

This work is dedicated to

My family and my friends.

A special feeling of gratitude goes to my loving grandparents, Aicha and Amar who have been my source of inspiration and strength.

I thank my parents, especially my mother, Karima who loves me, encourages me to work hard, and never leaves my side.

I also dedicate this work to my aunt Lydia, whose life cut short but her memories continue to regulate my life.

To my brothers, Yanis and Toufik who helped me in all the things great and small, and all family members.

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Lamia

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Abstract

The discrepancy between the East and West has been a significant concern in the postcolonial fiction. This dissertation seeks then, to undertake a postcolonial analysis of Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Yasmina Khadra's *The African Equation* (2011) within the framework of Edward Said's Orientalism. This dissertation aims to analyse the manifestations of the orientalist discourse and the representation of the Other in the two novels. The research focuses on the Orient-Occident dichotomy, distortion of Islam, false image of the Orient, the practice of othering, and the superior image of the West. The methodology of the discussion involves firstly the ways the characters reflect Said's designation of the "Other" and how he is represented. Then, it examines the orientalist discourse incorporated through the characters' speeches, attitude, and way of thinking towards the Easterners. The analysis has revealed the gap that stands between the East and the West. It has shown the importance of geography in embodying the Other with stereotypes and flawed representation. This research also discloses the Western's preconceived ideas produced through the orientalist discourse. Besides, it has proved how the aforementioned discourse consists of myths and untrue depiction of the Orient.

Key Words: Orient, Occident, Orientalist Discourse, Other, Orientalism, Postcolonial fiction.

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I. General Introduction

For centuries, the Eastern people were categorized according to a specific criterion, presuming that they lack fundamental characteristics. This idea is in depth rooted to a discrepancy between the East and the West or, as Edward Said named them, “Orient” and “Occident.” Although this issue has been discussed in postcolonial fiction by several authors, critics, and thinkers, Edward Said remains one of the crucial figures that studied the East-West dichotomy. This is then, the essence of this Orientalist reading. Hence, the problematic that stands within this discrepancy will be investigated in depth throughout this research under the framework of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978).

As a theorist and a critic, in his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said traces the false images, representation, and the Western discourse of the East. He exposes firmly the polarization of the East and the West, and evokes the abundant facts of the relation between the two areas culturally, socially, and politically. The theorist’s research examines the Westerners’ perspectives about the Other and the way their speeches and attitudes generate an orientalist discourse on Easterners. Hence, Said’s ideas about the gap that lies within the East and the West will be the core theory to compare Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Yasmina Khadra’s *The African Equation* (2011) through an Orientalist reading. Although they explore different topics and themes in the racial, cultural, and religious levels, these two texts portray the dichotomy of the East and the West and they both cover Orientalism as a discourse.

Due to the fact that Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Yasmina Khadra’s *The African Equation* (2011) depict the postcolonial fictions’ characteristics, these kinds of literary genres may be influenced by the research domain of

postcolonialism. Through drawing attention to this aforementioned academic field, it is essential to mention that Postcolonialism has claimed its position in history and the postcolonial studies due to the colonialism that overspread in the late 18th century. Thus, throughout history, the humankind's existence is fraught with exploitation, colonialism and intertwined with various forms of oppressions. This colonial practice tackles a relation between the tormented colonized and the superior colonizer. This leads to the main worldwide issue which is, the European colonizers are thriving into development, whereas the non-European colonized are unable to remain in a stable core of the world's balance. The wavering evolution of the world leads to the existence of separate geographical areas entitled *West and East*.

Indeed, besides referring to the historical background of the emergence of the field at both the colonial and economic levels, this issue unfolds also cultural and social aspects. This, in fact, leads to question how the colonized is affected culturally and socially while the only connection between the East and the West relies on the military interactions. The colonized hence, becomes a degraded object controlled by the colonizer. A discriminatory attitude and treatment towards the Easterners lead to an antagonism in identities that the colonizer maintains to make the difference between the Easterners and the Westerners, the "Other" and "Self." This is conveyed through a Western discourse that establishes a set stereotypes, flawed depictions, generalisations, and several other attributes towards the Easterners. The orientalist discourse becomes a subjective mechanism of representing the "Other." Rejecting these dichotomy remains the essence of Said's *Orientalism*. This is also one of the important concerns of other postcolonial Eastern authors. They then, associate the postcolonial phase with literature in order to repudiate the Western perceptions of the Eastern world, as well as to denounce the long-standing dichotomy. In depth, this genre of literature challenges the orientalist discourse that is formed through the Western speeches and behaviours. Hence,

these postcolonial fiction's aspects can be found in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Yasmina Khadra's *The African Equation* (2011).

This piece of research therefore, holds the aim of comparing Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Yasmina Khadra's *The African Equation* through an orientalist study. It will convey the dichotomy that lies between the "Other" and the "Self." It will also analyse how the characters employ the orientalist discourse to draw an image of the Orient.

1. Review of Literature

Khadra's *The African Equation* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* have received a large bulk of criticism. To begin with, in her commentary on Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Sobia Khan (2015) has analysed the novel in relation to social identity. For her, the story is mainly about Changez's imbalanced identity affected by post 9/11 prejudiced conditions in America. She argues that Changez was neither truly American nor truly Pakistani which caused him an inner conflict. Her assertion is further strengthened by Changez's reaction in response to the September 11 attacks. She states: "Hamid shows the naked truth of Changez's response to the attack as he watched the World Trade Center fall with a 'smile.'" ¹Hence, "the smile indicates the baggage Changez carries of belonging to a previously colonized nation." ²She then further approves that Changez's imbalanced identity is approved when he travelled back to Pakistan. "Changez is unable to fit into his old life before he left Lahore." ³For her, Changez does not only feel as an outsider in New Jersey, "he feels out of place in his Lahore as well." ⁴She also argues that Changez's 'Otherness' has always been bound to his identity, thereby increasing the conflicting state in which he is currently caught between insider and outsider. Sobia Khan claims that finally Changez raises a sense of belonging to Islamic religion.

Mansoor Khan (2022) is another critic who examines Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* from a postmodernist perspective. He argues that the use of post modernist

features and approaches unveils the Eccentric voice of the East. He exposes how Hamid highlights the voice of Changez and the East that have remained voiceless. For him, the author is giving the voice to Changez to draw a strong position over the Westerners. Thus, he emphasizes the novel's rejection of the grand narratives that adhere a "toxic assumptions for the Third World Countries."⁵ For him, the novel presents a micro narrative postmodernist theory that gives "a sense of voices which been arousing from far away peripheries and from the mouths of the voiceless."⁶

In addition, Wahid Pervez (2018) reviewed Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* from a postcolonial perspective. In his critic, Pervez reveals the conditions of Muslims and Changez as being a postcolonial subject in the American society after 9/11. He describes how Changez has been a subject of hybridism through incorporating American culture and detaching himself from his Pakistani's norms. He further states that the protagonist has been an "Other" for America. Hence, all his acquaintances, friends, and co-workers "had become indifferent to him"⁷ after 9/11, because, for them, Changez "was not more than a Muslim."⁸ For him, Americans raised a discriminatory attitude and perceived Changez as the head of the explosion. Wahid Pervez carries on demonstrating how Changez's life changed drastically, which compels an "American farewell forever."⁹

By the same token, Khadra's *The African Equation* has been the subject of several studies. As a literary scholar, Grechen Head (2011) focuses in Khadra's text on the Western/Eastern bipolarity in terms of representation. In her analysis, Head aims to evoke the stereotypes and the preconceived ideas held upon the Easterners. She states that Khadra portrays Joma as the confronter of these stereotypes. Accordingly, the character is then, clashing the Western characters, namely Kurt. Hence, she argues, that the characters spoke less about the colonial oppressions that led to forge polarity between the East and the West. For her, the characters "essentially accept the same opposition between barbarity and

civilization the German is accused of espousing.”¹⁰ She further affirms that the author of *The African Equation* demonstrates the Western’s racist depiction through one single character, Kurt. In this regard, she claims: “Kurt repeated assertions that Africa possesses a special brutality and savagery are, for the most part, reinforced by the text characters.”¹¹

Besides, Jane Housham (2015) has analysed the novel from a socio-psychological perspective. Jane Housham claims that Africa is presented in the novel as a single entity through Westerners’ speeches. For her, Africa “is treated as a single mythic entity with the kind of stereotyping we might have hoped was long gone.”¹²She claims that through the wicked incidents of Somali, Khadra’s novel engenders an image of unmerciful Africans to the readers. She explains that Khadra’s characters are behaving in a wicked way suited to their African identity. Hence, Jane reveals that the novel takes a different orientation to expose the knowledge of European culture that Africans possess as well as their fluency in the English language.

1. Issue and Working Hypothesis:

From the above review of the literature, it is noticeable that considerable studies have been undertaken both on Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Khadra’s *The African Equation*. Despite the importance of these investigations, the already mentioned critics remain fragmented. To my best knowledge, those studies do not put enough stress on the orientalist discourse developed in the two texts. Hence, this research shall be a comparative study that will deal with the works from an orientalist perspective.

No doubt, the two novels are completely different entities due to their different embedded themes. However, the tensions explored between the Eastern and Western characters in both literary works arouse my interest in the choice of both novels in order to achieve my postcolonial study. The main concern presently, is to capture Edward Said’s Other, and how the Easterner is represented in both novels. The major aim in this research is

to examine the Other's depiction as savage, inferior, and illogical. More precisely, it will explore how the opposing relation of the Self and the Other creates a flawed representation associated with the Easterner. This will provide an insight on why the Other is represented in a flawed image, how geography contributed in the Eastern portrayal, and how these characteristics are embedded in the Easterners' identity.

Besides, this study will further attempt to identify the orientalist discourse and the way it operates through characters' attitude, speeches, and thinking. This analysis will reveal how this orientalist discourse promotes a specific depiction of both East and West. It will also try to identify how the selected novels challenge the orientalist discourse and reveal the concealed truth behind Westerners' representation of the Orient.

2. Methodological Outline:

The research will be organized into five parts according to the IMRAD format. This work will be divided into five parts; the first part is devoted to a general introduction. This part consists of an overview of Orientalism, postcolonialism as an academic field and an era. Next comes the review of literature to discuss previous critics of both Khadra's *The African Equation* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in the review of literature. The coming part will raise the issue and working hypothesis. Then, Method and Materials section will be divided into two subtitles; I will start by introducing the postcolonial theory adopting Edward Said's *Orientalism* in Method section. Thus, this part will be categorised into Said's concept of Otherness and Orientalist discourse. The materials consist of synopsis of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The African Equation*. The fifth part will be dedicated to the results of the present postcolonial study.

In the next part, I shall reveal my findings and the results of the research. Then, I shall divide the discussion section into two chapters, each of them will develop Edward Said's concept. The first chapter will be devoted to the representation of the Other in the two novels.

This part embodies the Eastern violence versus the Western non-violence, succeeded by highlighting geography and Orientalism. This part also encompasses the binary opposition and its stereotypical repercussion. The second chapter entitled “The Orientalist Discourse in Hamid’s *The Reluctant fundamentalist* and Khadra’s *The African Equation*” will be divided into two parts. I will start by the Orient’s depiction and the Western’s depiction in the first part entitled as the orientalist discourse. The last section of the second chapter will explore the orientalist discourse’s challenges. The final section of the dissertation is the conclusion. In this part, I will conclude my present study with a summary of the main ideas developed in the dissertation.

II. Method and Materials

1-Method

Edward Said’s theory developed in *Orientalism* (1978) will be the core periphery to investigate my postcolonial study. Through the analysis of Khadra’s and Hamid’s East and West confrontation, adopting *Orientalism* will allow me to reach my objective. By doing so, I shall rely on Said’s concept of Otherness in order to convey its status. I will further explain how the Western characters in both novels employ the orientalist discourse to depict Said’s appellation of the Occident and the Orient.

Hence, Said’s postcolonial theory of Orientalism focuses on Europeans’ orientalist discourse applied on Arab Middle East; nevertheless, “the Saidian approach to Orientalist discourse is thought to be validly applicable to other parts of the non-Western world.”¹³ On the whole, given the fact that Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Khadra’s *The African Equation* narrative fiction revolve around Pakistan and Africa respectively, which they belong to the non-Western area. The Saidian approach is then applicable to proceed a study on the two novels.

1.1. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978)

Edward Said's *Orientalism*(1978) is one of the crucial artworks that address the style, representation, and a body of thoughts associated with the Orient. Thus, he employs the word Orientalism to refer to the Orientalists' representation, prejudices, and attitude towards the Easterners. As defined by Said again, "Orientalism is a style of thoughts based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the 'Orient' and (most of the time) the 'Occident.'"¹⁴ Hence, this definition delineated in Said's work indicates that a certain boundary is established between the Orient and the Occident, or the East and the West. Otherwise stated, Orientalism is a set of thoughts and representation that construct a particular discrepancy between the East and the West.

Yet, "The Orient was almost a European invention"¹⁵ constructed as "a system of ideological fictions"¹⁶ in order to endorse the "European superiority over Oriental backwardness."¹⁷ Hence, Said refers here to the Orient which is a product created by the Occident to compose a superior image of the Westerners. Orientalism is then a body of representation, distorted perceptions, and knowledge that denigrate the Orient. Thus, a set of preconceived ideas of the Oriental are embedded. According to Said then, the West believes that the Easterner is a savage, backward, and inferior Oriental. His identity is linked to a set of flawed representation that opposes the superior and civilised Occidental. The West and the East are situated under a hierarchical mechanism of Orientalists' representation.

Indeed, the imbalanced perception of the East and the West is also connected to religion doctrine. Hence, this has been a crucial element that Said tackled in *Orientalism*. For him, the discrepancy of perceptions and these distorted images of the Easterners are also connected to Islam and Muslims. As the Western scholars study the Eastern region, they formed strong ideas about Islam which becomes a subject of terror. Yet, "The European encounter with the Orient, and specifically with Islam, strengthened this system of

representing the Orient.”¹⁸ Thus, this religion, as defined by *Orientalism*, takes a pejorative connotation. Said argues that: “Orientals, and Muslims in particular, are lazy, their politics are capricious, passionate, and futureless.”¹⁹

Indeed, the historical connection of the East and the West interactions plays a major role in the discrepancy of the two areas. Hence, this relation is not only a relation of representation; it is also a “relationship of power, of dominating, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony.”²⁰ Thus, colonialism established an adversarial relationship that emphasises the differences between the East and the West. This idea is created through Westerners’ claims of possessing power and civilisation, and their fake attempts to develop an Eastern identity and construct a civilised community. Thereby Said draws attention to Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony. Said adopts the concept and integrates it in *Orientalism* to demonstrate that this academic notion is a system that maintains and promotes the Western hegemony over the East. Hence, the colonizer establishes a body of representations on the colonized people which renders it easy to identify the Easterners.

1.2. Edward Said’s Concept of Otherness

The first aspect that I shall discuss is Edward Said’s concept of the Other and its opposing characteristics with the Occidental Self. The cultural field of “*Orientalism* is thus inherently and inevitably a study of what theorists often call *the other*.”²¹ This is what Said reveals in his work entitled *Orientalism*. According to him, the Orient and Easterners are “stamped with an otherness.”²² The author of *Orientalism* notes here how Orientals are bounded with Otherness. This definition globally relies on the contradiction of the Self and the Other, ours and theirs, we and they.

This concept, as defined by Said, possesses certain vagueness. Thus, he associates it with an exaggerated system of representation. For Said, this notion emerges through representing the Occidentals or the Self with certain positive features. Hence, it has taken an

oppositional direction towards the Orientals. It thus creates an opposition of the Self, which is the Other. While inflicting the Occidentals with positive characteristics, a contradicting image is then created to face the Other.

The Other is basically defined by its inherent violence, lacking logic, and most importantly, inferiority. According to Said, the innocence and existence of the Other are never questioned by Orientalist scholars. Through coming in terms with the Other, his representation is in a stable core, in which no development is stimulated. The Other is “a surrogate or underground Self of Europe, giving strength and identity to European culture”²³ with rigid flawed representation. For such, the widespread image of Other is doomed to a set of stereotypes and preconceived ideas. This kind of view towards the Oriental makes the Self superior, logical, and civilised.

1.3. The Orientalist Discourse

Another crucial concept developed in Said’s *Orientalism* is the orientalist discourse. For him, the orientalist thought, idea, and representation revealed in the cultural field of Orientalism might be converted into a discourse. Hence, in order to define Orientalism and the orientalist discourse, Said’s inspiration is derived from Michael Foucault’s notion of discourse. Said argues: “without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage-and even produce-the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively.”²⁴ The author then departs from ideas of an existential Foucauldian notion and recalls a common concept, that of discourse, to eventually examine an analysis of Orientalism. According to him, Orientalism, as a discourse, determines a specific depiction of the Orient within a particular scheme of thoughts and statements provided by Westerners.

The term discourse, out of its linguistic definition, offers a distinguishable meaning by the French philosopher, Michael Foucault. Discourse, for Foucault, is a “limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existing can be defined.”²⁵ Thus, Foucault’s idea is that a discourse is the collection of statements attributable to a particular mechanism of talking and thinking about a subject or issue through assimilation of pre-existing ideas. As such, for Orientalism, the Orient could be theorized, defined, and subjectively portrayed through a set of statements. Said further asserts that what might be said about the Orient is controlled by the orientalist discourse. The Westerners possess a definite style of thinking and talking about the Orient.

In the same sense, Foucault asserts that such discourse provides knowledge about a certain subject within a historical era, and subsequently integrates those ideas into social conduct to form a distinctive behaviour and a language related to that subject. The French intellectual proceeds further to explain that: “Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the ‘nature’ of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern.”²⁶ This is hence, one of the significant concerns for Said, the way that the Oriental is governed by a set of preconceived ideas that constitute the essence of the Other’s portrayal. Said attempts to speak about various misrepresentations and ideas that construct certain facts about the Orient, which further create a historical image of the area. He also borrows Foucault’s notion of Knowledge and power. For Said, Foucault’s notion and Orientalism are correlated. Thus, a power emerges from the knowledge the Westerners possess and they affirm on the East. The West enwraps an orientalist discourse associated with a more authoritative tone to form an ideology that shapes the Orient in a particular way. Yet, “a wide array of agents such as scientists, scholars, missionaries, traders, and soldiers constructed the knowledge over the Orient under the umbrella of Western hegemony over the Orient.”²⁷

2-Materials

2-1 Summary of Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007)

Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is a first-person narrative novel in which the protagonist, Changez, recounts several events including 9/11 attack, Muslim discrimination, and the traumatic experiences of Muslims in the post 9/11 events. The story starts with the protagonist lounging on a cafeteria in Lahore, wherein he encounters an unknown American guest. The one-sided conversation communicates Changez experiences in America. It further tells how perspective shifts from being a lover of America to drastically become its enemy.

Changez is a young Pakistani who obtained a scholarship to Princeton and quickly rose through the ranks of Underwood Samson. After meeting Erica, his prosperous life on both career and emotional part allows him to significantly consider himself as an American native, ignoring his identity. Changez's life alters radically as a result of 9/11 and the bombings on New York and Washington, D.C. The Pakistani's life in US becomes tougher every passing day after the attack. His state is compelled to a centre of bigotry and Muslim segregation in the aftermath of a terrorist incident. He begins to corroborate the racial discrimination within the company through his colleagues' whispering, and then it spreads to the streets of the United States. His beard becomes one of the symbols that burdened him with subjugations. His life is not only affected by society and work; yet, it is further agitated by Erica's love. The situation aggravates with her constant rejections.

So far, Changez's aspirations have dispersed, and America has become a long-lasting discriminated sorrow. Indeed, he has been troubled with a sense of betrayal and afflicted by nostalgia for US. Hence, overwhelmed by Erica's love and his traumatic experience in America, Changez decides to idealise a new version of an Anti-American professor in Pakistan who encourages his students to develop a harsh ideology against America.

2-2 Summary of Yasmina Khadra's *The African Equation* (2011)

The African Equation is a dramatic novel written in 2011 by Yasmina Khadra. Kurt, a regular husband and a German doctor, introduces the story by describing his lovely wife and successful career in Germany. The ideal marriage and the perfect life are shattered altogether as a result of his wife's suicidal act. He then, left saddened, lost and confused for the unknown reason that caused his wife's decision. After being persuaded of the ideal life he is living, the disappointing side of reality is being faced. Jessica's hidden depression and reckless choice seem burdensome. Afterwards, his friend Hans Makkenroth, a wealthy and affluent philanthropist, proposes An African cruise on a boat to overcome his wife's bereavement and engage in humanitarian missions. While on a boat, the protagonist and his friends fall prey to African Somali pirates, who capture them and steal their boat.

As the central plotline of the novel unfolds, the perception of grieving over someone's death as the essence of life becomes obsolete. While the mourn of his wife was still fresh, the protagonist is about to discover a new livelihood as well as a version of agony that is greater than Jessica's sorrow. The abducted foreigners were subjected to malnutrition and various types of tortures, including Tao's murder. Their situation becomes overwhelmed with unbearable horror regardless of their health. Hans has been permanently sickened and beaten, while Kurt has been isolated and subjected to immurement leading him to be a captor within a cave. His fate remains unknown until Joma and his gang will determine his future.

At several attempts, the doctor tries to cultivate a friendship with Blackmoon, Joma's friend and right hand, in order to secure his freedom. However, his efforts are doomed to failure. The doctor's main purpose is presently to retrieve his strengths and investigate the African region and its hostilities. After being shackled together with Bruno, a mate-captive who spent forty years in Africa, Kurt acquires more about the continent. He was exposed to horrifying human lives in Africa, as well as the suffering of the indigenous. Nevertheless he

does not sympathise with the people, instead he expresses anger and rage. Although captured similarly, the Frenchman refuses to stigmatise Africa with evil and wicked labels.

By the time the rest of the crew disappears while exporting Hans, Joma is forced to conquer African desert with the rest of the captives. In their way, under the rage of Blackmoon's revelations, Joma unintentionally murders him. Now that he is confronted with murder, Kurt intentionally shoots the African captain. Both the German doctor and the Frenchman remain lost in African desert. They are trapped without any help. However, a Western vaccination company appears to save their lives. Kurt yearns for aid for so long; he finally receives it and grants the right to evacuate to Germany. The situation quickly shifts when the protagonist's affection for his new land and the love he holds for the doctor of the vaccination company persuade him to reconnect with Africa.

Endnotes:

¹Sobia Khan, "Alienated Muslim Identity in the Post-9/11 America: A Transnational Study of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*," *South Asian Review: Special on Borders, Boundaries, and Margins*. Vol.36, No.3(2015),143.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.,146.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Mansoor Khan, *Postmodernist Analysis of Mohsin Hamid's novel The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.2022, 6.

⁶Ibid.

⁷ Wahid Pervez, "The Representation of Muslims' conditions in America after 9/11 incident: Postcolonial study of the novel 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist,'" *International Journal of English Literature and Culture*, Vol.6(2018), 86.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339998462_Representation_of_Muslims'_condition_in_America_after_911_incident_Postcolonial_study_of_the_novel_'The_Reluctant_Fundamentalist'

⁸Ibid.,87.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Grechen Head, "From Kurtz to Kurt: Yasmina Khadra's *Simplistic African Equation*" [Review of *L'équation Africaine*]. November 2011,2.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Jane Housham, *The African Equation by Yasmina Khadra Review Hostage Drama Turns Disquisition*. March 2015.

https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/mar/06/african-equation-yasmina-khadra-review?CMP=gu_com

¹³ Amir Singh, *Orientalism and India*, march 2018, 2.

¹⁴Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books,1978),2.

¹⁵Ibid.,1.

¹⁶Ibid.,321.

¹⁷Ibid.,7.

¹⁸Ibid.,70.

¹⁹Ibid.,178.

²⁰Ibid.,5.

²¹Perry Nodelman, "The Other Orientalism, Colonialism, and Children's Literature." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*. Vol.17, No.1(1992), 29.

²²Said, *Orientalism*,97.

²³Ibid.,3.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 117..

²⁶Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practices and Poststructuralist Theory*(Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers,1997), 108.

²⁷Said,*Orientalism*, 7.

III. Results:

This study sets out to compare Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Yasmina Khadra's *African Equation* from a postcolonial perspective. Through analyzing both narratives, Edward Said's theory of *Orientalism* seems to be convenient to carry on the study since it embodies the main features of East and West dichotomy. Both texts are thoroughly reliable to identify the Other and its conflicting aspects with the Westerners. Another focal point is the Western speeches and their way of thinking in both novels that outlines an orientalist discourse.

This dissertation has shown that Pakistani and Africans characters are represented as an Other since they both belong to what Said named as the East. I have deduced that the Other is an Eastern who is represented as violent and inhuman who lacks a sense of logic. Another common attribute of the Other that is shared in both novels is the flawed religion doctrine. The Other is represented as being criminal and suspicious, a profile that is strengthened after the 9/11 attacks. Said's concept of Otherness is depicted through a binary opposition sustained by the Westerners to designate themselves in explicit contradiction with Easterners. The early binary notion fosters the implementation of stereotypes and facilitates the embodiment of opposing judgements that identify the indigenous of the East with characteristics contrasting Westerners. This study has also shown the controversial aspect of the privileged over the unprivileged that had evolved through the imaginary boundaries. With this context, it intends to strengthen the universal hierarchy of Western superiority and Eastern inferiority.

In addition, I have explored the orientalist discourse outlined through the Western characters in both novels. Thus, I have shown how the Western characters depict the East and Easterners in a flawed and negative depiction. This is observable in their speeches, way of thinking, and their behaviours towards the Easterners. In this context, I have also demonstrated how this flawed depiction outlined through the orientalist discourse renders the

West as the saviour and associate the Westerners with a positive image. Likewise, through analyzing *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The African Equation*, an opposition of the orientalist discourse is reflected through both the characters and the plot. This confirms that the traits afflicted upon the Easterners' and Westerners' identities are, as Said claims, myths and false images.

IV. Discussion:

Chapter One: The Representation of the Other in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Yasmina Khadra's *The African Equation* (2011)

The following chapter attempts to examine the representation of the 'Other' in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Yasmina Khadra's *The African Equation*. I will start by discussing the Other's features in terms of violence and inhumanity. I will demonstrate how the imaginary boundaries of the two geographical areas that are introduced in Said's *Orientalism* strengthen the Other's portrayal of unprivileged and inferior. My research will also highlight the religious doctrine and the 9/11 attacks' effects on the Easterner's status. I will further discuss the East-West binary opposition and the stereotypical representation of the Other.

In broader terms, the concept of Otherness evolved over history to establish a diametrically opposed relationship between two separate geographical areas. Nevertheless, identical standardised phenomenon is said to be formed by Western natives to designate an oppositional embodiment of the developed and civilised Self adjacent to the uncivilised and primitive Other. As a form of a conceptual dichotomy, Jean-François Staszak concedes that the Other's embodiment is derived from an exclusive set of characteristics opposing the Westerner, assessing the latter as respected and appreciated in stark opposition against the degraded Easterner. He further contends that certain factors culminate in the Other's prejudice and marginalisation; in this regard, he states:

Opposing Us, the Self, and Them, the Other, is to choose a criterion that allows humanity to be divided into two groups: one that embodies the norm and whose identity is valued and an other that is defined by its faults, devalued and susceptible to discrimination. Only dominant groups (such as westerners in the time of colonization) are in a position to impose their categories in the matter. By stigmatizing them as Others, Barbarians, savages or people of colour, they relegate the peoples that they could dominate or exterminate to the margin of humanity.¹

Edward Said, however, contends that, for Westerners, the Other's portrayal is determined through violence, which further opposes Western pacifism. Therefore, such description promotes the creation of an interpretative notion in Khadra's *The African Equation* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, permitting to properly define the Eastern characters centred on barbarous conducts opposing to the Westerners' non-violence.

1. Eastern Violence Versus Western Non-Violence:

In Said's *Orientalism*, violence plays a crucial role in defining the Other. Thus, the Oriental Other is believed to be constantly associated with cruelty. This concept is not only linked to their behaviours, but further to religious doctrine, illogicality and objectification. Whereas, the Westerner is believed to be peaceful and reasonable. Hence, the opposition in the representation serves as a bridge between the Easterners and Westerners. The conflict goes further to never question the innocence of the East. In other way, due to his inherent violence, the Easterner is conventionally otherised. Thus, a boundary between the violent Easterner and nonviolent Westerner seems to be determined. Such notion is explored in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The African Equation*. Its embodiment is represented through the aggressiveness depicted by the Eastern characters in contrast to the Westerners' peacefulness. The Eastern characters in both novels possess violent characteristics. Thus, their thinking process and their behaviours are all linked to cruelty. In this regard, Said affirms in *Orientalism*: "One encountered Orientals, arabs whose civilisation, religion, and manners were so low, barbaric, and antithetical."²

The barbarous dimension of the Other claimed by Said is developed in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. In the novel, Changez's aim in America is to pursue a higher education and obtain an employment. Although, the city seems to afford such needs, Changez does not seem to acknowledge its generosity. This gives impression that he is manipulated by his innate violence. Thus, during the September 11 attacks, Changez expresses neither

sympathy nor compassion for the Western country and its natives. Henceforth, when the news broadcasts and he is confronted with the terrible scene, he is not only unpretentiously apathetic; rather, he essentially appreciated the outburst. In this sense, Hamid's protagonist illustrates: "I stared as one-and then the other-of the two in towers of New York's World Trade Center collapsed. And then I *smiled*."³ He displays happiness and contentment, "It is hateful to hear another person gloat over one's country's misfortune."⁴ Yet, Changez's inborn Pakistani identity renders him conscious of his inhumanity and barbaric actions. He exclaims: "They reminded me of my own uncharitable-indeed, inhumane-response to the tragedy."⁵

Another example of the barbaric Other is shown through Changez's thinking process. When his colleagues' suspicions and mistrust spread in the company, he was resolved to not resign due to his displeasure with the work environment, but rather to exterminate them. He says: "I have been convicted of plotting to kill them rather than abandoning my post in mid-assignment."⁶ At a certain point, Changez believes that ending his co-workers' lives is the ultimate way out to preserve his status in Underwood Samson. He is then persuaded to resort to violence, and this quite means that his life is condemned to violence. Therefore, Changez's attitude towards his co-workers' discrimination reinforces a violent thinking pattern. This clearly means that he is an Other belonging to the East due to his intrinsic violence; nonetheless, similar barbarous behaviour is not executed.

Identical inhuman patterns are exposed in Khadra's *The African Equation*. During the Westerners' boating journey to Africa, the foreigners have been a target of a vicious criminal gang of African pirates. The Westerners have been subjected to a variety of immoral treatments, including psychological torture and immurement. The abducted foreigners expressed panic and concern regarding the exotic environment and its natives who perform abusive behaviours. A similar conduct is depicted in the narrative when the chief murders Tao, Hans' cook, which Kurt considers as a terribly heinous act, yet appears to be appropriate

for Africans, Khadra's protagonist asserts: "You killed a man, for heaven's sake!" Joma responds by saying calmly: "People die every day. That's never stopped God from sleeping soundly."⁷

Furthermore, the torture inflicted on Bruno by the African commander represents the violent Other in Khadra's narrative. Kurt, the protagonist of Khadra's *The African Equation*, depicts apprehension as a necessary consequence of a dreadful event performed on his fellow Frenchman. Indeed, Kurt's trepidation is undeniably traceable to his well-mannerism prospered in the West. He explains: "It was the first time in my life I had witnessed such a violent, bestial scene. I was overcome, unable to resign myself to the idea that you could attack a defenceless person like that and still call yourself a man."⁸

In addition, Kurt has a preconceived notion of the Other in the East that seems to be unchangeable. He believes that the natives have the natural ferocity that is defined as the essence of an Easterner. This is observable through Kurt's and Joma's conversation. While the African captain is seeking to convey the Other's innocence, his life's downturns and how he withstands African miseries, Kurt remains not only unconcerned, but offensive towards him due to his innate aggressiveness. In this regard, Kurt states: "From the helpless look on his face, I didn't get the feeling I was successfully concealing the aversion I felt for him. His bestiality had shocked me, and I didn't think, whatever mitigating circumstances he put forward in his defence, that I could ever consider his as belonging to the human race."⁹ Thus, despite Joma's pitiful discourse to vindicate his malfeasance, Kurt expresses contempt. Hence, the preconceived notion deprives Kurt from shaping the Other in a positive portrayal.

Furthermore, the East is depicted in its most wild nature in both Khadra's *The African Equation* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The Eastern world is presented in both novels as an area where the Other exhibits violence, and foremost acknowledged as a region of fatal savagery and where peace is never settled. It is presented as a realm of lethal and

brutal bloodshed, while Western societies are determinedly striving towards collective peace. In this regard, Said claims in *Orientalism*: “The familiar contrast between White Occidentalism and colored Orientalism. While delivering himself of paradoxes like “le carnage permanent de l’indifférence orientale” (for, unlike “US,” “THEY” have no conception of peace).”¹⁰

By the same token, the violent dimension of the Other elaborated by Said is explored in Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. After the 9/11 attacks, the existence of Easterners is perceived by the Westerners as threatening and suspicious, along with possessing no conception of peace. Muslims become a symbol of hostility. For such, Changez becomes a target of violence and racial prejudices. Although the novel’s hero is educated mainly in the United States, he is always perceived as an Easterner who is abided by his Otherness. Indeed, he becomes an alien for the Americans, Changez maintains:

I was escorted by armed guards into a room where I was made to strip down my boxer short [...] My entrance elicited looks of concern from man of my fellow passengers. I flew to New York uncomfortable in my own face: I was aware of being under suspicion [...] when we arrived, I was separated from my team at immigration. They joined the queue for American citizens; I joined the one of *foreigners*.¹¹

Changez decides to exercise his violent inherent nature at a certain point. By doing so, he becomes an abusive person in the streets of New York. His rage entails committing provocations and sustaining a reaction towards America’s oppressive policies regarding Pakistanis. Such temptation does not allow the protagonist to be aggressive, but rather to express solidarity with his countrymen. In this regard, Hamid’s protagonist says: “Sometimes I would find myself walking the streets; flaunting my beard as a provocation, craving conflict with anyone foolhardy enough to antagonize me.”¹²

Using a similar violent background as Hamid’s text, Khadra’s *The African Equation* exposes the comparable violent aspect of Africa’s indigenous. Thus, the natives’ hostility reveals that their society is an idealistic anarchy dominated by violence, Joma explains:

“There are no rights here, Mr Makkenroth. And there’s only one law: the law of the gun. And tonight the guns are on my side.”¹³The quotation indicates that, in contrary to Western jurisprudence, the locals do not follow regular rules and standards. Their only tangible truth is brutality; the omnipotent is the one who actually prove greater violence. Similarly, when the abducted tourists defied Joma’s authority, he responds with violence, rather than in a more civilised manner, he affirms: “We do not only slaughter cattle!” Joma said to the rebels. ‘The first person who thinks it is amusing to defy me, I’ll blow his brains out.’¹⁴ In addition, for Blackmoon, Africans do not only advocate violence because they are compelled to, yet they also enjoy it and relish assassination. He thus confesses considering his fellow locals: “They don’t give a damn about the law. They don’t even know what it is. All they know is how to kill and loot, and they seem to enjoy that.”¹⁵

Regarding Said’s *Orientalism*, the violent ‘Other’ is biased by Westerners for not being rational. his savage conduct and brutal manners are determined to be an actual result of mindlessness. One ought to consider from Said’s work that a civilised Westerner may debate rationally without renouncing his own sense of pacifism, conversely to the Other who adopts a violent attitude due to his erroneous reasoning. According to Said, Easterners are unable to employ their minds to reach appropriate judgments and achieve righteous conclusions. In this perspective, Said explains:

Orientals or arabs are thereafter shown to be gullible, ‘devoid of energy and initiative,’ much given to ‘fulsome flatter,’ intrigue, cunning, and unkindness to animals ; Orientals cannot walk on either a road or a pavement(their disordered minds fail to understand what the clever European grasps immediately, that roads and pavements are made for walking) ; Orientals are inveterate liars, they are lethargic and suspicious,’ and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race.¹⁶

In this context, the violence of the Easterner incorporated due to a lack of logic is presented in Khadra’s novel. Thus, as a natural repercussion of the belligerent African’s actions, Dr Krausmann’s abducting journey is greatly appalled. He plainly recognises that it is indeed their lack of reasoning that prompts them to continuously resort to violence. Hence, he

portrays them as people with irrational minds who lack the sense of argument due to the aggressiveness they possess, Kurt maintains: “What was the point of arguing anyway? Where would it get us? You cannot negotiate with people inured to strongarm methods and perfectly aware of their own immunity. With such people, you had to make concessions. It was pointless trying to reason with them.”¹⁷ Furthermore, the Easterners’ irrational claims are reinforced by Blackmoon who affirms Westerners’ conviction of Africans’ unreasonableness. He says: “Joma says that white people think Africans have mush for brains.”¹⁸ The quotation confirms the Westerners’ perceptions of African ignorance and lack of common sense, which adds to the polarisation of East and West, a distinction of rational and irrational reasoning.

Similarly, in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez appears to be an Other deficient of rational thinking, which entails the capability of making justifiable and logical deductions from reason. Such a leading assumption casts diverse concerns on his Eastern brain’s awareness, reflecting the fact that his mental attitude does not sprout to make appropriately a rational decision, as opposed to the logical Westerners who are startled by his remark, Changez states: “I hoped one day to be the dictator of an Islamic republic with nuclear capability; the others appeared shocked.”¹⁹ The recent declaration appears to be extravagant for a modest student brain pursuing a simple ambition of a successful future. Hence, it is unaffordable to disregard that the Western perspective is associated with Changez’s origins.

Furthermore, many thinkers and scholars claim that the Other is regarded as an object and a phenomenon within the Western countries. According to Said: “[...] And the problematic...the Orient and Orientals [are considered by Orientalism] as an “object” of study, stamped with an otherness.”²¹ According to the quotation, the Other is attached strange conduct, which has relegated him to the status of an object needed to be dissected and critiqued by the Westerners, he adds, “This is especially true of relatively uncommon things,

like foreigners mutants, or abnormal behavior.”²²In this context, Said affirmatively maintains that Easterners are considered as peculiar beings with strange characteristics.

Indeed, Said’s acknowledgement is incarnated in Khadra’s *The African Equation* through Western Characters. The latter claim that Africans are morally objectionable and do not continually behave as humans. They treat people as objects or animals with almost no consideration for a human being’s vivacity, Hans asserts: “people’s mindset is different in this part of the world, the life of man and the life of mosquito are the same for them.”²³ This shows the degree to which Africa is reduced to a lower position. Thus, the natives are conscious of such engrained primitive notions they retain, Joma says: “You must be wondering what kind of creature I am, not enough of a primate to be tamed, nor human enough to be moved.”²⁴ One can point out from the previous quotation that Joma presents himself as a creature which is generally referred to as a specific animal. Said’s theory is then, effectively constructed through Western characters. Furthermore, lowering the Eastern characters does not only place emphasis on depicting them as objects, but also greatly amount their portrayal as animals. Indeed, the Frenchman goes on to suggest that Africans are not only objects, but they are also animals, Kurt states: “He [Bruno] had shifted the context and was starting to reduce Africa to this gang of crooks with their pinhead pupils and animal instincts, who resisted all the rules of society.”²⁵Kurt’s comments here come to reveal Africans’ bestiality and inappropriate manners. He criticises Eastern behaviour patterns and forms subjective judgments, Khadra’s protagonist claims: “As long as he has something resembling a soul, however deeply buried it was in his animal-like nature.”²⁶

Likewise, the most debatable issue in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is the objectionable state of Changez towards his new identity. So far, the protagonist is in a comfortable environment gaining immersive experiences within American cultures. Indeed, under such circumstances, it may be regarded as a wholly positive development for his

identity and personality, regardless of Underwood Samson's repressive conditions. However, it is absurd to assume that his identity's rejection is a righteous decision to make in a Western society. In other words, it is reasonable to consider that the protagonist becomes an object formed by American culture and society, emphasising his failure to govern a basic chore of a stability. Hence, his journey in America does not only promote acculturation of new standards; rather, it ultimately results a needed renunciation of his own Pakistani identity. As a practical matter, Changez is a Western society-created phenomenon, he asserts: "I lacked a stable core. I was not certain where I belonged-in New York, in Lahore, in both, in neither [...] Because my own my identity was so fragile."²⁷

Moreover, it is important to draw attention to the violent Islamist ideology communicated by Said. For him, for decades, the religious doctrine was one of the factors of segregating the Other. Relatively, this seems to have an alternative meaning for Western societies who encourage the creation of elite groups of anti-Islamism to emphasise the violent Other and to earn an oppositional representative. Hence, Said claims that throughout history, religion has been one of the major contributing factors of discrimination, and as a logical consequence; the globe has been separated into different conceptual geographical territories. In this regard, he says: "That the Orient and Occident are irreducibly opposed to each other and that the Orient-in particular Mohammedanism--is one of 'the great world-forces' responsible for 'the deepest lines of cleavage' in the world."²⁸It might be claimed that 9/11 events accelerated the pace of Islamophobia and portrayed the Other as fanatical and intolerable due to the bombing of an Islamist organisation which destructs a Western region.

Within the concept of religious ideology stated by Said, the Islamist Other is captured in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Following 9/11, the United States and its Western allies have proved concern towards Muslims. By doing so, Changez becomes a Muslim Pakistani who is marginalized by the US society and doomed to terrorist Other. Indeed, in

Underwood Samson, which metaphorically alludes to the United States, the protagonist experiences a sentiment of bigotry since he is a foreigner from another land who embraces a different religion. According to this viewpoint, Changez states: “I have heard tales of the discrimination Muslims were beginning to experience in the business world—stories of rescinded job offers and groundless dismissals—and I did not wish to have my position at Underwood Samson compromised.”²⁹

Similarly, this perception of aggressive Muslims is commonly witnessed in Khadra’s *The African Equation*. Without a doubt, the African hijackers subjected the abducted Westerners to severe torments and forms of torture. Indeed, the pirates are communicating in local African languages instead of Arabic. The Westerners assume that the Easterners are members of an Islamist organisation based on their brutal behaviour. Kurt says: ‘Who are our kidnapers exactly? Al-Qaeda, rebels, soldiers?’³¹ This statement comes to strengthen Said’s argument of violent Muslim. It thus confirms that Islam is viewed as an aggressive religion, which explains why, despite being subjected to several detrimental hostilities by Africans, Westerners reflexively refer to Easterners as terrorists due to their harmful actions. Hence, the Westerners precisely refer to the group that murdered innumerable people in the United States, Al-Qaeda.

Although there is a loud uproar over the violent characters in both works, the representation of the Other is also bound by his locality. Dwelling in the Orient plays a significant role to shape the Other’s identity. Although the portrayal of the Easterner is indisputably aggressive in contrast to the Westerner’s serenity, it is imperative to recall Khadra’s *The African Equation* and Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*’s emphasis on geography and its division into two geographical areas featuring opposing attributes.

2. Geography and Orientalism

Geography is said to have exercised a crucial part in bridging the gap between the barbarian world maintained by the Other and the developed world inhabited by Westerners. For Westerners, the Eastern people are barbaric since they live in a primitive land where no development is generated. Edward Said states in *Orientalism*: “A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings and territory beyond, which is called ‘the land of the barbarians.’” He further adds: “both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from ‘ours’ to a certain extent modern and primitive societies seem thus to derive a sense of their identities negatively.”³²

The Other’s representation is linked to Africa in Khadra’s *The African Equation*. In the novel, the importance of geography maintained by Edward Said is revealed. Hence, the Westerners perceive Africa as an abominable zone due to their commitment to the dichotomy of Western societies. The damage subjugated through torture and the breach of norms towards the tourists make it inevitable to endorse such dichotomy even further. It is true that Eastern areas attract lure from the Westerners. However, the abducted foreigners do not only represent Africa in its inherent nature, yet it is represented in its most belligerent form. Kurt says: “[...] There was nothing else you might hope to see [...] It’s a code, a trap set for you [...] Where ever the boldest are doomed to failure [...] It’s a place of prayers that go unheard [...] Here lies the vanity of all things in the world.”³³ The Westerners are then, maintaining the dull idea about Africa and claiming that it is an Other’s savage land. In this regard, Joma asserts: “But you won’t find a better place to see Africa from up close. That’s what brings you here, isn’t it? Exoticism, wild spaces, nostalgia for lost empires...”³⁴

Another important area, which needs investigation, is the threatening characteristics of the Other’s land considered in Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. After the 9/11’s tragic events, Western societies are able to collectively establish a discriminatory code that promotes

the division of the world into two geographical areas. This is shown when Changez was wondering the reason why he sat with criminals: “I sat on a metal bench next to a tattooed man in handcuffs.”³⁵ The statement reiterates the fact that the Westerners’ suspicion towards Changez pervades after the tragic events; and as a knock-on effect, US’s natives equate him with someone who committed a deplorable act of violence. Yet, apparently, Changez is remarkably excluded from the Western world because of his Pakistani origin, and treated as a threatening criminal. In other words, the protagonist is perceived as a culpable person for the fact that he comes from Pakistan despite that he lives in the US and creates a new identity. Such an act may ensure that the Other’s representation is revealed without involving in unlawful activities, but relating to the innate qualities developed in the Eastern savage land.

Additionally, the distinction of the Self and the Other is perceived through a notion of privileged and unprivileged. Such discipline is collectively presented as a standard method to separate the world into two areas that consist of the East and the West. Indeed, the white people gain a universal prestige and considered as privileged in a way that is not equitable with the Other who lives constantly in poverty and mediocracy. For such representation, S.R.Moosavina and other thinkers claim: “Orientalism is affiliated with the representation of the self and the other or orient in which the self is privileged and has upper hand to define, reconstruct the passive, silent and weak other.”³⁶

Furthermore, Khadra relatively reveals the complex graphic of East and West in *The African Equation*, and shows the position of the unprivileged Other through the characters. Indeed, Joma, the African savage, affirms that certain personality characteristics may be linked to a definite geographical area in which they are suited naturally. In other terms, the Eastern native emphasises the unprivileged African occupants, and how they acquire and adopt certain features, which, in all ways, reshape one’s personality from being a moral and virtuous to savage Other. Joma asserts: “I did not choose violence, it was violence that

recruited me.”³⁷Hence, Joma’s assumptions make plain how distinct attributes are commonly imposed on people conformably to a specific area, Joma adds: “Everything depends on which side you’re on.”³⁸

Likewise, the concept of the privileged West over the unprivileged East is developed through modern medical treatments and healthcare. The Eastern unprivileged health problems are due to poverty that conquered Africans’ lives, which may never be eradicated. Although Africa would never stabilise from epidemics and diseases, and remains striving with the most common medications, Western societies provide the highest cure and offer patients prominent supports for recovery. Joma affirms: “My mother died of old age at thirty-five. Our people didn’t even have enough to buy aspirin. In fact, we didn’t even know what an aspirin looked like.”³⁹

Similarly, it is worth noting that Hamid shapes the differences between the privileged West and the unprivileged Other in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. In the novel, the protagonist’s convictions of Pakistan before the tragic events are directly emphasising its backwardness, which recently escalate to appreciation and resurrecting its demise after 9/11. This is noticeable when Changez affirms his desolation for his country and not moving towards a refined and progressed state before 9/11, presenting the privileged American, who, in all ways, is granted because he lives in a prosperous country. Changez declares to the unknown American: “Now our cities were largely unplanned, unsanitary affairs, and America had universities with individual endowments greater than our national budget for education. To be reminded of the vast disparity was, for me, to be ashamed.”⁴⁰Again, the same interpretation is constituted through Changez sensation of satisfaction and optimism for his opportunities to receive a higher education and an employment in the privileged world, opposing his unprivileged leghold homeland, to an extent that he desires to change his Pakistani identity. In this sense, Changez points out: “[...]And thought, this is *a dream come*

true. Princeton inspired in me the feeling that my life was a film in which I was the star and everything was possible.”⁴¹

However, it is critical to mention the superiority that lies behind the collective idea of privileged West. Said claims that the Other is said to be of a lower race, whereas the European is believed to be superior. The author of *Orientalism* adds that the Westerners have categorized the Easterners as inferior in order to define a superior image of themselves, and have associated the East with backwardness and failure in need of help. Said refers to this by saying: “Making nearly apocalyptic statements representing the White Man’s difficult civilizing mission.”⁴²Said’s quotation affirms that the West owes the responsibility of aiding and civilizing the East. Hence, he goes further to explain that this civilisation mission is, in fact, a strategy that reflects to the Westerners’ domination and exploitation. As a result, many Eastern thinkers believe that Westerners created the illusion of civilizing the natives and a colonial defence for the exploitations. As Said claims in this regard:

Chateaubriand puts the whole idea in the romantic redemptive terms of a Christian mission to revive a dead world, to quicken its sense of its own potential, one which only a European can discern underneath a lifeless and degenerate surface.⁴³

The quote above explains that the Orient is presented as inferior countries in need of civilization and restoration. Thus, Said argues that the West is creating its own superior identity opposing the inferiority of the Orient. They embody the ‘Other’ with inferior features in order to maintain their sense of superiority, Said says: “The idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures.”⁴⁴ This shows that West is only a mirror image of contrasting features, in which, with regard to the distinction, the East is the inferior area which needs to be dominated. The author of *Orientalism* states further: “So far as the west was concerned during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an assumption had been made that the Orient and everything in it was, if not patently inferior to, then in need of corrective study by the west.”⁴⁵

The inferiority of the Eastern race in comparison to the supremacy of the West is captured in Khadra's *The African Equation*. Precisely, Kurt, Bruno, and Hans portray the superior white people throughout the novel, in contrast to the inferior Africans. Hence, Joma exists to be dominated, and his people are individuals to whom it is appropriate to exercise power. However, the African poet held a different viewpoint than Kurt, claiming:

I am teaching this bastard about Africa. He needs to know that things have changed.' He grabbed me by the throat, squeezed hard and said: 'No one race is superior to any other. Since prehistoric times, it is always been the balance of power that decided who's master and who's the slave.'⁴⁶

Based on the poet's assertion, the Westerners possess an instinctual sense of superiority and power to which the locals have to surrender. However, Joma seems to reject such situation. In other words, the African character possesses awareness and intellectuality, making it difficult for the Western protagonist to endorse Western superiority. In addition, Africa is regarded as one of the wealthiest areas regarding its natural resources, yet represented as weakest continents in which Imperialism and Colonialism might easily establish itself. It is stated that Africa's inferior people were in desperate need of Western culture and superior colonialism. This leading position contributed in 'scramble for Africa'; as Afigbo proclaims: "But in the Era of slave, trade and colonialism, the Europeans had the desire to denigrate the continent [Africa] to justify exploitation, domination and colonialism."⁴⁷ One of the most significant instances that supports Western dominant was clearly portrayed in *The African Equation* when the superior Westerner protagonist yearned for dominance and authoritative directives towards the inferior Eastern natives. In this sense, Joma asserts: "The son of the bitch has to realise that the days of colonialism are long past."⁴⁸

In the same manner, it is crucial to remark that Hamid explores the same issue in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Although Changez has been marginalized from the American society since 9/11, the West had previously refused to accept the inferior Easterners in the US society before the tragic events. This is shown through Changez's failed attempt to integrate

in Underwood Samson and New York in the pre-9/11 era. He thus experiences exclusion of Western superior social class. He claims: "I sometimes sat near them in the cafeteria-although never at the same table."⁴⁹ The assertion demonstrates the overstated feeling of inferiority and weakness of Changez as opposed to the sense of superiority of the Americans. The 9/11 attacks then, fuel the global scale of the West and the East. Furthermore, due to the differences between the East and the West, Changez is certainly aware of the hierarchical discrepancy structure of US superiority over the Pakistani inferiority. This extends to the self-consciousness of a misfit in Underwood Samson. He adds: "It comes from feeling out of place."⁵⁰ In addition, he does not possess equal power till he necessitates changing his true identity, expressly, to be powerful and belonging needed to deny being inferior and shifting from being the 'Other'. Jim, the protagonist's Western friend, explains: "They try to resist change. Power comes from becoming change."⁵¹

Geography maintains a crucial role in shaping the Other's identity. However, the binary opposition bridges the gap between the East and the West. Thus, it represents opposing features that create further a set of stereotypes imposed upon the Easterners.

3. Binary Opposition and its Stereotypical Repercussions

Throughout history, several thinkers affirm that the West has always referred to the East as its adversary in order to separate itself from the barbarous Other and build its own honourable identity. Indeed, it is regarded that the West has continuously portrayed itself as oppositional to create its own renowned distinction. The Westerner views the Other as an opponent with opposing characteristics, which facilitates the formation of the Westerner's own qualities. Said explains that the antagonism eventually contributed in the creation of a binary opposition between the West and the East. In this perspective, the author of *Orientalism* states: "For Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the

strange (the Orient, the East, them’).”⁵² According to the author’s explanation, the contrast of characteristics creates a binarism of Civilized/Uncivilized, the Self/the Other, Us/them, Occident/Orient. As a result, Said clarifies that the polarity exists to allow the West to build its own identity of superiority over non-Westerners and uncivilized people as a reflection to them.

Such dichotomy is depicted through Western and Eastern characters in *The African Equation*. The fictional characters exchanged clashes that indicate the contrasting characteristics that were diametrically opposite to one another. So far, Kurt expresses his guilt towards Africans through a binarism that reflects the state of being a civilized and well-mannered European, referring to himself with an image formed with contrasting features with the uncivilised and savage Other. The protagonist explains:

I was angry with these maniacs conjured by some evil spell who had broken into my life, turning my mourning upside down and in one fell swoop destroying the faith I had in mankind, I felt like screaming, tearing out the ring that kept me chained to the wall and dented my self-respect, and lashing out at random with my shortened arms. I felt sick in my flesh, sick in my being, and sick everywhere my thoughts took me. Why I was confined in a foul-smelling cave, in the middle of nowhere, with these incessant swarms of flies drinking from the corners of my lips and driving me mad? What right did these bandits have to divert us from both our route and our destiny? I was furious. Hatred rose in me like molten lava, secreting in my mind a blackness I didn’t think I was capable of. The more I observed our kidnappers, the angrier I got. Everything about them disgusted me – their filthy language, their singlemindedness, their absence of humanity.⁵³

In the above quotation, Kurt represents his own personality in juxtaposition to the Africans. He entitles them with Eastern designations and all-encompassing attributes that clash a Western personality. Furthermore, Dr. Krausman’s persuasion of the binarism is expressed through his reasoning, particularly the initial entrance of the pirates on the boat. The protagonist regards them separately from the criminal gangs he encounters in his Western country. Nevertheless, he is determined by the unfamiliarity and brutality of the natives who live in a different territory that opposes his Western world. Kurt states: “I had never met anyone like these two in my life.”⁵⁴

Furthermore, such dichotomy is not only expressed through Westerners, but it is also endorsed by Eastern characters. Khadra portrays Joma in an attempt to sarcastically highlight the two geographical places' binary oppositions of modernity and civilization against tradition and medievalism. Joma ironically says: "Excuse our methods, doctor. We work in the traditional way around here."⁵⁵ Similarly, the African protagonist's statements are understandably related to racial binarisms of Black/White and East/West. Indeed, Joma is e with the polarity, till he expressed anger and contempt for Westerners. Notably, he urged Blackmoon to idolise exclusively black people or those with African hearts, such as Zidane, in a binary opposition between western whites and skin-colored native. Kurt says:

"And who are you fan of,"
 "There's Messi, Ronaldo and lots of others, except that Joma says an idol doesn't have to be a white man. So I went for Drogba, Eto'o and Zidane."
 "Zidane's white."
 "Only white-skinned. He's African at heart."⁵⁶

Similarly, another example of the binary opposition is revealed in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Through their conversation, Changez and the American tourist demonstrate the polarity that lies within the cruel East and the peaceful West. The American tourist was terrified by the violence of Eastern people. Hence, this maintains an oppositional portrayal between the Easterners and Westerners. However, Changez affirms that people of opposing races and cultures display virtue and justice. Hamid's protagonist exclaims: "I assure you: no one will attempt to steal your wallet."⁵⁷ The similar juxtaposition is appeared through Changez's denial identity of his naturally backward rightful place to more civilized and wealthy current set. Changez argues:

I tried not to dwell on the comparison; it was one thing to accept that New York was more wealthy than Lahore. [...]I attempted to act and speak, as much as my dignity would permit, more like an *American*. The Filipinos we worked with seemed to look up to my Americans colleagues, accepting them almost instinctively as members of the officer class global business—and I wanted my share of that respect as well. [...]Andi learned to answer, when asked where are you from, that I am from New York. Did the things trouble me, you ask? Certainly, sir; I was often ashamed. But outwardly I gave no sign of this. In any case, there was much for me to be proud of.⁵⁸

The quotation above affirms that Changez is remorseful towards his original identity due to the binary opposition maintained by the West. Once it is detected that the protagonist is perceived in an oppositional manner, he would assure the Westerners with his New York identity, in order to highlight his high moral values. A similar binary opposition is presented by American locals who question Changez' true origin based on Oriental norms. The protagonist affirms: "I was subjected to verbal abuse by complete strangers, and at Underwood Samson I seemed to become overnight a subject of whispers and stares."⁵⁹ This quotation highlights the binary dichotomy held by Westerners and represents the protagonist as Other considering his peculiar Eastern province.

One may consider that binary opposition of East and West lead to the creation of generalized images and judgements. According to Said, "The point is that the very designation of something as Oriental involved an already pronounced evaluative judgement."⁶⁰ This idea indicates that Orientals are burdened with prejudices and judgments, and their identities are framed by stereotypical representations, in certain ways, the Easterners are affirmably plagued with preconceptions and discrimination. The prejudicial treatments and the preconceived notions are approvingly depicted through Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Such characteristics are embodied by Changez, who, in all ways, stands for the Eastern people. Through the narrative, various stereotypical treatments form the protagonist's identity and cause him to face persecution within Underwood Samson and US society, Changez confesses: "I was subjected to verbal abuse by complete strangers, and at Underwood Samson I seemed to become overnight a subject of whispers and stares. Wainwright tried to offer me some friendly advice. Look, man, he said, I don't know what's up with the beard."⁶¹ This passage implies that, since 9/11, discrimination afflicts the Eastern Muslims who are constantly subjected to prejudices, particularly those with beards. Indeed, the concept of bearded people has been the novel's prominent idea regarding its stereotypical

interpretation. It thus represents a sign of solidarity with Muslims. This has been further depicted as a threat to Westerners as a result of its symbolic connotation of revolution through Changez's character. These preconceptions are similarly illustrated through his mother, saying: "Do not forget to shave before you go."⁶²

Furthermore, one of the major ideas of Said's theory concerns the perception of the Other as a body of facts and opinion constructed by the Westerners. The remark means that Easterners are defined by preconceived ideas constructed by the Westerners, and their identities are beset by judgements. The protagonist of Hamid's novel is prejudiced due to his Oriental nature. One of the most prominent examples comes at the opening pages of the story where Changez states: "Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Do not be frightened by my beard. I am a lover of America."⁶³ The latter reveals that Westerners have a prejudice towards Arabic individuals with beards since it poses a threat after 9/11. Similarly, Changez is subjected to societal discrimination in the airport, he is an anathema that contrasts the native Westerners. In simpler terms, the protagonist faces several prejudices and judgements that form his Oriental nature due to the post 9/11 American hysteria toward Muslims and several moral panic stories launched against them. After the attacks, Muslims have been harshly discriminated. A globalized depiction of Muslims' Other has been circulating in the American society. This renders Changez a target of discrimination, he adds: "I was escorted by armed guards into a room where I was made to strip down to my boxer short [...] I was separated from my team at immigration. They joined the queue for America citizens; I joined the one for foreigner."⁶⁴

Effectively, Africa and the African Other are stigmatised because of its desert and black population in *The African Equation*. Through Eastern and Western characters, the land presents the stereotypical continent in its most terrible form. Indeed, it is mostly exemplified by Kurt's foreign ideology about Easterners, in which he highlights the biases and the

prejudices that his culture has built onto Joma and Africans. Thus, the protagonist slandered the natives as barbaric and strange, who infuriated Joma, he claims: “What gives you the right to call us savages? [...] I’d really like to know what makes us savages.” The remark above demonstrates that the Western culture created false pictures and stereotypes about African Others unaccompanied by facts. Furthermore, Europeans associated blackness with immorality and abomination, a racial phenomenon that existed for decades. Thus, there are various clichés of a primitive and cruel black man who is hated not only in Western societies, but throughout the globe. In this perspective, Kelly Wetch claims:

The racial stereotyping of criminals has been an enduring and unfortunate feature of American culture. However, following the civil rights movement, the linkage between Blacks and crime was galvanized. The stereotyping of Blacks as criminals is so pervasive throughout society that “criminal predator” is used as a euphemism for “young Black male.” This common stereotype has erroneously served as a subtle rationale for the unofficial policy and practice of racial profiling by criminal justice practitioners. This article details the theoretical elements contributing to the development of Black criminal typification to understand how this has been used to justify racial profiling.⁶⁶

The quotation exemplifies stereotypical representations and racial discrimination of black people, who continuously face prejudices and judgments, and whose identities are moulded by their skin colour. In other words, the black man is not only rejected, but also portrayed as a creature who is being constantly accused of crimes.

The skin-coloured African’s stereotype is prominently shown in Khadra’s *The African Equation*, most notably through Kurt’s frame of mind toward Joma and the African gang. The Western protagonist’s understanding of the savage Africans is based only on prejudices formed while he was in the West, which mostly leads to the gang’s enmity. Although the Easterner was aware of Western preconceptions, Joma refutes Western racism toward people of colour, saying: “You hypochondriac, racist mother’s boy who’d disinfect the pavement if you found out that a black man had been walking along it before you, you want me to believe you’re so upset by world poverty that you’d give up a creature comforts to share the sufferings of niggers with bloated stomachs?”⁶⁷ This quotation illustrates the fact that Joma

does not surrender to the preconceived ideas of black people. He then exposes the binary between 'black' and 'white.' He thereby highlights the racism displayed by Kurt and Westerners in their attitudes towards African and Easterners.

To conclude, the representation of the Other is determined by a range of negative traits through Eastern characters, in contrast to Westerners' positive characteristics. Said's definition of the Other is thus an aspect that both *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The African Equation*. In both works, the Westerners have high morals; in contrast to the exotic Other, who is distinguished by its savageness and backwardness. For such, the Westerners claim superiority and profess hegemony over the inferior East, and pretend to aid while plundering Eastern lands through civilisation mission. The inferior Other is described through a binary opposition manifested by the Westerners to identify themselves in opposition to the Easterners. The early binary notion is conducive to the establishment of stereotypes in order to associate the natives of the East with characteristics that are diametrically opposed to those of the West.

The Other is thus a creation of the West to contrast itself with the barbaric Orientals. Thus, despite the development of knowledge and civilization throughout history, the Eastern area remains antagonistic. Indeed, in both *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The African Equation*, one may affirm that the relationship between the East and the West is an opposing one. The Eastern major characters in both works are clearly exhibiting virtuous actions and they possess favourable traits. Throughout the novels, I have highlighted the significant examples to ponder over Said's issues of Other's qualities. It is revealed through several features that geography plays a significant part in embodying oneself and building an identity. As a result, the West maintains its sense of superiority and considers its citizens to be privileged.

Given all of the negative traits associated with the Oriental Other, it is critical to conclude that several aspects play a significant role in shaping one's identity. Because of its geographical position, negative attributes, and stereotypical representation, the Easterner is regarded as an Oriental Other, motivating Khadra to properly reflect Africa with its inherent historical characteristics. This also allows Hamid to better depict the ramifications of Muslim countries, especially Pakistan, in the aftermath of 9/11. However, my postcolonial study of the novels does not rely limitedly on the representation of the Other, but also delves into the Orientalist Discourse expressed in Hamid's and Khadra's texts.

End Notes:

- ¹Jean-François Staszak, "Other/ Otherness," *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (Oxford: Kitchin and Thrift, 2008) accessed on October 10, 2021.pdf
<https://www.unige.ch/sciences-societe/geo/files/3214/4464/7634/OtherOtherness.pdf>
- ² Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 172.
- ³ Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (United Kingdom: Penguin Random House, 2007), 83.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid., 90.
- ⁶ Ibid., 181.
- ⁷ Yasmina Khadra, *The African Equation*. Trans. Howard Curtis (Great Britain: Gallic Books, 2015), 57.
- ⁸ Ibid., 136.
- ⁹ Ibid., 143.
- ¹⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 253.
- ¹¹ Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 85.
- ¹² Ibid., 190.
- ¹³ Khadra, *The African Equation*, 58.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 165.
- ¹⁵ Khadra, *The African Equation*, 73.
- ¹⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 253.
- ¹⁷ Khadra, *The African Equation*, 105.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.,
- ¹⁹ Hamid, *The Reluctant fundamentalist*, 33.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 116.
- ²¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 97.
- ²² Ibid., 54.
- ²³ Khadra, *The African Equation*, 59.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 66.
- ²⁵ Khadra, *The African equation*, 66.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 68.
- ²⁷ Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 168.
- ²⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 253 .
- ²⁹ Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 137.
- ³⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 59.
- ³¹ Khadra, *The African Equation*, 107.
- ³² Said, *Orientalism*, 54.
- ³³ Khadra, *The African Equation*, 182.
- ³⁴ Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 62.
- ³⁵ Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 86.
- ³⁶ S.R. Moosavina et al. "Language and Literature." *Edward Said's Orientalism and the Study of the Self and the Other in Orwell's Burmese Days*. Vol.2, No.1 (2001): 103.
- ³⁷ Khadra, *The Equation African*, 144.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 143.
- ⁴⁰ Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 38.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 3.
- ⁴² Said, *Orientalism*, 254.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 172.

- ⁴⁴Said, *Orientalism*, 7.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., 40-41.
- ⁴⁶Khadra, *The African Equation*, 96..
- ⁴⁷Adiele Eberchukwu Afiegbo, *K.O.Dike and The Africann Historical Renascene* (Nigeria :Rada publishers, 1984), 4.
- ⁴⁸ Khadra, *The African Equation*, 94.
- ⁴⁹Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 111.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., 48.
- ⁵¹Ibid., 110.
- ⁵²Said, *Orientalism*, 43.
- ⁵³Khadra, *The African Equation*, 79-80.
- ⁵⁴Ibid., 53.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., 56-57.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., 72.
- ⁵⁷Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 69.
- ⁵⁸Ibid., 74.
- ⁵⁹Ibid., 148.
- ⁶⁰Said, *Orientalism*, 207.
- ⁶¹Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 148. beard
- ⁶²Ibid., 146.
- ⁶³Ibid., 1.
- ⁶⁴Ibid., 85.
- ⁶⁵Khadra, *The African Equation*, 104.
- ⁶⁶Kelly Wetch, "Black Criminal Stereotype and Racial Profiling," *Sage Journals*, August 1, 2007.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1043986207306870>
- ⁶⁷Khadra, *The African Equation*, 109.

Chapter Two: The Orientalist Discourse in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Yasmina Khadra's *The African Equation*:

This chapter investigates Edward Said's concept of the orientalist discourse in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Yasmina Khadra's *The African Equation*. I will focus on the different ways in which the Western characters in both novels use the orientalist discourse to misrepresent the Orient and Orientals, which further reinforces the distinction between East and West. By doing so, I will discuss the constructions of erroneous facts that allow the depictions of Orient and Occident, which consolidate the orientalist discourse. In analyzing similar discourse, I shall shed the light on how a deep analysis of the characters and the plots in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The African Equation* challenge the orientalist discourse.

Above all, for Said, the orientalist discourse serves as a dominant discourse in the world which allows the portrayal of the Orient and the Orientals in a single set of statements. Thus, the concept is constrained in a unified perspective constructed through Orientalism, yet it carries a specific way of representation. In other words, Said's notion of orientalist discourse renders the depiction of the West positive while it outweighs the negative perspectives on the East. In this regard, Yang Zhao says: "Besides he [Said] believes that in the field of Orientalism, it is Europe that becomes the spokesman for the Orient, the Europe brings the Orient into Western ideology and empire, Asia is in silence and narrated."¹ For Zhao, Said affirms that the orientalist discourse allows the Westerners to shape the Orient in a determined scheme, to which the Easterners are doomed. This is shown in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Khadra's *The African Equation*. In both novels, the characters tend to associate their speeches and thinking process to Orientalism in order to depict the East and its natives in a flawed depiction. Regarding this issue of representation, the Western characters adopt an oppositional depiction for the West.

I. The Orientalist Discourse in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Khadra's *The African Equation*:

1. The Orient's Depiction:

The depiction of the Orient and Orientals is constrained by what Said identifies as the orientalist discourse. Similar discourse is, in fact, linked to different representations that allow a specific orientalist attitude towards the area and its natives. It is believed that it is a persisted and unified Western thoughts and perspectives that encompass features and attributes towards Orient and Oriental natives. According to Said, the depiction of the East is limited to the Orientalists' views of the Orient. Hence, this is what leads him to remark that only the orientalists who "can interpret the Orient,"² since "the Orient being radically incapable of interpreting itself."³ Yet, connecting Orientalism with the discourse which is "secretly based on an already said"⁴ sustain a flaw framework of the Orient, that of detrimental and unfavoured. Said argues that one of the principal dogmas of Orientalism : "is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, underdeveloped, inferior."⁵ This idea is, in fact, incorporated in Khadra's *The African Equation* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. In the two novels, the orientalist discourse serves as strategy for Western characters to draw a bleak depiction of the Orient.

It is worth mentioning that a deep analysis of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*'s and *The African Equation*'s Western characters endows a definite orientalist discourse that depicts the Orient and the Orientals in a barbarous status. The orientalist discourse is not only presented through Westerners' speeches, but also in their attitude towards Easterners. In particular, the presence of an Orientalist attitude is outlined through various situations and Westerners' deeds towards Eastern characters. Said affirms: "The Orient suddenly appeared lamentably [...] barbaric."⁶ For Said, after constant attempts to represent themselves, the Orient is thus

represented as barbaric through a collection of ideas and behaviours that outline an orientalist discourse.

In this context, the orientalist discourse asserted by Said is examined through the Western characters in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. In the novel, the Pakistani protagonist is primarily westernised due to his emigration and settlement in America. Yet, the situation changes thoroughly after the 9/11 attacks, which renders Changez, once again, plagued with orientalist judgements. Changez is, thus, constantly perceived as a threatening criminal due to his barbaric Oriental native land. This depiction is fundamentally shown in the airport through a discriminatory attitude that entails separating the passengers, including Changez. After being separated from his Western teamwork, the Eastern protagonist is submitted to a prejudiced investigation. The airport security says:

“What is the purpose of your trip to United States?” She asked me.

“I live here,” I replied.

“That is *not* what I asked you, sir.” She said. “What is the purpose of your trip to the United States?”⁷

Despite the truthful answer of Changez, the airport security does not seem to be convinced. The refusal to entrust the protagonist's declaration is not due to his personal behaviour, but rather, because of the strong opinion of a criminal Orient held against him. Although he belongs to the same fellowship, the airport security makes a preconceived idea according to an orientalist discourse that creates a barbaric image of the Orient. The orientalist behaviour of the airport security is reinforced through the repeated question, affirming her doubts for a deceitful Easterner residing in the West. This, indeed, affirms that the Oriental's existence within Western societies becomes threatening.

Similarly, this orientalist discourse that frames the Orient as barbaric is also outlined through Khadra's Western characters. Indeed, *The African Equation*'s plot revolves around interactions between Eastern and Western characters in Africa. Yet, Kurt's discriminatory interaction with the natives is symbolic. It refers to the barbaric image maintained by Khadra's protagonist towards Africans and Orient, which further traces an orientalist

discourse. This argument is reinforced through Kurt's use of animal imagery to define Joma's and his gang's land as "the animal world,"⁸ thus, it reveals the Orientalist discourse conveyed about a barbaric Orient.

Furthermore, Kurt's emphasis on savage Orient and Orientals is clearly not an immediate deduction regarding his short-period journey in Africa. Yet it indicates that he refers to "some previous knowledge of the Orient to which [...] he relies,"⁹ which further determines a general opinion that shapes the area manifested through orientalist discourse. From an Orientalist character standpoint, Africans fail to acquire human characteristics; they indeed become prisoners to unfading savagery. Kurt affirms: "Everything about them disguised me [...] their absence of humanity."¹⁰ This orientalist discourse strengthens the Orient's depiction of barbarism, it also consolidates the orientalist description echoed by Said: "Because he, unlike the Oriental, is a true human being [...] Westerner believes in his human prerogative not only to manage the nonwhite world but also to own it, just because by definition 'it' is not quite as human as 'we' are."¹¹ As such, Said's claim about what he believes as orientalist discourse is, thus validated through Khadra's protagonist argument.

The orientalist discourse in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Khadra's *The African Equation* is once again examined through an impoverished Orient's depiction. Through Western characters' speeches, poverty seems to conquer the East, and appears to be an endless matter that cannot be eradicated. As a consequence, the area has been isolated from the globe, Said asserts: "the Semitic world was too impoverished ever to attract universal attention."¹² A similar preconceived idea about the Orient conveys an orientalist discourse of a poor land with indigent natives.

In Khadra's novel, the collective idea of impoverished Orient appears to be the essence of Westerners' thoughts and speeches. The existence of Africans is moulded in a single portrayal that of "caravan people and nomadic shepherds."¹³ Unlike Kurt who lived in

Western urban prosperity, Eastern characters are assumed to be condemned to poverty and rural life. In addition, *The African Equation's* protagonist situates himself in the position of the Orient's speaker, enabling him to emphasise the poor portrayal of the land. Thus, he states: "Africa is bankrupt my friend,"¹⁴ he goes on to add: "everyday they (Africans) die of hunger and exhaustion."¹⁵ As mentioned above, Kurt is clearly making deductions through previous knowledge of Africa. It is, thus inconceivable to shape a whole country in a barbarous and poor standard through his short overseas journey to the land. Kurt is then, departing from a preconceived impoverished idea of the Orient, to further regenerating an orientalist discourse that portrays Africans in a stereotyped representation.

In the same context, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist's* Western characters delve into the impoverished depiction of the Orient and Easterners. At the beginning of the novel, Jim's conversation with Changez reveals a discriminatory attitude towards the protagonist's hierarchical status. This is apparent through Jim's description of Changez's family social position in Pakistan. He says: "most people assume you are rich where you come from [...] do your friends here know,"¹⁶ he adds: "that you're family couldn't afford to send you to Princeton without a scholarship."¹⁷ Jim hence, introduces an orientalist discourse of the poor Orient. Thus, he eventually reaches a fact that Changez is sinking in poverty, just because he belongs to Oriental world.

Another focal point of the orientalist discourse in Khadra's novel is Western characters' depiction of the Orient in a primitive portrayal. Said maintains : "Thus when an Oriental was referred to, it was in terms of such genetic universals as his 'primitive' state, his primary characteristic, his particular spiritual background."¹⁸ In this sense, Kurt and Bruno in *The African Equation* often refer to the East as an area stamped with primitiveness. This idea is not defined only through the African desert and its natives, but further through Easterners' unethical behaviours. Indeed, various immoral actions are witnessed through the Western

characters. They are then, left abided with stereotypes that reinforce the orientalist discourse of the primitive Orient. Bruno affirms this by saying: “the hostage trade has become an industry in Africa.”¹⁹ This shows that African’s old ways of slavery and racial trade raise a waned picture of goodness, and this lies as a relevant argument to construct an orientalist discourse that depicts Africa in primitiveness.

In addition, Kurt’s opinion towards Africa plays a significant role in reproducing an orientalist discourse of African primitiveness. It is claimed that “Africa is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development exhibit.”²⁰ This statement shows the degree to which Africa is viewed as primitive; or even passive as far as it concerns progress. Thus, Kurt’s description of Africa as “a land just after big bang”²¹ consolidates the primitive depiction of Africa. It gives impression that the area achieved no progress, ironically affirming that despite the modern era in which Kurt and the Westerners are settled in, Africa remains in early ages, equating its features with those of early centuries, deficient of scientific inquiry and development.

In the same context, an image of the primitive Easterner is manifested through an orientalist discourse in Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. As presented in the novel, Changez is not an Arab. Hence, the American citizens degrade his status and curse him as a “Fucking Arab”²² based on the assumption that he is a primitive Easterner. This articulated term comes to illustrates Said’s assertion that: “the Arabs are a primitive people.”²³ To be more precise, the Westerners here engender an orientalist discourse that shapes the Arabs and Easterners in one single portrayal that of primitive. This signifies that the Western speeches and way of thinking are associated to a circle of subjective discourse that takes control of their perspective towards an Easterner.

This Western representation of Orientals through an orientalist discourse of primitive East stimulates an illiterate depiction of the area. One of the issues covered in Westerner

speeches is the dichotomy that lays on the “educated and intelligent”²⁴ Westerner and the “gullible Oriental.”²⁵ This similar dichotomy is illustrated in both *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The African Equation* through the Western characters who, throughout the novels, engender orientalist discourse of illiterate Orient.

In this context, an orientalist narrative of illiterate Orient is portrayed in Khadra’s *The African Equation* through the deficiency of public education in Africa. Throughout the novel, Bruno has always referred to his rich knowledge about Africa. Despite his forty years’ experiences and his devotedness to the country, Bruno’s depiction of the Orient remains flawed. He then, seizes the opportunity to depict illiterate Africa through his conversation with Kurt. He declares: “What’s become of the school, the training centres, the institutions, the jobs?”²⁶ Bruno’s question may seem that he is engaging in a serious debate about illiteracy in Africa. However, considering the fact that, he reserves a wealth of knowledge upon Africa, it is then, untrue to remain unaware and oblivious to similar stereotype. The question is therefore, an insistence of previous claims to advocate the orientalist discourse of illiterate depiction that both Bruno and Kurt dispose. Thus, by articulating such flawed argument about Africa, a depiction of illiterate natives and the area is revealed. Bruno then, makes the statement as a justifiable question to prove the natives’ illiteracy.

Similarly, Kurt’s use of the word “superstitious” in his conversation with Elena, the Western doctor in Africa, appears to be symbolic. Superstition is, in fact, one of the most prevalent patterns of ignorance since it refers to lack of knowledge. Kurt says: “This country has made me superstitious.”²⁷ Elena laughed after making such comment, alluding to the sarcastic remark in a mocking manner. It is apparent that such statement is not handled seriously by Elena, but rather ridiculed and presented as an irony. This argument strengthens a flawed representation that Africa is, indeed, fraught with illiteracy’s tragedy, even incapable to speculate ideas through reason. Thus, an orientalist discourse of illiterate Orient is outlined

through Kurt's attitude, which reinforces Africans' beliefs in mythological ideologies with no understanding of science. Another example of the similar depiction in the novel is Elena's emphasis on skilled and competent European to come upon and drive things forward, she states: "Of course, architects and supervisors came from Europe to get things going."²⁸ This orientalist discourse affirms that living in an illiterate area renders its people uneducated. Elena, thus, reports a statement that of the Orient is incapable to progress due to its illiteracy, which further depicts the entire Eastern globe in an illiterate portrayal.

In the same token, the depiction of the illiterate Orient in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is also traced at the beginning of the novel. Despite that Changez is well educated in Pakistan and his journey in America is devoted only to continue a higher education, his perspective towards his country is radically reshaped in the onset of the narrative. As he is being influenced by the orientalist discourse of an illiterate Orient, he has started believing that the United States is capable of realizing the dreams that Pakistan has not been able to realize due to its illiteracy, he states: "This is a dream come true. Princeton inspired in me the feeling that my life was a film in which I was the star and everything was possible."²⁹ Changez's reference to the university itself is metaphorical; he thus refers to an academic place to promote opportunities and achieves his objectives. Hence, throughout his journey to the United States, he dismisses from his mind the fact that Pakistan provided him knowledge in his childhood. Therefore, this condition of being sourced by American knowledge and its influence conveys an orientalist discourse of the illiterate Orient. Yet, he becomes a university teacher after 9/11 with his return to Lahore.

Additionally, an Orientalist discourse of Islam and terrorism is explored through the Western characters in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The novel's core storyline is the post 9/11 complex background. The American society becomes discriminatory towards Muslims since "Islam has been fundamentally misrepresented in the West."³⁰ Thus, when

Changez first lands to America, he considers himself as purely American. The situation immediately changes at the aftermath of 9/11, he states: “I had heard tales of the discrimination Muslims were beginning.”³¹ The overspread of discrimination and Muslim depiction in an exotic portrayal deprive Changez from his American self, which further generate a state of estrangement. He thus, becomes a target of harassments and personal abuse; he even starts to be marginalized within the company. By reckoning on Said’s orientalist discourse of Muslims, the novel’s Western characters attitude and the traumatized discriminatory experiences of Changez reveal the exotic portrayal of Muslims.

Hence, Said retraces the dangerous representation of Islam by saying: “Islam was considered a degraded (and usually, a virulently dangerous) representative.”³² Islam and Muslims are then, not only considered immoral, but also criminal. This portrayal stands with Eastern characters in *The African Equation*, who are viewed as dangerous individuals. To illustrate, Bruno expresses Islam in a negative image, and associates the religion with the abuse of power and violent behaviours. He states:

‘Exactly what it says: they subcontract. It is just like any other business. There are big companies, and there subcontractors. The people holding us are common adventurers. There are no more than twenty of them, all told. Not being powerful enough, or well enough equipped to go it alone, they subcontract. Whenever they get hold of a hostage, they offer him to a stronger group, which in turn sells him on to another, tougher gang, and so on up to the criminal or terrorist organisations that have a solid enough structure to negotiate with governments.’³³

Despite that, Bruno’s affection towards Africa and its people is revealed through his constant appealing portrayal of the desert and the natives’ heroism to endure the land’s sufferings; nevertheless, a portrayal of Islamic hostility is traced through his statement. Bruno’s words indicate that, for Westerners, power and violence appear to play a crucial role in shaping a Muslim identity. Due to the fact that he has a deeper understanding of Islam, Bruno’s statement outlines an orientalist discourse that presents a flawed image of the religion.

It is apparent that the analysis of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The African Equation* reveals how the Western characters' orientalist discourse introduces a negative depiction of the Orient. However, focusing on a similar discourse to represent the Eastern area, widens the dichotomy of the East and West, and further strengthens the depiction of West in a positive image.

2. The Western Depiction

The depiction of the Orient plays a major role in defining the West as a form of its “contrasting image, idea, personality.”³⁴ As defined by Said once again, “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident.’”³⁵ Said goes further to add that :“Every statement made by Orientalists or White Men (who were usually interchange-able) conveyed a sense of the irreducible distance separating white from colored, or Occidental from Oriental.”³⁶Said's *Orientalism* thus, conveys an antagonistic portrayal of the East and the West. In other words, “Orientalist thought is an imaginative and yet drastically polarized geography divided into two unequal parts,”³⁷ the East that is depicted in a negative portrayal and self-reflective positive depiction of the West. The representation of the West likewise, is formed through the orientalist discourse in both *The Reluctant Fundamentalist's* and *The African Equation's* Western characters.

The Western characters in the two novels situate themselves in the position of “the white saviour,” enabling them to reinforce the orientalist discourse. Hence, these aforementioned characters depart from an orientalist discourse that depicts the Orient in an inferior portrayal, to reveal the positive image of themselves through the “White man's burden.”³⁸It is then, a duty from the superior West to help and save the Oriental backward. In Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Khadra's *The African Equation* the West is

depicted as a saviour through Western characters, who employ an orientalist discourse to shadow the Eastern area.

In Khadra's novel, the Western characters' representation as white saviours intensifies the orientalist discourse and establishes a power relation between the East and the West. At the beginning of the novel, Hans, a wealthy German, is concerned with humanitarian acts through placing emphasis on miserable Africa. It is revealed that after his wife's loss, Hans becomes involved in sailing to the "the unlikeliest places"³⁹ situated in "Africa, or in remote areas of Asia"⁴⁰ intending to conduct several humanitarian aids. Thus, while travelling his last journey to Africa on the boat, Hans says: "they're (Africans) trying to flog you cheap rubbish at exorbitant prices. They think every tourist is as rich as Croesus and stupid enough to take a rusty old teapot for Alladin's lamp."⁴¹ This quote represents Hans' superior status and the inferiority of the natives, and further his vast knowledge of Africa. It also foreshadows an orientalist discourse constructed by a Westerner due to "an imbalance between the Orient and the Occident in terms of power."⁴² His expanded experiences in the Eastern lands and his status precede the hidden intentions and motives behind the "White man's burden"⁴³ and his attempts as a saviour of Africa. Although Africa was a target of Western exploitation defined under "scramble for Africa,"⁴⁴ it is debatable whether Hans's charitable deeds are pure. In this regard, Said says: "knowledge of subject races or Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable; knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control."⁴⁵ This statement reveals that gaining knowledge of Orientals generates power, that of authority. It is then, an alternative position that Hans fails to achieve due to his murder in Africa. However, his humanitarian acts and his concerns for African indigents delude a saviour role.

By the same token, humanitarianism in Khadra's *The African Equation* remains one of the important factors that represent the Western characters as saviours. Another example that

traces an orientalist discourse is Elena Juarez character. Her attitude, her way to express her thoughts about Africa, and what she thinks and says convey an orientalist discourse of backward and primitive Africa that cannot recover without Western support. Elena's representation is related to a set of stereotypes and knowledge about Africa and its miserable conditions, which further echoes an orientalist discourse. It is, thus a Westerner who assumes that Africa will witness miserable circumstances to a greater extent in the absence of Westerners' intervention. She says: "Gladly, imagine this country cut off from the world these people without aid."⁴⁶ The illustration outlines a subjective discourse in which Elena describes African sufferings and sympathises with them. This further foreshadows the instability between Africans and the Westerners in terms of power. She thus, adheres a superior and saviour image for herself and remains responsive to the misery of Africans leading medical crusade to save the natives' lives. This argument is strengthened through Kurt's statement, affirming: "Dr Elena Juarez told us how, while her group was conducting a vaccination campaign, she had found herself at the head of an army of refugees."⁴⁷ The power of representing the African has thus, revealed the status of Western saviour, as being the white character that saves African from pathetic conditions.

In the same sense, the superiority and the status of saviour in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* are revealed through Changez. At the beginning of the novel, before the 9/11 attacks, Changez was westernized, he thus, denies his identity. He then, portrays America as the land of dreams and high chances of success as opposed to the perilous East. He says: "In that moment, that Underwood Samson had the potential to transform my life as surely as it had transformed his."⁴⁸ Changez's statement introduces how he made up his mind that the company, which again refers to the United States, will save his life compared to Pakistan. It is then represented as a saviour. This idea operates an orientalist discourse that represents: "The discursive construction of the Orient as part of power relations produced the —idea of

European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures.”⁴⁹ It is then, an orientalist discourse engendered in the West through Westerners’ speeches and employed through Changez who primarily rejects his identity; however, the protagonist’s perspective alters when he initiates a return to his Pakistani’s identity after the 9/11 attacks.

According to Said, the orientalist discourse is engendered through Westerners’ speeches, behaviours and thoughts. This does not only establish a negative portrayal of the Orient, yet, it further utters a superior image of the West. In this sense, Said says: “Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which put the Westerners in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand.”⁵⁰ In other words, regardless of Westerners’ sympathy and support in Eastern lands, the natives of the West constantly prioritise the superior portrayal based on power, which dramatically creates an absolute truth of inferior Easterner.

Similarly, Kurt’s resemblance of Kurtz, the principal protagonist of Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, remains symbolic. Both narratives revolve around Kurt’s and Kurtz’s journey to Africa and their experiences with African ingenious. Through their encounter with the natives, they constantly utter misconceptions on Africans that adhere a superior image of themselves and the West. Their stereotypes over the Africans delineate an orientalist discourse and underscore the dichotomy of the East and West. Hence, through Kurtz’s journey to Congo, he constantly places himself in the superior position through the orientalist discourse of barbaric natives. This is exactly the same case for Kurt, he thus, affirms his eminent position over Joma and the African natives. It is then a relation of endorsing the same Western discourse on the Easterners.

A similar orientalist discourse is outlined in *The African Equation* through Elena Juarez character who, throughout the novel, has shown sympathy towards Africans and leads

a charitable refugees' company. In this regard, she says: "of course, architects and supervisors came from Europe to get things going."⁵¹ The undoubted statement of the Western character essentially aims to designate the superiority of the West; it further creates a certain ruthless image of Africa. Hence, it examines an orientalist narrative that constitutes not only an inferior image of the East, unless it mirrors an oppositional superior image of the West. Elena then, strengthens what Said considers as superior and inferior relation.

In the same context, the superiority of the West is hence, explicitly revealed in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* through the company. In the novel, Underwood Samson remains one of the important allegories due to the fact that it reflects the United States. Jim thereby reveals its effective paradigm. While referring to it, he provides the most essential detail of the company which is the supreme system of Underwood Samson. As such, it represents the Westerners' Orientalist attitude towards the weak Orient that needed to be saved. This discourse further projects a superior image of the West. In this regard, Jim says about US: "We're a meritocracy."⁵²

3. Challenging the Orientalist Discourse:

The plot of Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Khadra's *The African Equation* revolves around the complex relation between the East and the West. Through an analysis of the characters, it appears that the Westerners provide stereotypical representations of the East based on the knowledge they possess. This outlines an orientalist discourse as introduced by Said "in order to understand the construction of the Orient as a totality."⁵³ By analyzing these novels in depth, a reaction to the orientalist discourse is further revealed through the characters and the plot. This reaction has been linked to what Said defines as an orientalist discourse founded on Western representation and knowledge regardless of the Orient's facts. Said affirms:

One ought never to assume that the structure of Orientalism is nothing more than a structure of lies and myths which, were the truth about them to be told,

would simply blow away. I myself believe that Orientalism is more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is a verdict discourse about the Orient.⁵⁴

According to Said's words, Orientalism is a Western invention based on lies and untrue information. This allows Khadra's and Hamid's characters and plot to reflect Said's disapproval regarding the orientalist discourse, and to further elicit a response in their novels through placing emphasis on the actual facts of the Orient and the Occident.

3.1. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

A response to the orientalist discourse in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is effectively conveyed through the characters and the plot. The novel's plot revolves around the 9/11 attacks and its effects on marginalizing Muslims in the USA. It further puts emphasis on the prejudices of the exotic East. Hence, the conflicting speeches and the clashes render the characters active to construct an opposition to the Westerners' attack. Thus, the Eastern characters aim to establish a similar idea of what Said explains as "Orientalism overrides the true Orient and negates its truth."⁵⁵ By doing so, a response to the orientalist discourse is effectively communicated through the characters and the plot.

In the analysis of the novel, an orientalist discourse of poverty in the Orient is advocated by Jim's character, to which Changez further responded by relying on his Pakistani's family status. In Jim's and Changez's job interview, an impression that entertains an uncommon worldwide norm of East-West dichotomy is presented. Changez's poor position is indeed inevitable in the Western speeches due to the fact that he belongs to Pakistan. This is shown through Jim's revelation. Instead of asking the protagonist of his position in Pakistan, he thus belittles him and affirms that his family was poor. Changez's internal monologue was: "I am not poor; far from it. My great-grandfather, for example, was a barrister with the means to endow a school for the Muslims of the Punjab."⁵⁶ Hamid's protagonist statement comes to oppose the orientalist discourse of the poor Orient examined

in Jim's revelation. This shows that the Western representation in the novel is only "myths that Orientalism propagates."⁵⁷

The orientalist discourse is not only related to the representation of the East, but it also overshadows the ferocious acts of Western societies. Indeed, Said affirms: "Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians."⁵⁸ Considering war on terror and moral panic stories inflicted on Muslims that unfold a criminal West in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, this calls into question whether Islam is exclusively associated with barbarism. In the novel, an orientalist discourse of 'terrorist Muslims' is advocated through Westerners after the 9/11 attacks. A generalized image of barbaric Muslim is created in America. Muslims become the target of horror and hostilities. However, subjugating Muslims, whether criminals or innocents, becomes a common state since war on terror arises Islamophobia. Hence, this remains symbolic. This is considered as a traumatic and moral panic experiences for Changez and Muslims. Throughout the novel, war on terror was regularised in different Eastern countries. Hence, it is represented as a normal act since they have the power to shape the Orient and themselves through the orientalist discourse. Hence, this is remains a false representation constructed through orientalist discourse. Therefore, the unified image of terrorist Muslims fails through Changez, who, throughout the story, his first objective in America was a higher education and a suitable career. On the contrary, the same opposed image of peaceful and moral Westerner is waned through the war on terror. This shows that the world is devoid of hostilities. The presence of similar features in Hamid's novel renders the prevailing orientalist discourse distorted.

Likewise, voicing the Pakistani's voice through silencing the West engenders a response to the orientalist discourse. In this regard, Saad Nawras Baradan says: "There is a recurrent theme of silencing of the Orient, of not allowing the Orient to speak about its history, culture, languages, and life experiences."⁵⁹ Hence, defining themselves has been a

difficult task for Easterners since they are being silenced. This means that the West achieves similar mission through engendering a specific discourse that depicts the East in an inferior image. Baradan further explains that: “If the discourse of Orientalism is problematic for Said, it is not because the representations made of the Oriental fail to capture reality, but because the Orient is never given a voice of its own.”⁶⁰ However, the notion of defining the Orient and allowing it to speak and negate the representation given to the Easterners contradict the orientalist discourse. A similar view is demonstrated in different ways in the novel through silencing the unknown American who incarnates the West and voicing the Pakistani’s voice. Thus, this is conveyed as a response to the orientalist discourse.

Throughout *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, several illustrations tend to allow Changez to speak, represent Pakistan, and silencing the unknown American. The novel starts with a conversation that seems to have no responder. Indeed, the responder is an unknown American who is silenced to Changez’s representations of Pakistan. At several attempts, the protagonist refutes the stereotypes incorporated through the orientalist discourse without allowing the American visitor to oppose him. The Western character is then, silenced, which makes Changez the representative of Pakistan. The protagonist is then, representing, speaking, and voicing the Orient. In the course of the one-sided conversation, Changez says: “I can see you quite clearly as you stand there with your wallet. For a city of a size, Lahore is remarkably free of that sort of petty crime.”⁶¹ While the unknown American remains unvoiced, Changez represents themselves here as the virtuous Pakistanis regardless of the fact that this revelation as other similar ones would contradict the Western discourse. Thus, this success to represent the Pakistan is an important response conveyed against the orientalist discourse.

Likewise, Changez’s rejection of orientalist judgements conveys a response to the orientalist discourse. The inability to represent themselves, oppression, and being voiceless are all factors that generate the meaning of orientalist discourse. Thus, to reveal

Changez's opposition to this, he therefore exposes a set of clashes. In the novel, it is obvious that Changez seems offended by similar representation unaccompanied by facts. This is apparent when he was belittling American countries while referring to Indian cities which were thriving into prosperity. By doing so, he further adds that the dispersed ideas of Pakistanis are unaccompanied by truths. This means that the orientalist discourse is only a representation but not a fact. In attempting to clarify the Eastern portrayal, the unknown American remains silent without riposting to Changez's comments. The protagonist says:

We were not the crazed and destitute radicals you see on your television channels but rather saints and poets and-yes-conquering kings. We built the Royal Mosque and the Shalimar Gardens in the city, and we built the Lahore Fort with its mighty walls and wide ramp for our battle-elephants. And we did these things when your country was still a collection of thirteen small colonies, gnawing away at the edge of a continent.⁶²

3.2. Yasmina Khadra's *The African Equation*

Through *The African Equation's* positive portrayal of the Orient, a response to the orientalist discourse is effectively communicated. Hence, it is necessary to challenge the myths and untrue schemes perpetuated against the East and Easterners. Thus, a favourable image of Eastern characters and the continent is provided, as well as reflecting the Westerners' flawed human aspects. By doing so, the hidden side of Africa that lies beyond its wild nature, miserable state, and narrow prejudices is explored. Although African lives revolve around suffering misery, brotherhood, survival and several other aspects remain present in Africans' self portrayal. In the same context, Western characters' prosperity and success do not prevent them from falling to hostility and immoral behaviour. It appears that the novels presentation of similar features violates orientalist discourse's standards. As such, the plot and the characters in *The African Equation* challenge the Western discourse.

Joma's character plays a crucial role in countering the Orientalist discourse of illiterate Orientals. One of the key aspects of orientalist discourse outlined in the novel is the ability to

shape the Orient in an illiterate portrayal. Due to Joma's and his gang's African background, as well as their savage behaviours, Western characters emphasise their inability to be educated and further consider them illiterate and backward. It is evident that the Western characters seem to be adapted to the orientalist discourse. This may be the reason why they never consider the possibility that Africans may be educated. Thereby, the well-educated part of Joma's character is overshadowed. Kurt's and Bruno's startled reactions when they realize Joma was a "genuine poet who is sure to make his mark on the literature,"⁶³ and further "has been awarded the National Prize"⁶⁴ lends support to this argument. Bruno reveals: "That brute was a poet."⁶⁵ This statement is uttered "almost breathlessly,"⁶⁶ which refers to the uncommon state of an African. Kurt also mentions experiencing a similar dazzled reaction upon Joma's educated status, he says: "Again, my limbs froze."⁶⁷ It thus, stands against the narrative about the illiterate Orientals and Africans. Indeed, Khadra's choice to personify Joma as a poet challenges the orientalist discourse. In other terms, the artistic dimension of Joma thus, symbolizes the literate East.

Another example that frames a response to the orientalist discourse in *The African Equation* is the decent human qualities of Africans. At length, an orientalist narrative of savagery and inhumanity is traced through the Western characters' speeches. Although Eastern characters possess diverse personalities, what binds them together is the cruelty constructed by the West. This implies that Kurt, as part of Western societies, is thus restricted to a dominant discourse that accentuates Africa's negatives and exotic features. Africans' existence is therefore reduced to barbaric acts and to a lower race according to what the Westerners' characters claim. However, the revelation of Joma's right hand, Blackmoon, is one of the examples that challenges this orientalist discourse in the novel. He thus recalls a helpful and humanistic act that an Oriental did, he says: "He took care of me."⁶⁸ Since taking care is considered as a generous act, Joma does not lose the values of a human being. This

argument is further strengthened when Blackmoon admits that he is not Joma's son; and yet that does not prevent him from providing help and carefulness. Hence, he carries sympathy and virtue. The preconceived image of every Oriental as being savage and inhumane remains then, as Said refers to it, an idea that "is commonly circulated by it is not 'truth' but representations."⁶⁹ So is the case for Joma; he thus cannot be considered as fully savage just because he belongs to the Eastern area. This further strengthens the response to the Orientalist discourse.

In the same context, Khadra, through laying emphasis upon the orientalist discourse engendered in the West, aims to highlight the Eastern characters' good features. Throughout the novel, Western characters introduce a set of stereotypical images of a violent Africa, which the Eastern characters have rejected. Through Eastern characters' speeches, it is evident that their aim is to challenge the orientalist discourse. They thus, continue to draw attention to the continent's and natives' positive qualities. An example of this is delivered through the captain's speech. Joma is therefore explaining the impact of hard times, after Kurt describes the character's wild nature. He thus affirms how hard experiences and difficult life are major factors that change people and render them offensive, rather than what they consider as an orientalist discourse that shapes an Oriental's identity. In this sense, Said argues: "Knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense it creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his world."⁷⁰ Hence, the Eastern protagonist was leading a peaceful life in the past; however, the course of the events dramatically changes after a bomb exploded his workshop. He thus, shifts from a hard worker to a pirate navigating in African desert. He affirms: "I may have a heart when I was little, today it's calcified. When I put my hand on my chest, all I feel in there is anger. I don't know how to feel sorry for people because nobody ever felt sorry for me."⁷¹ This shows clearly that Joma did not born with innate violence; he was rather affected by everyday miseries. Joma's statement comes to strengthen Victoria

Aveyard: "No one is born evil, just like no one is born alone. They *become* that way, through choice and circumstance."⁷² This indicates that Joma's violence cannot be justified through his Oriental identity, but rather his background. This also strengthens Said's previous statement and indicates how intensely the orientalist discourse dominates the Westerners' prejudiced speeches.

Likewise, Kurt's and Joma's identities shaped through the Occident's and Orient's dichotomy are paradoxical in Khadra's novel. Kurt's and Joma's status play a significant role in challenging the orientalist discourse. The Western character is represented as a peaceful and virtuous person. From the beginning of the novel, his personality is flawlessly shaped; yet, Joma is represented in his wildest forms. These descriptions highlight what Said refers to as "The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal.'"⁷³ It is then, a description given to Joma and Kurt through the Western characters due to the fact that they have power to shape themselves and the Orientals through the orientalist discourse. However, Khadra's latter personification of both characters seems to deviate from the orientalist discourse to form different portrayals. Hence, throughout the novel, Joma appears to be not as wild as the Westerners assert. In the same time, Kurt does not seem as good as they claim.

In this context, in Khadra's novel, the bright side of the Westerners is effectively revealed through Westerners. Hence, the natural side of a human being is further highlighted, that of being fallible in making mistakes. When Joma, Kurt, Blackmoon and Bruno were in the desert, the two Eastern characters were confronted to an atrocious scene, in which it eventually ends with a murder. When Blackmoon was recalling Joma's life, from the death of his lover to the hard life he is living, Joma's reaction went out of control, and he then unconsciously kills Blackmoon. Since the East is notoriously savage, this might seem to be a common scene. Yet, what comes after Blackmoon's murder violates what Said refers to as a

Westerner who is “rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding values, without natural suspicion.”⁷⁴ Indeed, in that burst of anger, Kurt’s rage leads him to take a pistol and shoot Joma. Even Kurt is not conscious of the cruel deed until he saw the blood coming from the body, he says: “It was only then that I discovered a pistol in my hand.”⁷⁵

On the contrary, Joma’s complex life, his wife’s death and several other factors make him choose another path than the good person he was. However, the human good side is still alive deep inside him. This is indeed shown through the good description given to him later in the novel. One can notice that the description of both characters gradually shifts. After being depicted in a negative portrayal, Jomathus becomes good-natured through several actions as opposed to the globalized image the Western characters have inflicted upon him. While Kurt is presented as ethical and virtuous, he thus commits a criminal act. This paradox deviates from the orientalist discourse examined in the Western characters’ speeches; it even seems to oppose it. Therefore, it might be represented as a direct challenge of the orientalist discourse.

The most significant response to the orientalist discourse in Khadra’s novel to be considered is the comparison that lies between the will to live of Africans and the suicidal behaviour of Jessica. On the one hand, regardless of a given love, convenient profession and wholesome life, Jessica, Kurt’s wife, has unethically committed suicide over a work promotion. Kurt says: “I still can’t believe that Jessica could have done something like that. Over a promotion...Just imagine!”⁷⁶ This shows the degree to which the reason of committing suicide is seen absurd. From here, it is evident to mention that the positive portrayal of the Westerners loses its significance through the disvalue of life. On the other hand, throughout the novel, Africans are living in the most miserable conditions regarding poverty, lethal disease and several other factors. Nevertheless, they seem to carry a deeper understanding of life and survival. Kurt claims: “Deep inside these people, there resided an enduring flame that brightened and revived them every the darkness tried to overwhelm them.”⁷⁷ The wicked

portrayal of the East and the virtuous side of the West seem to be controversial through Jessica's suicide and Africans' thriving for survival. Therefore, the comparison of the Eastern and Western perceptions and values of life may lend itself to challenging the Orientalist discourse.

Another example that echoes an opposition to the orientalist discourse is Kurt's envy towards Africans' thriving for survival. Indeed, superiority, maturity and rationality are all important characteristics to shape the Western identity. Kurt is certainly aware of this as claimed previously in the novel. However, latterly, he seems to deviate from the East-West dichotomy to form an aberrant description of Africans' goodness and Westerners' lack of reason. He says: "I envied them, envied the maturity they had gained from so much suffering and so many nightmarish ordeals, their philosophical distance which allowed them to rise above traumas and disasters."⁷⁸ This quote provides diverse concerns of the Western's superiority and maturity. Hence, on the one hand, this state of being envious lowers Kurt's superiority and further renders him inferior. For such, the feeling of envy comes when a person holds characteristics less valuable than what the other possesses. Therefore, possessing similar inferior characteristics let me be sceptic towards Kurt's superiority. On the other hand, Kurt started to consider the glory that stands on the maturity of thriving for survival as opposed to Jessica's immaturity. As mentioned above, although the Westerners claim to be "rational, virtuous, mature"⁷⁹ as opposed to the Easterners, this does not seem the case for Jessica and the Africans. The response to the orientalist discourse lies in this ambiguity to shape the East and the West through what Said refers to as Orientalism. This condition of being mature reflects to Jessica's immaturity for the absurd choice to devalue life and commit suicide. Kurt's comment thus, stands as a relevant argument that opposes the orientalist discourse's claims.

In addition, Bruno's rich knowledge about Africa further encompasses the positive portrayal of the land. Bruno's several revelations about Africa regarding his experiences and miseries remain symbolic. His portrayal stands antagonistic towards how the Orient is depicted through the orientalist discourse. He thus affirms that the land is not moulded in a wrecked image, but rather "Africa is more than the sum of its famines, wars and epidemics."⁸⁰ He further disagrees to shape Africa in wildness and poverty, he says: "I refuse to believe that Africa is nothing but violence and poverty."⁸¹ This explains that Bruno is aware of the gap that stands between the orientalist discourse and Africa's goodness. Hence, he assumes that the land is shaped in a certain manner examined through the Western discourse; however, his opposition to adapt to it as a Western character remains as a reaction to the orientalist depiction.

To conclude, the orientalist discourse has been the focal point in Western characters' speeches. Their reversion to the dominant discourse to shape the Orient and the Oriental leads to a central idea, that is, the Orient depiction may not be reshaped through prosperity or any development that will be further exercised. Therefore, in both Khadra's *The African Equation* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the Western characters engender an orientalist discourse that depicts the two areas in an oppositional portrayal.

In this chapter, I highlighted the orientalist discourse in both *The African Equation* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. I discussed the Western discourse that shapes both the Orient and the Occident. The depiction of the Orient is flawed by the Western characters, who further asset an oppositional saviour image of themselves. Thus, it allows a mirror depiction for Western characters who assume their superiority over the natives. However, opposing such discourse through clashes, explanation and even displaying the true version of the Orient is represented as a response of the Eastern characters. This is shown in both novels with

several characters. It then, affirms Said's idea that the Orient is established through a set of myths and representation.

Endnotes:

- ¹Yang Zhao, “ An Analysis of Knowledge-Power Structure and Orientalism, «*Proceedings of the 2016 2nd International Conference on Economics, Managements Engineering and Education Technology (ICEMEET 2016)*. Vol 98, (2017): 379.
- ²Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978),289.
- ³Ibid.
- ⁴Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 25.
- ⁵Said, *Orientalism*,300.
- ⁶Ibid.,150.
- ⁷Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (United Kingdom: Penguin Random House, 2007),86.
- ⁸Yasmina Khadra, *The African Equation*. Trans. Howard Curtis (Great Britain : Gallic Books, 2015),184.
- ⁹Said, *Orientalism*,20.
- ¹⁰ Khadra, *The African Equation*, 80.
- ¹¹Said, *Orientalism*, 108.
- ¹²Ibid., 289.
- ¹³Khadra, *The African Equation*,125.
- ¹⁴Ibid., 225.
- ¹⁵Ibid.
- ¹⁶Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 9.
- ¹⁷Ibid.
- ¹⁸Said, *Orientalism*,120.
- ¹⁹Khadra, *The African Equation*, 115.
- ²⁰Adiele Eberechukwu Afigbo, *K.O.Dike and The Africann Historical Renascene* (Nigeria : Rada publishers, 1984), 4
- ²¹Khadra, *The African Equation*, 92.
- ²²Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 134.
- ²³Said, *Orientalism*, 177.
- ²⁴Ibid., 281.
- ²⁵Ibid.,107.
- ²⁶Khadra, *The African Equation*, 225.
- ²⁷Ibid., 229.
- ²⁸Ibid.,247.
- ²⁹Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalis*, 3.
- ³⁰Said, *Orientalism*, 272.
- ³¹Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 137.
- ³²Said, *Orientalism*, 260.
- ³³Khadra, *The African Equation*, 187.
- ³⁴Said, *Orientalism 2*.
- ³⁵Ibid.,2.
- ³⁶Ibid.,228.
- ³⁷Edward W Said, *Covering Islam* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997),4.
- ³⁸Rudyard Kipling, *The White Man’s Burden* (London :The Times, 1899).
- ³⁹Khadra, *The African Equation*, 19.
- ⁴⁰Ibid.
- ⁴¹Ibid.,50.
- ⁴²FaithVarol,“Edward Said Vs Michel Foucault: Divergence of Perspectives on Knowledge, Truth and Power.”Vol.72,No.2(2017):319.

- ⁴³Kipling, *The White Man's Burden*.
- ⁴⁴Said, *Orientalism*, 210.
- ⁴⁵Ibid.,36.
- ⁴⁶Khadra, *The African Equation*, 218.
- ⁴⁷Ibid.,210.
- ⁴⁸Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*,16.
- ⁴⁹ FaithVarol,“Edward Said Vs Michel Foucault: Divergence of Perspectives on Knowledge, Truth and Power.”Vol.72, No.2(2017):318.
- ⁵⁰Said, *Orientalism*, 7.
- ⁵¹Khadra, *The African Equation*, 247.
- ⁵² Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 39.
- ⁵³FaithVarol“Edward Said Vs Michel Foucault: Divergence of Perspectives on Knowledge, Truth and Power,”Vol72,No.2(2017):317.
- ⁵⁴Said, *Orientalism*,6.
- ⁵⁵Yang Zhao,“ An Analysis of Knowledge-Power Structure and Orientalism,”*Proceedings of the 2016 2nd International Conference on Economics, Managements Engineering and Education Technology (ICEMEET 2016)*.Vol 98, (2017): 378.
- ⁵⁶Khadra, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 10.
- ⁵⁷Said, *Orientalism*, 307.
- ⁵⁸Ibid.,59.
- ⁵⁹SaadNawrasBaradan, “Re-Visiting Orientalism on the Problem of Speaking for the Orient”(Master’s thesis, Colorado State University,2015),34.
- ⁶⁰Ibid.
- ⁶¹Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, 69.
- ⁶²Ibid.,116.
- ⁶³Khadra, *The African Equation*, 186.
- ⁶⁴Ibid.
- ⁶⁵Ibid.
- ⁶⁶Ibid.
- ⁶⁷Ibid.
- ⁶⁸Ibid.,121.
- ⁶⁹Said, *Orientalism*,121.
- ⁷⁰Ibid.,40.
- ⁷¹Khadra, *The African Equation*, 144.
- ⁷²VictoriaAveyard, *Glass Sword*, (NewYork: HarperTeen, an imprint of HarperCollins, 2016),144.
- ⁷³Said, *Orientalism*, 40.
- ⁷⁴Ibid.,49.
- ⁷⁵Khadra, *The African Equation*, 181.
- ⁷⁶Ibid.,34.
- ⁷⁷Ibid.,256.
- ⁷⁸Ibid.,74.
- ⁷⁹Said, *Orientalism*, 40.
- ⁸⁰Khadra, *The African Equation*, 225.
- ⁸¹Ibid.,319.

V. General Conclusion

Throughout this research paper, I have analyzed Yasmina Khadra's *The African Equation* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* through Edward Said's postcolonial theory. This study allowed me to retrace the issues that lay between the East and the West. Thus, I have drawn upon the concept of Otherness explored by Said. Then, I have explored the orientalist discourse echoed through Western characters and further inspected its opposition delineated through the novels' characters and plot.

This research aimed to demonstrate the way the Eastern characters illustrates Said's theory of "Otherness" in contrast to the Western "Self." *The Reluctant fundamentalist* and *The African Equation* hence, reveal the major characteristics of the Other. By doing so, I highlighted the Eastern characters' attributes, which exemplify the gap that lies between the Occidental and the Oriental. The Other is thus, reflected as being the inferior and savage Oriental while the Western characters are given the positive attributes. Moreover, the two novels prove the importance of geography in shaping the "Other" portrayal. Thus, because of his geographical position, the Easterner is regarded as an Oriental Other. Such antagonism in geography and portrayal lead to the creation of a binary opposition between the East and the West. Hence, this opposition has also an impact on the religion doctrine. An Anti-Islamic ideology held upon the Other is then manifested in the novels and further shown how it bolstered after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. These aspects are all tackled in the two novels and further shown the framed stereotypical representation generated on the Other

The Other's representation is observable in the novels with the Eastern characters. Hence, Changez, Joma, and Moussa are represented as Others who are constantly ill-treated due to their Oriental identity. They are submitted to several discriminatory attitudes from the Western characters. Changez's representation has constantly been linked to his Pakistani identity. In addition, the other characters, Moussa and Joma are claimed to be an Oriental

“Other” due to the violence they exhibit. Hence, Africa and Pakistan remain as a key aspect to shape the characters’ identities, since both areas belong to the imaginative geography stated by Said. Either ways, it is noticeable that the main focus of the novels is to trace the issue of the Other’s representation, and how it widens the gap of the East and the West.

In addition, while the Pakistani author draws the 9/11 attacks and the Algerian author reflects Africans’ sufferings, the novels’ Western characters cover an orientalist attitude towards the Easterners. The Eastern depiction remains flawed while it allows a self-reflective positive portrayal of the Occident. All these images are connected to Foucault’s power and knowledge adopted by Said to draw a subjective discourse in order to misrepresent the Orient, which is outlined through the characters. Thus, the style, the plot, and the characters of the novels uncover the concealed truth of the orientalist discourse.

In this context, the Western characters adopt the orientalist discourse to shape the Orient in a flawed representation. Thus, the main characters of the two novels namely Kurt, Hans, Jim and other American citizens have referred to the East and Easterners as primitive, violent, impoverished and other negative attributes given to them. However, this flawed representation outlined through the characters engenders an orientalist discourse that depicts the West as its positive form. The West is therefore, the saviour, the literate, and the superior. However, contradicting similar representation and showing the true version of the Orient remain crucial to challenge the orientalist discourse. Hence, Said’s idea that the Orient is established through a set of myths is affirmed in the novels. This is mainly shown through the narrative style of Hamid and the portrayals given to the African characters

As literary works, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*’s and *The African Equation*’s postcolonial perspective cannot be limited to Edward Said’s theory developed in *Orientalism*. Thus, my postcolonial study dealt in this dissertation may be broadened to different theories

under the similar perspective. Thus, it would be interesting to use Homi Bhabha's hybrid culture theory or Franz Fanon's dehumanization concept to study the two novels.

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