issues facing Japan's anime producers contribute to an Orientalist discourse, leading to the re-Orientalization of Japan and portraying it as a distorted and uncivilized

part of the Orient. The anime producers seek affiliation with modernism and the Western canon to promote their culture, aligning with Daura's concept of self-Orientalism. Orientals re-Orientalize the Orient to meet their needs for modern advancements and modernity.

In her Ph.D. dissertation *Opening China to the Tourist Gaze: Representations of Chinese People and Languages in Newspaper Travel Writing since the 1980s,* Xiaoxiao Chen explores how the Chinese discipline of tourism is entwined with Orientalism. Chinese tourism experienced significant growth in the 1980s, offering the world a closer look at China's language and culture. Despite China's evolution beyond its classical position, it is still tethered to classical norms and traditions, remaining a part of the Orient in the eyes of the West. As China becomes a key player in global tourism, Chen selects China Daily and the New York Times for data collection. The study draws on Edward Said's Orientalism, revealing that Chinese people involved in tourism are portrayed in various ways. Chinese individuals are depicted as timeless human beings, engaging with tourists to guide, inform, and assist them. The discourse in both newspapers represents China as exotic, inferior, distorted, and linguistically weak, emphasizing the inability to speak proper English. This linguistic deficiency is presented as a characteristic that aligns with classical Orientalism, reinforcing the idea that Chinese people are Orientalized by Orientalists. The research underscores elements of self-Orientalism, indicating that China is re-Orientalized from a self-Orientalist perspective, a dominant factor in the overall findings according to the researcher's conclusion.

"Self-Orientalism and inter-imperiality in Anna Kazumi Stahl's Flores de un solo día" is an article by Chisu Teresa Ko that explores Self-Orientalism in Kazumi Stahl's novel *Flores De Un Solo Dia*. Stahl, an Argentine writer, contributes to the Orientalist discourse by engaging in a process of re-Orientalizing her own culture at both individual and collective levels. The analysis by Chisu Teresa Ko reveals various stereotypes and autoexoticism in the novel, showcasing the personal practices of Self-Orientalism and the broader Argentine cultural practices influenced by Self-Orientalism. The novel becomes an example of Self-Orientalism used to re-Orientalize Argentina's individual and cultural identity within the context of the Western canon. While the creation of stereotypes in

fiction is typically associated with Orientalists, local writers are now employing a similar approach from an Oriental perspective.

In his article "Consuming Orientalism: Public Foodways of Arab American Christians", Matthew Jaber Stiffler clearly suggests that Arabs are re-Orientalizing themselves from a Self-Orientalist perspective. Stiffler employs the term "self-Orientalism" to describe the representation of Orientals perpetuating stereotypical images. He contends that Arab-born Americans, residing in the United States for a century, have engaged in self-Orientalism to adapt and assert their presence in multicultural American society. Stiffler posits that self-Orientalism is strategically used as a rhetorical and visual tool within the Arab-American Christian community, particularly in restaurants and Church-sponsored festivals. He supports his argument with references to various scholars, including Edward Said, who discussed Orientalism. Stiffler concludes that Arab Americans strategically employ self-Orientalism as a tool for re-Orientalization, aiming to affiliate with the United States through stereotypical representations of Arabs and the Orient.

In his book *Japanese Higher Education as Myth*, Brian J. McVeigh highlights the presence of Self-Orientalism, which is disguised as internationalism due to the underlying assumptions and notions related to the representation of Orientals. McVeigh notes that in the post-modern world, concerns have shifted from nationalism to internationalism, with the latter being used to divert attention from nationalizing tendencies and gain politico-economic advantages in the globalizing market. However, McVeigh argues that practices associated with internationalism ironically reinforce Self-Orientalism. The book discusses education and how Occidental opportunities for Oriental students in higher education lead them to speak against the Orient. The selected students use self-Orientalism as a tool to re-Orientalize the Orient, bringing various issues into consideration and playing a crucial role in the Orientalization of the Orient. According to McVeigh, individuals facilitated by the Occident adopt self-Orientalism as a tool for re-Orientalization.

Rima Bhattacharya's "Neo-Orientalist Stereotyping in Amy Tan's 'The Hundred Secret Senses'" discusses the assimilation of the first and second generation Chinese in the diaspora. The article intimates that Amy Tan has appropriated the West in the novel,

depicting Asian Americans as incapable of maintaining their identity, leading them to discard their ethnicity and adopt an American identity. The novel is significant not only from the perspective of immigrants seeking identity in America but also in emphasizing the importance of American culture. Bhattacharya's article highlights the substantial gap between the two poles of West and East, portraying the West as scientifically advanced and developed in the concept of self, while the East is exoticized as the "Other." The article points out the supernatural and exotic tropes used by Tan in her novel, perpetuating Orientalist discourses by incorporating stereotypes of the Orient. Therefore, Rima emphasizes that Tan is Re-Orientalizing the Orient from a Self-Orientalist perspective with reference to stereotypes and clichés.

Sourayamaono Keflje's "Native Informant as an Impossible Perspective: Information, Subalternist Deconstruction, and Ethnographies of Globalization" is an essay that explores knowledge production in ethnographical research primarily concerned with culturally labelled stereotypes. The West, originally the creator of stereotypes, now sees native informants employing the same stereotypes as those used by Orientalists. The essay highlights that stereotypes, now labelled by native informants, are the central focus, replicating techniques and practices initiated by Orientalists. Kefli's paper constructs these stereotypes from Self-Orientalist perspectives, forming the core theme of the essay.

Orland Woods' "(Re)producing Buddhist Hegemony in Sri Lanka: Advancing the Discursive Formations of Self-Orientalism, Religious (Im)mobility, and 'Unethical' Conversion" describes Buddhist groups in Sri Lanka that converted to Christianity. Since Sri Lanka's independence, Buddhist groups have been seen as dominant, and the power after colonization transferred to these groups. The reproduction of Buddhist hegemony in Sri Lanka shows an affiliation with Christianity. The construction of Christian groups implies an affiliation with the West and a reclaiming of similar hegemony. The reclamation of Christianity was based on both violent means and legislation. The article suggests that Buddhist groups re-Orientalize the Orient from a Self-Orientalist perspective.

Tobias Hubinette in his article "Orientalism" interprets the term Orientalism from various perspectives. He posits the idea that Asian fundamentalism and nationalism in Asian writings are essentially inscriptions of Orientalism because fundamentalism is not

viewed positively. Orientalists often frame the debate around different fundamentalisms in both the Muslim and Indian worlds. Muslims and Indians tend to segregate themselves from the rest of the world, adopting various notions, both positive and negative, such as being hardworking, laborious, diligent, cruel, despotic, religious-minded, and fundamentalist. Hubinette references different genres of literature, movies, art, and various disciplines where Indian and Muslim communities engage in self-Orientalization. Such inclusion in Orientalist discourses is not seen as strategic but rather a spontaneous effort to highlight differences between the East and West. According to Hubinette, such Orientalization is not a well-defined concept, and terms like neo-orientalism and Orientalism are more appropriate. However, Hubinette's construction aligns with self-Orientalism and re-orientalism, where the Orient and Orientals themselves engage in the concept of self-othering.

The process of otherness from a self-Orientalist and re-orientalist perspective is termed self-Othering, as defined by Nicholas A. Germana in the research paper "Self-Othering in German Orientalism: The Case of Friedrich Schlegel". According to Germana, Self-Othering is a rhetorical technique that encompasses two different forms or actions of Othering. It involves creating imaginary representations of the Eastern Other, with whom one can relate, while simultaneously constructing an identity by contrasting oneself with the western imperial Other. Both the Indian and Western European Others can serve as perfect reflections for those who desire to perceive themselves and their country as grandiose (81).

Furthermore, the concept of self-Othering has historical precedents in Bartolomé de Las Casas's *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* and Michel de Montaigne's essay "On Cannibals". Both Bartolomé and Michel de Montaigne focused on similar perspectives of self-othering, questioning how the French religious community had othered itself during Spanish colonialism. This similar perspective is taken in the current research by the researcher to explore and illustrate the perspective of self-othering in Anglophone fiction.

Representation of women of Asian origin is currently a hot topic in the West. Women's writings hold a dominant position in the West, as women from the Orient are often depicted as marginalized and exploited. Tribal customs are a well-known system

among Muslim communities used to oppress women. The West has portrayed these Muslim communities as uncivilized, downtrodden, backward, barbaric, and static. According to Mohja Kahf, all Western societies and cultures emphasize such representations of the Orient to Orientalize (*Western Representations of the Muslim Woman*, 1). Therefore, the Muslim world has been misrepresented with reference to women's victimization. Western academia, particularly the American book industry, welcomes similar representations from the West. A hot commodity for the American book industry is the writing of the Muslim world that portrays oppression as noted by Kahf in "On Being a Muslim Woman Writer in the West". Women writers not only misrepresent their Muslim communities but also perpetuate certain stereotypes and clichés already associated with Muslim communities. The community of Muslim women is depicted as a homogenous group rather than a heterogeneous one, which is a generalized approach of the West. Said's generalization about Islam is significant in *Orientalism*, but the misrepresentation of Muslims is evident through Western media, as noted by Said in his work *Covering Islam*.

The Western publication of Muslim female writers gives significant prominence to Muslim feminists. Among the dominant Muslim feminists are Farzaneh Milani with *Veils and Words*, Sondra Hale with *Gender Politics in Sudan*, Deorah Kapchan with *Gender on the Market*, Fedwa Malti-Douglas with *Women's Body, Women's Word*, and Fatima Mernissi with *Beyond The Veil*. They present their perspectives in the Western world and receive affiliation and support from the West. These books are not just literary contributions but also provide insights into the social and political background of the Orient. According to Lara Deep et al., these feminists have stereotyped and essentialized the Muslim world (88). In this context, the representation of Muslim women who claim to represent the Muslim world is a misrepresentation based on the strategy of self-Orientalism. These writers re-Orientalize Oriental men.

In his article "Reframing Asian Muslim Women in the Name of Honour: Neo-Orientalism and Gender Politics in Mukhtar Mai's Constructed Narratives", Yilin Yu describes the story of Mukhtar Mai documented in Mukhtar Mai's memoir In the Name of Honour. Mai's story revolves around honour rape, as she herself was raped in the name of honour. The rapists were later sent to jail, and Mukhtar Mai fled to America with

the help of human rights organizations, where she wrote her memoir. The book documents the issue of honour rape, which was considered an act of terrorism caused by the barbaric tradition of honour rape in Pakistan. While her memoir is based on real events, Mai, intentionally or unintentionally, developed a rhetoric of neo-orientalism and stereotyped the representation of entire Asian Muslim women with false gender representation. Mai re-Orientalized Pakistani culture in her memoir from a self-Orientalist perspective, disguised to seek affiliation with the West, as suggested by Daura, who indicates that Self-Orientalism is often used to seek affiliation with the West and present oneself as modern.

Aamir Mufti in his article "The Aura of Authenticity" is of the opinion that postcolonialism critiques the cultural legacies of colonialism and its impact on the Orientals. Western narratives set out against the Others construct them as different and inferior, while the West is portrayed as superior and powerful. These binaries are now employed by the Orientals themselves, utilizing Western styles to perpetuate and represent the concepts of "Self" and "Other" with factual representation. Anis Shivani explores the inherent reappearance of different themes in Indian English novels, which are essentially created for the Western market, establishing a new form of Orientalism that violates standard literature. This type of Orientalism reinforces and recycles the smallest units of stereotypes. According to Shivani, the smallest form of Orientalism is either a conscious or unconscious effort, but it is a system where Orientals themselves construct perspectives similar to those employed by Orientalists. Shivani terms this phenomenon Exoticized Orientalism, where exoticism is a stereotype associated with Orientals to depict them as weak and distorted.

Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* narrates the story of a Palestinian family residing in the refugee camp in Jenin, later moving to America. The novel spans across different generations, beginning with simple villagers seen in refugee camps who eventually migrate to America. The central focus is on the female character Amal, who grows up in the refugee camp and earns a scholarship to move to America. The narrative provides a glimpse into the lives of ordinary people facing extraordinary circumstances, revealing Orientalist discourses from a Self-Orientalist perspective.

The novel underscores the significant battle between two poles: Orient and Occident, West and Arab. Amal articulates the contrast between the shielded and protected Westerners, portrayed as the happiest people among different races, and the unprotected, suffering, and exploited Arab race. Despite her confidence and bravery, Amal avoids identifying herself as an American, constantly affirming her Palestinian identity. The stark differences between the West and East are acknowledged in the novel, with the West depicted as a safe and peaceful place, contrasting with the tragedy and suffering prevalent in the Middle East. The novel portrays Palestine as a distorted and distant region, seemingly disconnected from the outside world. Overall, the narrative strongly reflects Self-Orientalism, with the writer actively participating in the re-Orientalization of the Orient.

2.4 Review of Studies on Hosseini's and Rahimi's Works

Both Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi have gained significant recognition for their bestselling novels, which offer a nuanced portrayal of political turmoil and interpersonal dynamics in the Middle East, particularly Afghanistan. These works are esteemed for their historical accuracy and ability to blend personal and political narratives, providing readers with a deeper understanding of the region's culture and customs.

In her research paper titled "Reading Khaled Hosseini's novels through the lenses of Orientalism", Shushree Smita Raj delves into the thematic elements of Orientalism, although her analysis lacks depth in this regard, despite providing a summary. Raj begins her discussion by focusing on Hosseini's debut novel, *The Kite Runner*, published in 2003. The narrative follows the intertwined lives of Amir, a Pashtun boy, and Hassan, his Hazara servant friend. Despite their close bond, societal norms, exemplified by the disdain of Assef, a bully, question the legitimacy of their friendship due to their disparate social statuses. The story takes a dark turn when Hassan is brutalized by Assef, leaving Amir burdened with guilt for his inaction. Over time, Amir distances himself from Hassan, eventually immigrating to California with his father to escape the political turmoil in Afghanistan caused by the Soviet Union's invasion. Following his father's death, Amir learns of Hassan's true lineage and endeavours to rescue Hassan's son, Sohrab, from an orphanage in Kabul. Despite numerous challenges, Amir succeeds in

bringing Sohrab to safety. Raj references a poignant passage from the novel depicting the oppressive atmosphere of Kabul under Taliban rule, yet she fails to effectively explore the themes of Orientalism within the text, neglecting to provide substantial evidence to support her argument.

Smita also examines Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Thousand Splendid Suns* through an Orientalist lens, though her analysis lacks depth. She provides only one reference from the novel, quoting Hosseini's reflection on sibling relationships. Hosseini's words highlight the complex dynamics of family ties, particularly between siblings, which he finds thematically rich and ripe for exploration in fiction. However, Smita fails to effectively demonstrate the Orientalist process within *The Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Similarly, Chitra V.K. Rekha's article, "Reinforcing the Stereotypic Binaries: Orientalist reading of Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*", published in 2013, approaches the novel through an Orientalist lens. However, Rekha's analysis, much like Smita's, lacks depth in reflecting the nuances of Orientalism. Rekha provides a summary of her perspective, noting that in *The Kite Runner*, both the protagonist Amir and the antagonist Assef are portrayed through Orientalist stereotypes. She suggests that Western readers, in trying to reconcile Amir's character with their own identities, resort to Orientalist tropes to position Assef as inferior and "Other". As a result, Assef is depicted as a demonic figure, characterized as pagan, brutal, criminal, and savage, reinforcing the notion of Eastern inferiority compared to the West. Throughout the novel, Amir's identity evolves to become more aligned with Western ideals, portraying a progression towards modernity and Westernization.

In contrast, Assef's character undergoes a development that only solidifies his portrayal as a more inferior and villainous "Oriental" figure. Throughout the novel, there's a juxtaposition of the contemporary American West and the traditional Muslim world, creating a binary opposition. This contrast exacerbates the disparities between the two worlds, ultimately reinforcing the dominance of Western power structures over Eastern ones. Rekha's failure to directly quote from the original text to support her claim of Orientalism might stem from her identification of Hosseini as an American writer, similar to Smita's perspective. However, she also discusses the notion of "Otherness,"

which, while implicated in Orientalist discourses, is contextualized within self-Orientalism, where the concept of the "other" is replaced by self-othering.

Rab Nawaz Khan and Abdul Waheed Qureshi published an article discussing Khalid Hosseini's novels, titled "The Politics of Voice in the Stereotypical Representation of the Pashtuns: A Critical Study of Khaled Hosseini's novel" The focus of their work is on the misrepresentation of the Pashtun community in Hosseini's novels. While their article appears to be influenced by Orientalist perspectives, the researchers fail to delve into the theoretical aspects of Orientalism, and they also overlook the epistemological reflections on the stereotypical representation present in the novels. They acknowledge that the novels under scrutiny feature a diverse range of characters belonging to various ethnic groups in Afghanistan, including Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Hazaras. Their research findings suggest that the authors' portrayal of these characters is influenced by their individual perspectives, resulting in politically charged and somewhat biased depictions. The authors note a tendency in the novels to generalize Pashtun people into three categories: socially educated and relatively liberal Pashtuns, tribal and conservative Pashtuns, and extremist fundamentalists such as the Taliban. They criticize the portrayal of tribal and fundamentalist Pashtuns as being prejudiced and exaggerated, depicting them as racists, ethnic nationalists, sexists, and power abusers, which they argue reflects a lack of objectivity on the part of the novelists and an inclination towards sensationalism.

In his article titled "To be good (again): The Kite Runner as an allegory of global ethics David Jefferess" David Jefferess discusses Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* in the context of contemporary ethical demands. Jefferess examines the novel's exploration of the notion that "there is a way to be good again", aligning it with modern humanitarian ideals. Using Mamdani's theoretical perspective on the "good Muslim" and the "bad Muslim", as well as engaging with Appiah's concept of cosmopolitanism and Butler's theory of human interdependence, Jefferess argues that *The Kite Runner* signifies a shift from race and nation as primary markers of political community and identity to the notion of the modern as the defining framework for humanity. Consequently, the novel is interpreted as an allegory for global morality.

In her article titled “The Kite Runner: Do I Really Have to Read It?” Mehan O'Rourke discusses the reception of Khaled Hosseini's novels by readers in the United States. O'Rourke observes that while many readers find Hosseini's work intriguing for its portrayal of cultural differences, they often fail to deeply engage with these differences. She points out that reviews and analyses of *The Kite Runner* often overlook significant aspects, such as the protagonist's conversion from secular to devout Muslim, instead emphasizing familiar themes and rhythms. O'Rourke suggests that Hosseini's approach mirrors Orientalist practices, as he presents information in a manner akin to a travel guide and employs popular self-help therapy discourse to cater to Western audiences. While the novel addresses ethnic and religious tensions in Afghanistan and economic disparities, O'Rourke argues that its primary focus on Western readership perpetuates a narrative of transnational humanity and compassion centered around Western values. Despite this analysis, O'Rourke acknowledges her inability to fully explore the processes of Orientalism and self-Orientalism within the novel.

Similarly, Atiq Rahimi's literary works are significant for addressing the issues faced by Afghanistan and its people, yet they do not firmly establish an epistemological stance on Orientalism. While discussions of binaries may be tangentially related to his works, there remains a notable gap in this regard. In his research paper titled “Representation of Afghan Women in Atiq Rahimi’s The Patience Stone: A (Standpoint) Feminist Critique” Muhammad Uzair Khan highlights the inadequacies in the representation of women. Khan notes that following the events of September 11, 2001, Afghan women garnered global attention, often depicted in popular fiction as victims of war, patriarchy, and oppression. Khan's research aims to analyse Rahimi's novel *The Patience Stone* to examine the portrayal of Afghan women and the political implications of such representation. Through the lens of feminist standpoint theory, Khan identifies Rahimi's use of strategies like imagining, political efficacy, and privileged positioning in representing Afghan women. However, these strategies are not without their problematic aspects, as they contribute to perpetuating negative stereotypes for political ends, such as justifying the United States' invasion. Khan asserts that Rahimi's portrayal of Afghan women is underrepresented and contributes to oriental discourses by neglecting alternative representational tactics like confessional narratives. Despite these insights,

Khan does not delve into the processes of Orientalism and self-Orientalism within Rahimi's work.

In their research paper titled “Confession without Borders: 1st Wave Feminism against Woman’s Right Disproportion in Atiq Rahimi’s The Patience Stone”, Pangestu and Darma assert that the societal structure in Afghanistan is severely oppressive towards women, with patriarchal norms exerting complete dominance over them. They draw upon Atiq Rahimi's novel *The Patience Stone* to support their argument, analysing the portrayal of women in the story. According to Pangestu and Darma, Afghan women are marginalized to the point of being considered sub-human, primarily serving as servants to their husbands. They further elaborate on how women lack agency in their marriages, with their relationships with other men being treated as transactions between their fathers and future husbands. Pangestu and Darma argue that Islamic doctrines grant men complete authority over women, perpetuating their inferior status and contributing significantly to the challenges faced by women, as depicted in *The Patience Stone*.

In their research article titled "Domestic Violence against Women in Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone*," Seyedeh Robabeh and Ruzy Suliza examine the portrayal of domestic violence experienced by women over their lifetimes. They contend that husbands and fathers perpetrate violence against their daughters, viewing them as inferior to sons. The woman depicted in the novel endures a harrowing existence marked by abuse from her father, and her childhood trauma compounds her suffering in her unhappy married life. Furthermore, Robabeh and Suliza argue that the woman's tragic life depicted in *The Patience Stone* reflects the harsh reality faced by Afghan women who endure similar conditions on a daily basis.

There is limited criticism of Rahimi's novel *The Patience Stone*, whereas Khalid Hosseini's works have predominantly sparked discussions centering on women's representation. These discussions often involve Orientalist perspectives that may not entirely align with Westernized viewpoints. However, it is argued that both writers engage in self-Orientalism, a claim that underscores a gap in current research.

2.5 Conclusion

The current chapter offers a comprehensive understanding of Euro-American scholarship, delving into its development, the initiation of Orientalist writings about the

Orient, and the presentation and perception of the Orient. The first section presents a brief review of insights into Euro-American Orientalist scholarship and its construction of stereotypes. The second part reviews Orientalist discourses about Afghanistan and their representation, resulting in bleak images of the country. The final section provides a review of literary works, criticism, and research about Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism, examining their practices with reference to stereotypes.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the theoretical perspectives and research methodology chosen for the investigation. Theoretical perspectives and methodology provide the justification and foundation needed to derive appropriate results. The purpose of the chapter is to systematically observe and comprehend the methodologies and methods deemed effective for analysing the primary texts selected for this study. Furthermore, the chapter offers essential insights into available theories related to the topic, addressing gaps in the theoretical understanding that may not have been covered comprehensively in the literature review.

A theoretical framework serves as a web of theories that furnish supportive arguments for the operational approach of the researcher. The operational aspect of the research encompasses the operationalization necessary for the study of the selected fiction. Literary research often falls within the realm of critical or qualitative research, aiming to contribute something new to the existing body of knowledge. Therefore, the theoretical framework assumes a crucial role in situating the researcher's perspective within the established landscape of literary research. Additionally, the chapter outlines the step-by-step development of the methodological techniques to aid in the analysis of the primary texts in light of the prescribed theoretical framework.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The intersections of Orientalism, Re-Orientalism, and Self-Orientalism fall under the umbrella term of Postcolonialism. As a comprehensive framework, postcolonialism forms the theoretical basis for my dissertation. However, the approach is heterogeneous

due to the intersecting nature of my topic. I have divided the theoretical section into three portions:

1. My research is situated within the realm of Postcolonialism. While Postcolonialism primarily serves as a reaction to and critique of colonialism and imperialism, it also draws attention to aspects where postcolonial writers become assimilated into the Western canon. This dual perspective is relevant to my research.

2. Tracing the genealogy of Orientalism is necessary, acknowledging the debt to the conceptions of literary theory stalwarts from whom Said has borrowed a significant amount of arguments. This genealogy allows me to move beyond the classical Saidian perspective and explore new formations in the field that may not align perfectly with Said's Orientalism.

3. The section reviews Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism with the aim of demonstrating how both theories are influenced by Edward Said's Orientalism. They remain consistent with it on some points, while simultaneously extending beyond the classical Saidian Orientalism.

3.2.1 Paying Debt to the Stalwarts: Tracing the Genealogy of *Orientalism*

Said's Orientalism provides a theoretical foundation for my dissertation. In Orientalism, Said acknowledges the influence of Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault. While these two critics have diverse fields of expertise and understanding, their combination significantly strengthens the conceptualization of Orientalism (Inden, 2; Chrisman and Patrick, 6). In addition to Gramsci and Foucault, Said draws arguments from various other critics and theorists for his analysis of Orientalism.

Said aligns his arguments with Nietzsche's view of truth as "a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms" ("and On Truth Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense" noted in The Portable Nietzsche, 46-47), addressing human relations with transposed, enhanced rhetoric, and poetics. According to this perspective, human relations become compelling and canonical over time, creating an illusion that is forgotten by people, with no one informed about its origin ("On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense", 46-47; *Orientalism* 203). This view suggests that truth is not a simple reality but is based on nihilism. Said does not just present Orientalism as a collection of binaries; he draws attention to the broader field, asserting that Western

awareness is inherently nihilistic rather than a reflection of truth. Said has faced extensive criticism for quoting Nietzsche (See e.g. Ahmad, 164-165; Clifford 262-263; Savolainen 19), but it was Said's polemical usage, not conviction, that extracts a clear reference from Said on the concept of truth, which aligns with Nietzsche's concept of nihilism.

Said's Orientalism, as a philosophical discourse, highlights the Orientalists' representation of the Orient and its people, considering it merely a textual representation rather than an accurate one. In *Orientalism*, Said presents a strong and evidential background of Western representation, depicting the Orient in its writings. He critiques such representation, arguing that it lacks a composite construction and relies on a one-dimensional approach to represent people of the Orient with bleak and stereotypical images.

The concept of Orientalism can also be extrapolated from Foucault's ideas, particularly his concept of discourses and discursive formations. Foucault introduces these theories in his book *Archaeology of Knowledge*, with a more advanced version included in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Foucault's discourses aim to reveal the Western agenda in representing Orientals in various discourses. As a discourse, Orientalism serves to clarify readers' perceptions about discourses and discursive formations, necessitating a detailed explanation of these terms. Both terms primarily focus on the production of knowledge, illustrating how knowledge is utilized to produce and construct the Other/Orient through the exercise of power. The term "discourse" reveals how meaning is extracted from the dual relationship of power and knowledge. According to Foucault, discourse refers to a way of referring to or manipulating knowledge about a specific topic practiced in a particular society. Furthermore, discourse is a cluster of different images, ideas, practices, and signs that establish routes for discussing a particular topic, manipulating knowledge to establish a solid connection with the intended subject matter (Foucault, 49).

Furthermore, social activity and societal attribution are merged into different discourses (Hall, 6). The manipulation and construction of knowledge with the help of ideas, practices, and images are determined by the people (produced discourses) to perceive the world and how they deal with people, aiming to control them through discourses. According to Phillips, it is important to focus on dichotomy within discourses

because any discourse not only reflects reality but is also involved in constructing reality by assigning intended meaning to the existing world and giving identities to people living in different societies. Discourse is thus a way in which people talk, perceive reality, and represent entities (Hall, 6).

Discourse, apart from ideas, images, and practices, is strongly used as a hegemonic tool in the postmodern world. The discourse is, therefore, accepted as a powerful and widely used phenomenon. Regardless of the fact that different discourses can be seen at work simultaneously, hegemonic ones are more powerful, but they are challenged by prior superseded discourses (Phillips, 2007). Thus, discourse is not an absolute but resistible phenomenon. I feel Orientalism is coercive in practice, but ideologically it is planted through hegemony. The stance is vindicated by the locals, clearly distinguishing and constructing the two binaries: Western (us) and non-Westerners (them). The former is constructed as superior, while the latter is inferior; the inferiority leads the Orientals to construct themselves as "Others" and the Westerns as "Self." Now, the group termed as "Other" itself participates in its construction, structuring, and re-structuring, and not just the West (self). Although Said's Orientalism also deals with the processes of Orientalization that shed light on the process of how the Orient is structured and restructured by the Orientists through different strategies, presented in different discourses. Contrary to this, self-Orientalism and re-orientalism are two distinct strategies, constructing the Orient as the "Other" but from the perspective of Orientals. This self-othering cannot be positioned in Said's Orientalism, which is another point of the thesis for the need to go beyond the classical Saidian perspectives.

Orientalism can be further comprehended through cultural hegemony. Gramsci perceives that civil society is merged with political society while saturating the cultural area, making academia more importantly linked with these societies in order to dissect them (Said's *Orientalism* in Rajan 23). Although a total philosophical system in Gramsci is not inherent, largely the philosophical significance and importance is explicit. Gramsci goes for historically transient societal basics, attributing the concept of truth from the physical subject. His historical, contextual, social, and philosophical aspects are equally responsible for identifying the reality. He ignores these aspects to understand the organic relationship between the two poles: power and truth. Merely, Gramsci does not bother

with the concept of binaries in his cultural hegemony like the West and the East, which are historical and conventional constructions. Both the West and the East are rationally observable and practically measurable, while contractuality and artificiality do not offer any trivial and negative connotation. Gramsci here meets the criterion of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity, where he believes in ambivalence. Influencing different aspects of life and inspiring minds of people from reality, the truth remains truth for different people; in historical-cultural construction, the truth remains "objectively real." The conceptions of truth are not neutral but are the creation of the ruling class, claimed by Gramsci, somehow consistent with Gayatri Spivak's creation of the Subaltern by Elite (see "Can the Subaltern Speak?"). Said himself opts for the idea of Orientalism for this creation of the ruling class; the Orientalizing process is constructed by the master colonizers.

Hegemony refers to the notions of the ruling elite accepted by the majority; for example, the West and the East are not just one dimension constructed by the European elite, but this binary relationship was widely accepted by the majority of people. Likewise, Japan is not only accepted by Europeans as the farthest East, but it has also been accepted by the Japanese people themselves. Another example is Egypt, considered the Near East, accepted by the Egyptian people as well (Lahtinen 13–14). The same concept has been employed by Spivak in "Can the Subaltern Speak" and Said in *Orientalism*.

For Gramsci, human nature is not an entity found inside the mind of a person but is caused by mutual efforts of a person's power and material powers. Moreover, while controlling personality, it is important to have control of material powers. Gramsci does not segregate philosophy from politics, and being political is not a negative aspect because politics helps us find out the truth through the worldly and earthly origin of commonsensical and scientific truths. Therefore, the critiques are directed to focus on the practices and institutions that produce truth in a society, rather than on philosophical and political aspects. Gramsci is not satisfied with the current institutions and practices of truth; he wants to change and penetrate these institutions, looking for new modes of practices and institutions. Therefore, counter-hegemonic actions are produced to replace the naturalities and necessities of the existing institutions and practices. It's essential for

Gramsci's readers to remember that counter-hegemonic scholarship does not hold the absolute truth. Gramsci values good sound judgment by emphasizing and reemphasizing the truth, and he does not believe in the binary of cynical nihilism and absolute truth as the final solution. He advocates for evaluation and re-evaluation, self-criticism, and the dynamic aspects of being, considering these tools for a counter-hegemonic perspective (Lahtinen 13-14).

Dennis Porter presents the opinion in his work Orientalism and its Problems, noted in Patrick and Chrisman's *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* that Edward Said's Orientalism has been influenced by Gramsci's concept, but the concept of hegemony is largely ignored and undermined (152-53). Porter further argues that hegemony is in constant flux, being recreated, changed, and defended due to internal and external pressures. This aspect, labelled as the superstructural conflict of hegemony, is missed out in Edward Said's *Orientalism*, particularly in the interpretation of the concept of Orientalism (Ibid, 152-53). The main reason behind this fact is explicitly stated by quoting that Orientalist discourses from Homer to Henry Kissinger remain unchanged and static. However, Said still justifiably stands aloof, emphasizing the dynamics and discovery of Orientalism.

Cultural hegemony holds a prominent position in Orientalism because, largely, Orientals tend to agree with what has been noted by Orientalists about them. This aligns with the cultural hegemony concept of Gramsci, influencing Said's Orientalism. When Orientals endorse the perspectives of Orientalists, the Orientalists' stance becomes valid and paves the way for other Orientalists to provide similar representations of the Orient in their writings. This phenomenon is termed as Self-Orientalism and Re-Orientalism, where native and semi-native writers accept the Western standpoint and re-Orientalize the Orient. Therefore, Gramsci has a significant influence on Said's Orientalism, even though Said did not openly quote Gramsci.

To delve further into Said's influences, aside from Gramsci, Michel Foucault holds a dominant position for reinventing Gramsci's philosophy on truth and power. Michel Foucault employs discourse theory to develop his philosophy on truth and power, which is consistent with Gramsci's concept. Both Foucault and Gramsci convincingly uncover the relationship of power and truth. Lahtinen expresses the opinion that where

truth is found, power is also present (13-14), while Michel Foucault contends that knowledge cannot be separated from power (Ludden 250-252; Patrick and Chrisman 5-8).

Largely, Said's Orientalism bears a greater influence from Michel Foucault. Foucault's philosophy on knowledge and power serves as a basic and significant foundation for Orientalism. Said heavily relies on and builds his opinion upon different discourses, extracted from the concepts of Foucault. Said reveals the difference between the Orient and the Occident, grounding discourse as a neutral contrast. Throughout the creation of Orientalism, Said constructs his arguments on the issues of representation observed in Orientalists' discourses, Orientalizing the Orient as a strange entity that can be defined, conceptualized, and categorized with convenient phenomena to be controlled and managed by the power of knowledge and discourses. Furthermore, Orientalist discourses have created a typology of characters based on contrasting binaries: the irrational Orient and the rational Occident (Turner 21). This is the basic argument where the binaries are developed; although the two poles are identified by Said, the origination is done by Foucault. However, Said further acknowledges that Foucauldian philosophy and the concept of discourse provide valuable information for understanding his work Orientalism, but still, Foucault's concept is only of limited value for studying the systematic discipline of Orientalism (See Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*). Said noted in *Orientalism* that in order to fully comprehend and understand the extensive and organised control exerted by European culture over the Orient in various aspects such as politics, sociology, military affairs, ideology, science, and imagination during the post-Enlightenment era, it is imperative to analyse Orientalism as a discourse. Furthermore, Orientalism had such a commanding position that I am convinced that everybody who wrote, thought, or acted on the Orient had to consider the constraints on their thoughts and actions imposed by Orientalism (3).

Unity and continuity within Western discourses are complicit in Said's work, managing the Orient to be understood through different written texts, travelogues, poetry, fiction, parliamentary debates, scholarly texts, and various official reports by colonial officers. Said not only identifies Western discourses in these works but also categorizes different literary forms for readers in which the Orient is represented (Porter 153). Said

focuses on works where various strategies have been employed for the textual representation of the Orient, portraying Orientals as "Others." It is quite surprising that an individual who lacks knowledge about a particular culture and person can come into brief contact with them, develop a concept, and believe that they know more about the said culture and person. Said notes that "people, places, and experiences can always be described by a book so much that the book (or text) acquires greater authority and use, even than the actuality it describes" (Said 93).

Apart from strangeness, the second important element is the writer's textual strategy (Said, 53), which is supported by the Orientals themselves. Keeping in mind Gramsci's concept of hegemony, it is a great success of the Oriental writers. The credibility of the representation is confirmed through both discourses and hegemony. Further, the texts and discourses are supported by institutions that practice the same approaches as both Foucault and Said. The texts, when fitting into the social world, become the powerful discourses of the time, largely applicable for the representation of Orientals (Said 94). However, Said faces significant criticism for his projection of Foucault. If Said is rigorously projecting Foucault, then he is merely the replica of Foucault; however, for Bhatnager, Said as a poststructuralist is justifiable to be called a real and pure essentialist, while Foucault's projection is merely to develop essentialist projects (3-5).

Said was influenced by Foucault's original idea of materialist philosophy and the concept of discourse to deal with and tackle the development of different institutions, helping to billet Orientalists. The billets provide blocks to Orientalists to organize their practices of Orientalization and dictate the same schemata to use their knowledge against the Orientals. Lastly, the institutions hold to dictate the same practices, presented by Foucault, and he calls it "the first law of what can be said" (Foucault 100, noted in Bhatnagar 12–13).

The growth of institutional sites is accomplished through the infinite production of knowledge, consisting of funds for Orientalist material, research, translation, and depiction, aiming to create a self-legislated Orientalism. Said is also of the opinion that Foucault examines the use of language. Language triggers and grants permission to perpetuate the practices based on discrimination, developing the concept of "Otherness"

in a particular society. For instance, the concept of "Otherness" has been developed to portray the Orientals as exotic and uncivilized. Said emphasizes the differences between societies based on knowledge, language, and power, deriving these concepts from Michel Foucault (Bhatnagar 12-13).

3.2.2 Postcolonialism, Orientalism and Appropriation

Postcolonialism in the postmodern world has extended its influence to every field, yet the term did not gain recognition from well-known critics until the 1990s. Peter Barry highlighted in his work *Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory* that postcolonial scholarship gained prominence with critical works such as Gayatri Spivak's *In Other Worlds*; Bill Ashcroft's *The Empire Writes Back*; Homi Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* and *Culture and Imperialism* by Edward Said (Barry 192). Bill Ashcroft et al. introduced the term postcolonial to describe cultural interactions within colonial societies in literary circles. Postcolonial theory primarily examines the Othering process imposed by colonizers on the Orientals. It serves as a response to Euro-American imperial powers, playing a crucial role in addressing oppression and Othering. At times, these theories emerge as strategies to resist discrimination resulting from colonialism, imperialism, and Euro-American societies. Bill Ashcroft et al. noted that "Post-colonial allegory becomes a common strategy of resistance in post-colonial texts" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 8).

The practices and concepts of Postcolonialism are largely oriented towards addressing the discrimination imposed by colonizers, imperialism, and Euro-American cultures. The theory examines how third-world countries and colonized nations are impacted by the processes of colonialism and imperialism. Although postcolonialism lacks rigid definitions and approaches, overall, the theories predominantly respond to the negative consequences of colonialism and imperialism.

In *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, Peter Barry outlines the functions and key features of postcolonial criticism. According to him, postcolonial writers reject the universalism propagated by Western literature. Universalism seeks to transcend cultural and ethnic boundaries, downplaying differences, while postcolonialism emphasizes diverse cultural practices and ethnicities, advocating for region-specific treatment. Supporting universalism implies endorsing

colonialism and imperialism, concepts rejected by postcolonial writers and critics (Barry, 196). Furthermore, the lens of Postcolonialism scrutinizes binaristic relationships, social injustices, violence, plurality, hybridity, appropriation, and the abrogation of colonized cultures. Importantly, it focuses on the marginalization of colonized people and explores how they have been subjected to "Othering" (196).

The aforementioned points indicate that Postcolonialism is a response to colonizers and imperialists who have marginalized and exploited third-world countries, colonized people, and diasporic individuals in the Euro-American world. Therefore, postcolonialism aims to challenge the Eurocentric worldview and deconstruct English literary writing, particularly in relation to Orientalism as noted in Said's work "Orientalism." Postcolonialism opposes various injustices, power dynamics, issues of representation and misrepresentation of third-world and colonized elements such as religions, cultures, places, people, language, rituals, and practices (Barry, 197). Postcolonial writers and critics dismantle stereotypical images and analyze Orientalist writings to expose injustices and discrimination, whether ethnic, literary, or otherwise. In essence, postcolonialism involves the critique and analysis of every colonial and Orientalist text that opposes the colonized and third-world countries.

In the postmodern world, postcolonialism has not moved beyond the theory of resistance and still incorporates elements of acceptance and appropriation of Euro-American colonial policies. Appropriation at first stage was used as an anti-colonial strategy to combat colonial discourses or to take some aspects of colonial cultures. According to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin appropriation is as "it describes the ways in which post-colonial societies take over those aspects of the imperial culture…that may be of use to them in articulating their own social and cultural identities" (15). However, the act of appropriation is inherently intertwined with a more comprehensive method known as interpolation. In order for the post-colonial writer's technique to be effective, they must incorporate the language into the Western-dominated institutions of publication, distribution, and readership. The act of entering commodity production systems can be seen as a tangible manifestation of the post-colonial individual's involvement in prevailing narratives across different domains, including history, literature, philosophy, and any other form of dominant cultural

production. Although interpolation is most evident in literary text production, it encompasses the entire scope of the 'culture text'. (Ashcroft, *Post-colonial Transformation* 48-49). Further, this interpolation leads to a very clear account of the appropriation of the master's language as an acquisition of cultural capital (Cudjoe in Ashcroft, *Post-colonial Transformation* 57) which is a key strategy of self-empowerment for postcolonial writers.

In accordance with, literature and literary criticism now engage with practices that accept the influence of colonial masters. According to Bill Ashcroft et al., various practices of colonial masters, including language, rituals, film, theatre, modes of thought, rationality, and other aspects, are adopted by third-world countries as their own (2007: 15). David Spurr (28) describes this process as a strategy in which the dominant imperial power incorporates the territory or culture it surveys and invades as its own (28 Noted in Ashcroft et al. 15).

Appropriation may have broad implications for accepting the Western canon, but the usurpation by the colonized is primarily limited to language and texts. This limitation serves as the central argument of my thesis, exploring how Orientals themselves use language and texts against their own culture. The acceptance process is referred to as textuality through language, illustrating how individuals who were once colonized now write from a colonial perspective. This textual appropriation is a crucial aspect of the phenomenon. Additionally, language is a significant tool for shouldering the burden of others (Ashcroft, 16).

The term "elite comprador class" is utilized in postcolonial studies to describe postcolonial writers who write in the language of colonizers and predominantly adopt a colonialist perspective. This framework recognizes comprador intellectuals and appropriative strategies as features of Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism. In various research studies, selected Afghan Anglophone fiction writers have been labelled as comprador intellectuals and appropriationists. However, it's worth noting that the term "Self-Orientalism" was not used at the beginning of my research journey.

The Western market provides the ultimate opportunity for Third World scholars to affiliate with the West, either embracing modernism or engaging in appropriation. This phenomenon can be viewed as a form of intellectual tourism, where Third World

intellectuals seek popularity and acceptance in the West. Graham Huggan discusses this tendency in his article *The Postcolonial Exotic*, highlighting the Western literary market's capitalization on the "otherness" of marginalized people and cultures and subscribing to a form of "intellectual tourism" (27). The question of why Third World intellectuals choose to write in the first world is addressed by Graham Huggan and supported by Lisa Lau, Arif Dirlik, and Daura in their literary discussions, aligning with Graham Huggan's concept of *Postcolonial Exotic* and Bill Ashcroft et al.'s notion of appropriation.

Appropriation and assimilation are simplistic phenomena in postcolonialism that involve affiliating with the first world in various aspects of writing, culture, language, and more, often resulting in the distortion or exoticization of one's own culture, or leaving it at the mercy of external influences. Stereotypical images of the Orient are frequently perpetuated. Therefore, in this dissertation, I will be exploring the link between appropriation and both Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism as essential aspects.

3.3 Going Beyond Orientalism: A Theorization of Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism

As has been sufficiently established in the above section, classical Saidian perspectives of orientalism could not address the emerging landscape due to the self-othering and self-representational practices of the Orientals. Therefore, a theorization of orientalism from the perspective of Re- and Self-Orientalism is required, which I intend to triangulate from the theoretical conceptions of Lisa Lau, Arif Dirlik, and Daura.

3.3.1 Lisa Lau's Concept of Re-Orientalism

Re-Orientalism, a framework originally introduced in Lisa Lau's article "Re-Orientalism: The Perpetration and Development of Orientalism by Orientals", draws inspiration from Said's ground-breaking work *Orientalism*. Re-Orientalism envisions the production of "the Orient" (or "Asia") by Orientals themselves, rather than by Europeans or other Westerners in positions of imperial power. As a result, the Orient is constructed by those who write as "authentic" Asians, portraying both positive and less than positive aspects. Lisa Lau explains that re-Orientalism is "based on how cultural producers with eastern affiliations come to terms with an Orientalized East, whether by complying with

perceived expectations of Western readers, by playing (along) with them, or by discarding them altogether" ("Introducing re-Orientalism: A new manifestation of Orientalism" 3). Based on this premise, the volume aims not only to highlight the power of Orientalist discourse but also to "underscore its instability and mutability" while identifying its fictions and frictions.

According to Lau, Said identified the Orientalist discourse for the last three decades, characterized by dominance and power, with Orientals being relegated to a submissive role, either labelled as Orientals or made into Orientals. Furthermore, Lisa Lau identifies the concept of Orientalism in different genres of literature written in the English language, providing representations of South Asia and its people, particularly in South Asian English literature. This process of Orientalism is still occurring and expected to continue in the future. Now, the process of Orientalism has shifted from classical Orientalism to another flavour where both Orientals and Occidentals are represented using the same classical strategy adopted in classical Orientalism. This process has been embraced by diasporic South Asian writers, and Lisa Lau terms it Re-Orientalism: "This process of Orientalism by Orientals is what I will be terming as 'Re-Orientalism'" (572).

Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes quote Said's Orientalism in their article "Introducing re-Orientalism: A new Manifesto of Orientalism", stating that "the cultural construct of Orientalism was the European imperialistic strategy of composing a positive image of the western Self while casting the 'East' as its negative alter ego, alluring and exotic, dangerous and mysterious, always the Other. As such, 'the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience'" (Said 1-2 Noted in "Introducing re-Orientalism: A new Manifesto of Orientalism" 3). Now the same has been adopted in re-Orientalism by Orientals. One direction of particular interest has been identified and designed as re-Orientalism. Re-Orientalism follows the same process as Orientalism. According to Lau, "Re-Orientalism is the same relationship of the powerful speaking for and representing the other, who is all but consigned to subalternism" (Lau 572). Lau and Mendes note that "to observe how re-Orientalism is deployed, made to circulate and perceived by cultural producers and consumers within the specific context of South Asian identity politics" (4).

In Re-Orientalism, we have a curious case in which the positionality of the powerful is simultaneously that of the insider and outsider, where the representing power can be simultaneously self and other." (Lau 572). Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendas noted about the entire process of re-Orientalism that Both Orientals and non-Orientals are observed to engage in Orientalism, with certain specific varieties being perpetuated (3). They further noted that Said's *Orientalism* examines how the Western world constructs the concepts of the 'Orient' and the 'Occident'. In contrast, re-Orientalism focuses on how cultural creators with Eastern connections navigate an Eastern culture that has been stereotypically portrayed. This can involve conforming to perceived Western expectations, engaging with them in a playful manner, or completely rejecting them (3).

According to Lau and Mendes, the term re-Orientalism is not simply their creation, but a huge literary and critical struggle is involved behind the term. The term can be traced back in *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age*, written by, Andre Gunder Frank published in 1998, which is about the counter-critique. Self-Orientalism has the same technique and process as re-Orientalism, introduced by Arif Dirlik, while another term, ethno-Orientalism, has been introduced by J. G. Carrier. Tony Mitchell's "reverse Orientalism" and Schein's "Internal Orientalism" are identical contributions to re-Orientalism. Further, Spivak's contribution is of great importance; her concept of "new Orientalism" presented in her book *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (277). An essay titled "Question of Neo-Orientalism" by Elleke Boehmer focuses on the term 'assessment of Neo-Orientalism as near to Spivak's 'new Orientalism (Noted in *Outside in The Teaching Machine* 277) and Anis Shivani's introduction to 'New Orientalism' in his article "Indo-Anglican Fiction" contributes to the process of re-Orientalism. These critics discuss the exotic Other presented from Oriental perspectives.

Re-Orientalism largely extracts the entire process from Edward Said's Orientalism. According to Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes, Orientalism is a process that derives its position in the tradition of Western academia, centering around the Orient. The theory of Re-Orientalism focuses on different aspects where the perpetration of Orientalism by Orientals is observed. This process is very careful, as the theory of Re-Orientalism zeroes in on power positions where the Oriental powerful group affiliates with the centre, initially placing themselves as the Other, although they are not Othered

but are passing through the process of Self-Othering. They report about the Orientals, and it is no longer just the Orientalists writing about the Orientals; now the same role is played by these Re-Orientalists. According to Timothy Mitchell, postcolonial expectations are for Re-Orientalists to turn their pens against the West, but "re-Orientalists instead faithfully keep to the tradition of Orientalism in maintaining the 'world-as-exhibition" (Noted in Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes 7).

Orientalism is inherently associated with the term essentialism, and it is similarly implicated in the theory of Re-Orientalism. Re-Orientalism posits that the Orient is a distinct entity, signifying its essential nature. Furthermore, the binary divisions between the West and the East are deconstructed, as Orientalism provokes these binaries. The theory of Re-Orientalism develops identical stereotypes, akin to Orientalism. However, rather than addressing substantial issues, parallel to Orientalism, Re-Orientalism perpetuates the same practices, constructing the Orient as the Other and exotic. Due to the entire process, we cannot label it a replica but rather a distinct process of re-Orientalization of the Orient by Orientals themselves.

Primarily, these writers belong to the diaspora, and their writings are positioned as Orientalist. According to Lau, they are still considered Oriental due to their culture, language, ethnicity, and colour, as they remain exclusively tied to their native country. These writers maintain a strong connection with the Orient because their identity is constructed as Orientals. Lau identifies that these writers, particularly those from South Asia, hold positions of power and dominance, especially in matters of literary representation and image construction (Lau 572). However, the initial struggle is evident among female writers in the diaspora who engage in re-Orientalizing the Orient. "It is predominantly the diasporic women writers who are the creators and keepers of the global literary image of South Asian culture, and this trend looks set to continue" (Lau 238). Subsequently, male writers also found their place in re-Orientalizing the Orient.

The more important and convenient way for South Asian diasporic literary writing is access to Western publishers due to their residence in the centre, where they can have their writings published. Lisa Lau quotes Salgado's article about Sri Lanka, stating that "Their [migrant writers'] residence in metropolitan centres and access to Western publishers gives them an international readership and the potential for publicity

that is the envy of their counterparts in Sri Lanka..." (Salgado 6, noted in Lisa Lau 2011: 573).

Lau extensively develops her argument on diasporic writers, particularly those from South Asian origins. Lau's argument is highly relevant because writers living in the centre have the agency and power to speak about the Orient. They perpetuate the same stereotypes, clichés, essentialism, and binaries found in classical Orientalism. Therefore, Re-Orientalism stands apart from the Orient to re-Orientalize it, while being amenable to Orientalism and participating in the construction of the Orient from the same perspective. However, Re-Orientalism primarily focuses on South Asian literature and literary writings, with other literature and literary writers from different regions not being highlighted in the theory of Re-Orientalism. I would like to conclude this section with Lau's comprehensive note on the features of Re-Orientalism from "Re-Orientalism in contemporary Indian Writing in English" that the allegations made against these writings have encompassed a wide range of criticisms, including exaggeration, categorization, stereotyping, romanticising, catering to Western preferences, conforming to Western demands and expectations, prioritising financial gain, appealing to popular opinion, and, more complexly, distorting and oversimplifying cultural identities, suppressing marginalised voices, and, most recently, perpetuating Orientalist perspectives. All of these critiques express dissatisfaction with Indian Writings in English for their failure to properly and comprehensively depict, their tendency to present a biased, incomplete, and selective portrayal, or even deliberate misrepresentation, and at its worst, blatant betrayal. (Noted in Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes's *Re-Orientalism and South Asian Identity Politic* 2011: 21)

3.3.2 Arif Dirlik's concept of Self-Orientalism

The treatment of Self-Orientalism is similar to Re-Orientalism, as the theory proposes that the Orient itself participates in the construction, reinforcement, and circulation of Orientalist discourse (Noted in Dirlik). Self-Orientalism occurs when the Oriental uses Western thought and stereotypes for self-definition or "a modus of Orientalism practiced by the Oriental Other itself" (Komel, 528).

The literature on Self-Orientalism includes two approaches that situate Self-Orientalism. The first is Dirlik's theory, which suggests that the East has been heavily

influenced by Western conceptions. Orientalist knowledge has been so internalized and self-inscribed by the East that it is nearly indistinguishable from Western propositions. Ideas in the East then become inseparable from Western ideas (noted in Yan and Santos, 298). The second approach to Self-Orientalism is proposed by Daura, who notes that Self-Orientalism is used as a strategy by Orientals to subscribe to modernism. Dirlik proposes that it is a profound consequence of the Orient striving for modernity, as those representations speak to the desires and yearnings for equality with the West, thus invoking Self-Orientalism intentionally. The motivation is to pursue modernity and gain acceptance from the West to achieve it.

Dirlik develops his arguments addressing Said's Orientalism. According to Dirlik's theoretical framework, the Orient has been constructed by Orientalists in the same way as by Orientalists in their writings. This applies to the entire Asia, but Dirlik reverses the process wherever Asia is involved in its own construction. Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the contact zone is important for such construction because this contact zone is the space where Asian intellectuals interact with Euro-Americans. Orientalism revolves around power, and Asian intellectuals not only struggle to obtain this power but also align themselves with modernity. This power struggle gives rise to different discourses of Orientalism from Self-Orientalist perspectives. According to Dirlik, this point is about the "self-orientalization of Asian intellectuals, which is a manifestation not of powerlessness but of newly-acquired power" (Dirlik 96).

Dirik starts the debate in his theoretical discussion about Orientalism with some major discussion extracted from Orientalism, summarized by Dirlik noted in his "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism": Orientalism encompasses multiple interconnected aspects. Firstly, it pertains to the evolving historical and cultural connection between Europe and Asia, a relationship that spans over 4000 years. Secondly, it refers to the academic field in the Western world that emerged in the early 19th century, focusing on the study of diverse Oriental cultures and traditions. Lastly, it encompasses the ideological assumptions, depictions, and imaginings about the Orient, which is a region of significant political urgent region of the world. These three features of Orientalism is the boundary that separates the Occident from the Orient. I have proposed that this boundary is not a natural occurrence, but rather a result of human

creation, which I refer to as imaginative geography. However, it should be noted that the distinction between the Orient and Occident is not fixed and should not be dismissed as purely imaginary (97).

Dirlik (1996) very appropriately sets out the background for his discussion, highlighting the entire scenario in a comprehensive order about Orientalism. He states that the second and third phases of Orientalism are concerned with the construction of Asia in Euro-American scholarship. Dirlik extracts different binaries from Orientalism, particularly the feminization of the Orient, created by Eurocentric historiographers, while the West has been depicted with masculinity, associated with the epitome of modernization. Orientalist epistemology is largely culturalist, representing various cultures by Orientalists. Their epistemic aspect deals with one homogeneous unit, the Orient, and they are not concerned with any singular and individual unit and culture. Therefore, all Asian countries are limited to one Oriental unit. According to Dirlik, "this epistemology, second, is bound up with questions of Euro-American power over the Orient" (Dirlik 98). He further asserts that "Orientalism, as part of this epistemological reordering of the world, is not a mere intellectual instrument of imperialism" (Dirlik 99). Dirlik refers to it as "Intellectual Imperialism" (Ibid 99). Dirlik's first section is entirely a summary and debate on Said's Orientalism (Section in literature review on Orientalism), where Gramsci and Foucault's philosophies with reference to Orientalism are discussed.

Dirlik dedicates a separate section to Orientalism by Orientals for a better understanding of the basic concepts and ideas shared with the readers. Orientalists have perceived Oriental society not from a particular perspective reflecting what it actually is, but observed it based on what they lack. Despite being a dire need in the past and present, it is not associated with such a description. The process of Orientalism is no longer a segregated phenomenon practiced solely by the Occident or the Orient itself. Dirlik refers to it as a relationship, stating, "the question I would like to raise here is whether orientalism was just the autonomous creation of Europeans, or whether its emergence presupposed the complicity of 'Orientals.' This is what I had in mind when I referred to orientalism as possibly a 'relationship'" (Dirlik 100). Dirlik initiates the debate on how Orientalism becomes a tool in the hands of Orientals. He terms it as the complicity of

Orientals, referring to the mutual relationship between the Occident and the Orient that contributed to Orientalizing the Orient.

Dirlik's concept of Orientalism by Orientals aligns with Said's Orientalism, but with a slight variation from Said's perspective. He raises many questions, stating, "these questions, brought to the surface, call for a number of qualifications regarding the location, production, and consequences of orientalism that are, I think, fundamental to understanding orientalism and its place in modernity" (Dirlik 100). Dirlik does not question Orientalism; for him, Orientalism is inevitable. The fundamental question is how Orientalism has been initiated for modernity. According to Dirlik, Orientalism is Euro-American scholarship, and Said gives little focus to Orientals' contribution to Orientalism, but, according to Dirlik, Asia has truly embodied the real concept of Orientalism in practice.

Said is also of the opinion that the concept of Orientalism is extracted from the concept of inside/outside, referring to two binaries Occident and Orient respectively. Therefore, Orientalism is not the only coinage and creation of the Occident but Orient itself participated in its construction and representation. Dirlik once again raises the question about Occidentals' scholarship about Oriental that despite originating from European intellectual circles; how did intellectuals from the 'orient' react to, or see orientalism? Did the Orientals truly lack the ability or opportunity to express themselves, as Said's research implies? When we consider the involvement of 'orientals' as active contributors to the development of a European discourse, rather than merely passive subjects, how does the concept of 'Orientalism' and the exploration of a modern consciousness manifest itself? How will the rebuilt picture of orientalism impact the understanding of the connection between orientalism and power? Indeed, Said's argument about orientalism originating from a dichotomy between inside/outside or occident/orient is accurate (101).

Both Said and Dirlik share the position that Orientalism is not a segregated process but rather a relationship between the Orient and Occident. Although Oriental scholars and philosophers contributed to modernity, the West would not have documented the larger portion of Orientalism without assessments from the Orient. Presjrit Daura's concept aligns with Dirlik's standpoint, asserting that Orientalism is a

reverse process for Orientals to construct themselves and find a place in the discourse of Orientalism. Lau somewhat endorses both Dirlik and Daura's concepts, but he largely refers to comprador intellectuals appropriating to affiliate with Western academia.

Dirlik draws attention to various issues in Orientalism, endorsing what Said has identified but using different terms. For example, Said's epistemological assumption is termed as "Sympathetic identification" by Dirlik, aiming to grasp the culture where Orientals live in an alien culture. Therefore, Orientalists find it inevitable to Orientalize the Orient in identification with alien culture. According to Dirlik, Orientalists are the individuals who represent the interests of Orientals. This pulls orientalists into a closer relationship with the Other, while creating a distance between them and their own society, the Self. When the orientalists engage with the Other, they do so not merely to discuss, but also to advocate for them, typically as specialists or experts (Dirlik 101). Dirlik believes that we cannot eliminate this relationship between Orient and Occident, stating that if we engage in such an action, the clear differences between oneself and others, or between the subject and the object, which are essential for the examination of Orientalism, may become unclear, although they are not necessarily completely to be eliminated (Dirlik 101).

Orientalism is not the isolated construction of the Orient; either the Orientalists speak for the Orient or portray them as alien or exotic. In both cases, the Orient has been identified and constructed (Said 40). Dirlik shares the same opinion, stating that presenting the Orient as the Other is a simplistic stratification by Orientalists. Not only do Orientalists speak for the Orient or portray them as exotic and marginalized, but the Orientals themselves participate in the process. Dirlik expresses this by saying that the orientalists' ability to speak for the Orient was based on their Orientalization. While being influenced by the Oriental culture, they also adopted some of its strange characteristics. This led to their marginalisation and even suspicion within their own society (Dirlik 101-2). Here, Dirlik suggests that Oriental society has been marginalized and exoticized by Orientals themselves. The Orient was not only identified as exotic and alien by Orientalists in Orientalism, but the Orient itself adopts the same stance. Lau (2009) shares the same opinion that the Orient itself constructs and perpetuates the practices of Orientalism. It is Orientalism that introduces and identifies different aspects

of Orientals, and later, Orientals fully incorporate these aspects into their society, as Dirlik gives the example of Chinese imperialism and its aftermaths; the military attack by Euro-American forces on imperial China not only triggered the rise of Chinese nationalism but also paradoxically offered it a collection of representations of China's historical legacy that could be assimilated into a fresh national identity. Various political factions within Chinese nationalism have emphasised different elements of the past and have assessed the historical heritage in varying ways. However, both liberals and conservatives have displayed metonymic reductionism by associating China with Confucianism, despotism, bureaucratism, familism, and even specific racial traits. These associations can be traced back to orientalist depictions (106-7)

Lau is very explicit in her work, introducing re-Orientalism in the first section of the theory, while Dirlik is quite philosophical, reaching the term Self-Orientalism. It takes pages of discussion to reach a conclusive position about the coinage of the term Self-Orientalism. Dirlik very skilfully and appropriately describes the scene and scenario to introduce the term: "the term orientalism has been used almost exclusively to describe the attitudes of Europeans toward Asian societies, I would like to suggest here that the usage needs to be extended to Asian views of Asia, to account for tendencies to self-orientalization which would become an integral part of the history of orientalism" (Dirlik 104). Dirlik shares the same opinion as Lau to situate Self-Orientalism for Asia to perceive the Asian; however, Dirlik's concept is wider and broader than Lau's because she specifies the term Re-Orientalism for South Asia, while Dirlik goes for the entire Asia. Apart from Dirlik, Daura's Self-Orientalism focuses on the similar representation of the Orient by Orientals. Both Dirlik and Daura have slightly different approaches but hold the same position, calling the process of Self-Orientalism applicable for the entire Asia.

The above discussion is about Self-Orientalism, initiated by Dirlik, and the same process has been already and later taken on by other scholars as well, with other names like Re-Orientalism by Lisa Lau and Daura's Self-Orientalism. The question of where the process of Self-Orientalism takes place has been answered by Dirlik. According to him, it is the contact zone where the interaction between Orientals and Occidentals occurs; though the contact zone is based on domination, "the contact zone is not merely a zone of

domination, but also a zone of exchange, even if unequal exchange" (Dirlik 112). This contact zone is simply called diaspora, where Oriental scholars affiliate themselves with the first world, either for modernity or to be recognized as well-versed writers. Lau initiates the contact zone with diasporic writers, in the first stage focusing on diasporic women writers. Daura shares the same opinion about diasporic writers who interact in the contact zone with the first world. Said's "Reflections on Exile and Other Essays", Bharathi Mukherjee's "Third World Intellectuals and Metropolitan Culture", and many other critics refer to this contact zone. The contact zone has been introduced by Mary Louise Pratt in her "Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation." According to Mary Louise Pratt:

> "Subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture. While subjugated peoples cannot readily control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to various extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for." (Pratt: 6 Noted in Dirlik 112)

This domination undergoes a linguistic shift, a complicit domination involving both Orientals and Occidentals because the superiority and domination of the West cannot be eradicated in this contact zone but only compromised. Dirlik refers to this contact zone as a zone of mediation where we cannot eliminate the domination of the West. Orientals have to accept mediation, either to provide their representation or to affiliate with the West for modernism. To conclude Dirlik's concept of Self-Orientalism with his reference point from his theory, I assert that Self-Orientalism follows the same process as Orientalism with its functions and features. Dirlik concludes:

> The part that self-orientalization may play in the struggle against internal and external hegemony, and its claims to alternative modernities, however, must not be exaggerated. In the long run, self-orientalization serves to perpetuate, and even to consolidate, existing forms of power. (Dirlik 114).

3.3.3 Prasenjit Daura' s Concept of Self-Orientalism

According to Prasenjit Daura's concept of Self-Orientalism, the Orient cannot exist independently of the West. It is a history that tells stories of marginalizing

homogeneous groups. In his book "Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China," Daura deconstructs history, addressing Hegelian concepts, and excluding marginalized groups whose voices are not represented in discourses used for state formation. Daura's book focuses on the Chinese people who are marginalized within the Hegelian concept, despite China having a "unitary consciousness or identity" (Daura 7). Various struggles have taken place within the community for insurgency, aiming to master and control, and increasingly dealing with the phenomenon to give voices to marginalized people. Daura's concept is linked with Spivak's idea of giving voices to the subaltern. While Spivak questions the authority of the subaltern in "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Daura is not merely giving voices to the marginalized but attempting to integrate them into authoritative narratives. Daura's concept involves examining Chinese intellectuals who write for modernity, representing their culture with bleak and distorted images, akin to the concepts of the native informant, Self-Orientalism, and Re-Orientalism. These processes address Said's classical Orientalism.

According to Daura's concept, Self-Orientalism is the result of the adaptation of Western culture by Orientals, and it is Chinese writers who employ Orientalist practices in their writings: Since the early 1900s, numerous historical figures that we analyse actively attempted to recount their own history in a linear and teleological manner. Their aim was to drive Chinese history forward in alignment with the evolution of global History. The objective of this book is not to uncover a pure and original history of China, but rather to identify the specific place where various narratives, and even multiple layers of narrative, attempt to claim or grapple with the actual historical events, which, naturally, can only be understood and interpreted through symbolic storytelling (27).

The aforementioned passage opens the way for different theoretical discussions. In the first stage, Daura rejects the positivist interpretation of historiography, essentially excluding the marginalized. According to Roland Bontekoe's opinion, "in dealing with narrative, our hermeneutical task is, in a sense, doubled. We must, of course, interpret the narrative text, but we must also interpret the narrated action" (*Dimensions of the Hermeneutical Circle* 160). This is crucial, and Daura himself focuses on the actors involved in storytelling. Daura borrows the concept of time and narrative from Ricoeur, segregating fiction from history. Daura is of the opinion that both history and fiction must

be interpreted and constructed in mutual collaboration. In this way, the process of reconstruction is exercised with reference to history (*Time and Narrative* 154).

Daura talks about the powerful discourses in history that have given representations of the Chinese people with different stereotypes, and the Chinese people have not been given a place in it. They have been represented thousands of times in different discourses as a single entity. Daura asks, "how do historical groups try to transform a society with multiple representations of political community into a single totality" (Daura 65). Here, single totality refers to one nation, China, and Daura discusses nationalism in his book, a specific kind of nationalism. "The shape and content of national identities in the modern era are a product of negotiation between remembered historical narratives of community and the institutionalized discourses of the modern nation-state system" (Ibid 71). This modern nation-state system refers to the global phenomenon where people seek affiliation with the Western world. Daura does the same in his book, referring to Chinese narratives, developing stereotypes of their own country, but it is the demand of the time to show their appropriation with modernity.

To discuss different discourses in Daura's book, we can reach one point, as he himself justifies, "the way that Enlightenment discourse made it imperative for all societies to affiliate themselves with modernity" (Ibid 29), while this modernity helps the narrators to impose their authority over others. He states that "statist discourse authorized a weak state to expand its role and command over civil society" (Ibid 170). The incorporation of such discourses also paves the way for nationalism. The writers endorse Voltaire's (1694-1790) concept, as he "laments that the good patriot must be the 'enemy of the rest of humanity,' for the wish for the success of one's country amounts to a wish for evil to befall one's neighbours" (Noted in David Archard "Political Philosophy and the Concept of the Nation" 380). It means modernity is inevitable for Daura. Therefore, I conclude that Daura's concept of self-Orientalism has been planted for modernism and affiliation with the Euro-American canon.

3.4 Research Methodology

For the current research, I have selected transcultural and postcolonial writings of diasporic novelists. The novelists belong to the Anglophone community and depict both Afghan and Euro-American societies in their writings. The readings are chosen to be

researched using a qualitative approach. In the current research, I have attempted to analyse and explore self-Orientalism in Afghan Anglophone fiction with reference to the authors' intentions, based on their behaviour. Employing the approach of qualitative research, the researcher has also tried to analyse the primary texts with reference to the theoretical framework formulated above.

Through a qualitative approach, the researcher instills his research, which is reflective in nature, based on interpretative and grounded theory. The nature of the research has been suggested by Mats Alvesson and Kaj Skoldberg in Book Reviews: Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research (noted in Kathryn C. Rentz, 319), in which interpretation is made with reference to four levels of reflective or reflexive methodology as they are mutually embedded and correspond to each other. According to Kathryn C. Rentz, "reflexive methodology includes data handling, interpretation, critical theory (politics/ideology), and postmodernism and poststructuralism (representation and authority) (319)." In the current research, I have mainly supported my personal interpretation (initiated by reflexive methodology) with literary discussion to substantiate my argument of self-Orientalism in the selected texts. The purpose of the reflective method is to provide a base for interpretation with reference to generating my own perspective, grounded on the concepts of other critics.

To establish consistency in my research work, I have focused on postcolonial theory with its subsidiary concepts to provide textual arguments supported by external interpretation. The practice is further linked with the interpretation theory and model of Paul Ricoeur for textual interpretation, introduced in "Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning," extracted from George Gadamer's textual interpretation theory (noted in Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Edition 3). The minutiae of textual interpretations focus on literary text to convey its meaning to the readers and its relevance to the author's intention. The nature of reflective research is facilitated by qualitative methodologies, goes beyond one interpretation and explanation of the text. The support of textual interpretation theory provides a base for the researcher to go beyond the intentions of authors. The intermingling of subjective and objective approaches—the approach is referring to both the author and readers' intentions and contentions—serving to fix and unfix the meanings of the text. Probably, the author

conveys a particular and intended meaning, but readers' perceptions are worth as much esteem and privilege as given to authors. Thus, the research focuses on dynamics rather than static accentuations to fix the interpretation of the texts, to be explored with reference to the selected reflex.

3.4.1 Research Methods

Research methodology is essentially the strategy, while research methods are different approaches and niches adopted by the researcher to carry out the research. Research methods can be defined as "concerned with how you carry out your research," and "the choice of method will depend on the kind of research one wants to conduct" (*Research Methods for English Studies* 3). Since my dissertation involves the analysis of Afghan Anglophone fiction, and I have formulated questions addressing reflexive and analytical approaches, I have chosen textual analysis as the method for analysing my primary texts selected for the research.

3.4.2 Textual Analysis

In the current research, I shall be using textual analysis for both primary texts and secondary sources, as secondary sources are equally of great importance and hold a prominent position when the researcher's arguments are supported through secondary sources. The purpose of secondary sources is to provide information that is not understood with reference to the author's given work. It leads the researcher to an extensive body of literature available on the selected area. Secondary sources, though not final, provide a basic and in-depth interpretation of the texts. Therefore, textual analysis is applicable to secondary sources as well to understand the interpretation and background of different writers, scholars, critics, and theorists.

In the current research, I shall be using textual analysis as a method, suggested by Frey, Botan, and Kreps in their *Investigating Communication: An Introduction to Research Methods*. Here, the method suggested by Frey et al. is summarized for better understanding in bullet points:

1. Textual analysis is a method focusing on different forms of communication, particularly consisting of recorded messages or visual messages, where the researcher aims to describe and interpret the recorded or visual messages with appropriate discussion.

2. Textual analysis is purposed to describe the function, structure, and content of recorded messages in the given text. The given text largely refers to literary texts, which are explored, investigated, interpreted, analysed, and described through textual analysis.

3. Textual analysis does not rely on the entire bulk of available literature to be analysed but has very specific parameters for selecting a particular text for analysis. For example, the text must fall under its premises to be studied, meaning an appropriate text should be determined, and then the researcher decides which particular method is applicable to the text. If textual analysis is chosen, it opens its boundaries for the selected texts to be analysed.

4. Textual analysis provides two categories of texts for interpretation: transcripts of communication, meaning what has been recorded by the author in the text and dealing with the perspective of the author; the second category is outputs of communication, meaning what message has been extracted by readers and scholars from the given text. Textual analysis helps readers and scholars in both cases to understand the text and interpret it with prior discussion.

5. Textual analysis provides more insights into outputs of communication, readily offering more consistency with different interpretations and explanations about a particular text, including both primary texts and secondary sources.

6. Textual analysis develops interpretation and explanation of the text. It further develops discussion on the selected chunks of the text with reference to interpretation and explanation (Investigating Communication: An Introduction to Research Methods, 1999).

As a researcher, I rely on textual analysis as a research method because the method is comprehensive and feasible for analysing literary texts with prior interpretation, explanation, and discussion of the available texts. My primary texts are related to Afghan Anglophone fiction, written in a multicultural environment, and I will definitely need to have a better understanding from different perspectives. The understanding is further developed with reference to postcolonial discourses, particularly Orientalism, Re-Orientalism, and Self-Orientalism.

Understanding the entire book is a difficult and hectic task, which is feasible and convenient through textual analysis. Multiple and diverse interpretations of the selected area are impossible for the researcher to cover but are made possible through the selected method, "Textual analysis." Apart from the analysis of the selected texts, I have analysed and interpreted different texts of Postcolonial literature/studies along with Afghan Anglophone fiction to support my argument for the research. My arguments are somehow linked with poststructuralist analysis, dealing with meaning without disposing of the author but beyond the author's boundaries. The same is done by Catherine Belsey, who connected textual analysis with poststructuralism (Noted in *Research Methods for English Studies* 165).

Finally, I come up with the idea that textual analysis needs to have a text, and the understanding of the text needs to have a proper agenda for the researcher. The element and the importance of the text cannot be exploited in the sequence and arguments of the thesis. Apart from the researcher's approach, a singular text defines itself and stands for different meanings. Therefore, textual analysis is not an answer to the finality of the arguments. Other researchers may have different aspects and interpretations of the texts from different perspectives, though not necessary to be provided by textual analysis but may be other methods are applicable. Therefore, every argument needs different and separate interpretation through a defined and given method. It is not guaranteed that the final and fixed meaning may be fixed in one research but may be fixated to multiple researches and different research methods.

Adopting and using textual analysis as a method for my research aligns with my argument and my concept of the contingency of meanings. The method will take me to the finality of my arguments as it is a fruitful strategy and will open more ways and aspects for research in the area. Keeping the tight and hectic demand of the research, research methodology and theoretical framework play crucial roles. It is not possible to rely on particular research methods and a specific theory. Therefore, the current chapters dealt with different research methods and theories appropriate for the current research, addressing its nature and significance. The selected methods and theories are thoroughly applicable to my research questions, objectives, literature, and selected texts. Further, theories of Orientalism are used as a primary theory discussed in chapter two in detail,

and the remaining part has been discussed in this chapter, while re-Orientalism and self-Orientalism are the central theories for the justification of my arguments but liable to follow Edward Said's Orientalism and consistent in nature with Orientalism in broader perspectives.

Chapter 4

Privileged Locations and Role of Native Informants in Khaled Hoessini's *The Kite Runner*

4.1 Introduction

The current chapter deals with the analysis of Self-Orientalism in Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* by showing how Khaled Hosseini's work explicitly incorporates elements of Self-Orientalism in order to re-Orientalize the Orient. This chapter is divided into five sub-sections, contemplating the elements of self-Orientalism from different perspectives.

Section one of the chapter provides a summary of the novel, which is important because readers are introduced to the novel and its different stories. The second section is about different characters from the novel who are represented from the Oriental perspective, using a Western style. The third section deals with the Westernized protagonist and "Bad Muslim" and "Pashtun of the Orient," showing how Hosseini has constructed Occidental protagonists, the narrator of the novel, to expedite the progress of the plot. Further, the section, in contrast, provides the description of different Oriental characters with reference to "bad Muslims" and "bad Pashtuns." Section four is more significant because it shows the relationship between the deprived Orient and the privileged Occident to develop binaries used by Hosseini in the novel. The last section deals with the stereotypical images of Islam and the Taliban, a hot topic for Orientalists.

4.2 Summary of the novel *The Kite Runner*

A well-known creation of Hosseini is *The Kite Runner*, which is the story of two young boys from Afghanistan: Amir and Hassan. Amir is the son of a wealthy Afghan, while Hassan, his servant, belongs to the Hazara community of Afghanistan. Amir is haunted by one of his childhood incidents when he was living in a furnished house with his baba in Kabul. The novel gives the narration of two more characters at Amir's house: Ali, his servant, and Rahim Khan, his father's friend who used to visit Amir's house on a daily basis.

The novel provides information about the country's poor condition when the King of Afghanistan was exiled. It is a time of crises in Afghanistan when the king was replaced. The story proceeds with Kamal, Assef, and Wali reacting against Amir and Hassan who play together. They are stopped from playing together, and Amir is beaten by Assef for playing with a Hazara community boy. Hassan attacks Assef to stop him from beating Amir. At this point, the novel portrays the kite-flying competition of Afghanistan. The boys are shown cutting the strings of other boys' kites. This is why the title of the novel is "The Kite Runner."

Amir has won the kite-flying competition while Hassan drops down on the ground when he is running after a kite and unable to catch it. Amir realizes that Hassan is missing and starts looking for him. When he approaches the backstreet, Wali and Kamal are seen taking Hassan to Assef. Assef is anti-Hassan and forces Hassan and rapes him. Amir is unable to confront and resist Assef and flees from the backstreet. Amir is burning from within because he could not save Hassan from Assef and his friends. Amir feels guilty for not saving Hassan at the time of need. Passing through this unending trauma, Amir decides to hide some money and a watch under Hassan's pillow, pretending that Hassan stole the money and the watch. When Baba interrogates the entire story, Hassan is found guilty of stealing, while the fact was that Hassan was not a thief, but even then he submitted to the charge.

Now, there is a paradigm shift in the novel. In March 1981, the Soviet Union attacks Afghanistan, forcing people to leave the country. Amir and his baba are also among the victims of the attack who were leaving the country. Both Amir and Baba are sitting in a truck to leave Afghanistan for Pakistan. The journey to Pakistan is highly stressful, but finally, they reach Peshawar. They spent some time in Pakistan and then moved to America seeking political asylum.

The setting is now 1983, and the novel narrates the story of Fremont, California, where Baba, a respectable and wealthy person from Kabul, is now seen working at a service station in California. His son Amir is getting his early education in high school. Baba meets his old friend General Taheri, and Amir is introduced to General Taheri's daughter, Soraya. Both Amir and Soraya develop a strong liking for each other. During this period, Amir's father is diagnosed with lung cancer. Upon his request, General

Taheri allows the marriage of Amir and Soraya. After one month of Amir and Soraya's marriage, Baba passes away. After the death of his father, Amir starts to write for a living.

Another paradigm shift is seen in the novel. Amir receives a telephone call from Baba's friend Rahim Khan, who requests him to come to Pakistan to see him. After one week of Rahim Khan's telephonic conversation, Amir reaches Pakistan. Amir is told about the destruction in Afghanistan caused by war. He further informs Amir that the Soviet Union was defeated and that the Taliban were ruling Afghanistan with brutality and violence. Amir is further told about Hassan and how he faced different problems, but Rahim Khan helped him out. Later on, Hassan and Farzana are married, and Farzana gives birth to a beautiful child named Sohrab.

Rahim Khan tells Amir that when he was coming to Pakistan for medical aid, he received a call from Afghanistan that Baba's house was attacked by the Taliban, and both Hassan and his wife Farzana were killed. However, their child Sohrab survived and was living in an orphanage in Afghanistan. Amir listened to the entire story, and finally, he is shattered by the revelation that Hassan is the illegitimate son of Baba. At first, Amir defies believing this news, but he is made to believe by Rahim Khan that Hassan is his brother. Rahim Khan requests him to bring his brother's son Sohrab from the orphanage. Amir agrees and decides to bring Sohrab from Afghanistan. When Amir reaches the orphanage, he comes to know that Sohrab had already been taken away by the Taliban a few months back.

Finally, Amir successfully approaches Taliban officials in a football stadium where he sees a man and a woman being stoned to death. During Amir's meeting with the Taliban, he requests for Sohrab to be returned back. The Taliban official presents Sohrab to Amir. During this meeting, Amir realizes the intention of Taliban officials. They attack Amir and hit him, but dramatically in a counter-attack, he saves himself and Sohrab from the clutches of the Taliban. Sohrab is rescued and brought to America. Another shocking revelation for Amir is that Assef and his friends have joined the Taliban, where Assef has assumed the role of a commander. Amir, with the help of Soraya, successfully finds a way to take Sohrab with them to America. Sohrab attempts to commit suicide because his memories were hurting him. He survives, and Amir and Soraya take him to America, but

he is unable to speak with the people around him and does not take an interest in the affairs of the world.

Meanwhile, Sohrab is taken to a cultural event of kite-flying. Sohrab is introduced to other Afghan boys, and Amir uses the trick of his deceased friend Hassan to win the kite-flying competition. Sohrab behaves at the ending of the story like his deceased father Hassan, going after a cut kite. The story ends with the indistinguishable cultural event of kite-flying, as shown at the beginning of the novel.

4.3 Stereotypical (Self)Orientalist Representations of the Natives

The Kite Runner is a powerful depiction of Afghan-American culture, locating Afghan identity against the turbulent backdrop of Afghanistan in the modern world. The New York Times placed the novel on the best-seller list for more than a hundred weeks. Yet, the fact remains pervasive that the work is the creation of an unknown author from an alien country. This particular stance of the New York Times is based on American sympathy with the scattered Orient, now more shattered and battered in the work. Why did the work remain on the best-selling books list for more than a hundred weeks despite serious hurdles of censorship? The primary reason is that this work targeted fundamentalist and religious theology.

The work has become popular among American readers because it is productively relevant to the historical incident of 9/11 and its aftermath. Meghan O'Rourke writes in Slate Magazine: What makes *The Kite Runner* stand out among the recent works on Afghanistan? The book initially attracted attention due to its potential to provide current information in a comprehensible way, making the media reports about a region that regained significance in the United States after 9/11 more relatable. This is what it does. *The Kite Runner* covers a period of around 30 years and provides a general overview of Afghanistan's recent tumultuous history, including the civil war in 1978, the Soviet invasion, and the emergence of the Taliban as a political alternative ("Do I Really have to read *The Kite Runner*" 2005: 1).

The fact is somewhat confronted by Meghan O'Rourke because the connected events after 9/11 contemplate issues of war, violence, bringing home, migration, and demonic humanity. *The Kite Runner* addresses all these issues, serving as a reflection of Orientalist discourse that employs binaries to establish the relationship between the Euro-

American and Asians, particularly targeting Islam. Ostensibly, the novel places Asian culture in a submissive position. The interest of American readers lies not in bridging the gap between the Orient and the Occident, but rather, their focus on the Asian community, especially Islam, becomes a significant concern for them after 9/11. The novel reflects the dire demand for the existence of the Euro-American world in the Orient (Afghanistan).

American newspapers and advertising agencies provide the same Orientalist representation of the Orient, as the old Orientalist trope is well known. It is a fact that Americans are attracted to the novel because of its advertisement in America that showcases these binaries. Evelyn Alsultany, in her article "Selling American Diversity and Muslim American Identity through Non-Profit Advertising Post-9/11" , notes that the American government has labelled binaries for Asian/Arab/Muslim identities in America while:

> In addition to government practices that defined Americans and Arabs/Muslims as binary opposites, government and media discourses relied on old Orientalist tropes that positioned American national identity as democratic, modern, and free and the Middle East as primitive, barbaric, and oppressive. (Alsultany 594)

Hosseini contemplates the same in his work *The Kite Runner*, developing binaries and gaining appreciation from American advertisement agencies, which contributed to his well-known position. The stance presented by classical Orientalism has been reinforced by Hosseini from a Self-Orientalist perspective.

Hosseini's powerful approach in terms of characterization is striking for Euro-American readers, showcasing the typical Oriental identity of Afghan culture. Names like Amir, Hassan, Wali, Assef, Ali, Rahim Khan, Sohrab, and Baba are distinctly Oriental, establishing a resentful connection between Afghanistan and America. Referring back to Said's Orientalism, it places Orientals in Western special discourses. The names of the Afghans strongly position them as Oriental identities, essentially constructed as Others.

The character of Amir is particularly significant, and his portrayal as a protagonist captures great interest. Amir has been assimilated into American culture, although he is the least exploited character, he remains the protagonist of the novel. His cultural identity

has an attachment to both America and Afghanistan, although he prefers peace in America. This creation of the writer depicts Afghanistan and Pakistan as exotic countries not fit for living: “I have a wife in America, a home, a career, and a family. Kabul is a dangerous place, you know that, and you’d have me risk everything for... I stopped (Hosseini 194). At another place, it is noted: “I see America has infused you with the optimism that has made her so great. That’s very good. We’re a melancholic people.” (Ibid: 175)

Hosseini draws binaries between the two poles, America and Afghanistan. Afghanistan is portrayed as a barbaric and distorted country, echoing observations made by Orientalists in their works. Now, this portrayal is initiated by Orientals themselves, reflecting a self-orientalist perspective. I refer to this as the strategy of Orientals constructing a self-image. The binaries not only highlight the weaknesses of Afghanistan, but also depict America as a civilized and modern country where Orientals are given career, home, and education. This reflects the internalization of Occidentalist values, showcasing Orientals’ love for modernity and affiliation with the first world, as merged by Hosseini.

The perception given to American readers is that the protagonist, Amir, is building a bridge between the two cultures—a bridge of understanding. However, their understanding of the Orient largely depends on stereotypes, as presented by Orientalists in their writings. Moreover, it is a belief among Western readers that stereotypes are employed because they aid in understanding the East. Therefore, the characters created by Hosseini remain consistent with stereotypes present in the Orientalist discourse.

Furthermore, the novel represents the character of Amir in the context of identifying and recognizing the American self. Said, Daura, and Lau allude to this self as the Western self within the Oriental characters, constructed as “Others.” Despite Amir being created as part of an alien culture, he is not completely Othered or foreign to American culture. This is because his construction is linked with the perceived superiority of American culture. Moreover, he plays the role of a native informant, actively informing America about the terror and crises in Afghanistan. One rare example from the novel is presented in the following words:

> "I grew up in the U.S … If America taught me anything, it's that quitting is right up there with pissing in the Girl Scouts' lemonade jar. But, as your lawyer, I have to give you the facts," he said. "Finally, adoption agencies routinely send staff members to evaluate the child's milieu, and no reasonable agency is going to send an agent to Afghanistan." (Ibid 299).

In the entire novel, the case of Amir is exceptional, considering him a foreigner but a less foreign protagonist. His creation is depicted as having an affiliation with the imperial and colonial self, targeting the East in all versions to gain benefits from the Euro-American world.

Hosseini's technique of creating Amir as a semi-foreign character in the novel stands in a similar position to Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. It serves as a reference point for how the foreign protagonist in the novel Kim used to perceive the natives. Hosseini is using the same lens through which the East is perceived and seen in the novel. Kipling's engagement with both the West and East granted his protagonist a hybrid position to be at the top of all characters in the novel. Similarly, Amir is granted a hybrid position by Hosseini, working as an Orientalist.

Regarding stereotyping in the novel, with reference to characters, Assef's character is more important compared to Amir's. The contrastive binary is used to formulate Amir's identity as the protagonist, while Assef is declared the antagonist of The Kite Runner. Amir's Otherness in the novel is identified for self-realization and identification, while Assef stands as a complete Oriental character, characterized as oppressive, barbaric, and primitive, in the words of Evelyn Alsultany. Assef is depicted as the Other, embodying primitive, barbaric, and oppressive traits: "I believe Assef had mostly refrained from harassing me too much." (Ibid 34). Assef's barbarism and oppression serve as the antithesis of those who develop liberal ideologies in the West against the Orient. Assef is identified as a completely foreign character, creating binaries with reference to the character of Amir. Although Amir is a native and a semi-native informant, he is figured out as an Orientalist because of the first narrative telling technique. Therefore, Amir's character is developed as an Occidental, while Assef represents the barbaric and oppressive Orientals. This technique of constructing binaries

has been identified by Said and supported by Muqaddas Inayat in his research work "Notes on the English Character by E.M. Forster: A Critical Perspective." The similar technique is now being used by self-Orientalists. It is the writer's (Self-Orientalist) technique to keep Western readers content by relying on such stereotypes regarding the Orient to assimilate with the West (Daura 98). This exposition leads the Orient to a submissive position. The purpose of stereotypes is to place the Orientals in an inferior position, while the counterpart (the West) is elevated to a superior position.

The characters of Amir and Assef are further contemplated in the process of illustrating how the Orient and the Occident develop and mature in the climax of the novel. Amir's Westernization is the central point of discussion, showcasing how the Occident develops and matures throughout the scenes of the novel. It serves as a sign of Occidental victory over the Orient, while the character of Assef depicts the weakness of Orientals. This portrayal highlights how Orientals are becoming inferior within the context of the novel. It represents one of the complicit relationships between the Orient and the Occident through Oriental writings from an Orientalist perspective, explicitly based on the process of self-Othering.

The development of the Occident is further linked with liberalism and modernism, illustrating how Occidental characters mature within the framework of the bildungsroman. Amir is now a professional creative writer: "I took out my books and studied. It was in the Pine-Sol-scented office of that furniture warehouse that I began my first novel." (Ibid 158) This portrayal depicts Westerners as developed and rational. In binaristic contrast, the character of Assef becomes more cruel, oppressive, villainous, and cartoonish, embodying a typical Oriental character. Assef questions Amir about not joining the Taliban for money: "didn't fight the Shorawi for money. Didn't join the Taliban for money either. Do you want to know why I joined them?" (Hosseini 235) This alludes to religious fundamentalism, which Assef prefers over money due to his wealthy father.

The scheming of both Amir and Assef in the novel, with reference to opposite categories (protagonist and antagonist), is based on the pitting of binaries between the West and the East, inflaming these binaries for power structure. The Western side is portrayed as powerful and superior over the East, while the Orient is depicted as inferior

and submissive. This establishment of superiority is achieved through an Oriental protagonist acting on behalf of the Occident, designating another character as a villain.

Said confirms such stereotypes in Orientalism through the incorporation of a foreigner as a protagonist. According to Said, the Orient is a dire need and backdrop for the Occident, both for stereotyping and its representation for personal interests. Said noted in Orientalism in the following words:

> Cromer envisions a seat of power in the West, and radiating out from it towards the East a great embracing machine, sustaining the central authority yet commanded by it. What the machine's branches feed into it in the East-human material, material wealth, knowledge, what have you-is processed by the machine, then converted into more power. The specialist does the immediate translation of mere Oriental matter into useful substance: the Oriental becomes, for example, a subject race, an example of an 'Oriental' mentality, all for the enhancement of the 'authority' at home. 'Local interests' are Orientalist special interests, the 'central authority' is the general interest of the imperial society as a whole (44).

The creation of Orientalism is a very skilful technique according to Said because it reveals how the West ingrained its power and materialism in the Orient to exploit and subordinate the Orientals. The Western materialistic position is deeply rooted in history, as Westerners have encountered Orientals for a very long time. They utilize their Western knowledge and impose their power on the Orient. This formation is strategic, and Said refers to it as specialist.

Said's perspective on the specialist strategy aligns with Amir's portrayal in the novel as a protagonist. Amir is crafted as a fictional character and translated into the experiences of Afghans and Afghanistan. The transplantation of his character is a palpable idea to assimilate Amir into Western experiences for Western readers. His celebration of Western identity is significant to the explicit imperialism in the novel, and this inherent creation is perceived as a beneficial perspective for the Occident.

Beyond the binaries, the novel depicts the character of Hassan in a close relationship with Amir and also suggests a reconfiguration of Occidental superiority over the Orient. Said has pointed out such stratification of the Occidentals in Orientalism. When an Oriental character, according to Said, is placed outside of powerful discourses

and portrayed as weak and submissive to support the Western partner, it confirms Occidental authority. Western scholars strategically promoted this culture as "a kind of cultural and intellectual proletariat useful for the Orientalist's grander interpretative activity, necessary for his performance as a superior judge and learned man" (Said 208).

Said's standpoint clarifies that the Oriental cohort is accompanied by the West to maintain its power and authority. This power and authority manipulate the cultural superiority of the West, while Oriental culture is portrayed as inferior and submissive. The binaries are developed, depicting a powerful and weak partner. The novel incorporates both the powerful Occident and the weak Orient through the characters of Amir and Hassan. The novel suggests that such binaries of the powerful and weak are developed to show Afghans' affiliation with America in terms of American psychological, social, and political needs. These needs serve as primary tools for writers who re-Orientalize the Orient from a Self-Orientalist perspective. Self-Orientalists largely show psychological, social, and political appendages with the West, and Amir is an example in *The Kite Runner*.

Hosseini is a true Self-Orientalist in Dirlik's point of view with reference to Said' s *Orientalism*. Said's position is that an Orientalist is a person from the West who writes, researches, and teaches about the Orient. While Said refers to Westerners, Dirlik and Lau identify the same writers from the East as playing roles as Orientalists. They are either called Self-Orientalists or Re-Orientalists. Furthermore, these writers are of a hybrid nature as they belong to both East and West. Hosseini holds a similar hybrid position and functions as a native informant, providing information about the Orient (Afghanistan) to America.

Hassan is portrayed as a supportive character, as I previously acknowledged, while Amir and Assef are incorporated to highlight the two cultural identities. This segregation leads to major markers of a society, such as redemption, religion, loyalty, and friendship, which are discussed with reference to ethnic division in the novel. The two characters, Amir and Assef, are foremost effective in retaining stereotypes throughout the entire novel. Similarly, Amir's best friend, Hassan, belongs to a separate ethnic minority group called Hazara. Although Amir is later told by Rahim Khan that Hassan is Baba's illegitimate son and Amir's illegitimate brother—"My illegitimate half-brother"

(Hosseini 208)—despite this reality, Hassan is still treated as a member of a minority group based on ethnic division.

The ethnic division has created tension in the novel. Amir is stopped by Assef from playing with Hassan, who says, "In fact, you bother me more than this Hazara here. How can you talk to him, play with him?" (Ibid: 36). Furthermore, the segregation and division of both communities, and particularly the stereotyping of Pashtuns, is a theme worthy of special attention and discussion.

Religious fundamentalism and ethnic division are integral to the characterization of the novel and how the three main characters—Assef, Amir, and Hassan—are portrayed as puppets in the hands of religious fundamentalism and ethnic division. The novel states:

> I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. It said that the Hazaras had tried to rise against the Pashtuns in the nineteenth century, but the Pashtuns had "quelled them with unspeakable violence." The book said that my people had killed the Hazaras, driven them from their lands, burned their homes, and sold their women. The book said that part of the reason Pashtuns had oppressed the Hazaras was that Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Hazaras were Shi'a. (Ibid 6)

The religious fundamentalism and ethnic division construct different stereotypes in the novel, portraying the Orient as a distorted and uncivilized entity. The novel deals with these aspects to depict a bleak image of Afghanistan. Therefore, these elements easily translate into binaries to construct stereotypical images of the Orient. Although Hassan is the most hated boy in the novel, he presents himself as both psychologically and morally groomed. Further, Hassan is very supportive of Amir. When Amir was fighting Assef and Wali, Hassan intervened to save Amir, but in turn, Amir abandoned Hassan when he was being raped. This aspect of Amir's character depicts him as self-centred. The identical creation of oriental characters by the Orientals is seen as Self-Orientalists or Re-Orientalists by Dirlik and Lau because the writers affiliate with the West either for modernism or to become well-known in the West.

Similarly, the self-centred aspects of Amir are delineated in the novel. Despite belonging to a well-educated and dominant class, he is portrayed as a coward and weak person who is unable to help Hassan. Amir uses Hassan for his interests and benefits, and

in the end, he devalues him: “I watched Hassan get raped... I said to no one.” (Ibid 75). Later, Amir moves to America and pursues higher education, while Hassan is left behind in Afghanistan, struggling for survival. Hassan is left entirely at the mercy of circumstances and was killed by the Taliban, whereas the creation of Amir’s character is completely privileged. Amir becomes an internal Orientalist, assisted by Orientals like Hassan.

The interests and benefits of Amir can be extracted from his dominant ethnic position in contrast to Hassan, who is considered inferior. The relationship between Amir and Hassan is also based on binaries, constructing stereotypes of superior and inferior, powerful and weak, civilized and uncivilized, and so on. Both Amir and Hassan are shown as friends, but Hassan is portrayed as a weak character. Said refers to the Oriental as the weak partner, while the Occidental is depicted as the superior character. These binaries in the novel are created by Hosseini to incorporate and depict Afghanistan as Orientalized, and in the process, he has Re-Orientalized Afghanistan.

The relationship between Amir and Hassan is based on interests and benefits rather than trust and mutual understanding. Amir needs the company and friendship of a brave boy like Hassan, but he is ashamed to admit it in front of Assef and company, despite Hassan showing his trust and sincerity by saving Amir. When Amir is asked to disassociate from Hassan, he replies: “But he’s not my friend! … He’s my servant.” (Ibid 36) Amir does not show loyalty to Hassan and uses him for his defence and protection.

The relationship between Amir and Hassan is dynamic because Amir harbours resentment towards Hassan. Amir is aware of his racial superiority and neglects Hassan despite the great respect and obedience from Hassan. Amir is seen with ethnic and racial superiority, while Hassan is presented with ethnic and racial inferiority. This illustrates how Orientalists considered themselves superior and their partners inferior, which is a central theme in the novel.

On returning to Afghanistan in search of Hassan’s son, Sohrab, Amir is now more cautious and careful, facing Assef, who has joined the Taliban, representing the central antithesis of Western ideology. The confrontation between Amir and Assef is now emblematic of the struggle between the West and the East; one symbolizing freedom and the other standing for Islamic fundamentalism. This power struggle is causing serious

tension in the novel. Every Talib is portrayed as sadistic, cruel, and cowardly, driven to justify their religious extremism and fanaticism. Assef, now a Taliban member, confronts Amir and boasts about his involvement in the Hazara massacre in 1998 in Mazar-i-Sharif. Assef's voice is filled with pride: "I had read about the Hazara massacre in Mazar-i-Sharif in the papers. It had happened just after the Taliban took over Mazar, one of the last cities to fall." (Ibid 236)

The stereotypical portrayal of Assef's character in relation to Amir is evident. Amir shows his effort to free Sohrab from the clutches of the Taliban and is depicted as an angel. This gives American readers the impression that affiliation with the Euro-American canon makes one behave like Amir, saving people from the barbaric Taliban. It presents the rational aspect of America, while in contrast, Assef is depicted as barbaric and uncivilized, attempting to kill those who save an inferior ethnic community from the Taliban. This constructs the binaries of good and bad; America and the Taliban. This is how the Orient has been re-Orientalized in the novel.

The physical confrontation between Amir and Assef is of great importance where Amir is looking to rescue Sohrab from the clutches of Taliban led by Assef:

> "Like pride in your people, your customs, your language. Afghanistan is like a beautiful mansion littered with garbage, and someone has to take out the garbage."
> "That's what you were doing in Mazar, going door-to-door? Taking out the garbage?"
> "Precisely."
> "In the west, they have an expression for that," I said. "They call it ethnic cleansing."
> "Do they?" Assef's face brightened. "Ethnic cleansing. I like it. I like the sound of it."
> "All I want is the boy." (Ibid 284).

Now, this incident reveals the binaristic division between the East and the West. The Eastern community is stereotyped with barbarism and cruelty, while Western ideology is portrayed as superior due to its emphasis on education. In addition to the aforementioned binaries, Assef is more than a political opponent of Amir. He espouses pro-Nazi ideologies and strongly opposes American values. This ethnic and political confrontation between the two groups can only be resolved by America. America is

portrayed as the mediator capable of solving the entire controversy. In this context, Amir serves as a representative of America, aiming to resolve the situation by rescuing Sohrab from the clutches of the Taliban.

4.4 The Westernized Protagonist and Bad Muslim and Pashtun of the Orient

Representation in Postcolonial studies is the most significant tool for highlighting the stereotypical image of a particular community. The representation of one ethnic group by another is not considered appropriate and is largely deemed misrepresentation. Since 9/11, the Muslim world has been misrepresented by the Western world, with certain ethnic groups, especially the Pashtun community, being particularly affected. Different texts, as reviewed in the literature review, label Pashtuns as terrorists and extremists due to their resistance against Euro-Americans. Consequently, their representation is given with bleak and distorted images. Orientalists have produced literature where Pashtuns have been stereotyped and misrepresented, eventually being "othered" in this process of stereotyping.

A majority of Orientalists have misrepresented Pashtuns, while local writers have attempted to present the actual picture of Pashtuns. The case of Afghan Anglophone writers is, however, different. Hosseini, among the native speakers, provides the representation of Pashtuns in The Kite Runner. The image portrayed is not appropriate, and there is bias. The novel revolves around two ethnic communities, Hazara and Pashtuns. Hassan belongs to the Hazara community, considered an inferior ethnic group, while Amir belongs to the Pashtun community, viewed as a powerful ethnic group. The novel is replete with different references to both ethnic groups, portraying them as two binaries in the novel, akin to Orientals and Occidentals, West and East, and so on.

Hassan, the illegitimate son of Baba who could not gain recognition in the Pashtun community, is consistently treated as marginalized and oppressed throughout the novel. Hassan becomes a point of conflict between Assef and Amir, leading Amir to avoid affiliation with Hassan. The Hazara community is entirely depicted as oppressed in the novel, as acknowledged by Amir: "I read that my people, the Pashtuns, had persecuted and oppressed the Hazaras. It said the Hazaras had tried to rise against the Pashtuns in the nineteenth century, but the Pashtuns had quelled them with unspeakable

violence" (Ibid 8). Without any historical reference, Hosseini provides information about the two ethnic groups, portraying only Hazara people as victims. However, it should be noted that they never remained inferior and retaliated by killing many Pashtuns, including Taliban members, in return:

> All parties committed ethnic cleansing and religious persecution. The Taliban had killed Hazaras living in cities and forced Tajik farmers off the Shomali Plain. The Uzbek and the Hazaras had massacred hundreds of Taliban prisoners and killed Pashtuns in the cities north of and around Kabul. The Shia Muslim Hazaras had also forced Pashtun people to flee because of their Sunni faith (Rashid 95).

The stance of Hosseini can be aligned with Orientalists who provided similar representations without factual references. The phrase "it said" is noteworthy from Said's Orientalism perspective, as he identifies such instances as textual representations that may lack accuracy. Hosseini adopts a Western style of representation from a Self-Orientalist perspective to re-Orientalize the Orient, perpetuating stereotypes about Pashtuns similar to those found in Orientalist writings as documented in the literature review.

Amir's character is portrayed as less brave than Hassan, as evidenced by Hassan saving Amir from Assef and his friends. However, when it is Amir's turn to save Hassan, he pretends not to have seen anything. Nevertheless, Amir demonstrates bravery when free from the authoritative terror of his father. He goes to Afghanistan and rescues Sohrab from the clutches of brutal Taliban. While this act signifies Amir's bravery in the novel, it is driven by his desire to redeem his guilty conscience from the cowardly act he committed during Hassan's rape. Additionally, it illustrates that when Amir identified as Pashtun, he could not help his friend; however, embracing American life and values has seemingly transformed him into someone willing to risk his life for his friend's son.

One of the major criticisms of misrepresentation in the novel is the scene where Assef and his friends confront Hassan and he is raped. Assef and his friends are Pashtuns, and this portrayal can be seen as reinforcing negative stereotypes about their community by linking Pashtuns to child abuse. While the novel explores various traumas through

characters experiencing war, the Taliban, and marginalization, Hassan's trauma during the rape is largely absent. As Amir witnesses the event, his own trauma takes centre stage. In her paper "Translating Trauma in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*", Sara O'Brien notes that "the point turns to Hassan's point of view during the rape, and the reader never receives a sense of his physical or psychological trauma" (7). This suggests that Hosseini may not have fully explored the ramifications of this event for both Hassan and the reader.

Furthermore, the ages of the boys involved raise additional concerns. If, as the story suggests, they are all between 10 and 12 years old, then the portrayal of child sexual abuse becomes even more disturbing. While such abuse is unfortunately possible, its inclusion feels improbable within the context of the story. This raises questions about whether the scene's primary purpose is to shock Western readers and generate sympathy for Amir, rather than explore the complexities of child abuse and trauma.

Finally, some critics argue that Hosseini's portrayal of Afghanistan and its people caters to Western stereotypes of the "Orient." They suggest that the focus on violence, oppression, and trauma reinforces existing biases, rather than representing the richness and diversity of Afghan culture. This aligns with critiques of Orientalism, which argues that Western representations of the East often simplify and dehumanize its people.

Amir is assigned the role of a good Muslim and Pashtun, in opposition to Assef, who represents a bad Muslim and a bad Pashtun. The concept of a good Muslim and a bad Muslim has been introduced by Mahmood Mamdani in his book *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. This theory classifies and distinguishes between good and bad Muslims, gaining acceptance within the Euro-American canon due to its alignment with their requirements. As per this theory, Assef falls into the category of a bad Muslim and a bad Pashtun, while Amir is positioned as a good Muslim and Pashtun.

However, despite Amir's perceived status as a good Muslim and Pashtun, he proves unable to assist his friend in a time of dire need and lacks any heroic qualities. Even by the standards of this theory, he cannot be placed in the good category, as he admits to being a coward. Amir confesses, "I watched Hassan get raped" (Ibid 20) and

acknowledges, "[I] ran because I was a coward. I was afraid of Assef and what he would do to me. I was afraid of getting hurt" (Ibid 20).

Amir is not only a coward but also a liar and hypocrite, as depicted in the novel: "I wanted to tell them all that I was the snake in the grass, the monster in the lake. I wasn't worthy of this sacrifice; I was a liar, a cheat, and a thief" (Ibid 21). The protagonist remains inflexible and resistant to change, exhibiting passivity, leading him into more crises and ultimately resulting in the death of Hassan and his wife. Despite having the opportunity to rescue the entire family, his cowardice prevails.

Despite numerous negative attributes, Amir is still categorized as a good Muslim and Pashtun, primarily due to his alignment with the perspective of America. Furthermore, he is labelled as a good Afghan upon meeting Soraya. When Soraya expresses her gratitude for finding him, she states, "I'm so lucky to have found you. You're so different from every Afghan guy I've met" (Ibid 21). Amir himself admits to not hesitating to drink alcohol with his wife Soraya, mentioning an expensive bottle of Merlot that he consumes in her presence, though Soraya refrains from drinking in front of him (Ibid 28).

Amir's creation is heavily westernized, and his placement among good Muslims and Pashtuns is not entirely based on the principles of Pashtunwali. Pashtunwali expects every Pashtun to embody heroism, bravery, goodness, and a belief in Islamic principles, qualities Amir lacks. His representation is thus a misrepresentation.

Amir identifies as a good Muslim because he is thoroughly immersed in Euro-American culture. To conform to the Western definition of a good Muslim and Pashtun, Amir must forsake the true spirit of Pashtunwali. He acknowledges in the novel that he is aware of the double standards associated with being an Afghan, having amalgamated his personality with both American and Afghan cultures. This hybrid nature leads him to be indifferent to other Afghans, positioning him to misrepresent his ethnic community and cultural values.

Amir's character is moulded to be both a good Muslim and Pashtun due to his disdain for the Taliban. Given the prevalent issues of Talibanization in America, and considering that a significant portion of the Taliban consists of Pashtuns, providing information about the Taliban and Pashtuns to America brings him fame. In this context,

Hosseini assumes the role of a native informant and a self-Orientalist. Amir not only resists and detests the Taliban, but he expresses pleasure when Afghanistan is attacked by America: "America bombed Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance moved in, and the Taliban scurried like rats into the caves. Suddenly, people were standing in grocery store lines and talking about the cities of my childhood, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif" (Ibid 319). Hosseini's stance is distinctly Orientalist because of his aversion to the Taliban and Pashtuns. For him, both Pashtuns and the Taliban are seen as the root causes of problems in Afghanistan. Consequently, he significantly misrepresents Pashtuns on materialistic grounds to devalue Afghan culture and its values, while elevating Euro-American culture due to its perceived superiority. These binaries align closely with Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, and given that they originate from an oriental perspective, they also maintain a re-Orientalizing of the Orient from a Self-Orientalist standpoint.

For binaries, both contrasting entities are necessary; if Assef is not presented as a bad Muslim and Pashtun, how would Amir be labelled a good Muslim and a good Pashtun? Assef is portrayed in the novel with bleak and negative images, despite being the same age as Amir. One notable element stands out in the novel—Assef does not exhibit cowardice; he is bold and brave. However, he is depicted as indecent and rude from the very first line about him until the completion of the novel. Assef shows no regard for any human values except his brutal acts; therefore, he lacks decency and morality. In the novel, Hosseini portrays him as savage and barbarian: "Assef Goshkhor, or Assef 'the Ear Eater.' Of course, none of them dared to utter it to his face" (Ibid 34). Such descriptions of Oriental characters are already part of Orientalism, portraying Orientals as barbarians, savages, and brutal individuals devoid of moral values, driven by personal dark interests (Mamdani 2000). Hosseini adopts a similar stance through the villainous character of Assef to create binaries that differentiate between good and bad.

Amir's creation in the novel aligns with the construction and reconfiguration of Orientalist creation. The same stereotypes and clichés of Oriental characters are already present in Orientalist discourses (Dirlik 98). Hosseini takes a reverse approach to Orientalism, contributing to Orientalist discourses.

A notable difference between the two characters is that Amir is the narrator of the story, while Assef is voiceless. Amir communicates with the readers through his

narration, while Assef speaks entirely through his actions. As Said demonstrates in *Orientalism*, Orientalists narrate, and the stories of Orientals are depicted by these narrators due to their subjective positions. Amir is given the authority to speak because he is Americanized, whereas Assef is stripped of a subjective position because he is non-Americanized. Amir and his friend Hassan symbolize good gestures in the novel, helping others, while Assef, with the help of his friends, inflicts torture on others. Assef is not a polite boy but a brutal one, and his defining trait perfectly embodies Orientalist techniques. In the context of the novel, Assef's character remains entirely negative and can be labelled as the villain of the story: "there are bad people in this world, and sometimes bad people stay bad" (Ibid 278). Assef does not speak throughout the novel; Amir, the narrator, is supposed to speak on behalf of everyone. The confrontation between Amir and Assef is reported by Amir, while Assef's actions are depicted. During the scuffle, Assef gets injured, and Amir tells Sohrab that justice is done now, as he has injured an evil person.

Assef is perceived as a bad Muslim and a bad Pashtun because he is non-westernized and considered a threat to the prosperity and peace of Afghanistan. Amir sees it as his responsibility to expel Assef from the country and eliminate Talibanization from Afghanistan. Hosseini conveys this rhetorical vision to the world, justifying the American invasion of Afghanistan. Hosseini does not address the destruction and violence committed by American and NATO forces in their attempt to liberate Afghans from the clutches of the Taliban.

Pashtuns are depicted racist in the novel with the help of Assef. He has been presented as an archetypal character after Nazism. He pays attention to the role of social model image, showing his hatred from Hazara people, living in Afghanistan.

> "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns. It always has been, always will be. We are the true Afghans, the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood … Afghanistan for Pashtuns, I say. That's my vision." (Ibid 35)

One of the fundamental reasons for Assef's hatred towards Hassan precedes the marker of racism, involving sectarianism. Hassan belongs to the Shia group, while Assef is Sunni, and his hatred may have been triggered by sectarian differences. However,

Assef's character is exaggerated and misrepresented without taking the sectarian element into consideration.

Pashtuns are the targeted ethnic group in the novel, and at an intellectual level, Hosseini distorts Pashtuns' identity by blaming them for the anarchy in the country. Hosseini does not align with the elements of Afghan Pashtuns' principles of Pashtunwali, their staunch belief in Islam to serve others, and their love for the land. All these elements are portrayed in the novel with bleak images by Hosseini. Orientalists held the same stance towards these three aspects of Afghans. Both Muslims and Pashtuns are depicted as immoral, selfish, liars, tyrannical, brutal, savages, and barbarians. Thus, Hosseini justifies the American presence in Afghanistan. In his review "*Reel Bad Arabs and Jack Shaheen*," Syed Aijaz Zaka discusses the depiction of Muslims and Pashtuns: "He (Edward Said) understood that such negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims were all about power and mechanisms of power . . . these dangerous images and negative stereotypes do not merely remain part of public consciousness; they eventually manifest themselves in government policies, justifying wars and invasions (of America)" (6-7). Hosseini adopts a similar approach in his novel, calling for the American invasion of Afghanistan and supporting American interference in the country. Hosseini's stance is entirely Orientalist and consistent in every aspect with Orientalism.

Hosseini is significantly influenced by Euro-American cultures, aligning himself with three countries: Britain, Israel, and America. He expresses his perspective, stating, "There are only three real men in this world, Amir," counting them off on his fingers: America, the brash savior, Britain, and Israel. "The rest of them—" he used to wave his hand and make a sound "—they're like gossiping old women" (Hosseini 109). His affinity for America, Britain, and Israel is linked with the idea of the White Man's burden, where these nations are seen as civilizing forces for the Orient and third-world countries. Hosseini aims to eliminate religious fundamentalism and Talibanization, perceiving a dire need for American intervention in Afghanistan. Hamid Dabashi observes writers like Hosseini in his work "Brown Skin, White Masks," noting that they can feign authority while telling their conquerors not what they need to know but what they want to hear. In return, American and European liberals label them as 'voices of dissent' (16).

In addition to Amir's sympathy for Afghans, Americans are portrayed with parallel benevolent humanism and sympathetic attitudes towards Afghans. Americans have contributed significantly to the development of roads, hospitals, educational institutions, and infrastructure in Afghanistan. Similar appreciation is depicted in the novel when Rahim Khan, Baba's friend, is seriously ill, and Amir promises him that America will provide good treatment. Amir encourages him to be optimistic about regaining his health: "Let me take you home with me. I can find you a good doctor. They're coming up with new treatments all the time. There are new drugs and experimental treatments; we could enrol you in one..." (Ibid 175). Hosseini continues to develop binaries by portraying American culture as superior, characterized by sublime development and modernism, while Afghanistan is depicted as the traditional Orient, lacking advancement and development and bound to follow the Occident.

When American Army invaded Afghanistan, they eroded Pashtun culture through their military operation under proxy war to destabilize the country rather than to construct. America has installed different comprador intellectuals for their missions around the globe. Dabashi says in *Brown Skin, White Masks*:

> In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, comprador intellectuals were actively sought out by the militant ideologues of the US Empire. Their task was to feign authority, authenticity, and native knowledge by informing the American public of the atrocities taking place in the region of their birth, thereby justifying the imperial designs of the United States as a liberation (72-73)

Hosseini, as a comprador intellectual and native informant, provides information to America, playing his role as a Self-Orientalist in representing and reconstructing the Orient. Alongside Orientalists, natives, and semi-natives have also depicted Pashtuns with the same bleak and distorted images. These representations of Pashtuns and Orientals closely align with what has been documented in literature post-9/11, particularly in diasporic literature about Afghans. These representations serve as the primary justification for the War on Terror (Northcott, 2004; Gow, 2004; Drury, 2006). Hosseini serves as an example of a native informant and comprador intellectual who has betrayed his own community by furthering the American Neo-Imperialist agenda in the

region. It is evident that Pashtuns are misrepresented in orientalist discourses, a central task of Orientalists. Hosseini adopts a similar philosophy to re-Orientalize the Orient.

4.5 Afghanistan; the Classical Orient and America; the Modern Occident

The case of Hosseini is much more complex than simple orientalists, and his work can be placed in both Classical and New Orientalism because he entirely speaks on behalf of the Oriental people in the novel. This aspect distinguishes Hosseini from other writers who have written about Afghanistan, as Afghanistan is his native country, and his description of it might be considered true, but he turns out to be a self-orientalist. However, his technique and writing style are much different from that of Orientalists, as they are largely mistrusted as true representatives since their writings were not based on lived experiences. In contrast, Hosseini is believed to be a true representative because he belongs to Afghanistan and is knowledgeable about its culture and traditions.

Hosseini is not American, but he contemplates the American stance in the novel by drawing comparisons between the two poles—the East and the West—between which the East (Afghanistan) is always generalized and misrepresented. For Hosseini, both America and Afghanistan are ideological states where the relationships among different people are not static. Rachel Blumenthal questions the ideological homeland in Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (262). Hosseini goes against the idea of either moving to America or staying in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is portrayed as a place full of anarchy and oppression, whereas America is depicted as a place of peace and refuge. However, Blumenthal suggests that the idea of moving back home in the novel is rejected by different characters because of their personal identity and history full of misery (263).

Baba, Amir's father, is also going through a similar crisis. He has a fondness for America, but he developed an ulcer while in America. Baba is of the opinion that a new place cannot offer equal opportunities to a successful man. He believes in the need to work hard to lead a good life, given that he was a successful landlord in Afghanistan and a well-known personality. However, in America, he finds himself working in a gas station. The decline in his status deals him a serious blow, as he has suddenly fallen from the position of a landlord to that of a servant. The feelings of father and son about America are poles apart; while Amir feels proud because he is living in the West, as he

says: “for me, America was a place to bury my memories. For Baba, a place to mourn his” (Hosseini 112).

Afghanistan is the Orient, an ideological place where family relationships seem to be shattered. Amir and his father, Baba, had significant gaps in their relationship while living in Afghanistan. Their connection was rigid and did not change, but as they moved to America, a transformation is seen in their relationship. The disappointment, false expectations from each other, their roles as wife/husband, son/father, and mother/son now transform into real love and a fresh relationship. This implies that relationships in the East are often artificial and challenging to express, while living in the West fosters an increase in love, transforming artificial relationships into genuine love and authentic connections. Their shared past, coiled within the family, now undergoes a natural change. Amir is more optimistic and trusting towards the West than his parents. On the other side, Amir is flourishing, but his father is growing weaker. Baba mentions, “Peshawar was good for me. Not good for you” (Ibid 113). Amir’s father never attains a position in American society and eventually dies after a long illness. However, a significant position in the novel is that the West offers prosperity to the youth, while the elderly are not content with aging. The youth are empowered with various opportunities for a better life, but traditional cultures shatter and are replaced by multiculturalism.

The cultural oppression in the West resulted in Amir and Soraya being childless due to their struggle for a modern life, preventing them from realizing the dream of becoming parents. Amir moves back to Afghanistan, where he finds Sohrab and adopts him, completing their family through this adoption. Baba had desired a boy to stand beside him, shoulder to shoulder, but Amir was not perceived as brave. He expresses, “a boy who won’t stand up for himself becomes a man who can’t stand up to anything” (Ibid 22). In the West, Amir gains the power to confront various situations, whether standing up in the West or saving Sohrab in Afghanistan. However, the saviour is not believed to be native or semi-native but an Americanized or Westernized protagonist.

Upon returning to Afghanistan, Amir behaves like an American, a completely transformed man. He now embodies the modern manifestation of the American ideology, seeking to rectify a past filled with mistakes. His character represents the West and America rather than Afghanistan. Amir acts as a rational being, knowledgeable and a

writer able to assess life from different perspectives. America provided him with significant opportunities to become a renowned individual. Once a naive and somewhat ignorant boy Amir returns with a mission to civilize Afghan people as it is the reminiscent of the strategies initiated by Orientalists for Arabs. This technique is endorsed by Self-Orientalism and Re-Orientalism, contemplating native and semi-native characters in different discourses to re-Orientalize the Orient. The writer not only depicts the Orient from an Oriental perspective but also seeks modernism and affiliation with the West.

Although Amir is portrayed as part of the civilizational movement in the novel, when he returns to Afghanistan, he is treated poorly. Assef says, "Why are you coming back here anyway? Sell off your Baba's land? Pocket the money and run back to your mother in America?" (Ibid 233). Afghan expatriates are disliked by the locals because these individuals are perceived as supporters of America and its invasion. The same is true for Amir, who faces similar animosity. Despite not identifying himself as American, referring to himself as Afghan, he is still viewed as an alien and a tourist in his own country, as he says: "I feel like a tourist in my own country," I said… Farid snickered. Tossed has cigarette. "You still think of this place as your country?" (Ibid 231). Afghans are unwilling to grant him a position and identity within Afghanistan. His peers see him as an American visiting Afghanistan for some important work, yet he now sees himself as a changed man striving to be called "good again." The inevitable inferiority of Afghanistan is highlighted, as a man from the West comes to rescue a boy from the clutches of the Taliban—an illustration of the Orientals' perceived inability to represent themselves. Said in Orientalism has pointed out that the Orient cannot represent itself; it is to be represented. Hosseini manifests the same idea to emphasize the Orient's incapacity to save itself or advocate for itself. It is, in fact, the Americans and Westerners who rescue them from their crises and problems.

Classical Orientalism dehumanizes the Orient in a similar way, presenting the portrayal of the Orient as entirely primitive juxtaposed with the West. Graham Huggan in his article "A Beginning, Two Ends, And a Thickened Middle: Journeys in Afghanistan from Byron to Hosseini" discusses Hosseini's novel:

> "The novel´s touristic discourse … is deliberately designed to create a distancing effect. Hosseini´s Afghans are thus ´humanized´ at the same time as they are culturally and politically differentiated, and his Afghanistan ideologically ´Middle East-ified´ so as to create the false dichotomies – between West and the rest, self and other, past and present – that its colonial modernity, fully coeval with America´s contests." (72)

It is confirmed that the depiction of Afghanistan in *The Kite Runner* is exclusively negative, portraying Afghanistan as entirely inferior, while the representation of America is shown as positive and superior. Hosseini does not present a nuanced picture of the war to his audience; instead, he attempts to justify the reasons for the invasion of Afghanistan. Coeli Fitzpatrick expresses the opinion that the "American enterprise in Afghanistan is then reaffirmed as a well-intentioned and necessary occurrence—not because of the events of 9/11 but because it is a continuation of such attempts by foreigners to liberate the country from its worst selves" (250).

Questions arise regarding the truth, how it is presented to the readers, which aspects of the truth are kept hidden, and which ones are presented. Hosseini combines the historical version of reality with the American version, giving a superior position to America while presenting Afghanistan in an inferior position. Hosseini provides the American public with a significant insight into Afghanistan through the actual story, aiming to attract them by portraying how an Americanized protagonist is saving the people and offering a glimpse of complete belief in Hosseini's perspective. The presence of Hosseini's Americanized character in Afghanistan strengthens the binary of "us and them," depicting him as superior, while the Taliban and the natives are portrayed as unable to stop Amir from his selections and intentions. America, in essence, is implicitly dictating to Hosseini because the construction of different plots represents American culture with superiority, pretending that the narrator is not Afghan but American. This technique aligns with self-Orientalism, as endorsed by Dirlik.

Throughout the novel, America is portrayed as a superior and civilized country, while Afghanistan is presented as the classical Orient, depicted as a morbid place. Hosseini idealizes the American lifestyle while re-Orientalizing the Orient. He prefers to use an Orientalist style for the narration of the novel, with his primary focus being the

idealization of America. Dirlik proposes the same in his theory of Self-Orientalism. America, as a developed country, is seen as facilitating Afghanistan and its people. Therefore, it is essential for Afghans to heed America and its people for their interests. Hosseini states: "In Afghanistan, owning anything American, especially if it wasn't second hand, was a sign of wealth" (65), illustrating that America is more advanced while Afghanistan is portrayed as the primitive Orient.

Rahim Khan invites Amir to Pakistan with the purpose of exposing some hidden facts. Amir is informed about Sohrab and requested to rescue him from the clutches of the Taliban, emphasizing the narrative that primitive Orientals are incapable of rescuing their people, and Euro-American individuals are the saviors. Rahim Khan, who has never visited America, attempts to exaggerate America in front of Amir and portrays it in an idealistic way: "I see America has infused you with the optimism that has made her so great. That's very good" (Ibid 173). In the novel, Amir's father is also obsessed with the American dream, and Hosseini represents Pashtuns as submissive and inferior because they accept their inferiority and dream of another culture to fulfil them. This process conveys the idea of Afghanistan as a classical Orient, while America is presented as a modern and scientifically advanced country.

At another point during a discussion between Amir and Baba, the superiority and idealization of American culture, reaches its peak when Baba tells his son about the Euro-American culture that:

> "There are only three real men in this world, Amir," he'd say. He'd count them off on his fingers: America the brash savior, Britain, and Israel. "The rest of them--" he used to wave his hand and make a phht sound "--they're like gossiping old women."(Ibid 105)

American and Western cultures are depicted with superiority, while the Orient is identified as feminist due to its weak position. The description between the two binaries is simple and plain, portraying the West as superior and the East as inferior and susceptible to following the West.

The superiority of America is not confined to Baba's opinion; it is an ongoing process evident throughout the entire novel, emphasizing the superiority of the American dream and Americanized power. Common people in Afghanistan delineate and

appreciate the superiority and modernism of America. While moving to Kabul from Peshawar with Amir, Farid asks him:

> Your father drove an American car. You had servants, probably Hazaras. Your parents hired workers to decorate the house for the fancy mehmanis they threw, so their friends would come over to drink and boast about their travels to Europe or America. (Ibid 197)

The love for America and its superiority is first-hand information in the novel, as from the very early childhood of Amir, he is fond of American people and has appreciated them. He talks about an American person, John Wayne, who is very friendly, has long hair, an attractive personality, and wears colourful dresses. Amir is fascinated and motivated towards Americans from a very early age. Later on, when Amir moved to America, he is optimistic for a good life in America where he will forget his past: "for me, America was a place to bury my memories." (Ibid 112) Dirlik and Daura go for the same creation of Orientals who are motivated and attractive towards modernism and affiliation with the West.

America is a place where Amir forgets about the misery of Afghanistan, and he appreciates America for being free of every kind of pollution, sin, misery, disappointment, as it is different from the rest of the world: "America was different. America was a river, roaring along, unmindful of the past. I could wade into this river, let my sins drown to the bottom; let the waters carry me someplace far; someplace with no ghosts, no memories, and no sins. If for nothing else, for that, I embraced America." (Ibid 119) Amir faced different problems in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, with the most significant being the incident of Hassan being raped by Assef and his friends. That event still haunts him. He wants to get out of that shock, which was impossible for him; however, America is a place where he changed himself and found a comfort zone for his mind and heart. America has made him forget his bitter memories, and now he spends his life as a normal person. Therefore, it was the basic reason that he idealized America and exaggerated her values and superiority.

America is not portrayed as a gloomy place like Afghanistan. Comparatively, America is shown as a superior country from every aspect, particularly in terms of the happiness of its people. Hosseini narrates about the people of America: "Now, if you

were American, it wouldn't matter. People here marry for love; family name and ancestry never even come into the equation. They adopt that way too, as long as the baby is healthy, everyone is happy." (Ibid 181) American people are depicted as healthy and full of energy, while Afghanistan is comparatively portrayed as a degenerated country where people are unhealthy and cannot find good hospitals for treatment. Amir asks Rahim Khan to go to America for better treatment because American doctors are very skilled. Hosseini ensures the trust of Oriental people in the Occident and appreciates their advancement and modern technology, while the Orient is portrayed as weak and technologically backward.

The novel rarely delineates the stories of American people, but whenever the writer documents about American people, they are appreciated and encouraged. For example, he talks about two Americans who are living in Peshawar and are cooperative and helpful, and their place is neater and cleaner than that of the local people:

> "Please hear me. I know an American pair here in Peshawar, a husband and wife named Thomas and Betty Caldwell. They are Christians and they run a small charity organization that they manage with private donations. Mostly they house and feed Afghan children who have lost their parents. I have seen the place. It's clean and safe, the children are well cared for, and Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell are kind people. They have already told me that Sohrab would be welcome to their home" (Ibid 186).

Again, it is shown that Americans are the saviours of the Orient, and Orientals are incapable of presenting and saving themselves from crises. It is the Occident speaking for the Orient, representing the Orient, and constructing it. Said pointed out in Orientalism that the Orient cannot represent itself but must be represented. Similarly, Hosseini has adopted the same procedure and process to represent the Orient and speak for both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Amir behaves like an American, and his perspective is based on Western ideology to help the Orient and save it from different problems. However, it is explicit that the Orient is also represented with bleak, distorted, and stereotypical images in the entire novel.

The advancement and modern technology of America, with multiple facilities, are not only provided and planted in America, but America has established its missions everywhere in the entire world where Americans live. Hosseini is giving the narration of the American embassy, located in Islamabad, with beautiful words:

> THE LAWN OUTSIDE the American embassy in Islamabad was neatly mowed, dotted with circular clusters of flowers, bordered by razor-straight hedges. The building itself was like a lot of buildings in Islamabad: flat and white. We passed through several road blocks to get there and three different security officials conducted a body search on me after the wires in my jaws set off the metal detectors. When we finally stepped in from the heat, the airconditioning hit my face like a splash of ice water. The secretary in the lobby, a fifty-something, lean-faced blond woman, smiled when I gave her my name. She wore a beige blouse and black slacks--the first woman I'd seen in weeks dressed. (Ibid 285).

Again, it shows the advancement and superiority of the Americans in the novel, with modern advancements, and America is presented with positive images, helping the entire world, while the Orient is represented with bleak images and nothing more than chaos. Hosseini very clearly brings the binaries into the entire discussion about the Orient (Afghanistan) and the Occident (America). America is entirely shown as superior, rational, civilized, and modern, while the Orient is represented with submissive images.

In comparison to America, Afghanistan has been portrayed as a classical Orient in the novel. Different characters are drawn towards their nostalgic memories about the time they spent in Afghanistan. For example, Baba and Rahim Khan are shown with nostalgic memories. However, the period before the Soviet invasion is considered to be a better society in Afghanistan, and the time is romanticized. Baba talks about his home:

> He missed the sugarcane fields of Jalalabad and the gardens of Paghman. He missed people milling in and out of his house, missed walking down the bustling aisles of Shor Bazaar and greeting people who knew him and his father, knew his grandfather, people who shared ancestors with him, whose pasts intertwined with his (Ibid 119).

Sugarcane fields, gardens, people walking in bazaars, and discussions about the past and their ancestors are the classical stories of the Orient, which are acknowledged by

Hosseini in the novel. The pre-Soviet war descriptions include different games played by boys. However, upon Amir's return to Afghanistan, the streets are devoid of boys playing games, and old buildings have been replaced by new ones. Afghanistan is now portrayed as a gloomy place resembling the classical Orient, offering no hope for a good life but only catastrophe. Amir stays in Kabul with his companion Farhad, reflecting on the experience: "Farad's snoring soon echoed through the empty room. I stayed awake, hands crossed on my chest, staring into the starlit night through the broken window, and thinking that maybe what people said about Afghanistan was true. Maybe it was a hopeless place." (Ibid 246). Amir confirms the existence of the classical Orient in the postmodern world in Afghanistan. The Orient is largely associated with hopelessness in Orientalist discourses, a perspective adopted by Hosseini as he explicitly states that Afghanistan is a hopeless place, echoing Said's Orientalism.

Orientalists maintain a rigid approach towards the Orient, defining it as a gloomy place inhabited by people incapable of defining and representing themselves. As previously mentioned, they need to be represented. Hosseini aligns with the notion of Orientalists and applies the same approach to represent and speak on behalf of the Orient. He repeatedly defines Afghanistan as a gloomy and morbid place, echoing the viewpoint of Orientalists. The morbid and gloomy condition of Afghanistan is evident in Hassan's letter to Rahim Khan, providing a glimpse into the harsh reality of the country:

> "Amir agha, Alas the Afghanistan of our youth is long dead. Kindness is gone from the land and you cannot escape the killings. Always the killings. In Kabul, fear is everywhere, in the streets, in the stadium, in the markets, it is a part of our lives here, Amir agha. The savages who rule our watan don't care about human decency."(Husseini 184)

The killing of people, savages, and barbarians are terms now prominently associated with Orientals, particularly during the period of Talibanization in Afghanistan. In the narrative presented by Hosseini, Afghans are depicted with bleak images, described as savages, uncivilized, and barbaric, with their surroundings characterized by gloominess and darkness. The term "savage" is recurrently used, as Rahim Khan implores Amir to rescue Sohrab from the clutches of these savages. Additionally, Rahim Khan provides Amir with a description of Afghanistan: "children are fragile, Amir Jan.

Kabul is already full of broken children, and I don't want Sohrab to become another" (Ibid 187). This suggests that children in Afghanistan are suffering due to the ongoing war, exacerbated by the rule of the Taliban, who exhibit a lack of concern for the well-being of the populace. Consequently, the novel portrays a morbid image of Afghanistan. Hosseini seems to view the people of Afghanistan as morally and socially compromised, considering them corrupt due to their association with savagery and barbarism.

Hosseini reinforces the same negative images of Afghanistan as depicted by Orientalists in their writings. Afghanistan is portrayed as a place of anarchy and barbarism, whereas America is depicted as a haven of peace and harmony. The novel, with its contrasting depictions of America and Afghanistan, is rife with binary divisions, positioning both countries in opposition to each other. Afghanistan is depicted as an undesirable place to live, while America is presented as a favourable place, with its people characterized as rational, good, civilized, and educated, in stark contrast to the portrayal of the Afghan people as bad, uncivilized, irrational, and illiterate.

4.6 Misrepresentations of Taliban and Islam

The novel has been published after the downfall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, confirming that it is a product of the Orientalist perspective. This is significant because both Taliban and the Islamic world are contentious subjects within the realms of both Orientalism and neo-Orientalism. A detailed and separate section focusing on the representation of Islam and the Taliban is necessary to develop and substantiate the arguments presented in the research. An analysis of the novel reveals that Hosseini's attitude is biased towards various facets of the Orient, such as Pashtuns and many other characters from Afghanistan, who are controversially represented.

Aligned with the concepts of Orientalism and neo-Orientalism, it becomes evident that Arabs and Muslims are consistently depicted as terrorists and extremists. This portrayal is mirrored by Hosseini through the character of Assef, a Pashtun Muslim and Talib who engages in terrorism and extremism in the novel.

However, it is crucial not to underestimate the fact that Islam is one of the major religions of the world, and Pashtuns are predominantly followers of Islam. Dag Henrik Tuastad, in his research article, demonstrates how terrorism is unfairly linked with the Muslim world: "the 'terrorist stigma' is explained by a form of 'new barbarism,' where

explanations of political violence omit the political and economic interests, as well as the context when describing violence, and instead present violence as a result of traits embedded in Arabic culture" (591). Orientalists often associate violence, terrorism, and extremism with the Muslim world in their writings, and Hosseini appears to perpetuate this association by portraying Muslims with a similar identity.

Despite Hosseini's interest in Islam, he misrepresents some characters and the Taliban, who are religious fundamentalists. The Taliban took charge of the country for a short span of time in 1996 and imposed Islamic Sharia throughout the entire country. They are not favored by Hosseini, as he believes they have misinterpreted and misrepresented Islam. According to him, they started as heroes but eventually turned violent and barbaric: "So when the Taliban came... 'They were heroes.' A few weeks later, the Taliban banned kite fighting. And two years later, in 1998, they massacred the Hazaras in Mazar-i-Sharif." (Hosseini 187).

The novel conveys a strong message of Islamic fundamentalism, as it was mandatory for Muslim children in Afghanistan to learn the Holy Quran and Islamic laws from a Mullah and follow him in religious affairs. Amir was taught by Fatiullah Khan, a Mullah who restricted Amir from various activities: "He (Mullah) told us one day that Islam considered drinking a terrible sin; those who drank would answer for their sin on the day of Qiyamat, Judgment day" (Ibid 13).

This representation of Islam, Mullah, and the Taliban is a deliberate creation because Hosseini aims to convey and justify the ideology of Euro-American culture about Islam and its followers. In doing so, he adopts a stance similar to Orientalism, which presented Islam and the Taliban in a particular light in their writings. Mullah Fatiullah Khan, teaching the Holy Quran and Islamic teachings to Amir, is described by Baba in the following words along with other Mullahs:

> Then I'll tell you," Baba said, "but first understand this and understand it now, Amir: You'll never learn anything of value from those bearded idiots."
> "You mean Mullah Fatiullah Khan?"
> Baba gestured with his glass. The ice clinked. "I mean all of them. Piss on the beards of all those self-righteous monkeys." (Ibid 15)

The description of Mullahs and bearded Muslims is very narrow and stereotypical, reflecting the biases of Hosseini and his apparent disdain for Islam and its followers. The novel portrays Islam as a religion marked by bias and controversies, presenting both the Taliban and Islam with stereotypical and distorted images similar to those perpetuated by Orientalists.

In Hosseini's perspective, Mullahs are depicted as responsible for tarnishing the image of Islam by interpreting the Holy Quran, Hadith, and other Islamic verses from their own perspective to serve their interests. The novel portrays a misrepresented image of Mullahs, stating that "the mullahs decided that Ayub's son would go to hell after all for wearing his pants the way he did. They claimed it was in the Hadith." (Ibid 282). This portrayal of Islam serves to align the narrative with Euro-American cultural biases. Orientalists have historically perceived and represented Muslims similarly, and New Orientalists have increasingly turned against Islam and Muslims rather than just the Orient.

Muslims are not only represented with stereotypical images, but they are also labelled as terrorists in the novel, portrayed as brutal, savage, and extremist, often associated with their iconic beards. The novel explicitly depicts Islamic ideology as distorted and misrepresented. Various quotations from the novel suggest that Muslims are portrayed as foolish, atrocious, and collectively mad, perpetuating negative stereotypes about a larger group of Muslims.

Apart from the Mullahs, the antagonist of the novel, Assef, is equally significant as he represents the Taliban's standpoint. His character is stereotypical, portrayed as evil and dishonest, much like the Mullahs. Assef's brass knuckles symbolize him as a barbarian, savage, and bully. Other boys his age fear Assef, unable to confront him. Hosseini describes Assef in the novel using the following words:

> "On the surface, he was the embodiment of every parent's dream, a strong, tall, well-dressed and well-mannered boy with talent and striking looks, not to mention the wit to joke with an adult. But to me, his eyes betrayed him. When I looked into them, the facad faltered, revealed a glimpse of the madness hiding behind them. (Ibid 81).

Assef is portrayed as a disturbed and Hitler-obsessed boy in the novel. This is evident from his birthday gift to Amir, a biography of Hitler, confirming his madness. Assef admires Hitler for his harsh stance against the Jews, and his likeness to Hitler is symbolized in the novel by his strong hatred for the Hazara race. Although Assef and Amir belong to the same ethnic group, Assef mistreats Amir solely because of his friendship with Hassan. According to Assef, Hazaras have contaminated their homeland, leading to long-standing controversies that culminate in the rape of Hassan.

Joining the Taliban, Assef becomes a commander, exhibiting even greater cruelty and ruthlessness. He proudly recounts his role in the massacre of the Hazara community. In the novel's final section, Assef is presented as a Taliban commander responsible for the Hazara massacre: "A few weeks later, the Taliban banned kite fighting. And two years later, in 1998, they massacred the Hazaras in Mazar-i-Sharif." (Ibid 187) Amir later learns about the Hazara massacre from the newspapers: "I had read about the Hazara massacre in Mazar-i-Sharif in the papers. It had happened just after the Taliban took over Mazar, one of the last cities to fall." (Ibid 187)

The Hazara community is massacred because the Taliban does not consider them Muslims due to their Shia beliefs. This stereotypical portrayal by the author is a constructed narrative as Islam prohibits the killing or massacre of another community. The novel reports dialogues between Assef and Amir discussing the Hazara massacre:

> "But there are things traitors like you don't understand." "Like what?" Assef's brow twitched. "Like pride in your people, your customs, your language. Afghanistan is like a beautiful mansion littered with garbage, and someone has to take out the garbage." "That's what you were doing in Mazar, going door-to-door? Taking out the garbage?" "Precisely." "In the west, they have an expression for that," I said. "They call it ethnic cleansing." "Do they?" Assef's face brightened. "Ethnic cleansing. I like it. I like the sound of it." (Ibid 244)

The novel's narration is centred around the brutality and wickedness of the Taliban, who do not hesitate to kill people without any reason. Similar to Mullahs, the Taliban decide what is good and what is bad, lacking a coherent ideology and instead imposing anarchy and terror to coerce people into following their laws. One significant incident in the novel serves as evidence of this perspective. When Farid takes Amir to eat

lamb kebab, a tasty dish in Kabul, Farid mentions, "The only people in Kabul who get to eat lamb now are the Taliban." (Ibid 210)

This illustrates that the Taliban have the authority to dictate and control aspects of life, including the luxury of eating lamb meat. Consequently, due to the Taliban's evil and wicked intentions, common people are deprived of basic rights. The novel portrays the Taliban as unchangeable, brutal, wicked, and evil individuals. Furthermore, Hosseini depicts the Taliban and Islam as entities that contribute to the country's unrest through various tactics. The bleak and distorted images of the Taliban and Islam are not limited to one or two instances but persist throughout the novel, providing stereotypical representations. When Amir goes to Afghanistan to rescue Sohrab from the clutches of the Taliban, he defines the ideology and mission of the Taliban:

> "What mission is that?" I heard myself say. "Stoning adulterers? Raping children? Flogging women for wearing high heels? Massacring Hazaras? All in the name of Islam?" The words spilled suddenly and unexpectedly, came out before I could yank the leash. (Ibid 243)

Islam and the Taliban are entirely depicted with dreary images in the novel, aligning with the portrayals made by Orientalists in their writings. Orientalists place the responsibility for all wrongs on the shoulders of the Taliban. Muhammad Asghar Malik in "The Levels of Power Relationship in *The Kite Runner*" states that: "in the novel, *The Kite Runner*, the writer paints a vivid picture of the Taliban as violent bodies responsible for all the wrongs in Afghanistan" (74). Hosseini's stance reflects an Orientalist perspective on Islam and the Taliban, constructing their stereotypical images.

Chapter 21 of the novel also presents vivid images of the Taliban—depicted as extremists, terrorists, and Islamic fundamentalists. The novel illustrates such a construction of the Taliban and Islam from a soccer ground, once a green and lively stadium but now collapsed and destroyed by the Taliban. In the ground, two holes are evident behind the goal. Instead of hosting games, the Taliban use this place for whipping people and stoning adulterers in front of the public:

> "We are here today to carry out Shari'a. We are here today to carry out justice. We are here today because the will of Allah and the word of the Prophet Muham mad, peace be upon him, are alive and well here in Afghanistan, our

> beloved homeland. We listen to what God says and we obey because we are nothing but humble, powerless creatures before God's greatness." (Hosseini 230)

Taliban's orders are the final words, and nobody dares to reject or resist the orders of the Taliban. Amir's father, Baba, once told Amir that "God help us all if Afghanistan ever falls into their hands" (Ibid 235). Taliban and Mullahs, according to Amir and his father, are corrupt people responsible for the disturbance and massacre in Afghanistan.

Hosseini, in his novel *The Kite Runner*, presents bleak and distorted images of the Taliban and Mullahs from different perspectives. They rob, kill people, and rape children. Furthermore, they commit all kinds of brutal and wicked acts in Afghanistan to maintain their power. This ideology is referred to as a crazy ideology, portraying Muslims as terrorists, extremists, violent, and aggressive (Tuastad 595; Altwaiji 317). Hosseini's stance is akin to Orientalists, representing Muslims, Islam, and the Taliban with stereotypical images and considering them responsible for all misdeeds. They are placed in the category of bad Muslims because they are terrorists and extremists.

4.7 Conclusion

The preceding chapter presented an analysis of Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* from a self-Orientalist perspective, illustrating the re-Orientalization of the Orient. The chapter covered five sub-sections, which clearly showed that Hosseini had used the Western style of Orientalism and represented the Orient from the same perspective as Orientalists had given in their representation of the Orient. In the novel, Hosseini was re-Orientalizing the Orient from a self-Orientalist perspective by establishing a binaristic relationship between the Orient and the Occident. America was portrayed as superior, rational, civilized, literate, modern, and advanced, while Afghanistan was depicted as inferior, weak, submissive, irrational, morbid, uncivilized, and third world. Moreover, stereotypes and clichés played a significant role in the novel, as it presented bleak and distorted images of Pashtuns, Afghans, and the Taliban. The novel provided a complete representation of the Orient from a self-Orientalist perspective, which was not a true representation but a misrepresentation, akin to the representations of Orientalists.

CHAPTER 5

INTERNALIZATION OF ORIENTALISM: A (SELF) RE-ORIENTALIST ANALYSIS OF *THE PATIENCE STONE*

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a critical analysis of *The Patience Stone* by Atiq Rahimi from new and re-Orientalist perspectives. The chapter uncovers how Rahimi's work can be classified within the realm of self-Orientalism. The chapter has four sub-sections, contemplating the elements of self-Orientalism from different perspectives.

Section one is an introduction to the author and the text, providing a summary of the novel. This introduction is important in terms of acquainting readers with the storyline and different characters in the story. The second section is concerned with the internalization of Western and Orientalist values by the writer due to his exposure to representational material in Western media. The third section deals with the construction of weak vs powerful characters in the novel, leading to the fourth section, which discusses the selection and omission of historical facts by the writer. The fifth section examines how the writer has misused his advantageous (privileged) location to depict stereotypical images of Afghan women and has committed epistemic violence. The sixth section shows how orientalist views regarding male and female bodies of the Orient and their sexualities have been revisited in the novel by Rahimi. The last section addresses the representation of the Taliban during the War on Terror scenario since 9/11, a hot topic among orientalists. The chapter concludes with a summary of the critical debates presented in the earlier sections.

5.2 *The Patience Stone*: An Introduction to the Author and the Novel

Atiq Rahimi was born in Afghanistan in 1962 and later sought refuge in France in 1984 due to the ongoing conflict in his homeland, opting for flight over resistance. In

France, he achieved notable success as a director and writer of fiction. His debut novel, "Earth and Ashes," published in 2001, garnered praise worldwide. Rahimi adapted the novel into a feature film, released in 2004. Although Rahimi currently resides in Paris, he has frequently returned to Afghanistan since the United States' invasion in 2001. During these visits, he conceived the idea of establishing a "Writers House" to support and train filmmakers, fiction writers, and there writers from Afghanistan.

In his literary work, Rahimi provides a subjective portrayal of Afghan women who have endured exploitation and oppression in various contexts. These women have historically been marginalized and mistreated, with themes such as war, marriage, sex, love, and honour being explored with vivid description. *The Patience Stone* offers a poignant depiction of the inner turmoil experienced by these women, offering subjective voices to their experiences. The novel has received numerous awards, including the prestigious Prix Goncourt, and has been translated into multiple languages, attesting to its popularity. It was also adapted into a full-length motion picture released in 2012. Algerian author Yasmina Khadra, known for *The Swallows of Kabul*, praised the book, stating, "With a veiled face and stolen words, a woman silently bears her forbidden pain in an Afghanistan marked by the follies of men. Yet, she triumphs when she rediscovers her own voice."

In Persian folklore, Sang-e-Saboor, also known as “The Patience Stone,” is depicted as a magical black stone that serves as a confessional for people to divulge their struggles and survival tales. According to the myth, the stone absorbs the burdens and woes of those who confess to it until it eventually explodes, signalling a day of reckoning or apocalypse when people's burdens will be lifted. The narrative suggests that anyone who confesses their hardships to the stone will be protected from severe consequences, or alternatively, the stone will absorb their troubles, freeing them from their suffering. However, in the context of the novel, Sang-e-Saboor represents a person rather than a mythical stone. The husband of the main character lies paralyzed due to a bullet lodged in his spine, a result of a confrontation unrelated to his military service. Despite his past as a soldier or militant, he is now dependent on his wife, who cares for him dutifully, attending to his medical needs while unburdening herself by revealing her true feelings

and secrets. In this way, the soldier becomes the "Sang-e Saboor" for the main character, embodying the concept of 'The Patience Stone', from which the book derives its title.

His wife reveals various secrets, pains, desires, and deepest thoughts to her husband. Instead of devoting himself to his wife and children, he goes to war to become a hero. That's why readers witness bloodshed and killing around his character. The novel brings attention to courageous and brave women despite the oppressive weight imposed by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Khalid Hosseini has praised the novel and Rahimi's effort in the introduction with the following words:

> For far too long, Afghan women have been faceless and voiceless, until now. With *The Patience Stone*, Atiq Rahimi gives face and voice to one unforgettable woman–and offers her as a proxy for the grievances of millions…it is a rich read, part allegory, part a tale of retribution, part an exploration of honour, love, sex, marriage, war. It is without doubt an important and courageous book. (Ibid, 1)

After the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, local factions of fighters have plunged the country into a civil war. They are knuckled up with each other in the struggle for power. The story is set against that backdrop, showing how a mother of two survives the odds while her husband lays brain dead. The story is a long monologue and confession of her inner self, which she had kept hidden for so long; at last, she has found a voice that has eventually unburdened her.

5.3 Internalization of Western and Orientalist Values

Said's traditional approach to orientalism falls short in addressing the re-orientalization of the Orient. While his thesis was ground-breaking in postcolonial literature, it primarily focuses on how Orientalists portrayed the Orient in their writings. Said views the Orient as a constructed idea, formed through a discourse known as 'systematic knowledge,' which has been practiced for a long time. However, this construction occurred alongside the actual existence of the Orient in the world. The dichotomy between the Orient and the Occident is inherently political, privileging one perspective over the other, a notion that Said challenges. What Westerners perceive as "systematic knowledge" about the Orient is often their own biases and preconceptions presented as truth. These biases create a distorted image of the Orient, shaped by Western

desires rather than its true existence. Said argues that while it is common for nations and civilizations to hold oversimplified views of other cultures, the problem arises when these views are accepted by militarily and economically dominant nations. The presumed superiority of the Occident over the Orient justified colonial endeavours and the 'civilizing mission,' as outlined in Said's Orientalism.

In Said's book *Orientalism*, the focus is largely on the theme of representation throughout its narrative. Said references Karl Marx's assertion that “they cannot represent themselves, they must be represented”, indicating that even intellectuals of the time recognized this phenomenon as rooted in unquestioned intellectual residue. However, such depictions based on preconceived notions and generalizations lack factual evidence. Said provides numerous examples, including Balfour, Cromer, Flaubert, Marx, and others, to illustrate the development of Oriental discourse as a direct consequence of such representations and textual portrayals. This raises the question: “Why do they depict the Orient in this manner?” The representation stems from the Oriental being perceived as exotic, mysterious, and even romantic, leading to their depiction as such. Consequently, this gives rise to a body of knowledge or a "prison box of discourse," within which Orientalists are confined, unable to think independently beyond its boundaries and premises.

This is a unique instance where individuals from the Orient contribute to perpetuating negative stereotypes about their own people through their representational choices. Here, individuals from the Orient depict and stereotype their fellow Orientals based on Western standards and modes of inquiry, reflecting an internalization of Western ideals and rooted in the concept of self-othering. Lisa Lau's perspective forms the basis of this thesis, aiming to understand how Orientals represent themselves, with Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* serving as an analyzed text within this context. In the subsequent sections of this chapter, I will provide an analysis of Rahimi’s *The Patience Stone*, incorporating both Self-Orientalist and Re-orientalist perspectives. The primary objective of this study is to highlight elements of both Self and re-orientalism through the analysis.

The role of Afghanistan in global politics and its representation in literature, particularly by Afghan authors, has undergone significant shifts, especially since the paradigm shift after 9/11. Initially, Afghanistan held a prominent position in Orientalist discourses, largely shaped by Western representations. However, with the changing dynamics of global politics and the rise of self-orientalism, Afghan writers have begun to reclaim their narrative and represent Afghanistan from their own perspectives.

Works like *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini have gained immense popularity and critical acclaim worldwide, showcasing the potential for Afghan Anglophone writers to shape the narrative of their country. However, this phenomenon of self-orientalism comes with its challenges. While it allows for the representation of Afghanistan by its own people, there's a risk of internalizing orientalist values and perpetuating stereotypes.

The concept of self-orientalism highlights the complex interplay between Eastern and Western perspectives. Afghan writers, like Atiq Rahimi, who have lived in the West for an extended period, are influenced by both Western media portrayals of Afghanistan and Western cultural norms. This influence can shape their representation of Afghanistan, sometimes aligning with Western ideals of modernity and equality. Moreover, self-orientalism can be viewed as a form of internationalism, where the Orient seeks to engage with the West on equal terms. However, this engagement may also lead to the loss of cultural specificity and the perpetuation of Western presuppositions about the Orient. The rise of self-orientalism among Afghan writers reflects a desire for autonomy in shaping their narrative and representing their culture to the world. However, it also poses challenges in navigating the influence of Western ideals and avoiding the replication of orientalist tropes.

Rahimi, an Afghan expatriate writer who has resided in the West since 1984, is notably influenced by the prevalent Western portrayals of Afghanistan found in media. Living in the West for nearly four decades underscores the importance for him to immerse himself in Western postmodern culture and conform to its norms. Yan and Santos describe self-Orientalism as either a pursuit of modernity and parity with the West or an embrace of Western-influenced knowledge, placing Oriental writers in a similar trajectory as Orientalists. McVeigh, in his work “Japanese Higher Education as Myth," equates "self-Orientalism" with "internationalism” suggests a connection between the two

due to inherent assumptions. The West, being fundamentally postmodern, rejects nationalist tendencies, thus promoting internationalism.

In the post-modern era, nationalism has lost its grip on global concerns, with McVeigh observation that "internationalism is adopted to deflect attention from nationalist tendencies and to gain advantages in the global market" (150). However, there's an ironic twist in that the practices associated with internationalism actually reinforce self-orientalism (150). McVeigh suggests that individuals who benefit from Western privileges often adopt self-Orientalism to justify their advantages, hinting indirectly at figures like Rahimi whose works may employ problematic tactics of representation, raising doubts about their authenticity.

Though Rahimi's narrative unfolds within Afghanistan, the setting is no secret to readers. It transpires predominantly within a single room in an unnamed Afghan city ravaged by war, with echoes of conflict punctuating the storyline. Yet, the initial assertion that the story could take place either in Afghanistan or elsewhere holds significance. Rahimi, having left his homeland as a child and returning years later, missed witnessing crucial periods of conflict. Faced with limited options, he resorts to popular imaginings to depict Afghan women, drawing inspiration from a true event but embellishing the narrative with his imagination.

While confessional tales might have offered a more authentic portrayal, Rahimi opts for popular imaginings, a choice laden with significance. Furthermore, his representation of Afghan women relies on limited samples, a point criticized by Mohja Kahf, who argues against generalizing about Muslim women based on isolated cases. However, such representations find a receptive audience in Western academia and the American publishing industry, where narratives from persecuted populations in the Muslim world are in high demand. It's important to recognize the diversity within the Muslim female population rather than succumbing to sweeping generalizations.

Hosseini praises Rahimi for giving a voice to marginalized Afghan women, portraying them as representatives of their oppressed counterparts. This act of representation in Rahimi's work, particularly in *The Patience Stone*, is significant as it humanizes women who have long been silenced and marginalized. However, Rahimi's attempt to generalize the experiences of Afghan women through his protagonist is

problematic for several reasons. Afghanistan's diverse ethnic and socioeconomic landscape, along with varying socio-political realities, makes it impossible to generalize the protagonist's experiences to all Afghan women.

Feminist critics may challenge Rahimi's portrayal, arguing that it reflects only one perspective and cannot represent the collective experiences of Afghan women. Furthermore, positioning the protagonist as a surrogate for all Afghan women overlooks the complexities of agency and individuality within different racial and ethnic subgroups. Rahimi's portrayal risks reducing Afghan women to a monolithic entity and ignoring the diversity of their experiences and agency.

Rahimi's choice to focus on a marginalized character neglects the perspectives of more empowered individuals within Afghan society. By selectively highlighting certain narratives, Rahimi perpetuates stereotypes that align with Western conceptions of Eastern women as submissive and oppressed. This binary representation contrasts with Western ideals of female strength and independence, reinforcing problematic tropes about gender and power dynamics.

5.4 Historical Omission: Selection/Rejection of Weak and Powerful Character

The writer made an effort to provide his protagonist with a predetermined agency and position. This action on his behalf is a precarious position that, in the long run, denies other powerful individuals the opportunity to acquire this success. Remember that the novel is a monologue, and the only the protagonist talks at any point (Muhammad Uzair 188). Because of this, he has breached the principle of agency by providing voice to one character while silencing all of the other subalterns. The information about other female characters comes to us from her perspective and directly from her mouth. In addition to oversimplifications of historical phenomena, there is also the issue of historical omissions. The author has decided to use a character that is so unimportant that she did not even bother to give her a name in order to represent the stereotypical Afghan woman. The Woman is the name that is used to refer to her throughout the entirety in the context of the book (ibid 189). By incorporating and reflecting on the subject matter, Rahimi has wilfully disregarded many powerful female voices of opposition that have historically come from Afghanistan. This historical omission is not a coincidence; rather, it has

always been there at the core of political and ethical representations all around the world (ibid 190). For a considerable amount of time, the Orientalists had been employing this tactic, and now the Orientals are following the examples of their former masters in the said crafting. There are other instances in which Rahimi has committed this epistemic violence against the history and people of Afghanistan, but I will only focus on two of them; one of them is historical, while the other is fictitious and takes place within the novel.

An illustration of this point of view can be found in the novel in the section titled "Dedication". In this section, the author states that the book was written in remembrance of "NA", but in reality, NA is Nadia Anjuman, a poet and a victim of domestic violence. This section serves as an appropriate illustration of this point of view. After being subjected to severe abuses at the hands of her husband, she ultimately succumbed to her injuries and passed away. At the age of 25, she was enrolled at the University of Herat, studying literature when everything took place. *Gule Dudi*, also known as *Flower of Smoke* or *Dark Flower*, is a collection of her poetry that she compiled and wrote as an authorial work. Her husband thought that her poetry was terrible for his family's reputation, and he ordered her to stop composing it. However, she continued the practise despite his orders. In point of fact, the second collection of her poetry was going to publish under the title Yek Sabad Delhoreh, which translates to *An Abundance of Worry*. Poems in this book gave expression to her loneliness and desperation during her married life, which was the real reason for her death and was the subject of this collection. According to the *New York Times*, her husband, Majid Ahmad Mai, also attended the University of Herat, where he received his degree in literature and then worked as an administrator there.

Mai was taken into custody as the initial suspect. According to what he claimed throughout the investigation, he also admitted in cold blood to having battered her but that she had taken poison after the fight. However, due to the fact that he and his family persuaded the doctors and prevented them from doing the autopsy, this could not be verified. Instead, a phoney postmortem report was created. The reason of Nadia's death became unclear in the face of (or in the absence of) these evidences, and as a result, the court ruled that she had committed suicide. According to *Country Reports on Human*

Rights Practises, published in 2008, the judge found in favour of Majid and ordered him to be released from jail within a month after the case was heard.

This seems problematic for Rahimi's female protagonist to serve as a stand-in for Nadia, comparing to Nadia's unique and harrowing experiences, the protagonist lacks comparable depth. Nadia's resilience in the face of adversity, such as continuing her education despite Taliban restrictions, highlights her exceptional character. Her story, marked by perseverance and creativity, deserves recognition in its own right. Rather than being represented through a fictional proxy, Nadia's narrative stands as a testament to her strength and resilience. Rahimi's neglect of this powerful figure in his work is a glaring omission that diminishes the richness of Nadia's story.

The aunt of the protagonist serves as a powerful character in the novel, embodying resilience and agency despite facing profound adversity. As the sole sister of her father, she enjoyed a loving childhood but her life took a tragic turn when she married a wealthy man who subjected her to abuse and forced servitude on his family's farm. Enduring years of sexual abuse from her father-in-law, she eventually took a courageous step forward, carrying a note expressing her despair but choosing not to end her life. Instead, she found refuge in a brothel, where she eventually became its proprietor. In her current role, the aunt represents a form of social agency, having liberated herself from societal and cultural constraints, albeit with the respect accorded to women by society. She rejects patriarchal norms and empowers other women in the brothel, embodying a resistance movement against oppressive systems. Her actions, though disruptive, are a deliberate and political effort towards liberation. Her intervention also plays a crucial role in the protagonist's life, facilitating her marriage and preserving it by ensuring her pregnancy.

Furthermore, the novel echoes an Eastern perspective on women, depicting them as sexually enigmatic, engaging in forbidden liaisons, and grappling with emotional and sexual dissatisfaction. The narrative unfolds primarily within a single room, with the protagonist remaining unnamed, referred to only as "the woman," while other female characters, such as her aunt, mother-in-law, and neighbours, are glimpsed through her perspective. The aunt's story and the broader portrayal of women in the novel highlight themes of resilience, agency, and the complexities of female experiences within societal

structures. She does not fit the mould of a traditional hero. As described by Hosseini, Rahimi's protagonist possesses bravery, resilience, and maternal devotion, yet she also grapples with human flaws, capable of deceit, manipulation, and spitefulness. When pushed to her limits, she reveals a raw and complex side, baring her vulnerabilities. Her character warrants a thorough psychoanalytic exploration, as she is not a simple individual but rather a multifaceted person grappling with profound mental health challenges.

It is evident from her monologues that she is suffering from Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) (Nicholas Spanos 1996), a mental disease affecting every area of mental functioning. Her mental illness may have grown as a consequence of the violence she experienced, including physical punishment from her father for minor errors during her childhood, as well as mistreatment from her in-laws and spouse. She is conforming to societal expectations and performing a role that has previously stifled her authentic self. However, now that her authentic identity is becoming apparent, she is experiencing fear towards herself. She is unaware of the source of all this. Therefore, she reaches a final decision or opinion: “I really am possessed… Yes, I see the dead… people who aren’t there… I am…” (Ibid, 33). She further explains her situation: “This isn’t me. No, it isn’t me talking… it’s someone else, talking through me … with my tongue. Someone has entered my body … I am possessed. I really do have a demon inside me. It’s she who’s speaking… she makes love with that boy…” (Ibid, 30).

From her monologues, there's a suggestion that she might be experiencing hallucinations, particularly when encountering the deceased, a common trait in dissociative identity disorder (Spanos 1996). If this assumption holds, it casts doubt on the authenticity of her narrative, raising the possibility that the entire story is a product of her distressed mental state.

The main character's mother-in-law exemplifies the archetype of a woman who perpetuates oppression within her own community, embodying the concept of "double marginalization." Abandoning her sick son and vulnerable daughter-in-law, she pressures her son into marrying another woman when her daughter-in-law is unable to conceive. Meanwhile, the daughter-in-law's aunt, encountered by chance, manipulates the situation by arranging for her to have sexual relations under false pretences, resulting in a

pregnancy that salvages the marriage. The protagonist harbours deep animosity towards her mother-in-law, forced to sacrifice her own comforts while her husband is away on duty, yet outwardly everything seems normal to those around her.

Little attention is given to the protagonist's own mother, described by her daughter as a submissive housewife subjected to regular beatings by her husband for reasons unknown. Despite enduring unimaginable hardships, including the marriage of her twelve-year-old daughter to a much older man as a form of payment, the mother accepts her fate without protest.

Next door resides an elderly woman, her presence marked by the persistent sound of her coughing. Throughout the day, she engages in a routine of coughing fits and murmuring names too soft to decipher, only interrupted by the arrival of the person delivering water. Tragically, her entire family met their demise on a fateful night, victims of tank mortars during a violent conflict that engulfed the region. The trauma shattered her sanity, leaving her to roam the city streets, singing songs and exhibiting signs of distress. This portrayal echoes the depiction of the elderly woman in *The Kite Runner*, whose fragmented speech mirrors the character's diminished state.

It's a recurring pattern in fiction to encounter such peripheral characters, reflecting a harsh reality where weaker voices are fictionalized while strong advocates for emancipation and resistance remain unheard. However, this trend persists as a means to engage a wider audience, whether to provoke thought or impart knowledge to millions. From the author's perspective, there appears to be a deliberate effort to create a global platform for garnering public support, perhaps as a belated defence of the United States' decision to intervene in Afghanistan.

Rahimi's portrayal of Afghan women aligns closely with the Orientalist narrative, depicting them as helpless victims of patriarchy and war, reliant on foreign intervention for liberation. This 'sympathetic identification', as termed by Dirlik, seeks to understand the culture of the Orientals, inevitably perpetuating Orientalization in the process. Non-native readers may perceive such representations as authentic insights into Afghan history and culture, given the author's perceived epistemic privilege. The impact of fiction on shaping perceptions cannot be overlooked, evident in the widespread success

of works like *The Kite Runner*, which has influenced readers' understanding of Afghanistan, particularly in the West.

Through the lens of re-Orientalism, Eastern cultural producers navigate the orientalised East, either conforming to Western expectations, challenging them, or disregarding them entirely. Authors like Husseni and Rahimi contribute to the orientalist discourse, perpetuating textual representations fraught with stereotypes and bleak imagery of the Orient, as described by Said.

5.5 Epistemic Privilege and Epistemic Violence

The geographical context in which an author operates holds significant weight in knowledge development. Critical theories emphasize understanding the socio-historical positioning of authors and how it shapes their experiences as native informants, impacting the knowledge they produce. As noted by Bill Aschroft and colleagues, factors such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and abilities play a crucial role in delineating the boundaries of permissible knowledge and what remains inaccessible.

Rahimi’s work stands out for two primary reasons: firstly, due to his advantageous geographical setting, and secondly, the global acclaim it has garnered. As observed by Wheeler, Green, and Brock, Rahimi's narratives resonate not only with readers unfamiliar with Afghanistan but also with those with prior exposure to the country. This wide reach underscores Rahimi's role as an informant, simultaneously positioned as both insider and outsider, blurring the lines of representing power and raising questions about his motives.

In the context of self-Orientalism, Rahimi aligns with Spivak and Dabashi's concept of the native informant, embodying characteristics of self-Orientalization. Spivak delineates three categories of native informants— the Native informant, the Postcolonial Migrant, and the Subaltern Woman—considering them as "fictional characters" crafted through deliberate techniques. The Postcolonial Migrant, in particular, serves as a construct aimed at providing political support, aligning with American cultural politics and the US canon of wars across different nations. Rahimi's portrayal fits within this framework, crafted through confessional narratives and popular imaginings as outlined in the text:

> "She bends down again to whisper, "In the name of Allah, give me a sign to let me know that you feel my hand, that you're alive, that you'll come back to me, to us! Just a sign, a little sign to give me strength, and faith." Her lips tremble. They beg, "Just a word …," as they brush lightly over the man's ear. "I hope you can hear me, at least." She lays her head on the pillow" (Rahimi 3).

Leila Ahmad emphasizes the evolving roles of native-authored texts and the shifting dynamics of native informants in post-9/11 context. She specifically notes that both fiction and non-fiction penned by natives after 9/11 continue to propagate identical stereotypes about the Muslim world (A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, From the Middle East to America 225).

Rather than challenging the stereotypical portrayals of Afghan women prevalent in Western media, *The Patience Stone* paradoxically reinforces these perceptions. The fact that these affirmations come from an Afghan expatriate writer is why Western readers may unquestioningly perceive them as authentic. However, as highlighted in the text, Rahimi has jeopardized his privileged position as an Afghan expatriate Anglophone writer and instead utilized his epistemic standpoint to perpetuate epistemic violence in discourses surrounding Afghanistan. This violence stems from Rahimi's exploitation of his epistemic privilege:

> "Before she has picked up her veil, these words burst from her mouth: "Sang-e saboor!" She jumps. "That's the name of the stone, sang-e saboor, the patience stone! The magic stone!" She crouches down next to the man. "Yes, you, you are my sang-e saboor!" She strokes his face gently, as if actually touching a precious stone. "I'm going to tell you everything, my sang-e saboor. Everything. Until I set myself free from my pain, and my suffering, and until you, you…" (Rahimi 40).

Rahimi's portrayal of Afghan women in *The Patience Stone* aligns closely with the stereotypical depictions prevalent in Western media. These stereotypes include women wearing burqas, being uneducated, confined to the home, subjected to severe patriarchy, and victims of war and brutality. In Rahimi's narrative, the protagonist embodies each of these traits, reinforcing these stereotypes rather than challenging or dispelling them. Through selective storytelling, Rahimi omits strong, empowered women from the narrative, opting instead to present Afghan women in a stereotypical light.

This perpetuation of stereotypes may not be coincidental but rather an expectation placed on Rahimi as an Afghan writer. By conforming to these expectations, Rahimi's work is selected, packaged, and promoted, further entrenching the misconceptions about Afghanistan and its women. This aligns with postcolonial theory's anticipation of writers like Rahimi to challenge Western narratives but instead perpetuate Orientalist views.

Moreover, narratives like *The Patience Stone* have been utilized to justify continued American occupation of Afghanistan, blaming the Taliban for the country's woes. However, after 18 years of war, the United States is now negotiating peace with the same Taliban they once vilified. This raises questions about the legitimacy of the initial invasion and the current peace efforts. Perceptive analysis reveals that Taliban policies rarely harmed rural women, contrary to the narrative propagated by the United States. Instead, the U.S. intervention inadvertently led to the exploitation of women in the country, turning it into a sex industry hub.

The novel also delves into the Orientalist perspective on male and female bodies and sexuality, reflecting deeper power dynamics within imperialistic structures. These themes will be explored further in the subsequent discussion.

5.6 Sex and Sexualisation of Oriental Bodies

In *The Patience Stone*, the protagonist's aunt earns her livelihood by managing a brothel, engaging in acts of prostitution and sex work that are recurrent themes throughout the narrative. Despite the dangers posed by the ongoing conflict, when three men seek refuge in the woman's home and learn of her solitary living situation, she refuses to abandon her residence. Although she discloses to them that her primary source of income is prostitution, she deceives them about the extent of her involvement. This falsehood convinces the young man to return to her home, driven by the desire to engage in sexual activity with her in exchange for monetary compensation. Rahimi writes about prostitution; “when you fuck a whore, you don’t dominate her body. It’s a matter of exchange. You give her money, and she gives you pleasure” (Ibid: 40). Rahimi demonstrates that many Afghan women have been pushed into this state of affairs where their only source of income is through prostitution.

In light of the events of September 9/11, there is a pressing inquiry concerning the sexualisation of women's bodies and their portrayal within the discourses of imperial powers, particularly in the third world. The rise of human trafficking and the exploitation of women in prostitution have become profitable industries in these regions. Chandra Mohanty articulates her stance on these matters, issuing a challenge to Orientalists and urging action within the movement to address these issues:

> "Imperialism, militarization, and globalization all traffic in women's bodies, women's labor, and ideologies of masculinity /femininity, heteronormativity, racism, and nationalism to consolidate and reproduce power and domination. Thus, it is anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, multiply gendered feminist praxis that can provide the ground for dismantling empire and re-envisioning just, humane and secure home spaces for marginalized communities globally" (2006).

In the context of the War on Terror, there is a deliberate deployment of gender, race, nationality, and sexuality to construct and reinforce practices of sexualisation and racialization, particularly targeting the bodies of third world women. This serves to uphold patriarchal and colonial agendas by disciplining and exploiting these women's bodies. As a result, there has been a proliferation of the "maid trade" in the global market, alongside the growth of sex tourism and militarized prostitution on a global scale (Mohanty, 2006). Additionally, I concur that beyond the connection between sexualisation and warfare, the novel also offers a re-examination of the perceptions surrounding male and female bodies.

According to Hosseini, the way Rahimi describes the body of his heroine has presented the notion of woman as sexual being—a great Afghan taboo. He was successful in "not turning his heroine into the archetype of the saintly, asexual, maternal figure" (Ibid, 3). The novel has redefined the meanings of both male and female bodies. Life for women in Afghanistan is hard, but it is not a heaven for men either. The heroine says to her sang-e-sabour: "Sometimes I think it must be hard to be a man. No?" (p. 28). On another occasion she says: "When it's hard to be a woman, it becomes hard to be a man, too!" (Ibid, 34).

The little boy who can be called a little lad becomes a sex slave due to the fact that his superior officer kidnapped him when he was a young orphan and has subjected him to a pattern of physical and sexual torture ever since. After this the woman hears his account, she becomes incensed and goes to inform her husband about it:

> "He keeps that poor little boy for his own pleasure! He kidnapped him when he was still a small child. An orphan, left to cope on his own on the streets. Kidnapped him and put a Kalashnikov in his hands, and bells on his feet in the evenings. He makes him dance. Son of a bitch! ... The boy's body is black and blue! He has burn scars all over—on his thighs, his buttocks … It's an outrage! That guy burns him with the barrel of his gun!" (31).

Additionally, Hosseini references the tradition of dancing boys in *The Kite Runner*, a motif also noted by Jonathan Scott in *Arabian Nights* concerning Oriental cultures. Through a self-Orientalist lens, Rahimi employs a similar narrative technique. Despite Rahimi's purported goal of empowering women through storytelling, he neglects to give voice to the suffering of the young boy and other "dancing boys," who arguably endure greater hardships than the heroine. The young man's psychological distress is evident in his frequent stuttering, even when attempting to articulate himself clearly.

In Orientalist discourse, both male and female figures diverge from Western gender norms. Women are often depicted as passive, chaste, and loyal, while men are expected to be active, brave, and strong. However, these stereotypes do not always align with the reality of Oriental societies. Macleod further observes that Orientalism feminizes the East, portraying it as passive, submissive, exotic, and sexually mysterious, while the West is characterized as masculine, active, dominant, and rational. This contrast underscores how patriarchal and colonial processes within Nation-States necessitate the control and regulation of both male and female bodies.

Such ideas introduce complexity into the notion of sexuality and gender. According to Zillah Eisenstein, "There is female and male masculinity; and male and female femininity" (Eisenstein, 2007). The heroine exercises complete control over her husband's body. She engages in lovemaking, kisses him, and even strokes his penis. She possesses the ability to inflict torture, confessing, "Now I can do anything I want with you" (Ibid, 21). This is her moment to seek revenge for every injustice she has endured

because of this man. She expresses, “He’s keeping you alive so you can see what I’m capable of doing with you, to you. He is making me a demon… a demon for you, against you! Yes, I am your demon! In flesh and blood!” (Ibid, 21). At one point, she attempted to kill him by removing the drip from his mouth and leaving him alone in that condition for an entire night (Ibid, 20). She tells him it would have been preferable if “A stray bullet just finished you off, once and for all!” (Ibid, 16). In the process of revealing her secrets, she becomes so bold and vivid that she openly abuses her husband and his family. “You men are all cowards!” (Ibid, 11), “One should not rely on men who have known the pleasure of weapons!” because “As soon as you have guns, you forget your woman.” She criticizes men for their propensity to shed blood, whether on a wedding night or in the battlefield, without understanding the reason: “I have never understood why, for you men, pride is so much linked to blood” (Ibid, 14).

Despite the progress depicted in the novel, she continues to tend to him, changing his clothes and administering eye drops. Initially, she may have felt compelled by societal expectations, but over time, her actions become self-serving. She seeks the protection of a man, acknowledging to her husband that they have no right to be abandoned without male companionship. Rahimi paints a rhetorical picture of Afghan women as reliant on male protection, a theme underscored even as she ultimately murders her husband and flees with the orphaned child, revealing a continued dependence on males. This portrayal may also suggest a plea for Western military protection.

Furthermore, she confides her deepest secrets to him, gradually finding empowerment through the act of disclosure. She reveres him as her Sang-e-Sabour, believing that once it has absorbed enough darkness and suffering, it will liberate her.

5.7 Taliban and War on Terror in the Wake of 9/11

The Patience Stone was interpreted as an attempt to rationalize the US-led invasion of Afghanistan under the guise of rescuing brown women from oppressive brown men. Despite claims that the novel aimed to politically empower Afghan women, it ultimately served as a justification for military intervention. Following the events of September 11, 2001, the Taliban were portrayed as a common enemy, with Laura Bush asserting that they sought to impose their culture on the West. This highlights the

evolution of orientalism during the neo-colonial era, where new constructions of the Orient emerged. It's crucial to recognize this shift.

In recent times, Western nations have been inundated with new portrayals of Islam and the Muslim world, often depicting terrorists as an "exotic other". This Islamophobic narrative is evident in the novel. Rahimi explores the impact of war and bombings in Afghanistan, particularly on Afghan women, attributing these hardships to the Taliban:

> "Somewhere in the city, a bomb explodes. The violence destroys a few houses perhaps, a few dreams. There's a counterattack. The retaliations tear through the heavy midday silence, shaking the window panes but not waking the children. For a moment— just two prayer beads—the woman's shoulders stop moving. She puts the bottle of eyedrops in her pocket. Murmurs "Al-Qahhar." Repeats "Al-Qahhar" (ibid 10).

The primary objective of such stereotyping was to rally international public opinion against terrorist activities, framing the conflict as a clash of cultures and ideals, where "our fundamental way of life" is perceived to be under threat. Scholars like Gow (2004), Northcott (2004), and Drury (2006) argue that cultural differences are a key driver of war. Contrary to popular belief, the novel does not empower Afghan women; rather, it serves to justify the US invasion of Afghanistan. As Daura and Dirlik suggest in their theories of Self-Orientalism, Rahimi plays a crucial role in constructing and perpetuating Orientalist representations.

While the novel does not explicitly mention the Taliban, there is an underlying war depicted, with the protagonist hearing ominous sounds of conflict. It's implied that various factions are engaged in internal strife for political dominance. Through the chronicles shared in the book, we learn about one faction enforcing strict dress codes like the burqa mandate for women, a hallmark of Taliban rule. Despite their reputation for oppression, little is said about the measures they implemented for societal safety, such as disarmament and monitoring, which eventually allowed women to move around more freely. However, the US invasion disrupted this fragile peace. As reported by Agence France-Presse:

> "Just 10 weeks after the Taliban fled Kabul city, Afghans are already starting to say they felt safer under the now-defeated hardline militia than under the power-sharing interim administration that has replaced it. Murders, robberies and hijackings in the capital, factional clashes in the north and south of the country, instability in Kandahar and banditry on roads linking main centers are beginning to erode the optimism that greeted the inauguration of the interim administration" (Agence France-Presse 2002).

The presence of a group of fighters seeking refuge in the protagonist's home, along with their subsequent behaviour, strongly suggests their affiliation with the Taliban (Rahimi 12). This account mirrors typical cruel behaviour associated with Taliban members, reminiscent of similar instances depicted in Hosseini's The Kite Runner. Thus, Rahimi's purpose seems clear: to adhere closely to conventional depictions of the Taliban and hold them entirely responsible for the deteriorating situation of women in the country.

Existing literature on Afghan women not only lacks portrayals of their dominant side but also perpetuates oversimplified narratives that shift blame solely onto the Taliban, absolving the United States of any responsibility for the country's decline. However, the fight for women's empowerment in Afghanistan dates back to Amir Abdur Rehman Khan's proclamation fifty years ago, advocating for women to receive the rights granted to them by Islam. The 1923 Afghan constitution and subsequent developments, such as granting women the right to vote in 1964, illustrate a gradual trend toward women's empowerment. Under communist-backed regimes, women held significant positions in various sectors, including education, government, and healthcare (Kamali 275).

However, this progress was halted in 1992 when the Mujahidin, backed by the United States, seized control of Kabul. Their policies regarding women, which were not well-received even by more conservative Islamic nations, marked a significant regression in women's rights. The media in the United States seems to have overlooked the fact that Afghan women have been under patriarchal control since the US-backed Mujahidin took power in Kabul—a control that the current United States military intervention purportedly aims to liberate Afghan women from. Despite extensive rescue efforts,

including the dropping of approximately half a million tonnes of bombs in just one month, equivalent to nearly 20 kilograms of bombs per Afghan resident, the bombings failed to liberate Afghan women. Instead, they exacerbated the situation, forcing many to flee their country and seek refuge in overcrowded camps. In the story, the protagonist finds herself abandoned by her in-laws, left to care for her sick husband and two children alone. The theme of emigration and displacement pervades much of the fiction written in English by Afghan authors. The novel begins with a vivid description of the room, noting a curtain adorned with the migration patterns of birds—a subtle yet poignant symbol of the pervasive theme of displacement: "...and the two curtains patterned with migrating birds frozen mid-flight against a yellow and blue sky" (Rahimi 9). Millions of people were displaced during the invasion of the Soviet Union and the civil war, which, in Pakistan alone, amounts to 3.5 million by 1992 (Khattak 2002). Around 4 million people migrated to Iran, and many more to other neighbouring countries.

The traditional role of the mullah is also depicted in the narrative. The woman perceives him as foolish because he constantly accuses her of neglecting her duties to her husband and disregarding his instructions. One day, amidst a bomb blast and fire, the woman gleefully predicts that the mullah would not visit them, citing the chaos caused by the explosion and gunfire and "[h]e's scared of stray bullets. He's as much of a coward as your brothers" (Ibid, 15). The same mullah is shown preaching jihad in the mosque. He is trying to convince and motivate people to fight, stating: "Today, your brother, our great Commander, is furnishing you with weapons that you may defend your honour, your blood, and your tribe!" In the street, men are shouting themselves hoarse: "Allah O Akbar!" Running: "Allah O Akbar!" Their voices fading as they near the mosque: "Allah O …" (Ibid, 20). The mullah was not like this before. According to the woman, one could crack a joke with him, but he has also changed with the new laws proclaimed by the Taliban. She says: "He wasn't like that before; you could have a joke with him. But since you people declared this new law for the country, he's changed too. He's afraid, poor man" (Ibid, 20). This implies that her husband was also a Talib who fought for several years on many fronts for the name of God. The woman was married to him while he was away at war, and he came back after three years of their marriage. While praying for his health, the woman mentions: "Bring him back to life, God!" Her voice drops. "After all,

he fought in your name for so long. For jihad!" (Ibid, 15). The intrusion by the group of four Taliban members into the woman's home one night highlighted their lack of moral or ethical principles. They ransacked the premises in pursuit of valuable items, displaying a complete disregard for any sense of decency, "crouching down to pull off the watch and the gold wedding ring. The third man rifles through the whole room—under the mattress and pillows, behind the plain green curtain, under the kilim..." (Ibid, 25). In their second encounter, she resorted to deception, fabricating a story for the commander that she was a widow surviving through prostitution. It was a strategy to protect herself from any potential harm, a tactic she believed had spared her from assault. This explanation she confides to her Sang-e-Sabour:

> "Forgive me!" she whispers. "I had to tell him that—otherwise, he would have raped me." She is shaken by a sarcastic laugh. "For men like him, to fuck or rape a whore is not an achievement. Putting his filth into a hole that has already served hundreds before him does not engender the slightest masculine pride. Isn't that right, my *sang-e saboor*?... (ibid 43)

These instances clearly illustrate the narrative's portrayal of the Taliban as the epitome of villainy and malevolence. Works categorized as re-Orientalist often underscore the dichotomy between 'good' and 'bad' Muslims. Rahimi delves into the Taliban's practices during periods of conflict:

> Outside:
> They shoot a while.
> Pray a while.
> Are silent a while. (Ibid, 54)

As Henrik (2003) has already noted that the connection between terrorism and the Muslim world can be understood through the concept of the 'terrorist stigma'. This concept suggests that terrorism is often attributed to a form of 'new barbarism', where explanations of political violence overlook the political and economic motivations, as well as the contextual factors, and instead portray violence as a product of inherent characteristics within Arabic culture (591). Orientalists often associate violence,

terrorism, and extremism with the Muslim world in their writings. Similarly, Rahimi also portrays Muslims with this same identity.

5.8 Conclusion

The analysis of Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* from both Re-Orientalist and self-Orientalist perspectives was presented in this chapter. While the author and many critics have praised the novel for supposedly empowering Afghan women, a critical examination reveals it as essentially a justification for the war on terror, despite claims to the contrary. Rahimi's portrayal of Afghan culture and people aligns with Orientalist conceptions, suggesting a re-orientalization of Afghanistan through Western-influenced thinking. Raised and educated in Europe, Rahimi internalized Orientalist values, depicting Afghan women as meek, submissive victims of war and oppression, clad in burqas. This portrayal lacks credibility due to its absence from Afghanistan for over seventeen years. Additionally, Rahimi's representation methods, such as using popular imaginings while avoiding confessional tales, are criticized. Furthermore, he neglects to adequately portray Afghan women, committing historical and fictional omissions that contribute to re-Orientalism. In conclusion, Rahimi's work re-Orientalizes the Orient through self-orientalization, reinforcing binary oppositions between self and other, and Orient and Occident.

CHAPTER 6

REINFORCEMENT OF ORIENTALIST VALUES: MOMENTS OF SELF-ORIENTALISM IN *And The Mountain Echoed*

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter has been divided into five sections. Section one gives an outline of the story and sets the analysis in its proper critical perspective. Section two of the chapter deals with Dirlik's idea of self-orientalism, providing the context and framework for analysis of the selected novel. It is important because without this context we will not be able to see the different and contradictory positions that Hosseini employs to build his narrative. Section three looks at the postcolonial vires of Hosseini to be able to locate his theoretical/ideological underpinnings. This emerges naturally from the argument, and is, therefore, vital to our making sense of *And the Mountains Echoed* and Husseini's oeuvre. Section Four concludes the analysis of Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* which was pursued throughout the chapter and provided us with a reference point in our analysis. This allows us to make our inferences from this critical look at Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* in our final section.

6.2 *And the Mountains Echoed*: An Introduction to the Novel

And the Mountains Echoed is the third book of Hosseini published by Riverhead publisher in 2013. The novel is slightly different from the previous two novels which were more subjective, paying attention to one character, whereas And the Mountain Echoed depicts multiple characters, and the book is a web of different short stories depicting Afghan characters, living both in the West and in Afghanistan. Thus, the novel has been divided into different portions, consisting of nine chapters, which present the perspective of each character in the novel.

The first chapter of the novel depicts the story of Saboor who is telling a fairy-tale story to his two children Pari and Abdullah as he narrates usually before going to sleep.

In the first part of the novel, Hosseini narrates the fictional story of Baba Ayub through the character of Saboor to his children. Baba Ayub has a son Qais, taken away by evil spirit Div. However, Qais has been taken on the bit that he will be given good food and good life. Baba Ayub is not happy and finally goes after Div to free his son but he is returned after watching his son in luxurious life, provided by Div. Baba Ayub consoles himself that Qais is happy and facilitated by Div, therefore, he must forget his son now.

The second part of the novel depicts Afghanistan of the 1940s as two of Saboor's children Pari and Abdullah are travelling with their father to Kabul from Shadbagh. Their father moves to Kabul to look after his children and starts his career as a construction labourer with the help of his brother-in-law, Nabi, who is a servant with Wahdati's family. Saboor starts work at the mansion, and he is introduced to Mr. Wahdati and Mrs. Wahdati. Mrs. Wahdati requests Saboor to let her adopt Pari as her child, and hence Pari is given to Mrs. Wahdati. Both brother and Sister are reluctant to live separately and finally, Abdulla returns to Shadbagh destitute and grieved. Abdullah's love for his sister is increasing day by day, and he was once given collected feathers by Pari to throw but Abdullah keeps the feathers by owing to return to Pari one day.

The third chapter of the novel narrates the story of Parwana, the second wife of Saboor. The story of Parwana starts before her marriage with Saboor as she has to care for her beautiful twin sister, Masooma, paralyzed in a horrible accident, and she is unable to walk. Both Parwana and Masooma are beautiful and they showed their affection for Saboor but Parwana was jealous of her prettier figure and face. Both Saboor and Masooma develop a space for one other and finally announce their engagement but Masooma's accident is caused by her sister Parawana to fall from a tree and get her paraplegic. Finally, Saboor marries another woman who dies in child birth. During this period Parawana repents for her act and starts looking after Masooma. Parawana comes to know that Saboor is interested in second marriage, and decides to marry him. First, she is reluctant to abandon her sister, but finally marries Saboor and never meets her sister.

The fourth chapter of the novel depicts the story of Saboor's brother-in-law, Nabi who is the brother of Parawana and Masooma. Nabi is now an old man who works with Suleiman Wahdati as a chauffeur and cook. Nabi is a shy and reserved person. Captivated by her beauty, Mr. Wahdati marries a gorgeous but a mysterious lady Nila Wahdati at the

start of his career. The Wahdati couple is childless and on Nabi's suggestion adopts Pari as their child. Saboor agrees to give away his daughter for adoption but hates Nabi for his role in his family's break up.

When Pari grows up, her memories seem to be fade away as she fails to remember Abdullah and Saboor while she starts considering Nabi as the servant instead of thinking him as an uncle. The relationship of Nila and Wahdati reach a dead end as a result of Nila's alienation from him. Nila decides to leave her husband to live in Paris along with Pari, and decides not to go back to her husband. Mr. Wahdati takes the incident to heart and suffers badly from a stroke. The stroke leaves him incapacitated. Now Nabi is the only companion of Mr. Wahdati, who starts spending more time with his master to take care of him. Together both, Nabi and Wahdati, are growing old. When they were young, Whadati tells Nabi one day that he liked Nabi, a quiet and shy fellow who does not know how to respond to the affection of his employer but he works with Wahdati with more loyalty until the death of his master. Whadati dies in the early months of 2000, and to Nabi, he leaves all his property. In the same days, Kabul is invaded by the Taliban which left the city into a great chaos. Nabi has contact with several European doctors and surgeons whom he invites to come and stay with him without paying rent in the house he received from the Wahdati. Dr. Markos Varvaris is one of the doctors who received a letter of Nabi in chapter four and Nabi at the end of this chapter, tell Markos Varvaris to search for Pari to tell her that she also has a brother called Abdullah.

In the first half of the 2000s, two cousins from the United States, Idris Bashir and Taimur Bashir arrive in Afghanistan. Timur is involved in the business of second-hand cars and has an arrogant personality with a loud voice. While on the other hand, Idris unlike Timur is a doctor and a shy person who most of the time resents his cousin. Their main purpose of coming to Afghanistan is to inquire about the property of their family in Kabul. They are acquainted with the doctor from Bosnia, Dr. Amra Ademovic during the stay at Kabul. She introduces Idris to the Roshana, a beautiful young girl who was severely injured in a murderous attempt by the Taliban and Idris promised Roshana that he will go to find any means to pay for her surgeries that she is needed in her recovery from injuries. Idris goes back to the United States and forgets about the entire situation.

A few years later, Roshana fully recovers and is obliged to Timur for his generosity and active support during her ailment. Roshana is grown into a young beautiful woman and writes her autobiography that she dedicates to Amra and Timur. On reading her autobiography, Idris gets petrified that Roshana might have highlighted the insensitivity and carelessness of him. Despite this, he goes to the event of book signing for the book of Roshana. Upon his turn to get signed the book, Roshana does not pay attention to Idris and coldly acknowledges him.

The sixth chapter deals with the relationship between Pari and Nila Wahdati in which the former considered later as her mother. At the beginning of the chapter, Nila is shown as a woman of the middle age who is not having a good relationship with the adopted daughter. Even though she has built up a promising career as a poet, she proved to be a negligent parent to her daughter. Nila develops a relationship with Julien when Pari was in her teenage. Julien is the person for whom Pari, too has feelings of love. Julian's love relation with Nila stayed only for a few months. After a few years, at Sorbonne where Pari was studying Maths, Julien once again is seen by her and they once again develop their love affair. So Pari decides to tell her mother Nila that she is now having affair with Julien, to which she responds in a mocking way. Later in the chapter, Nila giving interview to a magazine of talks openly about lack of any intimacy between Wahditi and herself. Moreover, she remarks that Wahdati was "in love with a chauffeur". In that interview she reminisces over cruelty, violence and dominance of her father. Not too long, after giving the interview, Nila commits suicide by slitting wrists. The death of her mother leaves Pari devastated, who repents having not spent much time with her mother.

After completing her Ph.D. in Mathematics, Pari marries Eric Lacombe and begets three children. Over time, she grows old and realizes that being a parent is quite a difficult stuff and feels a stronger bond with her late mother Nila as she felt when Nila was alive. Many years later when Pari grows into an elderly woman and is unable to walk properly she is called by doctor Markos Varvaris who tells her that she has a brother named Abdullah. This revelation makes her feel a strong bond with her unseen brother Abdullah.

In the seventh chapter, the writer is concerned about the boy, Adel residing in Shadbagh during 2009. The Father of Adel is serving in the army as a strong leader and "Commander Sahib" is intensely loved to the extent of worship by his beloved son. A boy meets Adel with the name of Gholam one day and soon friendship is developed between them, and they started spending time together. They spend their afternoons by playing football. Gholam tells Adel one day that his father Iqbal is the child of Parwana and Saboor. Iqbal and Gholam are being forced by authorities to live in a refugee camp when the Taliban had invaded in the early days of the 2000s. So Iqbal and Gholam decide to go back to Afghanistan to sort out the land that is being stolen by the father of Adel. Gholam's story seems untrue to Adel who refuses to believe what he had said. So a few days later when Adel is sitting with his father at home, a rock was thrown by an old man named Iqbal. The son is ordered by Commander Sahib to go upstairs and "deal with the intruder". Adel is shocked knowing the news that a man is killed by his son but the next day Adel comes to know through a newspaper that his father was not a good and true fellow. After reading the storyline as the survival of "assassination attempt" on commander sahib, and started hating him.

Markos Varvaris narrates the eighth chapter, where he spends his childhood at Tions a Greek island. The relationship of Markos with his unsympathetic mother, Odelia, is conflicting as she looksafter him but does not love him. So one day his mother announces the visit of her old friend and her daughter named Madaline and Thalia respectively. Upon arrival and hosting, Markos notes that there is something upon the face of Thalia, "a hideous wound" that might be a dog bite, and in such a wound her most of the lower jaw is seemigly taken away. Over time, a friendship is developed between the two and Markos realizes that Thalia is an intelligent lady and quick-witted. Moreover, Thalia encourages Markos to take photography as his hobby. Later on, Madaline adopted the carrier of an actress in the film industry and she abandoned her daughter selfishly and leaves her with Odelia and Markos that showed no more interest in her own daughter.

Further, there is a break in the story, and Markos is seen in his adulthood. He uses the money inherited by Thalia from her recently deceased father and goes on to travel the world. Photography of Markos across the globe severs the natural landmarks. In the meanwhile, he remains in the friendship and contact of Thalia. But incompatibility to

save a boy in an Indian hospital and his survival from death urges him to become a doctor and he decides to select the field of plastic surgery and ambitious to repair the face of Thalia and suggested her most of the time which she refused every time.

When Markos is grown into the man of middle age and his mother Odelia into the old lady she suffers from the disease "Lou Gehrig". He decided to visit his mother at Tions where he is appreciated by her mother as she feels proud of him. Markos becomes jubilant upon hearing these words because he was longing to hear such remarks from her mouth. Nonetheless, he becomes sad upon the thought of being lived in alienation from one another, and further he wished that it could be possible to remain closer to one another.

The last chapter narrates about the daughter of Abdullah, Pari II. She elucidates how her father Abdullah is reunited with her aunt Pari. Pari II is shown as a good caring daughter who left her schooling to serve her mother and take care of her when she was suffering from cancer and died later on. Pari II takes care of her father Abdullah too in his ailment and dementia. Abdullah and Pari II are settled in California where they receive a call from Pari, and Pari II makes arrangements for her aunt to come to California. On the reunion of Pari and Abdullah, the later one becomes sceptical. But on the singing of a song that both siblings used to sing in their childhood, Abdullah realizes the truth. And the happy reunion could not last long because of dementia of Abdullah. Abdullah's memory loss causes trouble for both sister and brother. Abdullah in his bout allegedly calls Pari a thief and liar by shouting at her.

Aunt and niece decide to go to Paris. When they are packing Pari II finds a small box of her father and finds a yellow feather that might have been kept long ago. There is a note that she finds, mentioning the date after when Abdullah realizes his dementia. The note says that all his life Abdullah wanted to meet his sister Pari again. Moreover, in Paris, the daughter sees a clear dream about the reunion of Abdullah and Pari as children who tenderly embrace each other.

Ika Agustina Kurniawati in her research work "The search for personal identity in Khaled Hosseini's *And* The Mountain Echoed: A psychological approach" postulates four reasons for studying this novel; Agustina considers the novel based on a true story of a war trodden people. The novel according to Augustina depicts truly the war between the

Soviet Union and Afghanistan. Therefore, the novel attracts readers to read about the true representation of Afghanistan. The second reason is nostalgia when characters of the novel remember their past which was based on familial segregation. The third reason is noted by Agustina that impacts of war on Afghanistan are seen, and how different groups have controlled Afghanistan in different periods. The land saw the killing, poverty, Talibanization, War, and many other ups and downs. The last reason for reading this novel Agustina pointed out that the plot of the novel is segregated into different parts and it needs more attention to comprehend and understand the happenings in Afghanistan.

6.3 *And the Mountains Echoed* and the Story Telling of Hosseini

Spread across many geographical spectrums, eras, epochs, and narrators, Hosseini's novel *And the Mountains Echoed* opens with a telling image. It is the story of the Dev and Baba Ayub, narrated to the two kids, Abdullah and Pari, by their father, Saboor.

> "Once upon a time, in the days when divs and jinns and giants roamed the land, there lived a farmer named Baba Ayub." (Hosseini 1)

It becomes, in the fullness of time, a metaphor for the many strands of the story that keep it together across space and time and lends it continuity and endurance. It mirrors the life experiences of the major characters in the novel in more than one way. Having braved the difficulties of reaching the Dev's Palace, so the story goes, Baba Ayub is shown the riches available to his son that his otherwise wretched son could never even dream about given their state of poverty. Having entrusted his beloved son to the riches at the Dev's Palace, Baba Ayub comes back to a life beset with dementia and insanity. In a somewhat similar way, Saboor sells his beloved daughter, Pari, to an affluent, westernised, and rich Kabul family, the Wahdathis. This provides the context to the background Hosseini would play his real role as a self-orientalised native intellectual. It will be elaborated during the course of this chapter.

Saboor, as Baba Ayub's reincarnation, has bought a future both for his daughter and his other family members by making a deal with the Wahdathis who can be construed as a reincarnation of the Dev. But it is Abdullah who suffers from the kind of dementia that was given as a gift to Baba Ayub to alleviate his suffering as a father. But this gift of dementia turns out to be a curse in the case of Abdullah when he is unable to

make up for the lost time with his sister, Pari, who reunites with him after many ages. Pari does get a life of comfort in Paris after Mr Wahdathi is left by his despairing wife, Nila, and settles with Pari in France. Abdullah, on the other hand, lives in Afghanistan and later on in America and has a daughter Pari II who gets the life she deserves through her aunt, Pari I. She ends the story on a happy note for the future when the circle of their lives have come a full circle.

> "She turns her face to look at him, her big brother, her ally in all things, but his face is too close and she can't see the whole of it. Only the dip of his brow, the rise of his nose, the curve of his eyelashes. But she doesn't mind. She is happy enough to be near him, with him—her brother—and as a nap slowly steals her away, she feels herself engulfed in a wave of absolute calm. She shuts her eyes. Drifts off, untroubled, everything clear, and radiant, and all at once." (Ibid 402).

Uncle Nabi, another piece of the jigsaw that is *And the Mountains Echoed*, straddles a world of his own in Kabul with deep roots in his village Shadbagh. He has two sisters whose lives he affects in profoundly different ways. It is on his instigation that Saboor, Nabi's brother in law and Pari's father, sells his daughter to the rich, Westernised family in Kabul in exchange for a better life for his remaining family members including his sister, Parwana, who is Saboor's second wife and a step-mother to both Abdullah and Pari. Pari is a ticket for them out of their otherwise perpetual poverty. Nabi helps seal this deal and regrets it when the hour of his life approaches. In a telling letter that he writes to Markos, an NGO worker, he is seen repenting the deal that he had made.

> But all these years later, I still feel my heart clench when the memory of it forces its way to the fore. How could it not? I took those two helpless children, in whom love of the simplest and purest kind had found expression, and I tore one from the other. I will never forget the sudden emotional mayhem. Pari slung over my shoulder, panic-stricken, kicking her "legs, shrieking, Abollah! Abollah! as I whisked her away. Abdullah, screaming his sister's name, trying to fight past his father. Nila, wide-eyed, her mouth covered with both hands, perhaps to silence her own scream. It weighs on me. All this time has passed, Mr. Markos, and it still weighs on me. (Ibid 102).

Markos can now redeem him by finding his niece in Paris and revealing to her about her brother, Abdullah. This letter reunites the different strands of the families ruined by their respective Devs. A similar letter turns the tide in Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. Nabi's letter does the same thing in *And The Mountain Echoed*.

Hosseini weaves many interlocking layers within the story that gives a big canvas to paint a picture of Afghanistan across many epochs. It has many small supporting characters who work within enormous digressions to lend the novel a sense of coherence. This narrative technique makes it possible for the reader to see Afghanistan and its society during its many transitional phases. The story of the cousins, Taimur and Idris, presents a contrast with the story of Roshana, an orphan girls caught in the fight between the greed of her maternal uncle and her father. Both stories are about properties and the claims on these properties and how they lead to different outcomes in the rural and urban areas. In a somewhat similar vein, the story of Gholam, son of Iqbal, who was Abdullah and Pari's step-brother, is killed by Baba Jan, nicknamed "Commander Saib", because Iqbal wanted his property stolen by Baba Jan back. Commander Saib gives it a political twist and is construed as an assassination attempt on his life. Former Commander Escapes Assassination Attempt.

> Adel read the story in his father's study, on his father's computer. The story described the attack as "vicious" and the assailant as a former refugee with "suspected ties to the Taliban." (Ibid 273).

Thus property feuds are settled in Afghanistan through whoever has power and money. This speaks volumes about the brutality of Taliban regime, on the one hand, and about the liberated Afghanistan in aftermath of their defeat, on the other. This instance does throw Hosseini in a kind of conundrum because it refutes the thesis that has given him so much acclaim in the world as the painter of Taliban's brutality. The kind of lawlessness that prevails at the societal level, as captured in the passage from *And The Mountain Echoed*, is more devastating than Taliban's public execution spectacles to ward off against socially destructive tendencies.

Hosseini rebels in novel painting the Taliban black and the NGOs as their liberators but the kind of ground reality that has slipped, like Freudian slip which is an error or mistake that can be linked with unconscious mind, in the passage under

discussion, through in the text betrays the chaos that has ensued in the post-Taliban Afghan society. State control, albeit brutal in its public spectacles, under Taliban regime was geared to the same social goal that executions in Texas, USA are geared towards. It is an instance in Hosseini's text which puts Hosseini's whole critical acclaim as a writer of Taliban's stories under a certain kind of erasure. He has ignored to focus on the needs of Afghanistan and is more intent in his text with how Afghanistan has been saved by its Imperial liberators from a brutal regime. In postcolonial theory, it does not get more ironic than this.

Nila's (Mrs. Wahdathi) and her husband, Suleiman's (Mr. Wahdathi), late time depiction as sexual deviants confirm, in a certain way, their pact/parallels with the devil or the Dev. They both represent what Hosseini would not want us to focus on: the penetration of Western ethos in Afghan culture and society. These western ethos make the Afghan society ripe for postcolonial literary theory's incisive look because they are the metaphors for the depths that colonialism has penetrated in traditional communities. The same Afghan society is divided among its different selves. In other words, the society is facing an acute identiterian crisis which makes it, from another perspective, a ripe case for postcolonial insights like Dirlik's Self-Orientalism.

The life of Wahdati's family is reflected through an image from old magazine whereas their household is showed a beautiful example of Western creation. The chapter makes it clear that both Nila and her husband are true reflections of Lord Macaulay's (1835) Indian goal: a class of people, Indian in colour but English in their tastes, opinions, and morals. The concept of Self-Orientalism is similar to Macaulay's goal, as reflected by Daura and Dirlik, and put into practice by Hosseini. These morals are attested to by Nila when she narrates how she was looked upon back in Kabul. She reveals that she had left her husband because he was in love with her servant, Nabi. "It was you, Nabi," she said in my ear. "It was always you. Didn't you know?" (Ibid 109). She also paints him as more western than the westerners themselves. Her words are later substantiated by Mr Wahdathi himself when he leaves his property and everything else to Nabi. These lines from the novel are very close to Dirlik's concept of Self-Orientalism and more importantly Daura's concept of Self-Orientalism is applicable because both

wife and husband support Western ideology, culture, language and practices, and the reason behid their appropriation to West is, standing with modern values of the West.

Some other subplots and narrators help the story hold its own as Hosseini builds a background narrative of how Afghanistan is getting resuscitated back to life after the departure of the Taliban, and the country is now an attractive place for jobs and many other advancements, resulted by American invasion "By then, the Taliban had been driven out by the Northern Alliance, and the Americans had come to Afghanistan. Thousands of aid workers were flocking to Kabul from all over the world to build clinics and schools, to repair roads and irrigation canals, to bring food and shelter and jobs" (Ibid 77). No doubt these roads, irrigation canals, food, and shelter are the dire demands of every country, but in Afghanistan before the Taliban these facilities were rare and inhabitants had to struggle hard. Therefore, Hosseini's stance applies to Daura's and Dirlik's Self-Orientalism. In this part of the novel, I feel that the writer is fully supporting American existence in Afghanistan, and opens up the discussion to support the American attack on Afghanistan because Orientals are not capable of running their government in Afghanistan. The reason is noted that's why Afghanistan is ruled by the barbarian Taliban; therefore, Hosseini as an Oriental writer re-orientalises the Orient.

Nabi's letter to Markos, the Greek NGO worker, makes the stance of Hosseini abundantly clear about American love wherein he narrates how everything has come to pass in his life beginning with his employment at the Wahdathi household as a driver and ending up inheriting the whole Wahdathi estate. Nabi uses the context to illustrate how Afghanistan where one could have champagne and attend dance parties is murdered at the altar of a stricter view of Islam. Nabi invites them to use the premises free of charge by hosting the NGO in his inherited estate because Markos is helping to rebuild a war-torn Afghanistan. Nabi invites many doctors and practitioners particularly a Greek plastic surgeon named Markos Varvaris. Nabi invites them all to lunch and offers to give them a tour of Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital, where the NGO he works for has an office. He also invited them to a party that night. Hosseini could be implying that NGOs in Afghanistan should be extended for their cooperation because they are rebuilding Afghanistan. This implication encounters problems. Mark Duffield's seminal views about the role of NGOs in the perpetuation of the Imperial agenda in the insecure world would reflect differently

on how Hosseini wants us to perceive Afghanistan and NGOs. They are directly implicated by Mark Duffield as an integral part of a hegemonic world narrative spearheaded by the Empire. What lends credence to Duffield's viewpoint is not only the data but the theoretical underpinnings of his framework: Foucault's concepts of "bio-politics" and other "liberal technologies of power." Dirlik's perspective, which according to him is a further elaboration of Said's central argument in Orientalism, is always already implicated in Foucault's overall argument that uses to build his case for Orientalism with. I fell that combining this presence of Foucault in Arif Dirlik and Edward Said, on the one hand, and Markos and Nabi, on the other, helps us seeing the variance of Hosseini with the postcolonial perspective of the world, and how Hosseini has appropriated to English language and culture. It is therefore with much more than a pinch of salt that one can take insights.

According to the authors of the postcolonially titled article: "Resistance, a Facet of Post-colonialism in Women Characters of Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns"* Hosseini addresses the same appropriation to Western language and culture, and can be a supporting lens for my analysis. Thus, in accordance with theory of Self-Orientalism in these cases, the authors have conveniently put the label of postcolonial writer on Hosseini when he is, critiqued from the perspective of Dirlik's Self-orientalism, far from it. His postcolonial vires are closely analysed in this chapter to help us in our conclusions from our analysis of the novel.

6.4 The Outsider Within

> "If you are neutral in times of oppression, you have chosen the side of the oppressor." (Bishop Desmond Tutu 2002)

Hosseini has ignored all those historical and cultural contexts of Afghanistan that could give his novel *And the Mountains Echoed* the postcolonial credentials that it demands. He does this in a manner which makes him such a perfect case for understanding Dirlik's conception of Self-orientalism. Dirlik's conception is incisive but what needs to be sorted out in his thought is the strand within Dirlik's conception of self-orientalism, which he admits to be indebted to Said's, is the line that says that self-

Orientalism could be construed as something liberating. How can Hosseini benefit from the kind of representation of Afghanistan's cultural mix that he has captured in his books? Hosseni's re-Orientalization of the Orient is embedded to self-orientalism as something beneficial to the cause and context that Dirlik has in mind, is very puzzling and interesting. It is on this aspect of his novel that we focus in this section.

Context is very important in any postcolonial study. This research is using Dirlik's conception of Self-Orientalism and he was using the arguments and debates engaged within a very specific intellectual practice i.e. postcolonial theory. In my analysis of *And the Mountain Echoed* I cannot ignore an understanding of the contexts under which a cultural product, like a novel for instance, is launched and disseminated. The context reveals the location of the writer's culture. It helps us make a reference point out of him for a more intense critical look. Contexts are, therefore, at times the only markers that one could effectively rely on for a proper understanding of an author and his oeuvre. Postcolonialism was premised upon a certain cultural difference, upon the Other, and the superfluity of problems that were associated with his representations. It finds itself perched upon a trajectory which is radically different from the trajectory that Orientalism finds itself perched upon. There is a very deep qualitative difference between the two and it is this difference that is blurred by scholars working in the field of postcolonial literary theory. As would be made clear, this mistake of branding every successful writer with Other-origins as postcolonial creates innumerable problems for researchers like me in the field.

Context is, therefore, of immense importance in any study inflected by postcolonial theory. Said's Orientalism, it's ideological and philosophical underpinnings, and Dirlik's arguments make the local context of the writer a reference point for a fuller appreciation of the author. When one turns a postcolonial look on Hosseini and his works from the stand point of context, his postcolonial credentials become questionable. It is very important that we have a firm grasp of this moment in Hosseini because it would help us making sense of his works and challenge our hitherto "structured" responses to them. Afghanistan, the war-ravaged, poverty-stricken, wretched piece of land is the site and supposed context of an Afghan refugee, Khalid Hosseini. He depicts Afghanistan as full of social ills and contradictions through the character of Baba, Adil's father;

"Afghanistan is mother to us all," Adel's father said, one thick index finger raised skyward. The sun caught the band of his agatering. "But she is an ailing mother, and she has suffered for a long time." (Hosseini 134) Hosseini's stance is similar to Orientalists as they have constructed Afghanistan in such words, and Hosseini is re-Orientalizing the Orient from a Self-Orientalist perspective as perceived by Dirlik.

Religion and its various interpretations that verge on extremist Islamism of Taliban are at full display in all his works. In *And the Mountain Echoed*, the westernised Kabul elite looks upon the rest of Afghanistan as if they are coming from a different dimension of time and space. Hosseini supports Westernized form of religious practices, and appropriated to Western culture as depicted in the novel;

> "The king, and proclaimed his plan to reshape the country—kicking and screaming, if need be—into a new and more enlightened nation. By God! he said. No more wearing of the veil, for one. Imagine, Monsieur Boustouler, a woman in Afghanistan arrested for wearing a burqa! When his wife, Queen Soraya, appeared barefaced in public? Oh là là. The lungs of the mullahs inflated with enough gasps to fly a thousand Hindenburgs. And no more polygamy, he said! This, you understand, in a country where kings had legions of concubines and never set eyes on most of the children they'd so frivolously fathered. From now on, he declared, no man can force you into marriage. And no more bride price, brave women of Afghanistan, and no more child marriage. And here is more: You will all attend school." (Ibid 105)

And then there are the intermediaries between the space and time which are still hanged in in-betweens. This space in between is occupied by people like Nabi, domestic workers at rich households in Kabul, who provide the elite with a link to the wretched of the Earth. But, on the other hand, this same context of Afghanistan is the site of one of the longest wars in American history. The unholy trinity of the postcolonial thought, Said, Bhabha, and Spivak, have taken the arguments of this imperial hegemony to tasks as part of the politically-inclined nature of postcolonialism. Hosseini's novel *And the Mountain Echoed* is no exception, is purged of this dimension. The novel rather gives air of messianism to an otherwise wilful violation of all international norms by an Imperial hegemony in its occupation of Afghanistan. America is the elephant that complicit native

intellectuals, who, are trained not to see. Hosseini is writing from a context that is the site of American War on Terror but Hosseini cannot be found questioning the views of their pretexts for an unlawful invasion that were always already pre-loaded by the unholy trinity as the political dimension of postcolonial thought practices, and he welcomes American in Afghanistan because American brings development to Afghanistan as depicted in the novel;

> "Then one day in 2002 you rang the bell at the front gates. By then, the Taliban had been driven out by the Northern Alliance, and the Americans had come to Afghanistan. Thousands of aid workers were flocking to Kabul from all over the world to build clinics and schools, to repair roads and irrigation canals, to bring food and shelter and jobs." (Ibid 77)

Hosseini also brings into context different characters like; Nabi who welcomes Americans when he writes a letter to Mr. Markos; "a medical group that had come to Kabul to operate on children who had suffered injuries to their face. You said you and your colleagues needed a residence, a guesthouse, as it is called these days." (Ibid 77) Hosseini's stance in the novel is similar to Orientalists and he speaks like an Orientalist in the novel to depict Afghanistan as depicted by Orientalists. The reason is noteworthy that is why he continues in the novel to miss the plot in the context of Afghanistan and comes up with ideas and insights that are strictly speaking one dimensional. This is a trait, a symbol, postcolonial thought's philosophical foundation tells us, of how the modern narrative has structured modern man in the novel: one dimensional. Hosseini's position in the novel, in other words, located within the Imperial Centre and its narrative structures, does not fulfil the role, a postcolonial author is supposed to spearhead. This leaves him, and all those who label him as a postcolonial writer, in the lurch because he is unable to stand the critical scrutiny that postcolonial literary theory brings to the intersection of politics and fiction.

Dirlik has expanded his central concept Self-Orientalism to Said's Orientalism in order to show what Said missed out on. He does so by focusing on the complicity of the native intellectual in the drama against him. What Dirlik further proposes is startling: it gives "newly-acquired power". How can being complicit in a discourse against one's

own self be a source of power? Untangling this thread would tell us many things about self-orientalism in Hosseini's *And The Mountain Echoed* because I feel that it may reveal the context of his work under analysis in which Hossein pretends to write to gain power as Dirlik writes about Postcolonial writers in the context of self-orientalism that could be beneficial for a reason:

> While orientalism has been very much implicated in power relations between Euro-America and Asia, the question of power nevertheless should be separated analytically from the construction of orientalism. In support of this argument, the essay points to the contemporary "self- orientalization" of Asian intellectuals, which is a manifestation not of powerlessness but newly-acquired power. (Dirlik 96)

Hosseini's *And The Mountain Echoed* is the creation of West that can be best understood in terms of Terry Eagleton's marvellous metaphor of *the gaudy super-market* located in the Imperial Centre, which in Hosseini's case is the production of his text in America. I also endorse my standpoint through Michael Gorra's argument can further illustrate the situation when he gives the *post* in postcolonialism its anti-colonial orientation when Imperialism has merely shifted geographically i.e. spatially not temporally. The current Imperial Centre is no doubt America and Khalid Hosseini is located there and his books are the construction of Afghanistan from Orientalists' perspective, which play the role of the native informant.

One of Terry Eagleton's central ideas in the essay, directly addressed to Gayatri Spivak and her ilk, is his advice that they should be writing from within their social, cultural, and political contexts and not from their positions within the imperial centres. This rings true in the context of the present section wherein we are trying to establish a reference point, a context, to be able to gauge Hosseini's novel, *And The Mountain Echoed*. In other words, establishing a postcolonial rubric is crucial to making sense of the novel, its characters, and its writer's intellectual drift in our effort to understand the phenomena of re-orientalisation of the Orient and the enduring persistence of the Oriental stereotypes across time and space.

Dirlik expands, as has been noted already, the questions that were raised by Said but not addressed by him. Dirlik, in other words, stretches the argument further to add

further dimensions to our understanding of the concept of Orientalism. He sees the native intellectual as a culprit, as someone complicit in the development of this cultural subjugation. He calls it "intellectual imperialism". This gives rise to one of the most fundamental questions in postcolonial theory: that of representation. It is with this lens that an analysis of Hosseini's novel has progressed in the present study. It yields some very interesting conclusions that help us reflect on the concept of self-orientalism, as presented by Dirlik, and the postcolonial notions of representation and intellectual Imperial/liberation. Hosseini's work gives us the reference point to mount a critique of the interplay of these cultural/historical forces in a postcolonial framework.

There are "sympathetic identification" references in Hosseini's story that confirm our position *vis-a-vis* self-orientalism as an informing aspect of Hosseini's literary oeuvre. These identity markers that arouse sympathy for the "outside", the binary opposite are dispersed over the pages of *And the Mountains Echoed*. The textual references as I have already quoted are presented here which explicate Hosseini's dispersion of binaries in the novel because he considers Afghanistan is the part of America:

> "Then one day in 2002 you rang the bell at the front gates. By then, the Taliban had been driven out by the Northern Alliance, and the Americans had come to Afghanistan. Thousands of aid workers were flocking to Kabul from all over the world to build clinics and schools, to repair roads and irrigation canals, to bring food and shelter and jobs." (Ibid 77)

It is, therefore, abundantly clear that Hosseini's context is incompatible with the demands that context in its postcolonial inflections, conditioning, and implications would conjure up in our minds. He is using a structure that is responsible for creating an image of Afghanistan and Islam in the world that rallies nations under America's leadership to bring *freedom* and *democracy* to Afghanistan under the project of Enduring Freedom. With his context, and by extension, his reference point thus made, Hosseini comes out as part of the problematic. He is no longer the face of Afghanistan's cries for help from foreign subjugation but is rather complicit, as both Dirlik and Said said they would be, in the crimes perpetrated against Afghanistan, its people, and its society. The very

resistance, which is the hallmark of postcolonial writers, is completely missing from Hosseini's context giving him a place among the silent Victorian spectators like Dickens, Austen, and Conrad of yore before him. They saw the world exactly as it is seen and made sense of by Hosseini: Empire as an enigmatic presence among a cultural, social, and ethnic Other that provides for the luxuries back home. It is nice to be in Scunthorpe, as Terry Eagleton would interject, while talking about Sienna. This leaves us with a very strong sense of how Hosseini has been performing the task of self-orientalism in the court of his Imperial masters.

6.5 Authenticating the Stereotypes

Self-Orientalism peeps through the novel at every turn of the page through the analogy of two different kinds of Afghanistan. Hosseini fills the novel with stereotypes that remain stable for the novel's intended reader in the western world. The Oriental in Hosseini's novel *And the Mountain Echoed* is marred by all those idiosyncrasies that would be translatable for the intended audience. No amount of effort is needed to infer that Afghanistan is stuck in time because she has not evolved the way other nations have evolved. Foreign insights of culture are used to compare and contrast the amount of effort and time needed to evolve out of the current straits. Nila, Mr Wahdathi, Idris, and Timur straddle a different world of Afghanistan than the world of Gholam, Iqbal, Roshna, and Pari. Afghanistan is liberated from Taliban's strict Islamism and reunited with the age of parties, jazz and booze. This jazzing and boozing is presented by Hosseini as a sign of liberated life. According to Hosseini, Afghan since long supports modern values as he substantiated his arguments from Nila's interview:

> Nila Wahdati mentions that she is not Afghan and her family travelled to Afghanistan to aid in the political and social reforms of King Amanullah Khan, who ruled from 1919 to 1929. Amanullah instituted sweeping changes in Afghan society, banning the institution of slavery, modernizing and Westernizing the school system, and reducing state censorship of scientific and religious texts. (Hosseini 201)

However, I agree with Hosseini's standpoint about Afghanistan and its people who always appropriated to modern values but unfortunately, the consistent interference of different powers in Afghanistan weakened its position and different stereotypes have

been annexed with i.e savages, barbarian and Taliban like etc. Therefore, Afghanistan as an Orient is depicted as exotic and mythical is met with a supporting image at the very beginning of the story and the subsequent implications and parallels with the lives of the two central characters i.e Pari and Abdullah reinforce the idea and image of the Orient. Treatment of women, how the Orientals trade their daughters for money, is represented by Saboor who sell his daughter to the Wahdathis.

> "When Mr. Wahdati eventually buckled—which didn't surprise me, Nila was a woman of formidable will—I informed Saboor and offered to drive him and Pari to Kabul. I will never fully understand why he chose to instead walk his daughter from Shadbagh. Or why he allowed Abdullah to come along. Perhaps he was clinging to what little time he had left with his daughter. Perhaps he sought a measure of penance in the hardship of the journey. Or perhaps it was Saboor's pride, and he would not ride in the car of the man who was buying his daughter." (Hosseini 63)

This would chill any parent in the west. And it would not be amiss to say that it was precisely this effect that was supposed to be created. Hosseini follows Orientalists' script following the statement about Afghans who sell their daughters. This treatment of selling women has been also noted by Riaz in his research. According to Riaz, Orientalists assume the idea that Afghan sell their daughters, and Orientalists merely heard from others, not physically observed during their tour to Afghanistan. The same has been applied by Hosseini in And the Mountain Echoed, and I stand with my argument about re-Orientalization of the Orient in Hosseini's novel from self-Orientalist perspective.

Similarly, Hosseini's scrutiny of the diverse behaviour of Idris and Timur is a condescending reproach of the cocky, arrogant, westernized Afghan youth. He is teaching them manners because they are crude, and sexually perverted. This image of crudeness is precisely the stereotype that captures Hosseini in his act of self-orientalism. Afghans are incorrigible and they would revert to a world of revelry and westernization once the wheels of extremist ideologies of Islam in Afghanistan have come off. It needs an overlord at the moment to teach it manners and help it evolve.

> "There is a man sitting on the other side of the bed, gaunt, sunburned, with a rat's-nest beard and stubbly dark hair. When Idris enters, the man quickly gets up, flattens a hand against his chest, and bows. Idris is struck again by how easily the locals can tell he is a westernized Afghan, how the whiff of money and power affords him unwarranted privilege in this city." (Ibid 90).

This, looked at from the perspective of the novel's western reader, is justifiable. This is how Orientalists have been subjugating the Orient since very long. In other words, despite the spatial shift in the centers of Empire, the Orient has remained subjugated temporally without a break. The legendary greed, considered an abiding trait of the stereotypical Oriental, is seen at work at many places in the novel. From Saboor selling his daughter for money to his son being killed by Baba Jan, the veteran Afghan Commander, for asking for his land back, to Roshna's family being butchered by their own uncle, to the arrival of Idris and Timur in Kabul from California to make money in the booming revival of a post-Taliban Kabul are instances of Hosseini reinforcing the image of an abiding stereotypical image of the Orient. This spares him the trouble to notice the presence of the imperial elephant in the room. He even reduces Afghan to an exotica in their own country. Abdullah records these impressions as he compares and contrasts the riches at the Wahdathi household with the wretched poverty back home. Further, Orientalists were fascinated with the way opium was consumed by the Orientals, and Hosseini in the same way depicts opium consumption in the novel as quoted below:

> "Parwana fills the hookah's vase with water. She takes two matchhead-sized portions of opium flakes with a pinch of tobacco and drops the mix into the hookah's bowl. She lights the coal on the metal screen and hands the hookah to her sister. Masooma takes a deep puff from the hose, reclines against the cushions, and asks if she can rest her legs on Parwana's lap. Parwana reaches down and lifts the limp legs to rest across her own." (Ibid 42).

This stereotypical image of Orientals also finds a place in Hosseini's novel when Parwana makes the hookah for her sister and they both take deep drags from it. This is another glaring example of how self-orientalism is at work in Hosseini's novels and how it supports the view held by both Dirlik and Said that native intellectuals were complicit

in bringing the Oriental stereotypes to life in the western imagination. Narratives like Hosseini's reconfirm the abiding thrust in Dirlik's and Said's respective conceptions of Orientalism and self-orientalism.

Hosseini's opening story of Dev, besides being an incriminating piece of evidence in a long list of moments of self-orientalism in Hosseini's book, could very well be an allegory of the different imperial hordes that came to ravage Afghan society from across the mountains; all those who had left these rugged mountains echoing with bombs and cries. He imposes the image of fictional, mythic, exotic times of Oriental world, as understood by the Victorian society, seamlessly on the Afghan society and draws a completely different inference in the novel:

> "Once upon a time, in the days when divs and jinns and giants roamed the land, there lived a farmer named Baba Ayub. He lived with his family in a little village by the name of Maidan Sabz. Because he had a large family to feed, Baba Ayub saw his days consumed by hard work." (Ibid 7)

These kinds of fantasy and imaginative stories have already been linked by Orientalists with the Orient in their writings, and the same has been employed by Hosseini in *And the Mountain Echoed* from Self-Orientalist perspective. So, Hosseini is re-Orientalizing the Orient and standing with Dirlik and Lau's concepts.

Postcolonial literary theory makes its readers particularly sensitive to these double acts and moments of wrong inferences performed by the native intellectual/writer. It teaches how these seemingly innocuous moments in narration are flowing from a certain trajectory of thought in the west that Postcolonial literary theory highlights as its ideological Other. This ideological Other has been constructing narratives and native intellectuals fell for it. Hosseini's inferences, although subtle, cannot hide this ideological conditioning. How then can, as Dirlik's conception of self-orientalists as complicit in the conception of Orientalism, Hosseini's book be analysed? Which side does Hosseini end up on when Dirlik's is critique is applied to his novel *And the Mountains Echoed*?

The inference that Hosseini draws from Afghanistan's present state is to mean that Afghanistan, with its deep ethnic and religious divide, has somehow been saved by some benign interventions that were not tolerable on humanitarian grounds. As if certain

invasions had a deep love of Afghanistan in them. Given the reception of Hosseini in the western world, a certain class can now make the argument to counter the postcolonial drive against new forms of subjugation and colonialism. That the Imperial world gains valid grounds, with a certain authenticity, a certain ring of truth to it because it is coming from the pen of the native intellectual/writer, and Western world believes in the depiction of the Orient as discussed in theoretical discussion.

Hosseini's self-orientalism becomes suddenly implicated in a plot against the very future of Afghanistan by the Imperial Centre. But he writes from a very sympathetic/nostalgic vein about his native country. But the question arises, "does this sympathy absolve him of his ideologically-conditioned inference? No, it does not, given the shift of emphasis from American hegemonic tendencies to a focus on the ills of the Afghan society, at once ravaged by huge differences in classes and castes. Afghanistan, that Hosseini is nostalgic about, is not without its cultural, ethnic, religious, and political divides. Afghan society was at once torn between two totally different extremes of the Haves and the Have Nots. Religion was providing a cover to the pent up emotions of all those forces and was building pressure on the power keg. It wasn't just serene and beautiful about Afghanistan in the early 1950s. Major Powers had renewed the great game of Imperialism, couched in different phraseologies of Socialism and the Free World, by then. The Dev did not only come from one direction and he was definitely not alone. There were many like him out there in the wilderness. As quoted in Hanif Kurreshi's *Red Birds*: nothing happens suddenly; Time rears it over long historical years. Afghanistan did not suddenly erupt on the global stage as a beacon of religious extremism. It was reared to make it into a Frankenstein monster during the long Cold War and Afghan Jihad. Religion was the last thing which powered keg in Afghanistan needed. It exploded in all forms of interpretations and counter interpretations; Hosseini highlights this in his much acclaimed novel *The Kite Runner*, to leave everything in total chaos. But Hosseni does not trace it back to the Imperial Centre as a postcolonial writer should.

Here we can understand Hosseini's position in the wonderfully apt metaphor employed by Terry Eagleton: the gaudy supermarket. Hosseni is encashing a certain turn

in the fortunes of postcolonialism as a literary theory and as the site of hot, oriental commodities and products.

Hosseini compares and contrasts the differences in these classes within the same Afghanistan to a telling effect. But this effect is geared towards generating a certain historical, feudal feeling that perfectly contrasts the very master/slave binary , which I feel is at the very heart of postcolonial theory, and can be fixed to "East is East and West is West; And never the twain shall meet" (*The Ballad of East and West* 22), Kipling's memorable Imperial words. Capitalist America can be easily replaced by Uncle Nabi's capitalist employer. If Afghanistan is put at the place of the Father, the dichotomy in having a mutual relationship goes out of the window.

I feel, Hosseini's stereotypes are consistent with Orientalists stereotypes when he depicts Afghan women in the novel. They are deprived of their rights and not emancipated like the first world women. Women in Afghanistan are not allowed to get education, and they are limited to domestication as depicted by Hosseini in And the Mountain Echoed;

> "From there, Parwana's day unfolds as it always does, as it has for the four years since their parents' deaths. She feeds the chickens. She chops wood and lugs buckets back and forth from the well. She makes dough and bakes the bread in the *tandoor* outside their mud house. She sweeps the floor. In the afternoon, she squats by the stream, alongside other village women, washing laundry against the rocks. Afterward, because it is a Friday, she visits her parents' graves in the cemetery and says a brief prayer for each. And all day, in between these chores, she makes time to move Masooma, from side to side, tucking a pillow under one buttock, then the other." (Ibid 35)

Hosseini is trying to portray the western indulgence of Afghan women who have transformed their culture in an alien culture's mould. This gives Hosseini's western/America readers a sense of what has been lost to religious extremism that runs as a backdrop to the novel and adds to the conflict a kind of redemption that American War in Terror, by way of justification, brings to the Afghan soil. Hosseini plays a central role to inform America about the ongoing situation in Afghanistan, and how the existence of America is inevitable in Afghanistan.

Afghan people do not allow women to get education, and their education may damage the honour of the family. When Nila wants to become a poet she is scolded and narrates the incident during her interview in America in these words:

> "What I can tell you, however, is that no one was touting me in Kabul. No one in Kabul considered me a pioneer of anything but bad taste, debaucery, and immoral character. Not least of all, my father. He said my writings were the ramblings of a whore. He used that word precisely. He said I'd damaged his family name beyond repair. He said I had betrayed him." (Ibid 120)

While Nila receives a letter from an editor of Magzine in America who calls her for interview, she is appreciated by a Western editor and gives a prominent position as a poetess in America. Hosseini depicts in *And the Mountain Echoed* as "an "editor's note" for the literary journal *Parallaxe*, dated winter 1974. The note explains that the journal features an interview with a young, promising poet named Nila Wahdati. The editor praises Nila for her literary innovations, and suggests that if she'd been born in a wealthier nation, she'd have a reputation as a major literary pioneer" (Hosseini 203).

In the above lines, Hosseini appreciates American practices of women's liberation which is not only granted to its women but America bestows the same rights for third world countries' women as well. Hosseini highlights the marginalized position of women as already showed marginalized by Orientalists, and Hosseini is re-Orientalizing the Orient from Self-Orientalist perspective in the current context. My standpoint is also substantiated by analysis of the novel and Hosseini has rightly embarked and redressed the concept of self-Orientalism.

In one small gesture could be seen the self-orientalist's efforts, as Dirlik so vividly captures, the native intellectual's contribution to the flawed underpinnings of the whole concept of Orientalism. Hosseini's oeuvre is full of moments when it becomes evident that he has not been honest with the soul of the soil. If one were to leave out these moments from his works, they would not merit the accolades that they have garnered. But the rise of Hosseini's novels is simultaneous with the rise of America's War on Terror and the kind of Afghanistan that is portrayed in his novel.

6.6 Reflecting Identity Crises

And The Mountain Echoed is the canvas that Hossaini paints about the Afghan society. Despite its technicalities of narration, the novel presents itself in the market as a story about Afghanistan by one of its sons. This lends it a kind of authenticity. But it is this authenticity as a writer as well as the label of postcolonialism that has been associated with Hosseini that must stand the test of scrutiny. Despite painting with large strokes, Hosseini does not come clean on the representation of an indigenous freedom struggle against an Imperial power. Rather like *The Kite Runner*, *And the Mountains Echoed* is also a kind of justification for the benign invasion by the saviors of humanity. This is a very exclusion, and given the context of this research, a very grave one. It is a moment, in historical terms, that cannot be ignored. The side that we find Hosseini to be perched upon is not the side of Afghans and Afghanistan. Where does this leave us with the question of identity as a postcolonial writer? This brings us circling back to our initial understanding that something is amiss in the label of a postcolonial writer for Khalid Hosseini. *And The Mountains Echoed* helps us attest to this identity crisis in a number of ways.

Nila Wahdati rejects her Afghan identity and prefers the Westernized one. She considers westernized identity as superior. She even considers herself being superior on Afghan culture when she came first time to Afghanistan. Her family brought the revolution to Afghanistan, and she plays a central role as her standing position is similar to civilization movement of the West. According to Hosseini that "Nila Wahdati mentions that she is not Afghan and her family travelled to Afghanistan to aid in the political and social reforms of King Amanullah Khan, who ruled from 1919 to 1929. Amanullah instituted sweeping changes in Afghan society, banning the institution of slavery, modernizing and Westernizing the school system, and reducing state censorship of scientific and religious texts." (Hosseini 210)

Islamic values are important for Afghan people who always die for Islam, and Afghan people are considered Islamic fundamentalist. Hosseini wants to break this bond of Islamic ideology through his depiction of different characters and more importantly, he substantiates his arguments about King Amanullah who supported liberalism but people revolted against him as depicted by Hosseini; "When Amanullah tried to ban the female

headscarf (a fixture of many Muslim societies), Nila explains, the people of Afghanistan revolted, and cast Amanullah out of the country. Nila concludes by saying, "she wanted her daughter to grow up happy and strong, and this would have been difficult had she grown up in Afghanistan." (Hosseini 213) I bring the discussion that Hosseini's depiction of Amanullah in the novel is full of controversies and his identity does not seem static. Therefore, he envisages identity conflicts in the novel which is largely depicted in Orientalists script about Orientals.

Whatever is happening to the Afghans living in the western world as refugees is particularly visible in the annihilation of their identity as encompassed by Hosseini in the characters and progeny of Pari, who was taken to Paris by her adopted mother, Nila. Their identity can almost be felt to be thinning out. A similar strain is visible in Taimur changing his name to Tim after September 11 events. A time would come, as it does come for Hosseini, when they are no longer able to extricate themselves from the narratives that they have been raised in. This blurring of the boundaries is the beginning of a certain crisis known to postcolonial literary theory as the crisis of identity in the formerly colonised societies. What gives it added dimension is the fact that this crisis imports blinkers for the colonized which allows them to see the hegemon as benign power. In the case of Hosseini, and Afghan nation, American occupation forces are their liberators and those fighting their unjust occupation are terrorists. It reminds one of the episodes of Gholam's father, Iqbal, and Baba Jan, the Commander. The latter successfully wraps up his personal dispute with the former by branding him as an assailant. Similar situation is glossed over by our postcolonial writer to cover American tracks.

Postcolonialsim, it must be noted, is not apolitical but through and through contaminated with resistance. It is therefore expected of those writers, who are employing the label to mark their identities as postcolonial writers, to be able to locate the enemy in the conflict. America, that is left scot free in Hosseini's literary estate, has been reading the nemesis of religious extremism to ward off Soviet influence in the region. What was known to the world as Cold War between a godless Soviet Russia and Christian America was sold to the Muslim world as Jihad. Dollars and arms from around the world were poured in Afghanistan to stop it from reaching "the warm waters" but which was, in fact,

a front for hiding American vengeance. It is these remnants that Hosseini uses to build a case for his stories with that depict Afghanistan to be suffering from acute identiterian and other social problems but which, on closer inspection, turn out to be the handiwork of Hosseini's generous hosts. His stories, the point I am trying to make, are locating the faults everywhere except where his postcolonial credentials would want him: the American Empire. Silence, as Plato said, is consent. Hosseini's silence on the subject of American Imperialism is deafening. His works rather support their occupation on a number of grounds.

What suddenly becomes obvious in this rendition of the story of *And the Mountain Echoed* is how Hosseini is conditioned by Empire to locate his identity in terms of ethos that reeks of their imperial connections. Dirlik's conception of self-orientalism assumes added significance when Hosseini's *And the Mountain Echoed* is critiqued from a perspective that informs Dirlik's conception in the first place i.e. postcolonialism. Seen from this perspective, Hosseini is not only complicit in Afghanistan's current depiction by the imperial hegemon as a site of Islamic religious extremism but cements their position further by lending their illegal occupation of Afghanistan a certain ring of authenticity. This is where Hosseini is crucial to the imperial narrative as a native intellectual because he brings the much needed voters in the west, who are on the fence regarding the involvement of their nations in America's war on terror, to the position where they strengthen the facade created by Empire around them. The world goes on and native intellectuals, or the *imperialised*— which rhymes with colonized— intellectuals as Dirlik would have us see them, reap the fruits of their complicity by collecting in millions of dollars.

6.7 Images and Representations

Orientalism was conceived by Said in the middle of the proliferation of images and representations of the Orient in the western society, particularly USA as an Imperial, hegemonic power. Hosseini's images and representations of Afghanistan's historical evolution would resonate with an image, already created through the media and other cultural instruments like Hollywood, with an audience in the West. Hosseini's treatment of the Taliban phenomenon in both his bestsellers— *The Kite Runner* and *And the Mountains Echoed* is reminiscent of an image that proliferates in the West as a

representative image of Islam. It is devoid of all those contexts that Said uses to conceive of Orientalism: Imperial power, ironically Hosseini's centre that provides a basis for the rise of such extremist elements across cultures. In other words, Orientalism is a minute and critical understanding of all those historical and institutional contexts that create stereotypes and stabilise them in history. Hosseini's inferences from Taliban are exactly those that an Imperial power would want us to infer from them. It justifies its subjugation and gives it a moral cover. But this is not the whole truth. Hosseini is hiding far more than he is revealing. This can be taken as an instance where Hosseini's intellectual foundations are clearly visible as well as his reputation as a writer. He neutralises a steak of anger in the West that could endanger Empire's political and ideological base. World's biggest anti-war rallies have been staged in the Western world. These could be far more effective had they not fed to a sizeable chunk of the western population/voters the native intellectual/Hosseini. He is a best seller author among a galaxy of formidable other writers in the same way as Afghani currency becomes formidable with the injection of American Green Bucks: both are artificial and bogus.

Said's conception of Orientalism was to counter a certain image, not to give it more sustainability across time and space. Hosseini does the complete opposite of him and gives durability to an argument that looks at the American presence as Messianic in nature because it keeps the dreaded interpretation of Islam at bay as depicted by Hosseini in *And the Mountain Echoed* "Karzai's cabinet will allow cable television networks to broadcast programs, challenging the Islamic hard-liners who had opposed it" (98). Hosseini not only seconds this inference but gives it added dimensions that make it look more real than real. He uses all the handiwork of a creative writing course at the very heart of Empire. I have already quoted America's presence in Afghanistan which brings development to the country is also Messianic as noted previously while Taliban's presence put certain restriction on people but America's presence deride Taliban:

> "Eventually, the fighting ended with the arrival of the Taliban, those sharp-faced young men with dark beards, kohl-rimmed eyes, and whips. Their cruelty and excesses have also been welldocumented, and once again I see little reason to enumerate them for you, Mr. Markos. I should say that their years in Kabul were, ironically enough, a time of personal reprieve for me. They saved the bulk of their

> contempt and zealotry for the young, especially the poor women. Me, I was an old man. My main concession to their regime was to grow a beard, which, frankly, spared me the meticulous task of a daily shave." (Ibid 75)

And the Mountain Echoed is the site of many competing narratives. Some of these narratives have been subjected to a severe critique within postcolonial thought practices. Said is one of the most formidable of these thinkers. Dirlik is following in the same steps but extends the boundaries of Said's original argument. His conception of self-orientalism helps us separate Hosseini's position from the rest of these competing narratives in order to fully understand his position as a writer as well as to test the thesis of Dirlik's conception and see its applicability to Hosseini and his works. In this arrangement *And the Mountain Echoed* is remarkable for its subtleties and implications. These implications and subtleties are achieved through images and representations that are left to the readers' imagination to work out. The first inference is that the audience is certainly not local. It resonates with images and representations that are the work of a tour guide talking to tourist in Afghanistan. The tourist is the abiding Oriental at the very heart of the western society. The story sells well based upon the longevity of the conflict and its attendant political propaganda. The reader is reminded once again of Eagleton's wonderful phrase: the gaudy supermarket. It is evident without a shadow of doubt that Hosseini stands with Empire and that his narrative is conditioned by Empire's preferred narrative of appropriating the world around us. This reminds us of Foucault who imbricates knowledge with power. Foucault, it must not be forgotten, is appropriated by Said for his conception of Orientalism. Foucault called it discourse wherein a hegemonic narrative controls as well as suppresses other narratives from voicing dissent. It is clear from *And the Mountain Echoed* that Hosseini is exploiting the gaudy supermarket by deliberately glossing over what has come to pass as a result of American interpretations of Islam and Afghanistan.

It becomes clear that *And the Mountain Echoed* is a repository of images of Afghanistan over the years has lend it an air of a time-capsule. These images can be very easily construed as oriental in their depiction. They bring up other images from the repository of images in the western society that have been moulded over long periods. They somehow then work together to reflect on American imperialism in the same

manner that *humanist* Victorian writers like Dickens and Austen looked upon British Imperialism. The brute must be made Man by force if necessary. It is for precisely this reason that American Imperialism has not been seen as an unlawful occupation neither in Afghanistan and Pakistan nor in the western world. As if we are both part of the same structure that does not find any faults with imperialism and Empire. But, at the same time, it is a fact that Afghani/Pakistani society is not western society. But what makes them think in similar lines when it comes to Empire? In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said had briefly noted which can be closely imbricated. The expectation from Hosseini as a postcolonial writer is different. He is clearly not in countering the imperial narrative. *And The Mountain Echoed* makes this abundantly clear.

In the light of my research question that how do they re-orientalise the Orient, *And The Mountain Echoed* is a perfect example of this exercise. It is replete with all those images of the orient that would resonate with a western reader. It tells us how a cultural tool, in this case the novel, is closely linked with a certain narrative that thrives for its existence on the exploitation and domination of the less *advanced* countries. During a fight with the Taliban, the local people have been harmed with heavy artillery and they have been made weakened, while America could at earliest remove Taliban. The fight is noted in the novel:

> "We outnumbered them, maybe three to one, but they had heavy weaponry and it wasn't long before they were attacking us! Attacking our positions in the orchards. Soon, everybody was scattered. We ran for it. Me and this guy, Mohammad something or other, we ran together. We're running side by side in a field of grapevines, not the kind on posts and wires but the kind that people let grow out on the ground. Bullets are flying everywhere and we're running for our lives, and suddenly we both trip and go down. In a second flat, I'm back up on my feet running, but there's no sign of this Mohammad something or other. I turn and yell, 'Get the hell up, you donkey's ass!" (Ibid 152).

This is how re-orientalism of the erstwhile Orient is carried out. It suppressed far more important and truthful narratives from emerging and holding their narrative understanding of the world to account. It leaves room for those narratives that would

indirectly, very subtlety; provide a justification for the affairs of the world. This conclusion is inferred from *And the Mountain Echoed* and how Hosseini has dealt with the story.

And the Mountain Echoed provides a wonderful reference point for our second research question through which the researcher wanted to unlock the unbroken continuity of the Oriental stereotypes and the mechanism through which these abiding stereotypes of the Oriental have persisted over time. It comes out that all those stereotypes of the people from Orient as lusty, greedy, lazy, superstitious, religiously deviant and violent have been reconfirmed by Hosseini in *And The Mountain Echoed*. Not one image of a stereotype is missing from the list of all those images that stereotypes and stabilizes the Orient in history across space and time. It also provides a trajectory where the rest of the world is supposedly catching up with the Western world that is at the leading edge of social evolution. *And The Mountain Echoed* is full of all those moments where an Afghan can be replaced for an image of the Orient already present in the reader's mind. Said called it the bombardment and reinforcement of the age old image of the Orient as lusty, amoral, lazy, uncouth, superstitious, and extremely violent people. Hosseini narrates how Roshna's uncle killed her father, mother, and brother with an axe right in front of her. She was left with deep wounds to the head but survived. The image of her uncle who Idris gives money to outside the hospital and who disappears thereafter reinforces the image of being greedy. Nabi's order of free accommodation and office space to NGO cannot be used to negate the image of the greedy native. Nabi is helping them because he is a broken man, full of regrets and has no interest to amass any wealth. He had, on the other hand, been portrayed as lusty because he frequented the areas where Nila aka Mrs. Wahdathi had originally come from.

Nabi's episode of cheating Taliban through his beard, and how Nabi sarcastically says saved him from the trouble of shaving everyday, depicts an ignorant, shallow, Islamist regime that is synonymous with violence and Al Qaeda. This image is also a stereotype. His admission that Mr. Wahdathi was in love with him, a claim later supported by Nila, is an image of sexual laxity, which is considered an idiosyncratic part of the Oriental society, that western readers would be able to identify the Orient with and thus give electoral support to the image builder, the imperial hegemon.

The mechanism of re-orientalism through the use of the native intellectual has been elsewhere in the chapter called a "liberal technology of power." It is this structure that reaps the fruits of these stereotypes and profits from stabilizing the image of the Orient across space and time. They carry out the further strands of the "White Man's burden" to be able to keep ruling the roost. The Orient needs help and this help could be painful at times is disseminated through the controlled media and enforced. Re-orientalisation thus occurs at many layers within the same imperial structure. Self-orientalisation performed by the native writer/intellectual plays the role of the local informant/tour guide.

6.8 Conclusion

And the Mountain Echoed is a shining example of self-orientalisation and gives us tremendous clues to where this tendency of thought may eventually lead. This reconfirms the inference that Hosseini needs to account for a lot before he can be labelled as a postcolonial writer.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary

The classical form of Orientalism has been successfully theorized by Said in *Orientalism*, where he deconstructed the binaries of the Orient and the Occident and challenged the taken-for-granted representations and stereotyping of the Oriental Others. The Orientalist discourse, the so-called systematic knowledge, had enabled the West to have hegemonic superiority over the East. In this classical type of Orientalism, the Orient has been represented as the 'other' by Westerners. However, in the modern era, we have examples of Orientals representing and stereotyping themselves, which moves away from the Saidian perspective of Orientalism. This kind of self-othering has been described by many names, such as Re-Orientalism, Self-Orientalism, Internal Orientalism, Reverse Orientalism, and Ethno-Orientalism by different scholars, which have a direct connection with Saidian original perspectives on Orientalism but are different from it in certain ways. Therefore, the Re-Orientalist and Self-Orientalist lenses have been taken up by this research to take the phenomenon a step further than the classical Saidian perspective on Orientalism.

The process of Self-Orientalism and Re-Orientalism is very much traceable to the colonial era where the centre would canonize comprador intellectuals who were in search of authentication and recognition from their colonial masters, and they were called native informants. However, in the recent unfolding of international political and historical events, instances of self-othering and self-Orientalism are in vogue, especially in the aftermath of 9/11. Afghan Anglophone writers are no exception. Afghan Anglophone fiction writers like Hosseini and Rahimi, in the selected texts, seem to engage with the re-orientalization process, using the Western style of Orientalism. Furthermore, the Afghan Anglophone writers seem to re-orientalize the Orient in their texts within the context of self-Orientalism.

In order to contextualize and locate the research problem in the existing bulk of knowledge, an extensive and exhaustive literature review was carried out. The reviewed literature points out that the orientalist discourse has maintained its hegemonic control through several ways among which, the role of the native informants cannot be over-emphasized—comprador intellectuals who have helped the colonizer maintain their rule in the colonies during the colonial period. Things have changed in the age of post-colonialism but the hegemony of the west is still the same but through the incorporation of different strategies like Self-Orientalism and Re-Orientalism and their corresponding techniques.

The review of the works of the selected writers and their different pieces was also a part of the chapter. This review helped in finding gaps in the existing studies on their works. The works of Khaled Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi have been taken up for research from multiple perspectives, including Orientalism, representation, and stereotyping. However, none seemed to go beyond the perspective of classical Saidian Orientalism, while the fact is that a more apt lens of analysis for the selected works would be Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism. Thus, the gap in the existing scholarship on Hosseini and Rahimi has been identified, and the need for a Re- and Self-Orientalist study has been established.

7.2 Conclusion

The current research is undertaken to provide a productive review of my operational approach, self-orientalism, and the main argument of my dissertation is parallel to Said's Orientalism. Self-Orientalism has been taken as a theoretical approach to investigate Afghan Anglophone fiction. To approach my primary texts—*The Kite Runner*, *And the Mountains Echoed*, and *The Patience Stone*—I have used qualitative methodology coupled with interpretative and exploratory methods for analyzing the selected texts. Other methods such as ethnographic, autobiographical, and textual analysis have been partially used to justify my research argument. A thorough investigation made it easier to support my research argument, and my research questions have also been answered.

I have started my analysis to premise myself to self-orientalism in the selected Afghan Anglophone fiction. Self-Orientalism, as previously noted, is the process in which the Orientals themselves reconfigure to the Orientalists' mode of representation. Therefore, Orientalism in this regard may not be blamed for the Orientalization process, as Orientals themselves are involved in the stereotypical construction of the Orient in ways similar to Orientalists' representation. Therefore, I have extended my arguments, supported by a theoretical framework consisting of three major theories: Orientalism by Said, Re-Orientalism by Lau, and Self-Orientalism by Dirlik. Orientalism has given birth to the other two theories, using Orientalism as a standpoint to be followed as it is by Self-Orientalists and Re-Orientalists.

Self-Orientalism and Re-Orientalism provide descriptions of Orientals through the discourse of Orientalism that is largely based on stereotypes of the Orient. Similarly, Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism coin similar stereotypes of the Orient and endorse Orientalism. However, appropriationists and comprador intellectuals are using the same lens to give the depiction of Orientals in their writing because they are given recognition by the West to use them as spokespersons on behalf of Orientalists. The West considers itself superior, progressive, and rational, while in contrast and comparison to the West, the East (Orient) is considered poor, backward, irrational, and corrupt. The West has set out the essentialist images of the Orient, but now the time has changed, and the West is supporting Oriental writers to promote its agenda. According to Rohma Saleem, as she noted in her article "Marketing Otherness: A Re-Orientalist gaze into Pakistani fiction with a focus on Trespassing and Typhoon":

> If West stands for everything positive; progress, development, enlightenment, rationality, then east denotes its opposite, a region marred by irrationality, backwardness, poverty and corruption. These are the fixed and essentialist images that West has about the East. In modern times, when it (West) no longer is in a position to speak on behalf of subalterns, it deliberately nurtures and promotes such Oriental writers who reinforce these perceptions. (140)

Further, Rohma Saleem has been supported by Spivak as she criticized Postcolonial intellectuals for being annexed with privileges, taken as their loss. Through this process, Postcolonial intellectuals gain recognition and power while they represent

the Orient in a parallel way to Orientalists. Dirlik proposes the term self-Orientalism as he notes that "Asian intellectuals are now using the same style and techniques of classical Orientalism that is self-orientalization of Asian intellectuals, which is a manifestation not of powerlessness but newly-acquired power" (Dirlik 96). Further, Lau has also supported Dirlik, as the theory of Re-Orientalism has been given birth, parallel to Self-Orientalism.

The techniques of Self-Orientalism and Re-Orientalism have been adopted by different writers, researchers, and critics. Sadiq Jalal Azm, Seller-Young, William G. Feighery, Rebecca Suter, Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes, Mirt Komal, Susan S. Noh and many others have worked on Self-Orientalism and Re-Orientalism in different literary works. These researchers have identified the elements of Re-Orientalism and Self-Orientalism in different works where Orientals are involved in the representation of the Orient with stereotypical images and endorsing the Western concept of Orientalism. Similarly, the current research is about Self-Orientalism in Afghan Anglophone fiction and relies on the following research questions:

1. In what ways have self-orientalism been used to re-orientalize the Orient in the selected Afghan Anglophone fiction?
2. How far stereotypes in Self-Orientalism have remained consistent with stereotypes in Orientalism as depicted in the selected fiction?
3. How do the Afghan Anglophone writers embed mutualist dynamics of Self-Orientalism and Re-Orientalism in the selected works?

The first question is answered, as the works of Hosseini—*The Kite Runner* and *And The Mountains Echoed*—and Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* have been selected as primary texts to investigate the elements of Self-Orientalism, showing how the Orient has been re-Orientalized in Oriental scripts. Three works have been analysed from the same lens, Self-Orientalism, that is consistent with one another in nature because both Hosseini and Rahimi never bothered to visit Afghanistan, and the larger portion of their works has been heard from others or imagined. The context of the novels does not agree with the real context of Afghanistan. Similarly, Orientalists have been giving the same representation of Afghanistan in their writings for a long time, which also answers the second question of the research: "How far stereotypes in Self-Orientalism are consistent with stereotypes in Orientalism?" Afghanistan is represented with bleak images as the

place and people are barbaric, ruled by savages; the Taliban. They are represented as backward, irrational, corrupt, and illiterate, while in comparison to Afghanistan, American and Western cultures have been shown as superior and modern.

The Kite Runner revolves around three major characters: Amir, Hassan, and Assef. Amir is shown as the representative of the American community; although he is a Muslim, he has been portrayed as a good Muslim. Assef is the representative of the Taliban and has been classified as a bad Muslim. The character of Hassan represents a third-world country with bleak images, as he is shown dependent on Western culture for support, with the survival of Hassan and his family at stake. However, Hassan becomes a victim of Talibanization, and his son is rescued by Amir, who appears as an American figure. Although Amir is Afghan-born, he behaves like an American. His presence in the novel replicates the comprador intellectual who speaks on behalf of both the Orient and the Occident, largely behaving like an Orientalist. He describes Afghanistan in bleak images, attacks religious sectarianism, and criticizes the Taliban, while in comparison; he pays homage to American culture and appreciates the advancement of America.

According to Amir, America is dreamt of by many Afghans; even his father dreamt of America, which gave him prosperity and health. The entire novel portrays America in positive terms while portraying Afghanistan in negative terms. Similarly, Orientalists have already presented images of Afghanistan and America in the same way. Now, the same has been done by Orientals themselves, resulting in "The Kite Runner." Therefore, the novel is an appropriate example of self-Orientalism, and the first and second research questions are answered.

The research questions are also addressed in *And The Mountains Echoed*, another novel by Hosseini that gives a similar description of Afghanistan and different European and American countries. The elements of self-Orientalism are more dominant in *And The Mountains Echoed* as the writer has given an apt description of war, trauma, Talibanization, appropriation to the Western canon, the advancement of Afghanistan due to the American invasion, illiteracy, and corruption of Orientals, and the civilization movement of Americans. Orientalism is clearly depicted in the novel *And The Mountains Echoed*.

The main story in the novel that is being narrated to Pari and Abdullah by Saboor, about Dev and Baba Ayub, depicts his son being taken away by Dev to an unknown place. When Baba seeks his child and reaches a place that gives the picture of heaven, and his child is busy with other children, playing and enjoying life. When Baba sees his child happy and every facility is available to him, he gives up the idea of taking his child back home because Baba realizes that Dev is looking after his child better than he could do himself. The story symbolizes the relationship of third-world countries with reference to the first world and how third-world countries are looking to the first world to give them the best opportunities, as they are not happy with the condition of their countries. If we make a comparison of Orientalism and Self-Orientalism here, we find that both theories are consistent in representing the Orient with stereotypical images. The West is given a high and superior position while the Orient is represented with bleak images.

Furthermore, the invasion of America brings prosperity to Afghanistan as people from more deprived localities approach Kabul to enjoy better opportunities available to them because the American invasion provides opportunities like food, shelter, and jobs for repairing irrigation canals and roads, and building hospitals, clinics, and schools for both males and females. These images in the novel give a powerful position to the Occident as reflected in the writings of Orientalists. Furthermore, American doctors provide medical aid and other facilities to natives as they were primarily deprived of these facilities during the Taliban regime. Textual evidence provided by Hosseini in the novel shows that Afghanistan without America is a place of anarchy and is not capable of representing itself. The same has been employed by Hosseini in his novel while the stance was originated by Orientalists in their writings, now endorsed by Hosseini (Self-Orientalist).

Next, we see different characters inspired by Westerners, among them Nabi, who befriends Markos, an American, and is requested by Nabi to bury him after his death adjacent to his greatest friend, Mr. Wahadti. Hosseini shows that Orientals trust Occidentals more than other Orientals. The same has been noted in *Orientalism*. Furthermore, Nila Wahadti, a female character in the novel, is given recognition in the West as the greatest poetess, while she was rejected and kept hidden under a Burqa in Afghanistan. It shows that Orientals seek recognition and validation in the West because

they are not supported by their native culture. In this regard, Orientals seek modernism and gain popularity in the West. Furthermore, Pari obtaining a Ph.D. degree in Mathematics in the West is also an example of Orientalism. All these pieces of evidence endorse Hosseini as a Self-Orientalist.

Another important issue for America and the West is Talibanization, which is highlighted by Hosseini as cruel, rude, barbaric, and savage. The Taliban have distorted Afghanistan and its people. Therefore, Americans have overthrown them, and now Afghanistan is considered a place fit for living. Different events and incidents in the novel replicate the elements of Orientalism, and as a Self-Orientalist, Khalid Hosseini endorses Orientalism. Therefore, we find consistency between Orientalism and Self-Orientalism, and Hosseini plays a central role in self-othering.

After Hosseini, Rahimi is considered to be a popular figure in Afghan Anglophone fiction, particularly the images presented in *The Patience Stone*. The first two questions are addressed in Rahimi's novel, and after analyzing his work, he can be placed as a Self-Orientalist in my work. Rahimi's approach to self-Orientalism is slightly different from Hosseini, as Rahimi pays attention to the marginalization of Oriental women, while Hosseini is not knowledgeable about Afghan women. Like Orientalists, Rahimi gives the representation of women as they are objectified, marginalized, scorned, beaten, ridiculed, and silenced. He generalizes the image of his protagonist, applicable to all Afghan women, which is a problematic stance because firstly Afghanistan is a country with diverse ethnic and social structures, and secondly, because the socio-political situations are not the same everywhere.

Nadia Anjuman, an Afghan poet, is killed by her husband because her poetry brings shame to the honour of the family. The incident replicates the practice of honour killing in the Orient that victimizes women. It shows that Oriental women are not allowed to become poets or receive education. The incidents of honour killings have already been reported by many Orientalists in their writings, and Rahimi gives the same narration as a Self-Orientalist.

Mai, her husband, is arrested on charges of killing his wife but is soon released because an Oriental man has a strong hold on his woman, and the man cannot be charged for the death since honour killing in Oriental society is allowed. Rahimi portrays

Orientals as corrupt, barbaric, irrational, and savage. The portrayal of Afghan women depicted by Rahimi in *The Patience Stone* corresponds exactly to the Orientalists' images of Afghan women, where they are depicted as passive victims of war, violence, and patriarchy, only to be liberated by American military intervention. *The Patience Stone*, instead of challenging the portrayal of Afghan women in Western media, reinforces stereotypical images. These images would be accepted as more authentic and true, coming from an Afghan writer who is well aware of the country's history and culture. However, the reality is quite the opposite.

The third question of the research, "How do the selected writers embed mutualist dynamics of self-Orientalism in their works?" has a positive response, as both Rahimi and Hosseini are self-Orientalizing the Orient in alignment with the notion of the native informant given by Spivak (1988) and Dabashi (2006), presenting perspectives and features of Self-Orientalism. According to Spivak, there are three types of native informants: the Native informant, Postcolonial Migrant, and, most importantly for Spivak, the Subaltern Woman.

The novels depict the War on Terror, bringing particular formations of gender, race, nation, and sexuality into play to invent and solidify practices of sexualisation and racialization of the people. This is done through disciplining and mobilizing third-world women's bodies as a way of consolidating patriarchal and colonizing processes.

In particular, all three novels depict Talibanization as Orientalists and Neo-Orientalists represent it in their writings. The depiction of the Taliban in these novels embeds mutualist dynamics of self-Orientalism. In the neo-colonial period, the concept of orientalism has metamorphosed to refer to new constructions of the Orient, with new representations of Islam and the Muslim world dominating Western public space. Islamophobia is evident in the construction of the image of the terrorist as an 'exotic other'. The central aspect of this stereotyping is to create a global alliance of public opinion against terrorism.

Moreover, the fiction of Hosseini and Rahimi appears to engage with the re-Orientalization process of the Orient from a Self-Orientalist perspective, as their approaches are consistent with classical Orientalism. They have provided stereotypical images of Orientals in their writings and assigned a higher and superior position to

Occidentals. Both writers have developed binaries through their writings, segregating Orient and Occident: Occident as superior, powerful, rational, and literate, while Orient is portrayed as passive, irrational, barbaric, savage, and illiterate. Both writers endorse and contribute to the discourses of Orientalism, giving rise to the concept of Self-Othering as the Orient is Re-Orientalized by the Orientals themselves.

The perspective of Humphrey School experts endorses the viewpoint presented in this thesis about the misrepresentation of Afghanistan and its people in the fiction of Anglophone writers; Dipali Mukhopadhyay's "On why the Afghan government collapsed so quickly after the U.S withdrawal" and Naseema Zeerak's "On Misperception and stereotypes about Afghanistan". They believe that Afghanistan and its people have stereotypically been represented, contrary to the historical facts and figures, particularly the images of women and the period of Taliban have been appraised concerning peace and economic prosperity. Further, Alia Ibrahim Dakroury in "The Representation of the Violation of Afghan Women's Social and Political Rights in Canadian Newspapers" shows how Western media has misrepresented Afghan women without bothering to consult the recent history of Afghan women and their struggle to gain their rights to education and economic uplift. The misrepresentations have been seen by many as a late justification for the US invasion of Afghanistan. Similarly, I have included in my literature review Norwegian journalist Åsne Seierstad who wrote a non-fictional book, *The Bookseller of Kabul*, about Shah Muhammad Rais, a bookseller who later dragged the author to court on charges of defamation and misrepresenting the historical facts of Afghanistan. She was proven guilty of journalistic negligence and was ordered to pay compensation to the widow of Shah Muhammad Rais after his demise during the trial. This whole affair put a question mark on the knowledge production on and about Afghanistan. Moreover, such textual practices of representation of the Orient by both Orientals and Occidentals are reported by Mohan, exposing the mission of the West to disguise and manipulate the reality in favor of promoting Afghanistan as a lucrative part of the classical Orient. Afghanistan has yet to shed the classical oriental tag associated with it since antiquity. However, concomitant upon this is its present status as a rich entity for the objectification of the re and self-orientalists. The new status, granted to it

through non-agentic representations, guarantees the continuation of the colonial mission and territorial aggrandizement of the West.

7.3 Findings

Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and *And The Mountain Echoed*, along with Rahimi's *The Patience Stone*, reflect stereotypical images of Afghan people, a process similar to Orientalist discourses where the Orient is constructed as the Other. The application of the theory of Self-Orientalism suggests that both writers re-Orientalized the Orient from a self-Orientalist perspective, utilizing the same stereotypical images found in Orientalist writings. Both writers embed mutualist dynamics of self-Orientalism in their works.

7.4 Contribution

Khalid Hosseini and Atiq Rahimi, despite their geographical separation and diverse contexts, both present Afghanistan in their works through a lens reminiscent of Orientalism. Their portrayals, while not rooted in individualistic or idiocentric perspectives, instead offer a collective representation of the country. Both authors employ Westernized styles of representation, characterized by self-Orientalism rather than Orientalisation, thereby perpetuating self-othering images of their homeland. Furthermore, the introduction of the term "Self-Orientalism" in this research provides a valuable framework for understanding the re-orientalisation of the Orient, making a significant contribution to academic discourse across various disciplines.

7.5 Implications for further research

The writers selected for analysis are both male, prompting the need for a study on Afghan Anglophone female fiction writers from the perspectives of self and Re-Orientalism. Such a study would contribute to a more representative set of texts, enhancing the fields of Afghan literature, postcolonial studies, and the theoretical discourse of self-orientalization. It could offer a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge, as exploring the differences between male and female perspectives may reveal significant insights. This is particularly important given the prevalent stereotyping and representation of women in Afghanistan, especially in the post-9/11 Western imagination. Investigating the perspectives of Afghan female writers would provide a more comprehensive understanding.

Sectarianism and sectarian violence emerge as common themes in all three novels, presenting another area ripe for further research.

7.6 Limitations of the Study

The researcher belongs to the Pashtun ethnicity, and there is a possibility that his personal attachment to the culture and people fictionalized therein may have unconsciously influenced his analysis. Efforts have been made to mitigate any personal bias, but it is still necessary for scholars from other ethnic groups to step forward and replicate the findings of this research. Additionally, the study's findings and results cannot be generalized, as the works selected for analysis represent only a small portion of Afghan Anglophone fiction. Conducting similar studies on a larger scale is recommended to authenticate the results.

The theory of self-Orientalism by Dirlik has previously been applied and utilized in the context of China, while Re-Orientalism by Lau is generally considered applicable in the context of South Asian countries. In this thesis, for the first time, I have applied self-Orientalism in the South Asian context, which constitutes the primary contribution of this research. However, this is not a significant claim but requires substantiation through similar studies in the field of Self-Orientalism in the context of South Asian countries.

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