



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism*

Privileged locations and role of native informants in Khaled Hoessini's *The Kite Runner*: A self-orientalist study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to analyze Khalid Hoessini's *The Kite Runner* (2005) from a Self-Orientalized perspective to show the privileged location and role of native informants, and the stereotypical images of the Oriental are given in *The Kite Runner* by the writer as a native informant. The mythological approach is qualitative and the nature of the research is analytical, and the researcher used close textual as a research method. Daura (1995) and Spivak's (1999) notions of self-Orientalism and native informants have been respectively used as theoretical framework. Hosseini (2005) is a true Self-Orientalist in Daura's (1995) point of view with reference to Said's Orientalism (1978), and also a factual follower as a native informant who gave stereotypical images of Afghan in *The Kite Runner* (2005), and misrepresented the Oriental as Orientalists misrepresented, showing the orient as Others. The main findings of the research are effective for the researchers and scholars of literature who after comprehension the concept of native informants who re-Orientalize the Orient may research and approach the notions in other discourses of developing countries. Orientalists have represented the Orient in their writings, and the approach is identified as Orientalism. The same practice of representing the Orient from an Oriental perspective was also largely identified as Orientalist-based representation, but it is actually a self-orientalist perspective that is claimed in this research, which has not been previously done.

KEYWORDS: developing countries, native informants, Orientalism, racial disparities, self-orientalism

Research Journal in Advanced Humanities

Volume 6, Issue 4, 2025

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 08 August 2025

Accepted: 18 October 2025

Published: 12 November 2025

HOW TO CITE

Akhter, S., Riaz, W., Ambasta, A., Kumar, M., & Kumar, T. (2025). Privileged locations and role of native informants in Khaled Hoessini's *The Kite Runner*: A self-orientalist study. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 6(4). <https://doi.org/10.58256/5crkbc45>



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

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Introduction

In the context of Orientalism, not only West and East present the binaristic opposition but it is the fact that the binary relationship has been strengthened by the Oriental elite class or those who have been facilitated by the West such as native informants, comprador intellectuals appropriated to Western cannon, as Said (1978) has pointed out in *Orientalism*. Further, post-colonial writers used identical approaches in their writings to give the depiction of the Orient as castoff by westerners. Their mode of representation is called re-orientalization that is directly linked with original Saidian (1978) perspectives of Orientalism. However, the contemporary period is pregnant with the issues of representation as diverse outfits are used for representing different people or the people themselves give their self-representation. Cultural preservation is crucial for maintaining a community's identity and heritage by safeguarding traditions, values, and practices passed down through generations. Without these efforts, cultural elements risk disappearing and eroding community identity (Xue et al., 2025)

That is why researcher has pointed out that the Orient has been re-orientalized by the Orientals themselves or the Orientals helped the West in the representation and construction of the Orient. This kind of self-representation or self-construction from oriental is called self-orientalism. However, Gayatri Spivak's (1999) conception of native informant is similar to Self-Orientalism. Similarly, Hamid Dabashi's (2006) notion of native informant presents the same perspective and features of Self-Orientalism. Therefore, the concept of self-Orientalism is annexed with Spivak's (1999) and Dabashi's (2006) notions of native informants who are using the western style of represent the Orient from Orientalist point of view.

With the emergence of Orientalism, different terminologies have been positioned with Orientalism i.e. to Neo-Orientalism, Re-Orientalism, Self-Orientalism, Internal Orientalism, Reverse Orientalism and Ethno-Orientalism and many other terms have been envisaged (Dirlik, 1994; Dirlik, 1995; Lau, 2005; Lau, 2009; Lau and Mendes, 2011; Dabashi, 2012; Kumar (2021); Moorthi et. al., 2024). These terminologies have direct connection with the original Saidian perspectives on Orientalism. Nineteenth century early Orientalism as well as post 9/11 neo-Orientalism were and are based on essentialist constructions and reconstructions of Islam, Muslim societies, and Muslim communities in Western societies (Altwaiji, 2014; Tuastad, 2003; Kumar, 2023; Yunus & Kumar, 2024). The fact that there exist various Islamic trends and traditions, different religious and secular views and movements, different social and cultural varieties of the Muslim world and the diversity of political and social actors within Muslim countries have all been put aside. They leave a vacuum which is filled with an essentialist and culturalist reading grid of a monolithic and unchanging Muslim world. The construction of Islam by the West shifted the concept of Orientalism to neo-orientalism which is an incarnation of modern Orientalism that holds moral superiority over the Orient. Further, the binary opposition has been shifted from West and East to West and Islam (Kumar, et al., 2022; Priyadharshini & Kumar, 2024). These conflicts can be explored through education. The landscape of language learning is increasingly extending beyond the traditional classroom, significantly shaped by the rapid advancement of digital technologies (Peng et al., 2025; Xiao et al., 2024; Pan et al., 2022; Çakmak et al., 2021).

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 (Dirlik, 1995; Daura, 1995). Therefore, Oriental themselves are practicing the process of Orientalism to construct, circulate, reinforce and represent through the discourses of Orientalism. Influenced by Edward Said's Orientalism (1978), Arif Dirlik (1995) used Self-Orientalism as a term for the first time in his "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism". According to Dirlik (1995) "asian intellectuals are now using the same style and techniques of classical Orientalism that is selforientalization of Asian intellectuals, which is a manifestation not of powerlessness but newly-acquired power" (Dirlik, 1995: 96). But this process of self-orientalism is not possible without the informants who provide information about Orient to Orientalists, or represent the Orient from same perspective, and mis-represent the Orient using the stereotypes.

The Orientalizing practice is strapped through representation where the aforementioned terms are the implements for representing the Orient. Further, Orient in the contemporary period is capable of giving its representation with its ethnicity, language, society, culture, identity which is different from the West and it does not require Orientalists representation (Kumar, 2020;). However, after 9/11 the World Order changed and

the interference of America can directly be seen in different regions of the World. Afghanistan amongst these regions is more significant. Afghanistan as Orient has been Orientalized and re-Orientalized for the last few decades because of its centrality and importance in international politics. Therefore, Afghans are stereotypically represented in the works of Orientalists as illiterate, barbarian, irrational, revengeful people, snatching money, kidnapping people etc. but now Afghan Anglophone writers themselves employ the same stereotypical images of Afghanistan and give the representation of Afghan people and culture.

The research explores the interbraiding of Self-Orientalism process in Afghan Anglophone fiction with reference to native informants to represent the Orient using stereotypical images of the Oriental. It attempts to unravel how postcolonial writers took part in the re-orientalization process, and it is the practice of self-orientalism is essentially a reconfiguration and, in many ways, an extension of Orientalism, as such the thesis proposes that Orientalism is not simply the autonomous creation of the West, but rather that the Orient itself participates in the construction, reinforcement and circulation of orientalist discourse. It is perceived that Self-Orientalism occurs when the Orientals use the Western style of thought and stereotypes in terms of self-definition or a modus of Orientalism practiced by the Oriental Other itself. Self-Orientalism is an outcome of the East's representation and expression of itself from the eyes of the West with the image that West has fictionalized for it. In his work, Feighery (2012) has explained that image creators of the Middle East are writing from "an Occidental Script" (269).

In view of the said discussion the current research analyze Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2005) to show the representation of the Orient from self-Orientalist perspective that how native informants are being used to give the similar stereotypical images of the Orient as given by the Orientalists in their writings.

Introduction to *The Kite Runner*

A well-known creation of Hosseini is *The Kite Runner* (2005) 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 Hazara community of Afghanistan. Amir is vacillated by his one of childhood incidents when he 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 daily basis.

The novel provides information about the country's poor condition when the King of Afghanistan was exiled. It is the 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 not to play 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* (2005).

Amir has won the competition of flying kites 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 backstreet, Wali and Kamal are seen taking Hassan to Assef. Assef is anti-Hassan who 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 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 for stealing while the fact was that Hassan was not a thief but even then he submitted to the charge.

It is now a paradigm shift in the novel, March 1981, 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 reached Peshawar. They spent some time in Pakistan and then moved to America seeking political asylum.

The setting is now 1983, the novel is narrating the story of Fremont, California where Baba, a respectable and rich person of Kabul, is now seen as a worker at a service station in California. His son Amir is getting 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 strong liking for each other. During this period Amir's father is

diagnosed with lung cancer. Upon his request, General Taheri allowed 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, a telephone call is received by Amir 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 Soviet Union was defeated and that Taliban were ruling Afghanistan with brutality and violence. Amir is further told about Hassan that how he faced different problems but Rahim Khan helped him out. Later on, Hassan and Farzana are married. Farzana gave 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 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 news that Hassan is the illegitimate son of Baba. First, Amir defies to believe 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 Taliban a few months back.

Finally, Amir successfully approaches to Taliban officials in a football stadium where he saw a man and a woman are being stoned to death. During Amir's meeting with Taliban, he requests for Sohrab to be returned back. Taliban's official presents Sohrab to Amir. During this meeting Amir realizes the intention of Taliban officials. They attacked Amir and hit him, but dramatically in a counter attack, he saves himself and Sohrab from the clutches of Taliban. Sohrab is rescued and brought to America. Another shocking revelation for Amir was that Assef and his friends have joined 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 survived and Amir and Soraya take him to America but he is unable to speak with the people around him and does not take interest in the affairs of the world.

Meanwhile, Sohrab is taken to a cultural event of Kite Flying. Sohrab is introduced with other Afghan boys and Amir used 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 the cut kite. The story ends with the indistinguishable cultural event of Kite flying as showed at the beginning of the novel.

Statement of the research

Hosseini (2005) is a true Self-Orientalist in Daura's (1995) and Dirlik's (1995) point of view with reference to Said's *Orientalism* (1978). Said's position about an Orientalist is that a person belonging to the west, who is writing, researching and teaching etc. about the Orient. However, Said refers to Westerners but Dirlik (1995), Daura (1995) and Lau (2009) nominated the same writers from the East because they are now playing their roles as Orientalists. They are called native informants using Self-Orientalists or Re-Orientalists approaches to give the stereotypical representation of the Oriental using the Western script. Further, these writers are of a hybrid nature as they belong to both East and West while Hosseini holds the same hybrid position and plays his role as a native informant, providing information about the Orient (Afghanistan) to America which is analyzed in the current research to show the similar representation in *The Kite Runner* (2005).

Objectives of the Research

1. To investigate the process of Self-Orientalism that re-orientalizes the Orient in the selected novel.
2. To explore consistency of stereotypes in Self-Orientalism and Orientalism through the concept of native informants, shown in the novel.

Research Questions

1. In what ways has self-orientalism been used to re-orientalize the Orient in the selected novel?
2. How far stereotypes in Self-Orientalism are consistent with stereotypes in Orientalism as presented in the novel with reference to the concept of native informants?

Literature Review

Scholars like Fitzpatrick (2009), Margaret Mills (2012), Leila Ahmad (2003), Hamid Dabashi (2006) and Saba Mahmood (2001) have highlighted in detailed the native-penned texts after 9/11 crises. When Orientalism turned to Neo-Orientalism the representation of Other also affected who has been adopted for other modes of representation. The West was concerned with Muslim world and Orientals with reference to textual representation while the modes of American Orientalists have adopted a direct conflict with Islam and Muslim world. The role of native informant is also changed with mere changes in the mode of Orientalization. Now the native informants are those postcolonial and subalterns' writers who are heard by the West, speaking on behalf of Occident. It happened mainly in literary writing after 9/11.

The native informant is a person who reports to Euro-American cannon while the aforementioned scholars called them native and semi-native narrators. The biggest debate in the entire scenario is considered Islam and its representation. Different literary writers, among them are autobiographers and memoirs writers who played significant role in the representation of the Orient. Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (1996) is one of the significant example of Self-Orientalism and she plays a role as a native informants and colonial agent. She incorporates the identical mission to re-orientalize the Orient, mainly the Islamic state which has been blamed for the exploitation, suffering and injustices of Irani women. *Reading Lolita in Tehran* becomes a bestseller book in the Western world because the book highlights the spoiling image of women in the Islamic State, caused by Islamic state. Veil and women's education are the central themes in the book (Noted in Blumenthal, 2012: 57). Being a university teacher she started teaching to female students in a hideous house, later on exposed and sent to Jail revolting against the state. The entire life span of the writer is spent in Tehran is the part of discussion in the book.

Oberoi (1996) notes in his article "Empire, Orientalism and Native Informants" that the "production of colonial knowledge was not simply a matter of what was advanced by knowledge practitioners in the West. Indigenous intellectuals and antique traditions of knowledge actively, if not equally, shaped the imperial agenda. Thus, we can no longer confidently speak of a hegemonic western discourse" (95). Oberoi (1996) identified Orientals discourses, used for identical agendas which have been planted by Orientalists. These discourse providers are also called native informants who inform about Orient to colonial masters and other Orientalists, who (Orientalists) never visit the Orient and start writing about the Orient. A native informant is a person, belongs to a particular place or race and he is expert in Oriental Studies and mainly Orientals culture, language, tradition, rituals and many others.

Riceur (2016) acknowledges in his book *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* about native informants as they are actually informing the West to show their appropriation and understand others not themselves. He further confirms about native informant and develops them on metaphorical level who says something about something already envisaged with deviational information. The doer and the actions are interrelated, put the actions on the record to document. The metaphors are actually the social actors; they understand how actions are performed. They are actual native informants who observed themselves and informing about themselves to the Euro-American cannon. Paul Riceur goes for hermeneutic interpretation "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 its inner connections" (Riceur, 2016: 203). Following Reiceur (2016), Clifford Geertz (2016) writes; "there are three characteristics of ethnographic description: it is interpretative; what it is interpretive of is the flow of social discourse; and the interpreting involved consists of trying to rescue the 'said' of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms" (20).

Lisa Lau and Christina Mendes (2011) contribution is documented by Vamsee Juluri (2013) in her article "Lisa Lau and Ana Christina Mendes (eds), Re-Orientalism and South Asian Identity Politics: The Oriental Other Within" that both Lau and Mendes identified the era of Oriental's construction by the Orientals themselves. The process is called either Self-Orientalism or Re-Orientalism. Both the writers have identified the Western powerful discourses which are planted to highlight their ideologies through local native informants; the elite Other. South Asia is one of the example, whereas the cultural production of the South Asia Orientalists discourses spread in the entire regions. Sometimes the "Others" are the member of Subaltern groups, one amongst three groups of Native informants nominated by Gayatri Spivak. Different movies and fictional works contribute to the Re-Orientalists mission, noted in Vamsee Juluri's (2013) article like; Akhil Sharma's *The White*

Tiger (2008) and Gurinder Chadha's film *Bride and Prejudice* (2004).

Mookerjea (2002) "Native informant as impossible perspective: Information, Subalternist Deconstruction and Ethnographies of Globalization" is an essay about ethnography, which is flow of knowledge, produced in ethnographical researches tell us about the stereotypes which are culturally labeled. The West is the creator of stereotypes and now native informants use the same stereotypes as used by Orientalists. The essay highlights stereotypes, labelled now by native informants, are the central discussion of the essay, and replicate the same techniques and practices, initiated by Orientalists. Mookerjea (2002)'s paper constructs the same stereotypes from Self-Orientalists perspectives which is the central theme of the essay.

Research Methodology and Theoretical framework

The researcher used qualitative approach and the nature of the research is analytical whereas close reading and close textual analysis has been used as research method. Textual analysis as a research method has been used because the method is comprehensive and feasible for literary text to be analyzed with prior interpretation, explanation and discussion of the available texts. The primary text is related to Afghan Anglophone fiction, written in the multicultural environment and will definitely need to have a better understanding from different perspective which is approached through textual analysis (Frey et al, 1999). The understanding is further developed with reference to postcolonial discourses; particularly Self-Orientalism and Native Informants.

The researcher used Prasenjit Daura (1995) and Spivak (1999) as theoretical framework for the current research. According to Prasenjit Daura's (1995) concept of Self-Orientalism the Orient cannot live without the West. It is the history, telling the stories of marginalizing homogeneous groups. Daura (1995) in his book *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* is deconstructing the history, addressing Hegelian concept of history, excluding marginalized groups who are not given voices in those discourses which are used for state formation. Daura's book is about the Chinese people who are put aside from Hegelian concept, however, China has a "unitary consciousness or identity" (Daura, 1995: 7). Different struggles are intaked within community for insurgency to master and control, increasingly deal with the phenomenon to give voices to marginalized people. Daura's (1995) concept is linked with Spivak's (1999) concept of giving voices to subaltern. Spivak simply questions the authority of subaltern in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), yet, Daura (1995) is not giving voices to the marginalized but trying to make them the part of authoritative narratives as Daura's (1995) concept is about the examination of Chinese intellectuals who write for modernity to represent their culture with bleak and distorted images, is similar to the concept of native informant, self-Orientalism and re-Orientalism. These processes address Said's (1978) classical Orientalism.

Spivak's (1999) *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* and Said's Orientalism (1978) are the significant contribution to Postcolonial studies, referring to the term native informant. Said (1978) asserts; "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 about the construction and representation of the Orient by Orientals, but also deconstructing the process of Orientalism as the Orient needs the West to speak for the Orient and what they call it, is "a triumph of Orientalism" (Said, 1978: 323) means the Orient itself is ready to accept the representation of Orientalists.

Spivak (1999) goes for divergent interpretation, according to her, native informant is a person, found in other places, his information are treated unquestionable, based on objective evidences. The Oriental (native informant) provides information to the West through comparative religion, ethnography, ethnolinguistics and many other sources which become the factors of marginalization of the Orient. The person provides information related to Other itself becomes a controversial one because the information provided to West may have exaggerated values which are against the facts (Spivak, 1993).

For Spivak (1999) who are Native informants? She calls them fictional characters, created with careful and diligent strategy. Spivak has three types of native informants; Native informant, Postcolonial Migrant and the most significant for Spivak (1993) is Subaltern Woman. The native informants are those who provide information to the Westerns through different sources while the Postcolonial Migrant was the invention of America, created to intervene with, to support the American cultural politics and mainly US cannon of wars, continued in different countries (Spivak, 1993), particularly Iraq and Afghanistan are the prominent one. Spivak herself created the character of Subaltern woman in the course of recent debate "Feminism and Marxism"

(Spivak, 1988). She tries to use Subaltern to interact with the aforementioned theoretical discussion, based on multiculturalism, identity, politics and appropriation to the United State (Spivak, 1993b, 71). Apart from the aforementioned debate Spivak (1988) considers native informant is weak and submissive character with paradoxes who always puts the issues of representation into troubles, constructed discrimination. Further, the unequal power relations are depicted through the representator who represents the Other in larger historical, cultural, political, social and economic context. Thus, native informant himself as an “Other” one who contributes to master discourses.

The person native informant is actually the first mode of Self-Orientalism who Re-Orientalizes the Orient through different strategies as he provides information to the Euro-American cannon about the Orientals. In accordance with Euro-American Orientalists do not need more envisaging of the Orient as the information are 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

Stereotypical (Self)Orientalist Representations of the Natives; and Privileged locations and Role of Native informants in *The Kite Runner*

The Kite Runner (2005) is the powerful depiction of Afghan-American culture, locating Afghan identity in the backdrop of the turbulent position of Afghanistan in the modern world. *New York Times* placed the novel in the best-seller list for more than hundred weeks; yet, the fact is pervasive that the work is the creation of an alien country’s unknown author. This particular stance of *New York Times* is based on American sympathy with the scattered Orient, now more shattered and battered in the work. Why the work remained in the best-selling books list for more than hundred weeks despite serious hurdles of censorship? The primary reason is that this work targeted the fundamentalist and religious theology.

The work has become popular among the American readers because it is productively relevant to the historical incident of 9/11 and its aftermath. Mehgan O’Rourke (2005) writes in the Slate Magazine:

Why *The Kite Runner* and not any of the other books about Afghanistan that have recently hit the shelves? The initial interest in the book clearly lay in the promise that it might deliver topical information in an accessible manner-humanizing the newspaper accounts of a place that suddenly became a U.S. preoccupation again after 9/11. This it does. Spanning nearly 30 years, *The Kite Runner* loosely fills in most of the relevant facts about Afghanistan’s turbulent recent history-the 1978 civil war, the Soviet invasion, the rise of the Taliban opposition. (1)

The fact is somehow confronted by Mehgan O’ Rourke (2005) because the connected events after 9/11 are contemplating the issues of war, violence, bringing home, migration, and demonic humanity, whereas *The Kite Runner* (2005) is the call of the day for all these issues. The novel is precisely the replica of Orientalist discourse, employing the binaries, the relationship of the Euro-American and Asians where Islam is particularly targeted which is largely identified in Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) whereas in the said it is done through native informants, and this process is now a self-orientalist one. Apparently the novel is locating the Asian culture to a submissive position. The interest of American readers is not to bridge the gap between the Orient and the Occident and their interest in the Asian community, particularly Islam is of great concern for them after 9/11. The novel provides the dire demand of the existence of the Euro-American world in the Orient (Afghanistan).

The American newspaper and advertisement agency give 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 to show the binaries. Alsultany (2007) in his article “Selling American Diversity and Muslim American Identity through Non-Profit advertising Post-9/11” noted that the American government has labeled binaries for the Asian/Arabs/Muslim 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, 2007: 594)

The same is contemplated by Hosseini (2005) in his work *The Kite Runner* to develop binaries and the appreciation he got from the American advertisement agencies, and both of these factors gave him a well-known position. The stance of what the classical Orientalism presented has been reinforced by Hosseini (2005) from Self-Orientalist perspective, and he is a native informant to give such representation.

Hosseini's (2005) powerful approach in term of characterization is striking for the Euro-American readers to show the typical Oriental identity of Afghan culture. The names Amir, Hassan, Wali, Assef, Ali, Rahim Khan, Sohrab and Baba are more striking names of the Orientals, showing the West a diverse approach that they also envisage the same names in their writings. Now, these names draw the resentful connection between the two poles Afghanistan and America. It would refer back Said's Orientalism (1978), placing Orientals in Western special discourses. The names of the Afghans give a strong position of Oriental identities, essentially constructed as Others due to Oriental's stereotypical images.

The character of Amir is more significant and his portrayal as a protagonist is of great interest. Amir has been appropriated to American cultural, although, he is the least exploited character but still he is the protagonist of the novel. His cultural identity has appendage with both America and Afghanistan, though, favors to be in peace with it in America. This creation of the writer is showing 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, 2005: 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." (Hosseini, 2005: 175)

Hosseini (2005) draws the binaries between the two poles; America and Afghanistan. Afghanistan is shown a barbaric and distorted country as Orientalists have time and again noted in their works. Now the same is initiated by Oriental themselves. This is what call the strategy of Oriental to construct the self-image from self-orientalist perspective which is currently used by Hosseini as a native informant. The binaries not only show the weak aspects of the Afghanistan but America in comparison and contrast have also been shown a civilized and modern country where Orientals have been given career, home and education. This is what internalization of Occidental values look like. Orientals' love for modernity and affiliation with the first world is merged here by Hosseini (2005).

The perception is given to American readers that protagonist Amir is developing a bridge between the two cultures which is the bridge of understanding. However, before this bridge, their understanding of the orient mainly depends on stereotypes as shown by the Orientalists in their writings. Further, it is one of the beliefs of Western readers that stereotypes are given because they believe in stereotypes to understand the East. Therefore, the creation of Hussein's characters is consistent in stereotypes to the Orientalist discourse.

Further, the novel is representing the character of Amir to identify and recognize the American self; Said (1978) Daura (1995) and Lau (2009) refer to this self as Western self within the Oriental characters, constructed as "Others". It is evident that Amir belongs to an alien culture, despite its creation as Other, he is still not Othered and foreign to American culture because his construction is annexed with the superiority of the American culture. Furthermore, he plays his role as a native informant actually informing America about the terror and crises of 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." (Hosseini, 2005).

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

Hosseini's (2005) technique of creating Amir as a semi-foreign character in the novel stands in similar position with Rudyard Kipling's Kim (1989). It is the referential point how the foreign protagonist in the novel *Kim* used to see the natives. Hosseini (2005) is using the same lens, through which East is perceived and seen in the novel. Kipling's employment 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 (2005) to work as an Orientalist.

Regarding stereotyping in the novel, with reference to characters, Assef's character is more important in comparison to Amir's. The contrastive binary is used to formulate Amir's identity as protagonist while Assef is declared antagonist of *The Kite Runner* (2005). Amir's Otherness in the novel is identified for self-realization and identification while Assef stands a complete Oriental character to be called oppressive, barbaric and primitive in the words of Evelyn Alsultany (2012). Assef is shown as Other like primitive, barbaric and oppressive: "I believe, Assef had mostly refrained from harassing me too much." (Hosseini, 2005: 34). Assef's barbarism and oppression is the antithesis of those who develop their liberal ideologies in the West against the Orient. Assef is identified as a completely foreign character and contemplating binaries with reference to the character of Amir. Amir, though a native and semi native informant, is figured out as an Orientalist because of the first narrative teller, 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 (1978) and supported by Muqaddas Inayat (2019) in his research work "Notes on the English Character by E.M. Forster: A Critical Perspective", and the similar technique has now been used by self-Orientalists. It is the technique of the writer (Self-Orientalist) to keep the Western readers happy by relying on such stereotypes regarding the Orient to assimilate with the west (Daura; 1995; Kumar, 2017; Jabeen et. al., 2022). This exposition leads the Orient to a submissive position. The purpose of stereotypes is to take the Orientals to an inferior position while the counterpart (the West) is taken up to a superior position.

The characters of Amir and Assef are further contemplated in the process of showing how the Orient and the Occident get developed and matured in the climax of the novel. Amir Westernization is the central point of discussion how Occident develops and matures in the entire scenes of the novel. It is a sign of Occidental victory over the Orient while the character of Assef is the depiction of Orientals' weakness. It also shows how Orientals are getting inferior in the context of the novel. This is one of the complicit relationships between the Orient and the Occident through Oriental writings from Orientalist perspective, explicitly based on the process of self-Othering.

The development of Occident is further linked with liberalism and modernism that show how Occidental characters groom within the premises 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." (Hosseini, 2005: 158) This is how Westerners are shown as developed and rational while in binaristic contrast, the character of Assef becomes more cruel, oppressive, villainous and cartoonish to become a typical Oriental character. Assef questions Amir that I did not join 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, 2005: 235) This refers to Religious fundamentalism which Assef prefers rather than money because his father is a wealthy person.

The scheming of both Amir and Assef in the novel with reference to opposite categories; protagonist and antagonist are based on the pitting of binaries between the West and the East, inflaming the two binaries for power structure; the Western is shown powerful and superior over the East while the Orient is inferior and submissive. The superiority is established due to Oriental protagonist, acting on behalf of the Occident while the same Orient designates another character as villain.

Said (1978) confirms such stereotypes through the incorporation of foreigner as protagonist. According to Said, Orient is the dire need and backdrop of the Occident to both 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 (Said, 1978: 44).

The stance of creating Orientalism is a very skillful technique by Said because it shows how the West had ingrained its power and materialism in the Orient, to get benefits and merge the Orientals as subject. Western materialistic position is linked with the history because westerners have encountered Orientals since very long. They use their Western knowledge and impose their power on the Orient. The formation is strategic and Said calls it specialist.

Said's (1978) standpoint about specialist strategy is identical to Amir's formation in the novel as a protagonist. Amir is created as a fictional character and translated to the experiences of Afghans and Afghanistan. The translation is an edible idea to merge Amir in the Western experiences for Western readers for personal interest. His celebration of Western identity is somehow significant to the mode of explicit imperialism in the novel and this inherent creation is understood as beneficial perspective of the Occident.

Apart from binaries the novel shows the character of Hassan in close relationship with Amir is the reconfiguration of Occidental superiority over the Orient. Said (1978) has pointed out such stratification of the Occidentals in *Orientalism*. According to Said that Oriental character is a phenomenon, put outside of the powerful discourses and pitted as weak and submissive to support the Western partner and 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 superior judge and learned man (Said, 1978: 208).

Said's standpoint clarifies that Oriental cohort is accompanied by Western to maintain its power and authority. The power and authority manipulate the cultural superiority of the West while the Oriental culture is shown inferior and submissive. The binaries are developed like powerful and weak partner. The incorporation of both powerful Occident and weak Orient is given in the novel through Amir and Hassan. The novel depicts 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 are the primary tools of the writers who re-Orientalize the Orient from Self-Orientalist perspective. Self-Orientalists largely show psychological, social and political appendages with the West and Amir is one of the example in *The Kite Runner* (2005).

Hassan is shown a supportive character as it has previously been acknowledged while Amir and Assef are incorporated to segregate the two cultural identities. The segregation leads to major markers of a society; redemption, religion, loyalty, and friendship. These markers are discussed with reference to ethnic division in the novel. The two characters Amir and Assef are foremost effective in retaining stereotypes in the entire novel. Similarly, Amir's best friend Hassan belongs to a separate ethnic minority group called Hazara. Although, Amir is told later on by Rahim Khan that Hassan is Baba's illegitimate son and Amir's illegitimate brother: "My illegitimate half-brother." (Hosseini, 2005: 208). Despite this reality, Hassan is still treated as minority group based on ethnic division. The ethnic division has created a tension in the novel. Amir is stopped by Assef not to play with Hassan. He said: "In fact, you bother me more than this Hazara here, how can you talk to him, play with him." (Hosseini, 2005: 36). Further, 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 inserted in the characterization of the novel and how the three main characters; Assef, Amir and Hassan are puppets in the hands of religious fundamentalism and ethnic division. The novel says:

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. (Hosseini, 2005)

The religious fundamentalism and ethnic division construct different stereotypes in the novel to consider the Orient as a distorted and uncivilized entity and the novel is dealing with these aspects to show the bleak image of Afghanistan. Therefore, these elements are easily translatable into binaries in order to construct the stereotypical images of the Orient. Although Hassan is the most hated boy in the novel, but still he presents

himself both psychologically and morally a groomed character. Further, Hassan is very supportive of Amir. When Amir was fighting Assef and Wali, Hassan interrupted to save Amir but in turn he left Hassan alone when he was being raped. This aspect of Amir's character declares him a self-centered person. The identical creation of oriental characters by the orientals is seen as Self-Orientalists or Re-Orientalist by Dirlik (1995) and Lau (2009) because the writers affiliate with the West either for modernism or to become well-known in the West.

Similarly, the self-centered aspects of Amir is delineated in the novel, despite, well-educated and from a dominant class, as a coward and weak person who is unable to help Hassan. Amir uses Hassan for his interests and benefits and at the end he devalues him: "I watched Hassan get raped ... I said to no one." (Hosseini, 2005: 75). Later, Amir moves to America and gets higher education while Hassan is left behind in Afghanistan, struggling for survival. Hassan is left entirely on the mercy of circumstances who was killed by Taliban whereas the creation of Amir's character is completely privileged. Amir becomes an internal Orientalist and he is assisted by the Orientals like Hassan.

The interests and benefits of Amir can be extracted from his dominant ethnic position in contrast to Hassan who is inferior. The relationship of Amir and Hassan is also based on binaries which help in constructing stereotypes with reference to superior and inferior, powerful and weak, civilized and uncivilized and so on. Both Amir and Hassan are shown friends but Hassan is incorporated as weak character. Said calls it weak partner while referring to the Oriental, and the Occidental is shown 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 of Amir and Hassan is based upon interests and benefits rather than trust and mutual understanding. Amir needs company and friendship of a brave boy like Hassan but he is ashamed to admit in front of Assef and company despite the fact that Hassan shows his trust and sincerity by saving Amir. When Amir was asked to unfriend Hassan he replies: "But he's not my friend! ... He's my servant." (Hosseini, 2005: 36) Amir does not show his loyalty to Hassan and uses him for his defense and protection.

The relationship of Amir and Hassan is dynamic because Amir is resentful towards Hassan. Amir knows his racial superiority and he is neglecting Hassan despite great respect and obedience from Hassan. Amir is seen with ethnic and racial superiority while Hassan is presented with ethnic and racial inferiority. This shows how Orientalists considered themselves superior and their partners inferior, and this is the very 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 because he has joined Taliban, who are the central antitheses of Western Ideology. The confrontation of both Amir and Assef is now the confrontation of the West and the East; one is the symbol of freedom and the other stands for Islamic fundamentalism. This power struggle is now causing a serious tension in the novel. Every Talib is shown to be sadistic, cruel and coward in nature because he has to justify his religious extremism and fanaticism. Assef is now confronting Amir and recalling his Hazara massacre in 1998 at Mazar. 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". (Hosseini, 2005)

It is stereotypical creation of Assef's character with reference to Amir. Amir shows his effort to free Sohrab from the clutches of Taliban and is depicted as an angel. This gives the image to the American readers that affiliation with the Euro-American cannon makes you behave like Amir and save people from the barbaric Taliban. It is the rational aspect of America while in contrast Assef is presented a barbaric and uncivilized who tries to kill those who save inferior ethnic community from Taliban. It constructs the binaries of good and bad; America and Taliban. This is how 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.” (Hosseini, 2005: 284).

Now this incident shows the binaristic division between the East and the West. Eastern community is stereotyped with barbarism and cruelty while Western ideology is shown superior because of their education. Apart from the above mentioned binaries, Assef is more a political opponent of Amir. He holds pro-Nazi ideologies and is a strong opponent of the American ideology. This ethnic and political confrontation between the two groups can only be solved by America. America has been shown as the mediator who can solve the entire controversy. Amir here stands as a representative of America who will solve the situation by rescuing Sohrab from the clutches of Taliban.

Conclusion

The research presented an analysis of Hosseini’s (2005) *The Kite Runner* from self-Orientalist perspective to show the re-Orientalization of the Orient with reference to native informants. The research showed that Hosseini (2005) has used the Western style of Orientalists and represented the Orient from the same perspective as Orientalists have given the representation of the Orient. Hosseini (2005) in the novel is re-Orientalizing the Orient from Self-Orientalist perspective by giving the binaristic relationship of the Orient and the Occident as America is shown superior, rational, civilized, literate, modern and advance while Afghanistan is shown inferior, weak, submissive, irrational, morbid, uncivilized and third world. Moreover, stereotypes and clichés are more significant in the novel as the bleak and distorted images of Pashtuns, Afghans and Taliban are given. The novel depicts a complete representation of Orient from Self-Orientalist perspective which is not a true representation but misrepresentation like the representation of Orientalists, and Hosseini (2005) is a true native informant in providing all these information.

Findings and Recommendation

Hosseini (2005) is a true Self-Orientalist in Daura’s (1995) point of view with reference to Said’ (1978) s *Orientalism*, and also a factual follower as a native informant. Said’s position about an Orientalist is that a person belonging to the west, who is writing, researching and teaching etc. about the Orient. However, Said refers to Westerners but Daura (1995) and Spivak (1999) nominated the same writers from the East because they are now playing their roles as Orientalists. They are either called Self-Orientalists or Re-Orientalists and native informants. Further, these writers are of a hybrid nature as they belong to both East and West while Hosseini (2005) holds the same hybrid position and plays his role as a native informant, providing information about the Orient (Afghanistan) to America can be researched in other discourses, particularly in literature by the students, scholars and researchers of literature.

Limitations of the Research

The novel *The Kite Runner* (2005) is the very clear example of religious disparities; particularly the stories of different sects of Islam are provided which are sensitive issues. Due to sensitivity of such issues, the researcher strongly intaked research ethics consideration to maintain religious harmony, and deliberately ignored and did not include the issues of religious antagonism and sectarianism.

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