
**The Shadow of Representations *the*
New Orientalistic Tenets in Khaled
Hosseini's *The Kite Runner***

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Abstract

This paper tries to approach *The Kite Runner (KT)* by Khaled Hosseini from a New Orientalistic perspective by the amplification of the different cultural, ideological, historical, and the political determinants which the researchers believe are major cornerstones. The novel is scrutinized on the basis of a postmodern philosophy that involves the epistemological model which is built on relativism, subjectivity, and deconstruction foundations. This paper accumulates different critics' thoughts on New Orientalism philosophy and its permutations in the *KT*. Then, different conclusions are synthesized. The major objective is to re-read *The Kite Runner* and underpin the New Orientalistic tenets to show that Orientalism is still founding the Muslim and the Islamic subject matter in the Western imagination, and it keeps renewing the patterns which govern any discursive representation about Islam.

Keywords: The Kite Runner; new orientalism; Afghanistan; culture; post colonialism

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Kite Runner is a novel that historicizes the story of the 20th c Afghanistan, we shall presume that the novel is predicated on different partial accounts that erroneously sequenced Afghanistan's story, and in the same time presented a defamatory image about Islam and Muslim societies. The latter was done by the reiteration of the classical orientalists' stereotypes on the one hand, and a post 9/11 worldview on the other. The novel played the ring of fragmenting the Afghani society by positioning the conflict into black and white oppressor/oppressed dichotomy, an oppressor is a Pashtun and an oppressed who is a Hazara. The major problem that this article is trying to raise is the representation of Islam through different lenses which are subjectively predicated on one-sided position. The latter, indirectly, works to defame and, fallaciously, introduce a picture that is influenced by a post 9/11 American worldview, and that is, actually, a new philosophy which many new orientalists have adopted to harness different vision about Islam. The idea of relocating the abnormal existence of the Orient unto a confrontational battlefield was the consequence of years of dialogic and ideologic heated friction that sharpened the civilizational prospects. Said's seminal work established notorious reputation for the cultural reservoir that used to nurture the so called Western supremacy which drew the governing paradigmatic reciprocities and gave rise to a new critical directions. The latter was transferred gently in tranquil narratives which narrated sympathist and personal human experiences which center the emotional *topos* at the expense of the collective social and historical pathos. WW1, WW2, and the Cold War played an intrinsic role in revisiting and reconsidering the role of the universal soldier that protects the humanity from its evil. The binary of the West and the East is no longer validating the old practices of the early orientalists, nevertheless; the conceptive process infiltrated in subtler ways that incorporated political, cultural, and anthropological melting pots into new formula that is complexly encrypted. The nonlinear aspect that characterize the representation of Islam in the novel is the new methods that polish the old orientalist clichés and provide supposed alternatives which position Islam away from the locus of abnormality and strangeness. The Islam that the novel is introducing is an Islam that corresponds with a Western model that meets with the American norms and values. In this paper, the researchers assume that the historicization process presented by Hosseini is partial account that minimized different historical facts which played intrinsic role in determining the progress of narrational testimonio. The major thesis of this work is to trace the recycling process of the classical orientalist tenets, and the way they were given a new orientalist shape in which they will be discussed on different bases. The researchers adopt interpretive analytical approach in which the data will be scrutinized on the basis of new orientalist lenses as theoretical ground.

II. THE NEW ORIENTALISTIC TENETS

In 1973, the major accredited orientalists organized a big congress on the occasion of the hundred anniversary of their first conference, wherein they announced the death of Orientalists concept

¹. The latter was only cancelled formally, and nevertheless, it kept evolving through the methodological frameworks and the paradigmatic reciprocities of the West and the East in general, and Islam in particular. In the 70s, research and studies centers played a huge role in boosting the knowledge quest of the different ethnicities

and cultures, all for the service of decision making circles. Through writing the strategic reports, providing counseling services for governments' policies, intensifying their presence in media to comment on and analyze the different political and economic events, those research centers were the natural spring that fosters and entrenches the new orientalist direction of the West in the public sphere. After 9/11, the writings of Bernard Lewis were the pivot of repulsion around which the classic stereotypical tendencies of orientalism were polished. His two books the *Crisis of Islam* and *What Went Wrong* were the kernel of the Anti-Terrorism imagination that Western decision makers adopted and promoted. Many American and non-American writers, journalists, politicians, and experts like: Martin Kramer, Bassam Tibi, Raphael Patai (who asserts in his book *The Arab Mind* (1973) that Arabs are naturally savage and are vulnerable to sexual humiliation. That book was strongly recommended at the evening of preparing Iraq's invasion during Bush's II administration². The book was the pretext under which torture and abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib was undertaken), Daniel Pipes³ (-who said that Islam can be divided into three categories: "traditional Islam", which he sees as pragmatic and non-violent, "Islamism", which he sees as dangerous and militant, and "moderate Islam", which he sees as underground and not yet codified into a popular movement. He elaborated that he did not have the 'theological background' to determine what group follows the Quran the closest and is truest to its intent-⁴). The aforementioned figures strongly believed that terrorism has deep roots in Islam and it must be eradicated⁵. Olivier Roy believes that the latter assumption led the west to increase their interest in Islam as a political and military crisis rather than an academic issue⁶. Media unspecialized talkative analysts⁷ contributed negatively in ingraining the simple, shallow, stereotypically repeated clichés of the -Whitely- burdened maneuvering politicians who keep consuming the classical orientalist identifications of Islam with terrorism:

إن الاستشراق الإعلامي أكثر خطورة على جمهور القراء من الاستشراق الأكاديمي الذي لا يقرؤه إلا المتخصصون، وإن كانت الخطورة في المادة الأكاديمية أشد لوصولها إلى أعلى مراكز القرار السياسي في الولايات المتحدة وفي أوروبا، ولكن ما حدث أن بعض المستشرقين أصبحوا من الكتاب الصحفيين ومن الذين يلجأ إليه الإعلام للحديث عن القضايا الإسلامية.⁸

In the above passage, the author highlighted the unprofessional treatment of the Islam's topic in media, and this is what Edward Said discussed in *Covering Islam* on how Journalists like Judith Miller, the famous New York Times' reporter, professors like Bernard Lewis, and writers like Daniel Pipes, and many other media influencers' shaped, molded, and finally introduced their alleged facts in representing Islam. Middle East women had the lion's share in the New Orientalist debates. They were introduced in gender studies as an exotic case study that needs special approaches because of their socio-cultural condition, and they became the border-line scapegoat in which the anti-terrorism cults permeated and invaded different Islamic countries. The latter was evidenced in a survey which claimed that between 2000 and 2009, 170 book and 670 article discussed Middle Eastern women issues⁹. Bernard Lewis became the major figure of the new USA after the first and the second Gulf Wars and eventually after Afghanistan and Iraq's invasion. He was the academic façade of Bush the son administration, on which his political views were centered and adopted. On Bernard's honoring ceremony in 2007, Dick Cheney said that since the struggle of freedom and justice keeps renewing itself, we'll keep relying on Bernard Lewis' stern way of thinking¹⁰. After the

9/11, the US administration started to advocate a new thesis which divides Islam into good Islam and bad Islam, and the official discourse and loyalty parties nurtured the notion of deconstruction that differentiates good Muslims from bad Muslims inside the Islamic body, just like what Bush asserted in his speech following the 9/11 attacks. The good Muslim is someone who adopts an American view of Islam rather than a natural Islam, and the bad Muslim is a Muslim who is perceived extremistically by the US government. And this is what Richard N. Haass argued about when he said that the goal of the US foreign policy in the 21st century is to integrate different countries and international organizations into harmonic solutions which correspond with the American interests and values¹¹. Hence, the normal Islam is the conformative to the US agenda of perceiving what good Muslim is, and if any thesis is outside this circle of American identification, it will be considered as a threat. Consequently, research and strategic centers in cultural, political, and economic issues boosted different academia that serves this new direction of Orientalism that came with the rise of anti-terrorism agenda. This agenda is an agenda that works to alter the system of values that underpins Islam as a distinct counterpart and complementary block which comprises a parallel entity to the US agenda of anti-terrorism. It works to re-interpret, re-define, and re-introduce a new Islam that is stripped of its kernel and submissive to what is supposed to be normal and representative. The US government agenda is based on the belief that the good Muslim is the passive Muslim who dilutes within the American cultural, and hence political, hegemonic, overwhelming, and repressive mouth shutting whipping ideology that abrogates any sort of alterity which does not comply with this new philosophy of colonialism.

On the other hand, thinkers like Baudrillard argued that the so-called problem of terrorism was not of primeval existence in the Islamic body, nevertheless, objective approach towards the issue should look at the conditions and causes which led to this external upsurge that befell the world. In other words, one should understand the nature of the hegemonic systems that rule the majority of the Arab world with the support and co-foundation of the US especially, in addition to social and economic problems which pervades in many Islamic countries all with the shadow presence of the Imperial powers of the world¹².

The shift towards New Orientalism was marked by the criticism directed to the classical orientalism that was, thanks to fervent thinkers, perceived stereotypically because of its underpinning ideological orientations. Different factors contributed in the revision of the field and its repercussions; among them:

- 1- The fall of the big empires and the rise of the spirit of Nationalism¹³.
- 2- The two world wars which unveiled the elite's system of values to the western mind.
- 3- The emergence of liberation movements in the colonized countries which showed that this oriental 'object' is capable of speaking and introducing himself.
- 4- The development in the field of Humanities and its inclusion of different other fields like: Economy, Demography, Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, and Linguistics.
- 5- The globalization process contributed in the flourishing of polyphonic tendencies which alleviated the task of cultural dialogue.

6- The emergence of the leftist wings _especially in the US _ encouraged the liberation movements and anti-imperialism agendas¹⁴ .

7- The works of Anwar Abd ElMalik, Abd Allah Elarwi, and more emphatically Edward Said, in which the ideological permutations of Orientalism were deconstructed and debunked.

8- The fall of the Soviet Union marked the rise of the US as distinct power that directed its interest towards the Middle East as cultural, political, and military expansion. The latter point was the nucleus around which the New Orientalist's subject matter revolved, unlike the classical one that focused on the effect and anatomy of the European Imperialism, and its invasion and study of the Muslim countries.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the interest in oriental studies remained primarily imbued with the philological tendencies that perceived Islam as a decadent civilization in comparison with the Western one. However, in the mid-20th century, especially after the two world wars, a slight change surfaced in terms of representatives, from philologists _as supposed specialists_ to sociologists, anthropologists, politicians, philosophers, and even writers and artists.

After being perceived stereotypically, many New Orientalists started to prefer to call themselves Arabists or Islamism Experts to avoid the historical connotations of the term¹⁵.

The concept of New Orientalism is entrenched mainly in the public imagination of the West and the East, wherein the legacy of the early cultural onslaught is still sparkling under the ashes of the postmodern and postcolonial world. New Orientalism did not have constant patterns of definition, it fluctuated to include different directions, but it had one constant that it recoiled primarily from the collective aversion of the early colonial and imperial legacy of orientalism. Mohamed Khalifa Hassan defines it as: "... Human and sociological field that applies Sociology and Humanities methods in studying peoples and cultures of the world."¹⁶ However, a comprehensive definition for the term comes from Olivier Moos who stated that New Orientalism is a quasi-cultural ideology that is based on the renewal and the rehabilitation of the classic orientalist theses with the requirements of the modern thought and democracy according to the West and specifically the US. The latter is contextualized with the ideologization of the international relationships, as well as, it works for the return of an essentialist reading of the Islamic field.¹⁷ Moreover, the New Orientalistic discourse is not limited to academics, but also journalists, writers, researchers, bloggers, in addition to political and economic activists in a direct or indirect way¹⁸.

The modern media technology contributed intrinsically in the widespread of the New Orientalistic implications through the American international anti-terrorism policy in general, and the US specifically, as well as the role that the Westernized Muslim authors, experts, anthropologists, and politicians played, in addition to the soft silent invasion of the occident culture in the age of the Big Middle East that Bernard Lewis talked about. The dynamics of the postmodern patterns which decenter the West and encourage pluralism in representation, have been perceived by some Muslim thinkers like Akbar S. Ahmed _in his book *Postmodernism and Islam*_ as a recourse of power that insures an inside perspective to let the subaltern narrates his story. In addition to the Islamic one, the openness on Eastern cultures (Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Buddhist, and Zoroastrianist) -through the anthropological and the sociological researches- within an age wherein culture of

relativism, pluralism, and decentralization are prevalent, New Orientalism flourished primarily thanks to this postmodern worldview. This worldview includes the equivalent representational portions which deauthenticates the master narratives. The latter was the core of the matter that characterized mainly the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century in which the idea of the Other East as _a constant substance_ was replaced by the notion of perceiving it as a complex block of cultural and intellectual phenomena,¹⁹ and that the mythologization of the East was substituted by basic effective philosophical, sociological, and cultural assumptions²⁰.

The postcolonial New Orientalism was pivoting around major hotspots that Gérard Leclerc talked about:

- 1- Its globalization tendency allowed careful pluralism.
- 2- Its intellectual confidence opened new interpretative methods that are more modest and less self-critical.
- 3- Its naïve idealism permitted critical design that reveals its often hidden or evil agenda.
- 4- It romanticized the East in a different way that substituted the concept of the east as a space of exotica and transcendent wisdom to a multi cultivational entity that is composed of cultural actors and intellectual movements which are stemmed from different historical circumstances²¹. In addition, the western academic and popular imagination about the mythic Eastern changed to maturer analyses that comprise the different abstract and material, direct or symbolic social systems. Also, New Orientalism engrossed in deconstructing the colonial orientalist discourse and in questioning the essential distinction between the East and the West and its motives, biases, and backgrounds.

Olivier Moos suggests that New Orientalism rehabilitates the classical stereotypical depiction of Orientalism but in an anthropological and sociological mold. He argues that New Orientalism revolves around four assumptions²²:

1- The Islamic field is a homogeneous whole. This assumption is based on a double territorialization of an Arab and Muslim world that is seen in essence as a homogeneous entity, and also on cultural denominators which are normally supposed to give an idea about the individual and the collective action of the Muslims, and sometimes it minimizes the diversity that characterizes any Islamic movement to a static conception of an utterance that is derogatory and reductive. The latter results in a series of methodological suppositions which are based on the limitation of diversity in the Islamic body.

2- Islam is an exception. It means that Islam is a system of values that informs us about all the social and individual aspects of Muslims' life, and the progress towards democracy or any recognition of human rights for example, cannot be done without breaking up from Islam, otherwise, the latter has to submit to a Westernization process. Also, from a religious and historical standpoint, New Orientalism considers Islam as incapable to cope with modernism/modernity, henceforth, backwardness and abnormality are engendered in the substantial essence of Islam, its history, culture, and identity.

3- The Muslim world is stagnant. This assumption is predicated on the belief that Islam is a static and solid block wherein the individual is shaped by his religion and culture, and it is at odds with the modern western dynamic pattern that is built

on the idea of liberation and self-accomplishment. 4- Islamic violence is a cultural product. This assumption is based on the use of the term Islamism/Islamist or political Islam as a totalitarian ideology that operates its principles through the violence engine, and the patterns which boost this force are primeval and cannot be eradicated unless they are deformed. Anthropology was among the major influences in approaching the Middle Eastern Subject. The fact that this field studies the systems of marriage and kinship, the authority and governance conditions, spiritual beliefs, and the different religious rituals, made it one among the big determinants of the nature of representations. The Middle Eastern anthropology went through four stages as, Richard T. Antoun the famous American anthropologist, argues²³:

1- The stage of the dominating classical orientalists: this stage was characterized by meditating the historical studies and does not account for the methodology of the contemporary anthropologist.

2- The stage wherein travelers and political administrators dominated.

3- The stage wherein theoretical anthropology, scholars, and professionals ruled.

4- The stage of local anthropologists.

According to Laila Abo Laghad, Middle Eastern anthropology proliferates more three subject matters: races/tribes, Harem/woman, and Islam²⁴. In the Western imagination which was pumped by the media machine that programs the audiences, women were the border line that divides modernity from Islam and democracy from totalitarianism. Since Iraq's invasion day and its following years, the British government sent various delegations of women's rights activists to document what they believed women's rights violations and supposed executions committed by the Iraqi government. In the early accounts of the classical orientalist depictions of women, the established stereotypical worldview by the orientalists molded the female subject as "Harem" and "veiled women" which are connotative of oppression, persecution, suppression and so on. However, in the post 9/11 New Orientalists' account, the Hijab became the substitute and turned to be representative of religiosity and sometimes orthodoxy, and many European countries banned it in some governmental public or private facilities. Inevitably, the issue of Hijab had the lion's share of the criticism directed towards women's position in the Muslim society, and the western ruling elite propagated against the Middle Eastern status quo by claiming the inferior position that Muslim women occupy (which is seen in the western imagination about Islam as organically embedded) even though Muslim women are comfortable about their position. Hence, the issue of Hijab became politicized and took even more advanced levels to be seen as an Isthmus between democracy and totalitarianism.

Among the most influencing approaches which were targeted to define Islam is the Christian model that underlies the different sociological and anthropological philosophies. The latter refers to the conditions that surround the educational career and the communal upbringing in a society that was controlled by the church, and after an Enlightenment Era, this society divorced from these modes of thinking. In addition to a major cause _alluded to by the famous French Sociologist Jean-Paul Willaime_ that talks about the contribution of the Christian circles (pastors, priests) in the evolvement of the modern sociology in the 1960s, especially (the ecclesiastical

sociological researches in the USA-at that time- reached 40%²⁵ of the total) the introduction of different terminology like: salvation, original sin, Orthodoxy (for salafists for example), pope as Imam, holy wars, fundamentalists, which were introduced and applied in approaching Islam. Even though, this terminology, is originally part of a different religious and cultural system that is totally distinct from an Islamic universe that does not co-operate except on a ground that is cultivated by its original organic patterns²⁶. The aforementioned was a forgone conclusion of anti-religious movement that rebounded off an age that annihilated Europe under the pressure of obedience in the name of God.

III. THE NEW ORIENTALISTIC TENETS IN *KT*

The nature of new orientalism amplifies the difference, and ideologically silences the voicing process of the Middle Eastern character. In its treatment of the orient, it surfaces specific patterns of identifications that work as a privilege to define finalities which formulate the picture of the target issue. The latter is exemplified in the dispersion of the basic contempt towards the religious practice and the global united culture that emanates from the Western model of representation. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, for example, was one amongst the beta bastards that copied the permeated 'imagination' which is often introduced as a neutral exemplification of a Middle Eastern Other who needs to be represented through New Orientalistic lenses which selectively emphasize the patterns of depiction. Respectively, the book, for example, worked to erase the voices of sanity and spot _in subjective conditionality_ a behavior of extremists, and hence eventually reduces the space of causality to a mere violent, insane, and monstrous centrality that promotes negative representational discourse. The revolutionary patriarchal male presence is engendered in the novel to show the voiceless, nameless female element who is persecuted and banned from reading Western literature. Throughout the novel Hosseini exhibits how gender roles affect almost all characters. Soraya brings exposure to the treatment woman receive from Afghan men and speaks out about the level of inequality between the two genders. At one point in the novel, Soraya had spoken to Amir about the inequality in the form of double standards. In the same plane, The portrait of Amir's mother is the only thing that he remembers about his mother. His mother's absence is marked from this scene as she is just a memory for both Amir and Baba. Amir's explanation of pictures shows the domination of men and their seminal role in the traditional family as Amir recalls that "I am a baby in that photograph and Baba is holding me, looking tired and grim. I'm in his arms, but it's Rahim Khan's pinky my fingers are curled around" (*KR*, 2003, p. 5). Extreme binaries like oversimplification versus over exaggeration, the extremist (Eastern) versus the democratic, are the cornerstones that are heralded in reading the Other (Eastern) from Western perspective; which in its turn territorializes the borders of perception. It satiates the complex superior versus inferior duality that the Western reader is historically overwhelmed by. "Alas the Afghanistan of our youth is long dead. Kindness is gone from the land and you cannot escape the killings. Always the killings" (*KR*, p: 216). The creatures that are found in such books are reduced to absolutist representations, wherein they are distinguished through specific cognitive corners which are enveloped in fanatic and extreme levels of perception. Keshavarz (2007) categorized them contextually. There are the "Ugly" (p. 113) males who are replete with the violent, revolutionary, collective, pack-mentality clique that dominates and spreads its influence with power. This category excludes any Western

presence and prohibits the sheer act of reading a Western book. The place of women in the world of the 'Ugly' is domestic, submissive, passive, and vulnerable. The Western reader, hence, is received by the intentional erasure and absenteeism of any forefront or positive existence of the female element. The existence of both genders is determined by the strictures of Islam, and usually the behavior of those 'Ugly' elements is corrupt and deviant from rational standardized *normal* human conduct. The latter is usually emphasized and followed by characters' commentary on the cruel nature of the religious system rather than on the individual's behavior (which was not reflected and discussed in accordance) with the just objective rules that Islam holds.

"Will God . . . he began, and choked a little. Will God put me in hell for what I did to that man?" (*KR*, p: 318). The Islamization of wickedness is the vital driving force that the uninformed, and consequently, the disinformed Western reader is encountered with. The latter is bordered within two cornerstones; imaginary Good (the West), imaginary Evil (the East), the former is in a perpetual strife to overcome the latter, the first cannot be imagined without the second, and thus their existence is inter-dependent. The Evil 'Ugly' characters are themselves the prototype by which Islam should be understood. The characters in works such as *Reading Lolita in Tehran* *RLT* and *KR* do not offer an objective exposition of their religious preaches system, rather their judgments are built on subjective personal experiences which affected their lives in essence:

The conversation inevitably turned to the Taliban. "Is it as bad as I hear?" I said. "Nay, it's worse. Much worse," he said. They don't let you be human.", "Suddenly this young bearded fellow who was patrolling the aisles, eighteen years old at most by the look of him, he walked up to me and struck me on the forehead with the butt of his Kalashnikov" (KT, p: 208).

Hence, the image of Muslim fanatic characters is essentialized to reduce a whole belief system into an enveloped subjective representation that appropriates personal pragmatized experience, and abrogates objective non-essentialized methodological informativeness. This informativeness is selective in nature, the Feminist's aspiration for better conditions of women, for example, is disparaged and faced with the religious system that prevents them from any change. Even the rules which are related to Islamic law are not accurately introduced to the foreign reader; they are, on the one hand, presented with a sweeping overgeneralizations that do not apply to different occasions with different circumstances, and on the other hand, they are interpreted from a subjective stand point that is not based on scientific and methodological frameworks. Moreover, religion is depicted to dominate, ruthlessly, on the lives of the community without a clear detailed justificatory account that explains and shows the objective motive behind taking action. Islam is pictured as one sided blind un-mundane world that eliminates the worldly dimension of the human behavior, and thus, it is indifferent to any progressive movement that serves the society. In the *KR*, the Islamic regime is depicted as a faceless, blind whole, and one block entity that diminishes the individuality of its constituent members, and this regime is the one that lurks in the dark as a predator to eradicate any sign of novelty that, subjectively, does not relate to its body of monstrosity:

Suddenly a young Talib ran over and hit her on the thighs with his wooden stick. He struck her so hard she fell down. He was screaming

at her and cursing and saying the Ministry of Vice and Virtue does not allow women to speak loudly. She had a large purple bruise on her leg for days but what could I do except stand and watch my wife get beaten? (KR, p: 216)

The normality that characterizes any society is not found in this Islamic body. The differences in opinion, the openness in debates and disagreements with leaders are positioned in the eye of the reader to show that they are forbidden, or in the worst to show that these distinguished individuals are disillusioned with their corpus of knowledge and skeptical about what do they learn from their spiritual or military leaders. In other words, this Islam is retarded, closed within, and empty of scientific richness that draws logical frameworks.

Another category that Keshavarz (2007) traced is the "Good". The Good, principally, is Western. The KT overlooks the historical and the direct or the indirect political role that the US played in the Afghani trauma. The US is depicted as the dreamland, and the open refuge for every oppressed human being. Respectively, all criticism of America is presented as "misinformed, ill-intentioned, misplaced, and exaggerated" (p. 127). In addition, as far as the Afghani conflict is concerned, Hosseini presents to the reader rather a simplistic, selective, and one dimensional picture that associates "the Chechens, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Arabs, and Pakistanis" with the genesis of Taliban by forsaking the CIA. He does not mention the CIA or Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security advisor to President Carter, 'whose stated aim,' according to Pankaj Mishra in the spring 2002 issue of *Granta*, "was to 'sow shit' in the Soviet backyard":

Hosseini also intimates that the current leader handpicked by foreign powers, Hamid Karzai—whose "caracul hat and green chapan became famous"—will put Afghanistan back in order. Unfortunately, that is all Karzai is famous for—his fashion, Hollywood style. His government does not control all of Afghanistan, which is torn between warlords as in the feudal days. Farmers are producing more opium than ever before for survival. And the occupying forces, according to human- rights groups, are routinely trampling on innocent Afghans. There is no Hollywood-style solution to such grave problems of a nation steeped in the Middle Ages, is there? (Bloom, 2009, p. 63)

The personal, private, and humanly appealing tone was the umbrella that protected the existence of the work from the harsh, burning, uncomfortable, and unfamiliar narrative that the stereotyped western reader might expect to find. It is that sort of stories which dramatizes the struggle and the quest for spiritual stability in the pursuit of self-recovery; wherein the hero strives to atone for his past sins which caused troubles to the others. It is this struggle that the reader finds himself/herself between two soul mates that color, ethnicity, social barriers ruptured their intimate relationship and their love to each other. Thus, the reader sympathizes the personal, subjective, and partial story with all its discursive, aesthetic, and emotional play at the expense of the collective, complex trauma that befell the nation.

Moreover, this Islamic society is a society that is obsessed by the romanticization of the past. Those Muslim characters are confined within the orbit of glory days to the point they are still positioned hand in hand with the image of the

sword and the turban just like the Taliban. The reiteration of the Orientalistic denominators are maintained vehemently. Veiled women from the *Arabian Nights*, bearded blood thirsty fanatics, aggressive men shouting for the death of the Other, fear, and pain, in addition to killing, are the amplified projectors which blaze the sight of the Western reader to perceive the Muslim and Islam. And even the women in this society are bereft of any symptom of power except for the sexual power. In other words, woman's presence is bound to her sexual presence, she in such communities does not possess any influence on men or society except with her seductive and tempting presence that hypnotizes everyone. Indeed, women in these societies are useless except for sex.

“He pointed to an old man dressed in ragged clothes trudging down a dirt path, a large burlap pack filled with scrub grass tied to his back. “That’s the real Afghanistan, Agha sahib. That’s the Afghanistan I know. You? You’ve always been a tourist here, you just didn’t know it.” (*KR*, p. 232) The implementation of this kinetic informative voice in the *KT* blurs the isthmus between fiction and reality. The author offers an inside view that is meant to authenticate the narrative authority, so that he soothes his reader with the credibility of the presented perspective. Moreover, the judgmentality that will be directed towards the discourse of the ‘Ugly’ characters will be divorced and perceived in isolation from the official whole discourse of the novel in general, and the author specifically. In other words, only characters are responsible for their theories, facts, judgments, and reasoning; the authorial presence is diluted mechanically inside the body of accusations and misinformativeness. In addition, because the work is a work of fiction, it is not required from the author to provide accurate, contextualized, and scientific testification that is found in the realm of History science. Thus, the author in between position that disavowed the ownership of assumptions, and at the same time fictionalized historical events which are substantially woven in defamatory new orientalist fabric.

The common shared experience between all humans that Hosseini created is exemplified in several aspects: the feeling of guilt, redemption, atonement, family bonds, love, and humanity positioned the receptive cognition of the reader onto different realm that minimized the trauma of a whole nation to a personal individual story. The latter worked to familiarize the already standardized definition of pain and overlooked, shortsightedly, the shadow of the accumulated misery over the troubled Afghanistan. The novel presents very few instances where Amir or Baba interacts with American citizens who are not of Afghan origin. This lack of interaction is conspicuous in a novel where America seems to be idealized to such a great extent. Also, the Afghan community seems to be detached or isolated, or more extremely, perceived as an outsider by the American society. The latter is quite different to Amir’s case who seemed to embrace the American dream worldview, wherein he appropriates the main symbol of power and economic success. He does not seem to experience or acknowledge ethno cultural boundaries to this identification primarily since he only represents the Afghan subculture. Indeed, by representing the poverty of this group and their identification solely based on their past in Afghanistan, Amir is able to strengthen his own identity as American by contrast, since he achieves wealth and feels no attachment to Afghanistan when he returns there. And even when he went back to rescue Sohrob, he was more like a tourist rather than a native, he mentions that he needs to wear the traditional “garment and pakol” (Hosseini, 2003, p. 202), and he explains: “[I]ronically, I’d never worn either when I’d actually lived in Afghanistan” (p. 202), and he also needs to wear “perhaps the most

important item: an artificial beard, black and chest length, Shari'a-friendly – or at least the Taliban version of Shari'a" (p. 202):

By disapprovingly referring to the artificial beard and clothing, Amir points to what he sees as the inauthentic nature of these displays of belonging, and how they are representations of a homogenous Afghan identity which he objects to. Indeed, his comments demonstrate reluctance towards these displays of belonging, and it becomes clear that his reluctance is linked to the fact that he no longer feels like he belongs in Afghanistan. He says to his driver Farid, "I feel like a tourist in my own country" (203). As with his discussion of the Taliban, he relegates Afghanistan to the realm of representation and removes it from reality: "I looked westward and marveled that, somewhere over those mountains, Kabul still existed. It really existed, not just an old memory, or as the heading of an AP story on page 15 of the San Francisco Chronicle" (211). Afghanistan, Amir implies, has become a narrative to him, relayed in American media. (Andrews, 2012, p. 40)

There is no mention how Americans viewed Afghans, and how they are depicted in the novel as a separate parasitical entity that lives at the periphery of existence without being purely identified. Nevertheless, the narrative was established to maintain the resemblance between the American and the Afghan character by prioritizing and centralizing the American prototype as a referential temple, "I found that there's a lot in common. Amir comes to a point when he is desperate, he reaches to God. To me, that's the way people within Christianity are." (p. 113), and this is how the *Denver Post* reviewer was all too happy to reassure readers, "This isn't a 'foreign' book. Unlike Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*, Hosseini's narrative resonates with familiar rhythms and accessible ideas." The predicament lies in a pivotal sequence of cognitive narrative images that shyly erases the original character of the hero:

I throw my makeshift jai-namaz, my prayer rug, on the floor and I get on my knees, lower my forehead to the ground, my tears soaking through the sheet. I bow to the west. Then I remember I haven't prayed for over fifteen years. I have long forgotten the words. But it doesn't matter, I will utter those few words I still remember: La illaha il Allah, Muhammadu rasulullah. (KR, p: 345-346)

His character was fused within the American corpus and eventually vaporized through the western created ambiance, which in its turn founded an entrance of familiarity that made the world of the story accessible to western readers by focusing on the universal appeal of fiction about the Other, and at the same time camouflaged the implemented uncasualities that amplified the collective trauma that the US and SU played role in. Because readers' interpretations are affected by their political, historical, and cultural background, they will be unaware of the learned practices of reading the Other which do not challenge them to critically consider conclusions of their relationships with the Other, and will henceforth result in a reading that will condition the receiver to project himself through his expectations, biases, and values onto the Muslim characters. The latter will impose a reiteration of the old cliché of Us and Them binary and forsake the complexity that characterizes the Afghan

condition, and this will lack the context that gives a more holistic perspective of readings this Other:

What makes the old Orientalism and its newer version effective is that their sinister plots build on each other—and gradually seep into our daily accumulated fears. In Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination (University of Minnesota Press, 1997), the sociologist Avery F. Gordon explains that ghost stories are accounts of phantoms that disturb the reader with their overpowering presence. And yet their most distinct feature is that they are absent from view. Ghosts haunt us by not being there. And the New Orientalist literature has been producing ghosts in abundance. (Bloom, 2009, p. 72)

The affirmation of an everlasting existing enemy justifies much of the ongoing political, economic, social, and historical agenda that guarantees the linearity of the imposed reality. It is a stream of line that keeps the perpetual tide of the historical movement, in which it establishes a discourse that is meant to primarily dictate its own methodology of narrating the story:

...At the same time, while their supposed rage, ignorance, and incompetence are made hypervisible, a kind of background noise setting the ghostly ambience, they rarely speak for themselves. The absence of Muslim voices and commentators comes across as a natural function of their lack of dynamism and agency.... (Bloom, 2009, p. 74)

The latter is found for example in Bernard Lewis' *What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response*, and political pundits like Samuel Huntington who poured their rage on the supposed underdeveloped Arab countries by accusing them of backwardness, failure, irrational, and their fall from glory, without taking into consideration the complex condition that characterized the rise and fall of those countries, in addition to their negligence in attributing the role of the imperial West as a colonial power and postcolonial _behind the curtain_ ultimate player.

IV. CONCLUSION:

Creating the existence's absence of the counterpart voice was and still one of the pivotal denominators which circumscribed the prescribed created hostility. This shows how the idea has been operationalized by those who institutionalize a strategically aesthetic, intellectual, and psychological Western perspective and representation of the Muslim Middle Eastern Other; in a way that has provided Western justification for domination over these colonized peoples (Said, 1978). Moreover, as Willinsky (1998) describes, "it was the duty and pleasure of these learned men and women," referring to those engaging in the Orientalist project, "to make the whole of the world coherent for the West by bringing all we knew of it within the imperial order of things" (p. 11) This so-called ill intention exacerbated the enmity between the West/East and provided the pretext for the continuity of the antagonistic relationship.

The problem that sites its position _in approaching the historical dynamism_ is that the principal tendency of anthropologists and sociologists in interpreting history and its convergence with politics, centers its assumptions on materialistic ground of a utilitarian reasoning that involves political and economic motivations as the sole driving force of the

different human actions, and in the meantime, overlooking the basic divine ontological finalities which are considered as the substantial core of the Islamic worldview. Therefore, every religious discourse that talks about paradise and God's blessing is just a façade that surfaces the real motivation of an economic and political expansion philosophy.

KR narrative was built on the dynamic complex nature of interrelated three conflictual engines exemplified in: ethnicity, religion, and language. Hosseini shows that these differences are the source of troubles which torment the Afghan body and prolong its miseries on an arena of a Pashtun oppressor and Hazara oppressed. This text was supposed to give an authentic account that objectively delivers a crystal clear image of 'what is going on in Afghanistan'. Actually, it was written by someone who spent twenty six years of his life in the US, since, he fled his country when he was a child. The work was more flavored with an Islamized Western tone that explains what it is meant by being a Society in Afghanistan.

The intersection between anthropology and sociology with politics resulted a tendency that made the central objective of New Orientalism not offering resolutions for the different political and sociological challenges that the Islamic actors get involved in, but founding a pathway that does not clash _partially or wholly_ with the identical, professional, or political interests²⁷ of those experts. Among the major factors that influence the prejudice tendency of the Humanities is the ideological nature of those fields, and this is because of the social issues that they deal with and their communal and cultural problem, in which the political and economic interests are involved in. Because of the latter, Habermas, the famous sociologist, believed that knowledge in general, and sociological knowledge in specific, reflects scholars and researchers interests and subjective tendencies²⁸. The layout which governs the modes of interpretations was among the most critical and pivotal issues that characterize the Orientalistic/ New Orientalistic paradigm then and now. Sociology of religion has produced dozens of theories which are meant to be applied on Islam and the Muslim communities, but a dilemma aroused from this approach towards understanding, explaining, reading, and defining a foreign culture without taking into consideration its social, historical, and cultural specificities.

¹ Bernard Lewis: *Islam and the West*, p: 157.

² Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*, p: 76.

³ Those specialists rely heavily on the works and theses of philosophers, sociologists and linguists like Ernest and Lewis Gellner whom Zachary Lockman called "the far right watch dogs" (see his book *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, second edition, p.300)

⁴ The Middle East with Daniel Pipes on YouTube. Uncommon Knowledge. Hoover Institution. Published September 23, 2008. Accessed July 21, 2020.

⁵ Ibid: 280-291.

⁶ *Les Illusions du 11 Septembre : le Débat Stratégique Face au Terrorisme*, p : 111.

⁷ Zachary Lockman: *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, p: 123.

⁸ مازن مطبقاني (Mazen Matbakani : *Studies in Contemporary American Orientalism*, p : 64, 65).

⁹ منيرة شاراد (Mounira Sharred : *Gender in the Middle East*, p : 290).

¹⁰ Stephen Sheehi, *Islamophobia*, p: 83.

¹¹ Olivier Roy, *ibid*, p: 108.

¹² *The Spirit of Terrorism*, p: 21.

- ¹³ Bensalem Hamich: Orientalism in a Cul-de-Sac, p: 63. (Bensalem Hamich: Orientalism in a Cul-de-Sac, p: 63).
- ¹⁴ Vasant Kaiwar: The Postcolonial Orient: The Politics of Difference and the Project of Provincialising Europe, p: 30
- ¹⁵ El-Sheikh Ahmed: The Orientalism Dialogue, p : 83). ص: 83، حوار الاستشراق، الشيخ أحمد
- ¹⁶ Dilemma of the New and Contemporary Orientalism (ص: 58، أزمة الاستشراق الحديث والمعاصر
- ¹⁷ (the New Orientalism Stream and Islam, p : 5). ص: 5، تيار الاستشراق الجديد والإسلام
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Elmabrouk Elmansouri : The Contemporary Theological Studies from Western Centrality to Cultural Relativity, p : 28) ص، الدراسات الدينية المعاصرة من المركزية الغربية إلى النسبية الثقافية، المبروك المنصوري
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ Gérard Leclerc: La Mondialisation Culturelle, p : 323. (Gerard Leclerc : Cultural Globalization, p : 323).
- ²² ((the New Orientalism Stream and Islam, p : 6,7). ص ، تيار الاستشراق الجديد والإسلام 6، 7.
- ²³ Qtd in Aboubakr Ahmed Bakadr : Islam and Anthropology, p: 92). (qtd in Aboubakr Ahmed Bakadr : Islam and Anthropology, p: 92)
- ²⁴ Ibid, p: 55.
- ²⁵ Sociologies et religion. Approches classiques (with Danièle Hervieu-Léger), Paris, PUF, 2001, p : 57-62. (Sociology and Religion. Classical Approaches, p : 57-62).
- ²⁶ (Moatez Elkhatib: Islam and Terrorism in Western Thought: Interpretive Paradigms and their Backgrounds, p: 21). ص، الإسلام والإرهاب في الفكر الغربي: النماذج التفسيرية وخلفياتها، معتر الخطيب 21.
- ²⁷ Olivier Moos, ibid, p: 30.
- ²⁸ Knowledge and Human Interests, p: 23.

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