Representations of the Self and the Western Other in Omani Narrative

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Abstract

This paper aims to cast light on the image of the self and the West in Omani narrative. It will focus on analyzing two novels which are: “Me and the Grandma Neena” (Ana we’ Aljedda Neena) (2015) by Ahmed Alrahbi, and “Eternity Sky” “Sama Alkhulood” (2021) by Talal Alhadrami.

The choice of these novels in this research work is due to two main reasons; the first of which is that the narrators in both novels are Easterners, and they are viewing the West and its civilization. Hence, the depiction of the self and the West structures the main viewpoints in such narrative. Secondly, the major events in both novels took place in Western countries; and this offered very rich and deep connections between the self (East) and the West. Subsequently, I considered these fiction works as ideal samples to investigate the differences between the representations of the self and the Western other in Omani’s writings.

Therefore, this paper attempts to answer some questions such as: what topics were presented regarding the self and the West in some of the Omani fiction in general and in these two novels in particular? How do Alrahbi and Alhadrami imagine the West through their depictions of the Westerners? Was there a balance in the depiction of the self and the West in these two fictions? And at same point: Was there a balance in the depiction of the self and the West's good and bad characteristics? Did these samples present the Eastern characters as equivalent, superior, or inferior to the Westerners? Do the Eastern characters accept/reject the other’s values as a way of life in these two novels? Why do they accept/reject them? Were these two novels successful in their representations of the East-West relationship through the characters? And why?

Keywords: Self, Western, Omani Narrative, Omani writer