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Title

Patriarchy, Oppression and Resistance in A
Thousand Splendid Suns (2007) by Khalid Hosseini

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
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Of master in Anglo-American studies

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Candidate Declaration Form

I, Bekakra Romaissa,

A candidate of Master at the Department of English, Larbi Ben M’hidi University, I do hereby declare that the substance of the dissertation entitled “Patriarchy, Oppression and Resistance in the Novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by Khalid Hosseini” in partial fulfillment of Master Degree in Anglo-American Studies is my own original work, and it has not previously, in its entirety or in part, been submitted at any university.

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to focus on female characters’ long journey of endurance and resistance against violence, illustrating their characteristics in demonstrating their inner strength and abilities being challenged by hard life conditions under patriarchy. Particularly, it aims at explaining how Mariam is depicted as a strong woman who left the world as a brave person; she changed a condition of miserable, dependent and oppressed life to an independent, dignified life, free of oppressive male dominance by her sacrifice. The study attempts to provide an analysis of Khaled Hosseini’s *A Thousand Splendid Suns* from a psychoanalytic feminist perspective.

In the novel, the heroines are the characters who suffered tremendously from sexism and inequity, but in the end they re-emerge as women with dignity and self-confidence. Mariam transforms from a timid girl into an independent woman by the help of Laila and her children Zalmai and Aziza as supporting characters; from a girl who suffers a constant feeling of embarrassment and uselessness, she becomes a woman who has loved and has been loved. Her useless and unintended life can bring peace and comfort for the ones she has loved.

**Keywords:** patriarchy, psychoanalytic feminism, oppression, resistance, endurance, sacrifice.
Résumé

Ce travail de recherche vise mettre l'accent sur les personnages féminins long voyage d'endurance et de résistance à la violence, illustrant leurs caractéristiques en démontrant leurs force intérieure et leurs capacités étant remis en cause par les conditions de vie difficiles sous le patriarcat. En particulier, il vise à expliquer comment Mariam est dépeinte comme une femme forte qui a quitté le monde en tant qu’une personne courageuse; elle a transformée une condition de vie misérable, dépendante et opprimée en une vie indépendante et digne, libérée de la domination oppressive des hommes par son sacrifice. L'étude tente de fournir une analyse des « mille soleils splendides » de Khaled Hosseini dans une perspective féministe psychanalytique.

Dans le roman, les héroïnes sont les personnages qui ont énormément souffert du sexisme et de l'iniquité, mais à la fin elles réapparaissent comme des femmes avec dignité et confiance en elles. Mariam se transforme d'une fille timide en une femme indépendante avec l'aide de Laila et de ses enfants Zalmai et Aziza comme personnages secondaires; d'une fille qui souffre d'un sentiment constant d'embarras et d'inutilité, elle devient une femme qui a aimé et a été aimée. Sa vie inutile et involontaire peut apporter la paix et le confort pour ceux qu'elle a aimés.

Mots clés:

Patriarcat, féminisme psychanalytique, oppression, résistance, endurance, sacrifice.
ملخص

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى التركيز على الشخصيات النسائية ورحلته المحاولة في القدرة على التحمل ومقاومة العنف، وتوضيح خصائصها في إظهار قوتهن الداخلية وقدراتها في مواجهة تحديات ظروف الحياة القاسية في ظل النظام الأبوي. وتهدف على وجه الخصوص إلى شرح كيفية تصوير مريم على أنها امرأة قوية رحلت عن العالم كشخص شجاع. غيرت شروط حياة بائسة، معتمدة ومضطهدة لحياة مستقلة كريمة، خالية من الهيمنة الذكرية الطالمة من خلال تضحياتها. تحاول الدراسة تقديم تحليل ل "ألف شمس رائعة" لخالد حسيني من نظرة نسوي نفسي.

في الرواية، البطالات هم الشخصيات التي عانت بشكل هائل من التمييز الجنسي والظلم، ولكنها في النهاية تعود إلى الوجود كنساء يتمتعون بالكرامة والثقة بالنفس. تتحول مريم من فتاة خجولة إلى امرأة مستقلة بمساعدة ليلي وأطفالها زلمائها وعزيمة كشخصيات داعمة. ومن فتاة تعاني من إحساس دائم بالإحرام وعدم الجدوى، تصبح امرأة تحب وتحب، يمكن لحياة غير مجدية وغير مقصودة أن تجلب السلام والراحة للذين أحبتهما.

الكلمات المفتاحية:
الأديوية، النسوية التحليلية، الفقر، المقاومة، التحمل، التضحية
Dedication

I thank Allah Almighty for the strength and patience he has given me to accomplish this work.

To my caring, supportive and generous parents.
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List of acronyms

ATSS: A Thousand Splendid Suns
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Introduction

Patriarchy, as an idea of female oppression, points to the institutional structure of male domination. Across time and in many ways, Patriarchy has been talked about as an ideology, as the power of the father, as a technique for controlling women's sexuality. Centuries ago, women lived without rights, they were unable even to demand for because men have the upper hand in everything. Women were oppressed and marginalized by men of the family whether the father, the brothers or even the husband. Women’s status was inferior at least for men who were so violent and abusive towards them to the point that led women to be sick psychologically and physically. Despite the fact that patriarchy is a social phenomenon that oppresses women and influences them badly. However, the female characters in the novel are depicted as strong in facing their fears, struggling to find the eternal happiness, and sacrificing in order to make their dears live happily and safe. The power of women has emerged to defy men who marginalized them and made them worthless, in order to get equal rights. These unjust attitudes led to the emergence of the women's movement. Feminist criticism is generally considered as a critique of the patriarchal culture that is the key word in this mémoire.

This study depends on the views and opinions of many writers who tackled the subject of women as subjugated and valueless in Khaled Hosseini’s A Thousand Splendid Suns. Nurul Istikomah, through her "Women’s Attitudes towards Gender Discrimination in Khaled Hosseini’s A Thousand Splendid Suns" tackles the females situation as victims of abuse in a patriarchal society where they were under male’ rules, whom were treating their female partners badly. The abuse females endure is not only emotional but also verbal, physical and even sexual to fit their desires. In addition, Basharat Shameem’s article “Living on the Edge:
Women in Khaled Hosseini’s *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, where he claims that females experience oppression, domestic violence and raping from their severe and violent males whom aim to dominate and control them wanting them to be obedient to their orders and not to ignore their instructions. Moreover, bell hooks in her book *Understanding Patriarchy, The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love*, she defines patriarchy and focusses on its effects and influence on women’s psychology. She states that men are looking at women as powerless, considering themselves as masters and dominate all fields. So that women are not permitted to play any role in the society except being mothers and housekeepers under men’s rule.

Patriarchy, as a central issue in many novels prominently among them is Khaled Hosseini’s novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. In this novel, oppression and violence are very apparent and have lies the importance of displaying the Psychological aspects of the female characters. Although men’s violence has a bad influence on the women’s psyche, here lies the women’s strength to refuse men's oppression and show their violence through many ways. Women have resisted and endured men’s bad behaviours and their shifting moods, the thing that gather and unify them to form a real sisterhood in order to live happily and to sacrifice without being afraid of what is coming after. In this regard, it is relevant to address the following research questions:

1- Who were the ones to put the blame on, behind the psychic problems of female characters?
2- What are the main troubles that faced female characters and made them violent towards their husband?
3- To what extent have women resisted men’s violence and oppression?
4- Where lies the women’s happiness and how can a woman sacrifice herself in order to make others live happily?
The reason behind choosing this topic is to fulfil my personal interests concerning the Afghan-American literature. The significance of this research lies in the deep analysis of women's struggle to pursue their happiness. It also focuses deeply on the feminist criticism and psychoanalysis for interpreting the notion of women's search for the infinite happiness.

This study aims at highlighting the struggle of the female characters in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* for selfhood recognition and the infinite happiness. Moreover, it aims at investigating the impact of patriarchy on the female characters’ life and its role in changing their thinking and feelings. In addition, to see how Khalid Hosseini is depicted his characters throughout the novel and showing patriarchy’s negative effects on females’ psychology, behaviours and thoughts. It is a qualitative analytical study, the approaches that are used in this study are the Feminist Criticism and Psychoanalytic approaches. Feminist and psychoanalytic notions that shape the author’s intellect can be found in the novel.

This research is divided into three chapters. Chapter one is entitled The Impact of Patriarchy on Women, contains two parts. Part one is entitled Patriarchy: Theoretical Background defining what is meant by the term patriarchy and patriarchal society for better understanding the situation of women in that context. Part two is entitled Gender as a Tool of Oppression in Afghan Society, it deals with the impact of persecution towards the Afghan women. It depends on feminism since it provides an overview of understanding the female characters in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. It also tackles the theoretical approaches from which the novel is viewed, that are the Feminist criticism and psychoanalytic approach.

Chapter two is entitled Men’s Violence Vs Women’s Violence, it is divided into two parts. Part one is entitled Men’s Violence, it examines violence as a symbolic form of domination that was exercised on women. In fact it is not a new thing; it existed before centuries when men used all types of violence against women, they were treated rudely and they had been
considered as useless and inferior creatures by their families. Part two is entitled Women’s Violence, it addresses the notion of violence which has been negatively reflected on females, and also generates violence in females.

Chapter three is entitled Woman’s Resistance and Endurance, it is divided into two parts. Part one is entitled Women’s Silence and Obedience, it tackles an analysis of the female characters in the novel, their resistance and endurance to men’s mistreatment and bad deeds. Since males are aggressive towards females, females supposed to be silent and obedient. Part two is entitled Sisterhood and Sacrifice, since female characters are persecuted and subjugated, they stand beside each other, their strength is drawn by unity as they seen as sisters; to the point that each one of them sacrifice herself for the other one’s security and happiness.
Chapter One

The Impact of Patriarchy on Women

Over the years, almost all societies have been patriarchal and characterized by conservatism. Men were the upper hand of all societies, they dominated all fields whereas women were considered just as housekeepers and mothers. Not only that, but also they were treated badly by their fathers, elder brothers and husbands. Women, especially those of Afghanistan, have suffered of being oppressed and subjugated their whole life; they were extremely inferior to men who led them to psychological disorder and depression. That chapter is divided into two sections, the first one includes a theoretical background to patriarchy as a global issue i.e., its aspects and results on women. Moreover, a theoretical background to feminism and psychoanalysis. Whereas, the second section presents gender as a tool of oppression in the Afghan patriarchal society in particular.

I- Patriarchy: Theoretical Background

Etymologically, patriarchy is a term derived from the ancient Greek ‘patriarkhia’ which means the system of society led by fathers or elder males of community. It means ‘rule of the father’. In popular discussions, it is more often used to refer to the rule of men over women. Patriarchy is a word used to describe the society where men are in authority over women in all aspects, and in the society which is characterized by male domination and unequal power relations between both, whereby women are systematically oppressed.
Concerning patriarchy’s foundation, traditionalists do agree that males are born dominant and females are born just to be subordinating. They accept as true that this progression has constantly been found and could continue, and such different regulations of nature cannot be altered. Whereas, others denied that stating that patriarchy is man-made and it is not always native. So, it could be altered. Sultana¹ has already explains claiming that:

…Regarding the existence and origin of patriarchy, traditionalists do believe that men are born to dominate and women to be subordinate. They believe that this hierarchy has always existed and will continue, and like other rules of nature this one too cannot be changed. There are others who challenge these beliefs and say that patriarchy is not natural it is man-made and, therefore, it can be changed. (3)

Patriarchy is a system that advantages men, it essentially mistreats a wide range of females without considering to which class they belong or have a place with; they are abused in various ways socially and mentally. In its largest meaning, patriarchy can also mean that the father dominates not just females within the circle of relatives, but additionally the more youthful guys. The patriarch’s strength derived from his wealth produced and his land’s property. But in maximum instances such a traditionally precise society is not what is meant by the term. Basically, patriarchy theorists based on how to bring a solution to cut women’s oppression, since they live in such a peasant society. To explain that more, German² claims that:

Patriarchy in its broadest meaning can also refer to a specific society for instance; where the father (the “patriarch”) ruled not only the women in the family but also the younger men. The patriarch’s power derived from his possession of the wealth produced, and his ownership of land. But in most cases such an historically specific society is not what is meant by the term.
Even the vaguest of patriarchy theorists can see that we do not live in such a
peasant society today, and their concern is to deal with present day women’s
oppression. (n.p)

Moreover, patriarchy is a framework which urges that men are overruling by heredity,
everybody is considered powerless in front of them. Particularly, women granted with the
privilege to rule, administer and to keep up that predominance through different types of
mental fear and brutality. In that sense, hooks\textsuperscript{3} comes with a significant definition that is:

Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently
dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially
females are endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to
maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and
violence. (\textit{Understanding Patriarchy} 18)

Importantly, patriarchy underscores all aspects of social organization from the family,
tribe, and community. It underpins capitalism, socialism, colonialism, imperialism, education,
legal systems, interpersonal relationships, technology, and the navy. In short, patriarchal
practices and values are familiar and generally tend to talk about each component of life.
Patriarchy is not always a monolithic phenomenon, but refers to many shapes of occurrence
and application of power.

Patriarchy affects the culture, the society, and the family. Its presence can translate to
inequality and gender-based violence, to bear in mind that patriarchy is seen as the main root
of almost all existing problems in the globe, to name a few: war, colonization, rape domestic
violence, terrorism, slavery, and racism. Patriarchy creates violence, it leads men to be violent
and brutal towards their wives and their children. As Tracy\textsuperscript{4} (2007) claims: “Patriarchy is the
ultimate cause of all abuse against women. It has only been in the past few decades that domestic violence has been studied in detail” (576).

The main cause that led to “patriarchy” in one form or another; is the women’s persecution, which is clearly shown in almost all around the world. As a consequence, Saigol argues that:

The most commonly understood meaning of ‘patriarchy’ is male domination, feminists have defined the term more broadly to include all ideas, practices, values, beliefs, norms, institutions, behaviour and attitudes which privilege men over women, as well as all that is considered masculine over all activities and attitudes considered feminine. (7)

That is to say, patriarchal society is characterized by three main characteristics. First, male domination, whereby the responsibility of the country and the family is taken by men: they hold the power over their families and in government. Second, male identification, which stands for the description of masculinity that includes control, strength, rationality, and competitiveness. Third, male centeredness, which meant that men are the centres of activities in a society, all the focus is on them, and they considered as heroes in all situations. In this context, Becker states that:

…in patriarchy men are sexual subjects whereas women are sexual objects and that women’s sexuality exists to please men, because patriarchal heterosexuality it is ‘male dominated, male identified and male centred’. It illustrates and teaches general patriarchal principles. (28)

There are many features of patriarchy that affected women, to mention some of them: firstly, depression, which is more than a feeling, it is a serious illness that affects the person’s mind after facing a lot of difficulties and various bad experiences. Secondly, violence, that is
an aggressive action done by somebody over somebody else; it can be by using all kinds of cruelty such as beating hardly or saying hurting words, violence against women is a key feature of patriarchy. Thirdly, unhappy marriage, where there are a lot of problems between husbands and wives which they cannot resist or solve or even face it. Fourthly, abortion, is when a pregnant woman voluntarily or involuntarily loses the baby because of oppression, it is the end of pregnancy before giving birth to the fetus. Fifthly, resistance, it is an argument of the woman’s re-silence and strength, it means to fight and endure till the end when all things came against her will.

Among a considerable number of ideas produced by contemporary feminist theorists, patriarchy is likely the most abusive phenomenon and in a few regards, the most undertheorized. This situation is not because of disregard, since there is a considerable volume of composing on the question, but instead to the particular states of advancement of contemporary women's activist uses of the term. While radical feminist theory supports an extremely liberal view of female mastery communist women's activists have for the most part limited themselves to examining the connections amongst patriarchy and class under private enterprise

The feminist theory is an extension of feminism into theoretical, literary or philosophical fields. It encompasses work in a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, economics, women’s studies, philosophy and psychoanalysis. It focuses on the promotion of women’s rights and interests. Feminism, in general, it refers to the belief that men and women deserve equality in all opportunities, respect and social rights. Feminists are the people who try to stop social inequality based on gender from going on. In that sense, Mies\textsuperscript{7} views that:
Feminists are those who dare to break the conspiracy of silence about the oppressive, unequal man-woman relationship and who want to change it. But speaking up about this system of male dominance, giving it certain names like ‘sexism’ or ‘patriarchy’, has not reduced the ambivalence mentioned above, but rather intensified and broadened it. (6)

Feminism is a term which describe a political, social or economic movement that aims at setting up women’s equal rights and security. As a movement, it includes political and sociological theories concerned with gender issues. It is a politics directed at changing the existing power relations between women and men in the society. It is started by developing a patriarchal system that states a system characterized by power, dominance and competition. In that context, Virdee defines feminism as:

...an ideology and practice based on actions to change/challenge inequalities based on gender. It is an awareness of patriarchal control, exploitation and oppression at the material and ideological levels of women’s labour, fertility and sexuality, in the family, at the place of work and in society in general, and conscious action by women and men to transform the present situation. (84)

In addition to that, Freedman, a U.S. historian specializing in women's history and feminist studies, comes to define feminism as: “A belief that although women and men are inherently of equal worth, most societies privilege men as a group. As a result, social movements are necessary to achieve political equality between women and men, with the understanding that gender always intersects with other social hierarchies” (n.p).

Women are prevented from earning a true independence, their rights are taken from them, and they cannot have properties even over their own bodies i.e. they violently been raped without any legal intervention (e.g. when a husband rapes his wife, that idea wasn’t confessed
as a law until the 20th century). Since many of these problems increased, women wanted to fight for their rights and liberties to gain equal rights like men have in all fields, they aimed at raising the consciousness and discussing the lack of a collective voice in politics, the workplace, economics, and education. So, they formed groups for these reasons. According to different aspects of the same purpose, feminism is categorized into several types, radical feminism is the type we are going to tackle in that section.

Radical feminism was the cutting edge of the feminist theory from approximately 1967 – 1975. Its name comes from the Latin word ‘radical’, which means ‘root’. The term often refers to the women’s movements which pave the way for other branches of feminism. It believes that the entirely traditional family system is sexist; which meant sexism is rooted deeply in society. So, the only cure for that is getting eliminating the concept of gender definitely. As a form of feminism, it is characterized by an emancipatory standpoint, it calls for a “compensatory reversal in which masculine bias was exposed and women’s theorizing and activities were rescued from obscurity” (Beasley 10).

Radical feminism believes that patriarchy and sexism are the most elemental factors of women’s oppression today. Radical feminists also emphasize the patriarchal roots between men and women and the social dominance of men. In addition, they believe that women can free themselves only when they are away from what they consider as an inherently oppressive and dominating patriarchal system. Besides that, they feel that there is a man based authority that is responsible for oppression and inequality. To support this idea, Walby 11 claims that: “radical feminism is distinguished by its analysis of gender inequality in which men as a group dominate women as a group and are the main beneficiaries of the subordination of women. This system called patriarchy” (3). Feminists require a necessary social change which would emerge from women’s emancipation from the neglect and marginalization of the past.
Feminist theorists’ main focus is on the commitment to end patriarchal domination over women. Because there will be no love, respect or understanding within a family which is based on domination and submission to patriarchal rules. hooks\textsuperscript{12} explains feminism as: “the struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is to benefit solely any specific group of women, any particular race or class of women” (Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre 26).

The psychoanalytic theory is considered as a human mind theory. Sigmund Freud has found it between 1885 and 1939; it continues to be developed by psychoanalysts all over the world. However, it is the theory directed towards the investigation and understanding of how we develop and experience ourselves. In that sense, Aneja\textsuperscript{13} defines psychology as: “a set of concepts and theories, and their related applications, which help us to understand the workings of our conscious and unconscious mind with a view to comprehend why individuals follow certain patterns of behaviour, and exhibit peculiar personality traits” (361).

It has four major areas of application. First, as a theory of how the mind works. Second, as a treatment method for psychic problems. Third, as a method of research and fourth as a way of viewing cultural and social phenomena like literature, art, movies, performances and politics.

Psychoanalysis is very important in treating the features of patriarchy and its effects on women. It provides an understanding of basic processes of sensation, perception, learning and personality along with principles of social psychology. Whereas, feminism is an approach that focuses on the woman herself. The relationship between men and women has always been unequal and oppressive. The extent of inequality and oppressiveness has varied greatly. All known societies have been patriarchal. As a result, all major social institutions such as economy, political system, family and religion have been characterized by male dominance.
A psychoanalytic feminist finds the root of women’s oppression embedded deep in her psyche. It seems when she makes a reaction towards herself and her surroundings. Here lies the importance of psychology that can identify a woman’s mental state deeply. Some feminists see psychoanalysis as useful because it reveals how a patriarchal society oppresses women. In that context, Mciver\textsuperscript{14} states that: “Psychoanalytic feminism is based on Freud and his psychoanalytic theories. However, it maintains that gender is not biological but is centred on the psycho-sexual development of the individual” (3).

As a result, psychology is tightly related to feminism which is not one but many theories and perspectives. Each feminist theory or perspective tries to depict women’s oppression, to demonstrate its reasons and effects also to prescribe strategies for women’s freedom.

The patriarchal family system was constituted and led by a group of male members. So, females were supposed to accept that. It shows male supremacy in every sphere of life even the state level where males learn to be dominating and aggressive while females learn to be obedient and submissive. Because of this gender stereotype women are subjected to more violence. Patriarchy imposes inferiority on women by projecting on them the image of sacrificing and faithfulness to the point that they should be dependent on men since men need to be worshipped as God.

Patriarchy can be reflected in literary works, in writing especially. Writing can be realized in a kind of short story or a novel. The writer’s main focus is on the novel. A novel is a long and complex narrative in literary prose, portraying characters and usually presenting a sequential organization of action and scenes. It also reflects human reality. It can represent a situation, for example politics, culture and social phenomenon. Therefore, the novel can be as
a media or instrument to support the social study. An author makes every effort to direct the reader to the images of reality of life through what is told or existed in the novel.

It is considerable that patriarchy is the main obstacle of females’ advancement, it is hard for a woman to be developed in an authoritarian society. Throughout history, all societies were patriarchal. A patriarchal society can be defined as the one that is led by men who are the decisions makers and hold the positions of power; they are superior. Patriarchal societies are typically more authoritarian. In such societies, women are presented subjugated within a world made by men, and a history defined by men's actions. Particularly, we can take the Afghanistan as a patriarchal society.

II- Gender as a Tool of Oppression in Afghan Society:

Afghanistan is a rural, patriarchal, traditional, and religious society at almost all levels. The Afghan society is consistent in its attitudes toward gender’s principles. It is the implementation of these principles that varies from one group to another, as well as differences in male attitudes toward correct treatment of women. The truth is that women’s treatment in Afghanistan is as different as is it elsewhere. Violence exists highly in Afghanistan more than the other countries, but the rate of violence against women is not known exactly because there are no reliable statistics.

Female characters psychology is tired of being marginalized and inferior by the patriarchal system, which stands only for men ignoring women’s needs and rights, the serious issue that influences them negatively and made them suffer of being alive. In that sense, Philip\footnote{Philip} views that:
Gender equality is the longest war that women have been fighting for a long time. Throughout history, women across the world who have fought for gender equality are considered as feminists. Women in Afghanistan have been going through gender equality issues in its severe form for ages. (791)

The Afghan women’s position is inferior to that of men since long time ago. This position has varied pursuant to age, ethnicity, sociological and cultural standards. The fact that the Afghan women were slaves of their fathers, husbands, fathers-in-law and elder brothers until the beginning of the 20th century. But they were characterised by silence and obedience. According to that, Andrews\textsuperscript{16} comes with the idea that:

Middle-Eastern women, specifically Afghan women, are often misunderstood. Beyond the stereotypical media representations of Afghan women as submissive and in need of liberation, most people outside Afghan society lack knowledge about these women. Much of the challenge stems from hearing repugnant stories about infants and female teenagers being married to elderly men, or seeing offensive images of abused women covered from head-to-foot with the traditional burqa. (5)

The essence of mentality towards women could be unmistakably found in the relationship of the family after the introduction of a female child. Such a birth was considered and judged as an unsavoury occasion, and tragic for the whole family forgetting that they are raised to be great moms and tolerant housewives.

Additionally, their fathers do not give careful consideration to their education. They were married to youthful and even to exceptionally old men. That is to say, young women have no privilege to pick their future spouses, or question their engagement, which is organized by their fathers or elder brothers. Early marriage was the primary driver of anguish for young
women in Afghan culture. Such relational unions were both physically and mentally undesirable. Numerous youthful moms passed on amid conveyance in view of physiological reasons and early parenthood. Separation was a simple demonstration if the spouse needed it. Afghan ladies did not have the privilege to request divorce. Incidentally, spouses were denied of their rights. Women in Afghanistan have undoubtedly suffered in the years their country was subjected to Taliban rule.

…Women were forbidden from going to mosques, schools and the market – all places considered the male public sphere, pregnant with dangers of mixture with unfamiliar men and the possibility of contact with men belonging to the enemy ethnic group. Women were further ordered to give all outside work to men, refrain from learning History, Geography and English, avoid being social and to stay away from learning to read and write… (Saigol 1)

Women and children are the most victimized; patriarchy has influenced them by experiencing all sorts of domestic violence on them. Women haven’t the access and the control of a much smaller share of the social product compared to men, being prevented from fully engaging in certain forms of work. They are socialized to do the emotional, nurturing, and caring work of reproducing society. This can mean doing disproportionate amounts of household work, as well as the work of raising children, caring for elders and maintaining relationships. Saigol (2002) concludes that:

The most consistently observable effects of patriarchy across time periods and cultures have been the denigration of women, reduction of women to lesser status as citizens, subordination of women to male authority in both the public and private spheres, and the devaluation of all that is considered feminine. Another universal effect of patriarchal practices and norms has been unbridled violence against women at home and in the outside world, accompanied by
greater controls over women’s activities, movements, expression and freedom. Most patriarchal thought and practice regards women’s role as limited to that of biological reproduction and service to household members within the confines of the home. Thus while patriarchies may differ in the ways and forms in which women are subordinated, controlled or treated, the aims and effects of patriarchal practice tend to be fairly consistent across time and space. (ibid 7)

In literature, many feminists have tackled the subject of patriarchy as an issue that exists in all over world and as a main threat to women’s security and happiness. Amongst them, the brilliant Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini.

Khaled Hosseini who is an American novelist and physician of Afghan origin was born on March 4, 1965 in Kabul, Afghanistan. He is the elder one of five children. When Khaled Hosseini is still a child, he read a great deal of Persian poetry. His father is a diplomat with the Afghan Foreign Ministry and his mother teaches Farsi and History at a high school in Kabul, Afghanistan. The boyhood home of Khaled Hosseini was Kabul. Khaled Hosseini has written several works, such as the Kite Runner which published in 2003, The Mountains Echoed which published in 2013. Prominently, amongst them his bestselling novel which is entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was published in 2007 by the Afghanistan-American writer Khalid Hosseini. Mariam is the main character in the novel which tells Mariam’s tragic life starting from her age of five to her death. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* an incredible chronicle of Afghan history during the Soviet invasion and the Civil war under Taliban dictatorship. It has four parts and fifty-one chapters, telling how women have struggled in the
patriarchal institution of the family, society, and the state. Almost all the women characters in the novel undergo long-suffering and try to endure it to the maximum level.

To conclude, issues of equality and difference between both genders have been discussed many times throughout history. Defenders of women’s rights see that females are subordinate and always oppressed by the patriarchal system. Women experienced many difficulties in the past and in many cases still do. That was discussed by many feminists amongst them the Afghan American physician and author Khaled Hosseini in his bestselling novel A Thousand Splendid Suns.
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Men’s Violence Vs Women’s Violence

Throughout history, men are considered as the most powerful and dominant humans in the globe. They were treating their wives in the worst ways using several means of violence; they abused them without clemency forgetting that they have rights as all human beings. Men were violent, so women reacted violently too as a way to present themselves and to take revenge. Such subjects were discussed by many feminists amongst them the Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini, who demonstrates all that in his bestselling novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part is about men’s violence, which is clearly shown in the novel, and the second part is about women’s violence, which is brought by the men’s violence, since men are so violent towards their women. So, women rebel against their men as a revenge and a reaction to their brutality and oppression.

Khaled Hosseini is an American writer and doctor of Afghan origins. He was born on March 4, 1965 in Kabul, Afghanistan. He is the oldest one in five kids. When he was young, he read a lot of Persian verse which influenced him. His dad is a representative with the Afghan Foreign Ministry and his mom teaches Farsi and History at a secondary school in Kabul. Kabul, Afghanistan is the childhood home of Khaled Hosseini.

In the mid 1970’s, Hosseini’s family moves to Tehran, Iran when his dad is allocated to a conciliatory post at the Afghan Embassy in Iran. They return home to Kabul in 1973. In 1976 his family moves to Paris, France, where his dad is a representative at the Afghan Embassy.
They returned home to Afghanistan again in 1980, when the Russians attacked his nation. His dad is reviewed home after the invasion, yet then he chooses to request political shelter in the United States and gets it. In September 1980, Hosseini’s family moves to San Jose, California. Hosseini moves on from secondary school in 1984 and proceeds with his learning at Santa Clara University where he acquired a bachelor’s degree in Biology in 1988. The next year, he enters the University of California-San Diego’s School of Medicine, where he gained a Medical Degree in 1993. While in medicinal practice, Hosseini starts composing novel on March, 2001. His first novel, “The Kite Runner” that was distributed initially in 2003, distributed in 48 nations. After over 189 weeks, Khaled Hosseini comes back with a delightful and frequenting novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* that is distributed initially on May 2007.

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* is an extraordinary novel. It is originally published on May 22, 2007, by Riverhead Books _a member of Penguin Group (USA). The original language of the book is English. The novel consists of 51 chapters and 219 pages. The phrase “*A Thousand Splendid Suns*” itself is taken from a poem by Saib-e-Tabrizi. It was inspired by a trip to Kabul, Afghanistan, the author’s place of birth in 2003. The story portrays the lives of two Afghan ladies, their families, fellowships, and hopes later on, set against the scenery of three decades of political strife. The novel covers the Soviet Union invasion, Mujahidin, the ascent of the Taliban, and post-Taliban endeavours to modify the nation and United States of America. Hosseini uses straightforward dialect to recount an unfortunately expressive story of an improbable companionship and love.

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* is separated into four sections. The first part concentrates on Mariam, the second and fourth parts concentrate on Laila, and the third part switches centre amongst Mariam and Laila with every section. Mariam and Laila vary in age, ethnicity, instruction, and social class. The two ladies had unique encounters of youth and show very
extraordinary abilities to identify with others and even to life. It receives enthusiastic reception from the readers, either good or bad response, for example as below:

Spectacular, Hosseini’s writing makes our hearts ache, our stomachs clench and our emotions reel […] Hosseini mixes the experiences of these women with imagined scenarios to create a fascinating microcosm of Afghan family life. He shows us the interior lives of the anonymous women living beneath identity-diminishing burqas […] Hosseini writes in gorgeous and stirring language of the natural beauty and colourful cultural heritage of his native Afghanistan. Hosseini tells this saddest of stories in achingly beautiful prose through stunningly heroic characters whose spirits somehow grasp the dimmest rays of hope. —USA Today¹

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* is one of the most interesting books that are made by Khaled Hosseini. He makes the story in the novel alive, similar to the marvel that happens as a general rule. The effective and graceful novel investigates sexuality and the state of Muslim women in Afghanistan. It is got by the genuine condition in the public and the encounters of the creator himself. The issue of patriarchy points of view contained in the novel. It is one of which is appeared through Mariam figures as a female who has been driven by sadness into the darkest corner.

Mariam is the illegitimate daughter of Nana and Jalil. She lives in a kolba on the edges of Herat with her mom. Jalil is a wealthy man who lives nearby with three spouses and a few children. However, Jalil visits her every Thursday narrating her events that never happened; about taking her to the green wheat fields and so on. In her fifteenth birthday he promises to
take to the theatre, but he doesn’t come, Mariam waits for him all the day. And since she is curious about jalil’s house and her siblings, she wants to go. Nana doesn’t allow her.

However, she goes when she comes; Jalil refuses to see her, lastly she ends up mulling over his veranda. In the morning, she returns home finding her mom has hanged herself because Mariam has disappointed her. Then, Mariam is taken to live in her father’s house. Jalil requests her to wed with Rasheed, a shoemaker from Kabul who is about almost forty years old. Which means a quarter century older than Mariam. In their marriage, Mariam becomes pregnant until seven times, yet she is never able to have a kid, so it makes Rasheed turns out to be more harsh and abusive.

In the same neighbourhood, live a girl named Laila and a boy named Tariq, who are dear companions. In that time, war comes to Afghanistan and Kabul is attacked by rocket assaults. Tariq’s family chooses to leave the city, however Laila and Tariq end with having intercourse. Laila’s family additionally chooses to leave Kabul, yet when they are packing a rocket destroys the house, kills her parents, and harms Laila seriously. Laila is taken care by Rasheed and Mariam. In the wake of recouping from her wounds, Laila get pregnant with Tariq’s child, nobody knows it. Rasheed says that Tariq is dead and request Laila to wed with him.

Specifically, Rasheed has the second spouse, and wants to have a child with her. Laila gives birth to a baby girl named Aziza. Rasheed hates having a girl. He is disappointed and suspicious even he turns out to be more damaging to Laila. Mariam and Laila in the long run turn out to be closest companions. They plan to flee from Rasheed and leave Kabul. Sadly, they are gotten by police at the transport station, and they are conveyed to return again in their home. After arriving their home, Rasheed beats them. A few years after, Laila gives birth to a child named Zalmai.
The Taliban has ascended to power, making conditions in Kabul wind up noticeably poorer. Rasheed’s workshop is bankrupt. One day, Tariq appears outside the house. He and Laila are met, when Rasheed returns home from work, Zalmay informs his dad regarding Tariq. Rasheed is exceptionally upset, he beats Laila and all of a sudden Mariam kills Rasheed with a shovel. Mariam request Laila to leave Kabul, and go to Pakistan with Tariq and Mariam herself goes to the police. Laila doesn’t want, yet at last she does it. At the end, after Taliban is not in Afghanistan, Laila and Tariq returned to their homeland to help to rebuild Afghanistan.

Violence is a symbolic form of domination that was exercised on women. In fact, it is not a new thing, for centuries women are treated rudely, and they had been considered as useless and inferior creatures by their families and society. Violence against women is additionally apparent of verifiably unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over women by men. Violence is an intersectional and regularly unexposed issue that restricts innumerable women's lives internationally, which is a key feature of patriarchy that affects women mentally, emotionally, physically, sexually, in the past, present and future. It must be realized that violence and abuse greatly affect women and their lives, futures, abilities, dreams and actions. A Thousand Splendid Suns fictionally yet realistically portrays the lives of two Afghan ladies and their consistent battles inside the male-ruled society of Kabul in Afghanistan. Laila and Mariam are both the spouses of the considerably more established and extremely rough Rasheed, who extremely manhandle them and their children physically, sexually, and verbally.
Khalid Hosseini, as a feminist, his novel is based on the Afghan women’s nature. He attentively reveals Mariam and Laila’s discrimination and struggles which they face, as they are living in a really severe time for Afghan women’s rights. He displays his tremendous concentration across Afghanistan i.e. his motherland, by portraying all what matters, either in the past, the present or the future, specifically *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, where he seeks to reflect excessively the facts, and his planning of female’s struggles particularly in Afghanistan. In that sense, Serir clarifies her view saying:

By using feminist and womanhood perspectives, Hosseini could successfully reflect the real image of the Afghan women, as he sheds light on the discrimination and victimization of women by patriarchal lifestyle imposed in the society. As the oppression predominated in the entire novel, Nana, Mariam, Laila and Aziza are typical examples which represent the bad treatment and show the abuses and the seizures faced by the Afghan women which are demonstrated by Hosseini in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. (34)

I- Men’s Violence:

Violence may appear in many sorts and faces which harm both genders emotionally and psychologically, like it is depicted in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Suffering of the protagonist Mariam from childhood till the adulthood is very apparent all over the novel. At first, she always hears her mother Nana saying: “You are a clumsy little harami. This is my reward for everything I've endured An heirloom-breaking, clumsy little harami” (Hosseini3 3). At first, she doesn’t recognize that the word ‘harami’ means but after realizing the real meaning – an illegitimate girl_ that hurts Mariam emotionally and makes her feeling sorry of herself. In that context, Yawari states: “Nana loves Mariam, in a crude way, but speaks bitterly to her,
making plain that she was an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to
the things other people had, things such as love, family, home, acceptance” (13).

In that quote Yawari clarifies more how much Nana cares about her daughter and even though
she talks with her harshly, but she loves her anyway and doesn’t want her to experience bitter
experiences like she has been experienced through her life, such as letting her lonely after
taking her honour; the most precious thing she has by the man she has loved and trusted.

Lying is considered as a form of emotional and verbal abuse. It often precedes violence
and since it is hard to recognize, Mariam didn’t recognize her father’s lies about the stories he
narrates about taking her to the green wheat fields of Herat and to the tree of pistachio. Which
lets Nana saying: “Rich man telling rich lies. He never took you to any tree. And don't let him
charm you. He betrayed us, your beloved father. He cast us out. He cast us out of his big
fancy house like we were nothing to him. He did it happily” (Hosseini 5). To make Mariam
understands that he left her, and lying on her, but since Mariam loves her father fondly she
doesn’t believe Nana anyway. As Yawari says:

Mariam during her childhood always doubted Nana’s sayings. She thought that
Nana doesn’t want her good because she didn’t let her even talk about going
with her father. Nana always said that don’t believe Jalil, he is lying and he
won’t let you live with his family. But Mariam could not believe that unless
she saw everything Jalil did to her by her eyes. Jalil sold her to a shoe maker
from Kabul, with whom she experiences very hard days in her life. (107)

Men abuse and humiliate women without paying attention to their feelings. Nana, in
advising and preparing Mariam to expect nothing but abuse from men, since She was rejected
and seduced by Jalil and abandoned by her father. Nana says: “Learn this now and learn it
well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always
finds a woman. Always. You remember that, Mariam” (Hosseini 6). Women are abandoned, marginalised and valueless for men, as it is shown in the novel notably when Nana wants to make Mariam understands that she is valueless for Jalil, saying:

What a stupid girl you are! You think you matter to him, that you're wanted in his house? You think you're a daughter to him? That he's going to take you in?

Let me tell you something- A man's heart is a wretched, wretched thing, Mariam. It isn't like a mother's womb. It won't bleed, it won't stretch to make room for you. I'm the only one who loves you. I'm all you have in this world, Mariam, and when I'm gone you'll have nothing. You'll have nothing. You are nothing! (ibid 17)

The freedom of women in Afghanistan is killed by violent attitudes that are apparent in the novel clearly, like taking decisions instead of you, decisions of your life, happiness and destiny; without permitting you even to complain or to let you decide what makes you feel happy; there is no right to survive as you wish; that is the case of Mariam in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Jalil and his wives organize an arranged marriage against Mariam’s will to a friend of her father named Rasheed, a shoemaker lives in Kabul, whose wife was died before ten years during childbirth and his son sunk in a lake since three years; he is older than her about twenty five years. They have already decided what to do for her, saying: “You can't spend the rest of your life here, don't you want a family of your own? Yes. A home, children of your own? You have to move on” (ibid 29). When hearing such bitter words, Mariam is extremely upset, she feels that she is unwelcomed in her father’s house and that all want to get rid of her anyway. That makes her psychologically tired of being illegitimate telling her father: “I thought about you all the time. I used to pray that you'd live to be a hundred years old. I didn't know. I didn't know that you were ashamed of me” (ibid 33).
A Thousand Splendid Suns Contains patriarchal perspectives, one of them is shown through Mariam’s figure as a woman who has been driven by despair into the darkest corner. A significant example of the patriarchal culture is seen in that quote: “…Yes. But I've seen nine-year-old girls given to men twenty years older than your suitor, Mariam. We all have. What are you, fifteen? That's a good, solid marrying age for a girl” (ibid 28). It shows that the Afghan girl cannot get a formal education, she is supposed to marry at the age of fifteen.

Rape is a serious issue that can harm the female’s psychology strongly, it is considered as the worst and ugliest type of violence which males do over females. Men treat their wives toughly and violently especially in their sexual desires, this appears bitterly in ATSS. Hosseini states: “His hand was on her right breast now, squeezing it hard through the blouse […] the pain was sudden and astonishing. Her eyes sprang open. She sucked air through her teeth and bit on the knuckle of her thumb” (44).

By that, Hosseini sheds light on how Mariam feels and thinks when Rasheed is forcing her to have sex with him, at that point, she cannot defend herself. As she is being raped in an early age affects her negatively, makes her experience that bad feeling of a fragmented body and thoughts of being possessed by her victimizer; feeling of losing herself, her life and her dignity. In supporting that idea, Yawari declares that: “women are regarded as commodities and properties of men; they are not seen as honourable wives or mothers but simply viewed as reproduction machines […] not as loving caring individuals” (95).

Mariam becomes pregnant almost seven times but unfortunately in every time she becomes pregnant; she loses the fetus. She is unable to be a mother which makes Rasheed so violent, he is emotionally a cold man and actively abusive towards her; beating her without mercy. Which affects her both physically and psychologically. In that sense, Yawari comes to support that idea by saying: “As it becomes increasingly clear that she will be unable to bear him
children, his coarseness slips over into contempt and brutality” (14). Rasheed’s is a brutal man, his brutality lies in Hosseini’s quote stating:

It wasn't easy tolerating him talking this way to her, to bear his scorn, his ridicule, his insults, his walking past her like she was nothing but a house cat. But after four years of marriage, Mariam saw clearly how much a woman could tolerate when she was afraid. And Mariam was afraid. She lived in fear of his shifting moods, his volatile temperament, his insistence on steering even mundane exchanges down a confrontational path that, on occasion, he would resolve with punches, slaps, kicks, and sometimes try to make amends for with polluted apologies and sometimes not. (55)

Here, we can see another type of violence, an emotional violence, which is ‘fear.’ In ATSS, that distressing feeling is so clear in the protagonist Mariam’s attitudes, because of her husband’s shifting moods, she feels afraid of saying anything or defending herself fearing of the consequences especially, that he is being cruel and savage man.

The physical and the psychological violence are shown through Rasheed’s attitudes towards Mariam. As Hosseini says: “His powerful hands clasped her jaw. He shoved two fingers into her mouth and pried it open, then forced the cold, hard pebbles into it. Mariam struggled against him, mumbling, but he kept pushing the pebbles in, his upper lip curled in a sneer. "Now chew," he said” (59). Here Rasheed’s mistreating over Mariam is very apparent when she cooks rice for him and he doesn’t like her cooking anyway.

Moving to Laila, Rasheed’s second wife who was in a love relationship with Tariq, her closest friend from the childhood. When the Taliban rises to power, Fariba, Laila’s mother, has lost her two sons who participated in the war. Tariq and his family left Kabul but before leaving; Laila and Tariq have a forbidden sexual relationship. Fariba doesn’t want to leave the
land her sons have died for but when she is convinced to leave Kabul, her house is bombarded and dies with her husband Hakim. Laila loses her parents and stays alone and lonely. So, Rasheed lies on her telling that Tariq has died during an explosion, and he asks her for marriage but she doesn’t know what to do except accepting his demand.

Mariam, from her childhood till now is considered as a victim of emotional abuse. When she is growing up with Nana in a Kolba, she is called a ‘Harami’. This psychological abuse follows Mariam throughout her life, since she is an illegitimate child, Rasheed informs Laila of Mariam’s status when comparing their backgrounds during a dinner scene. He says: “…have you told her, Mariam, have you told her that you are a Harami” (ibid 118). By saying that, he emotionally degrades her. Every time he intends to use it in context, it acts as reminder to her for her real status. Mariam’s early emotional abuse at the hands of her mother and indirectly at the hands of her father by way of being forced into a marriage, unfortunately continues in her marriage to Rasheed who is an emotionally cruel person.

Then, a physical and a verbal violence appear again, it is shown in ATSS later when Laila and Mariam try to run away from their hostile life, Rasheed beats them both while verbally mistreating them. One powerful thing he says to Laila:

…You try this again and I will find you. I swear on the prophet’s name that I will find you. And when I do, there isn’t a court in this godforsaken country that will hold me accountable for what I will do. To Mariam first, then to her, and you last. I’ll make you watch. You understand me? I’ll make you watch.

(ibid 142)

According to Shapiro⁵, there are more forms of violence that lay on. Firstly, “educational oppression which lies on Mariam who is never permitted to go to school, and because home schooling is not permitted teaching must be done in secret.” Secondly, “male domination
which treats Mariam, Laila and Aziza as second-class citizens because of their gender.”

Thirdly, “physical and mental abuse is clearly shown when Rasheed savagely beats Mariam and Laila because they are forced to suffer the consequences of being born as an inferior gender.” Fourthly, “Sexual abuse which is very apparent in ATSS, the two heroines of the novel are forced to have sex with Rasheed.” Fifthly, “body coverings because women are not permitted to show their faces and must obey the restriction that they are not allowed to go outside the home without permission” (44).

Once again, a verbal violence is horribly clear in ATSS. To demonstrate how Rasheed is the dominant force in the family. He uses intimidation and death threats including Aziza’s life. So that, the two women remain under his control. As Hosseini says:

He looked down at the ground, noticed Aziza at his feet. ‘Get off my heels!’ he snapped, making a shooing motion with his gun. ‘Stop following me! And you can stop twirling your wrists like that. I’m not picking you up. Go on! Go on before you get stepped on.’ (133)

The female characters, Laila, Mariam and Aziza are victims of abuse in a patriarchal society where they were under Rasheed’s rule. The abuse they endure is not only emotional but also verbal, physical, and even sexual. In this sense, Istikomah⁶ states:

Just like Mariam, Laila experiences the same way about her sexual life. Rasheed always forces himself upon her so that for Laila, sexual intercourse is merely a duty done of necessity. After Laila gives birth to her first child, Aziza, the doctor forbids her to have sex in six weeks. Yet, before the time, Rasheed forces her to serve his sexual desire. Ironically, he blames Mariam for Laila’s denying and flogs her using his belt. Seeing Mariam is being tortured, Laila has no choice but doing what Rasheed wants. (70)
Both Mariam and Laila experience oppression, domestic violence and raping, Rasheed was so severe and violent towards them. He ordered Mariam and Laila to wear burqa, not to talk with strangers and not to go out without informing him; claiming that he wishes to protect them, but in reality he aims to dominate and control them wanting them to be obedient to his orders and not to ignore his instructions. As Shameem\textsuperscript{7} states:

Rasheed orders Mariam to wear burqa and avoid strangers, even their family, friends and guests. Mariam is not used to wear a burqa and finds it very suffocating. But she has to do so; Rasheed told her that she will get used to it. Later on, he gives the same instructions to his second wife Laila. Rasheed falsely pretends of protecting their “honour” and “integrity” while indulging in limitless cruelty of abusing and beating them regularly. (63)

Women are always seen and described as inferior, submissive and victimized according to the male dominant society. That lies in Hosseini’s ATSS, when the judge hears Mariam’s case, he expresses the belief of the Taliban that women are inferior to men by saying: “God has made us differently, you women and us men. Our brains are different. You are not able to think like we can. Western doctors and their science have proven this. This is why we require only one male witness but two female ones” (191).

II- Women’s Violence:

Since women are the victims of male’s oppression and brutality, they want to do something to release themselves from pain. So, they rebel against man after resisting and enduring all aspects of male violence. As Meiyono\textsuperscript{8} states:

Nana, Mariam and Laila represented the women’s rebellion. Through the characters and their characterizations, Hosseini represents how the women are
Mariam is a harami, an illegal daughter of Jalil. This fact made her occupied the lowest position in the society. The last character, Laila, represents the middle class position. She is an educated woman who realizes that the woman should get equality in the society.

Through the profiles, Hosseini talks of the rebellion and its indicators. Further, any finding based on *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel will be abridged into ATSS in order to make it easy in understanding the data source. (6)

The difference between Mariam and Laila lies on the social class and education. Laila is an educated woman from the middle class. Whereas, Mariam is uneducated woman from the lower class, since she is an illegitimate, and her mother Nana doesn’t allow her to study.

“Unlike Mariam, Laila speaks out when she can’t resist the extreme unjustified treatment of man towards her, and try to make them notice the wrong judgment they make” (Yawari 107).

In that context, Laila, to impose her opinion as an intellectual woman, she dares to say:

“‘They can’t make half of the population stay home and do nothing’, ‘why not?’ Says Rasheed. ‘This isn’t some village. This is Kabul, women here used to practice law and medicine; they held office in the government’, says Laila” (Hosseini 144).

In addition, Silima claims that: “the specific lives of Mariam and Laila give an insight into the various forms of suppression which these women are subjected to, at the mercy of their male counterparts” (457). All that affects female characters psychology and destroyed them internally, but after all Rasheed’s violent actions; come their turn to react against him and his abusive deeds.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, since Laila is an educated woman she knows about all women’s rights. She is an independent woman who hates to be restricted or controlled by someone, she just wants to be free refusing all kinds of violence and brutality. As Kusnadi
mentions: “Laila’s character who refuses the oppression, violence and also discrimination against women struggles against the oppression. It was described when she was caught by officers who want to send her back to her husband. Laila criticizes about the right inequality between man and woman” (39).

In addition to that, courage is another form of resistance. As Kusnadi states: “Laila fought against her husband and the patriarchal system, Laila’s courage to make decision by leaving her husband can be said as her success to be free from the patriarchal system and reflection of the concept of feminism” (ibid 44). Moreover, Female characters want to make something against men’s abusive actions, by standing in front of their fears and obstacles because they want to face them hardly in order not to remain weak again. To support her idea, Kusnadi claims again: “Rasheed lost his patient and slap Laila, but she hit him back on his head. This is the first time to hit someone, and she realizes that she is smiling without any afraid. Laila smile widely when Rasheed goes out directly. This is a symbolic strive against man’s oppression” (ibid 42).

Since Mariam is uneducated, she is submissive and obedient to all the orders and instructions given by Rasheed. Whereas, Laila is totally different. She wonders, argues and if possible she sometimes becomes aggressive and violent over Rasheed. As Hosseini represents: “Then a flurry of hurried footsteps in the hallway before Mariam and the children were in the living room, their eyes shifting from her to Rasheed and back. Then Laila punched him” (154). Here Laila’s violence is clearly shown amongst her husband.

Mariam’s violence lies in her rebellion against Rasheed by killing him by a shovel. It seems to her that this is the right thing that she is doing and it was an obligation to do that before however.
And so Mariam raised the shovel high, raised it as high as she could, arching it so it touched the small of her back. She turned it so the sharp edge was vertical, and, as she did, it occurred to her that this was the first time that she was deciding the course of her own life, and with that, Mariam brought down the shovel. This time, she gave it everything she had. (ibid 183)

As the two protagonists i.e. Mariam and Laila suffer a lot from almost all types of oppression and violence caused by the cruel husband Rasheed and the brutal male dominance as a whole. Yawari marvels by Mariam’s reaction saying: “…Especially Mariam re-emerges as a brave and dignified woman. Mariam’s transformation from a silent, submitted and obedient woman into a brave and independent woman highlights that it’s with women to learn from the hard days…” (94).

As a conclusion, one might say that women have repeatedly stressed by men’s domination and invasions which have always negatively impacted their identity and their struggle for rights and equality.

In a nutshell, the female characters in Khaled Hosseini’s A Thousand Splendid Suns endure a severe violence that affects their psychology and leads to an equivalent violence. In other words, male violence brings about female violence.
Endnotes:


8 Meiyono, Pitoyo. *Women’s Rebellion in Khaled Hosseini’s A Thousand Splendid*


Chapter Three

**Woman’s Resistance and Endurance**

The Afghan women have suffered a lot for being marginalized, inferior and useless in a society of men. Despite their characterization as voiceless victims of war, violence and oppression, women are silent, endured, resistant and obedient. That case is demonstrated in Khaled Hosseini’s *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The two protagonists of the novel, Mariam and Laila, being under one roof sisterhood and love have gathered, to the point that each one of them can sacrifice her happiness for the other so that make her living a happy, a peaceful and a secured life. This chapter is divided into two parts, the first part is about women’s silence and obedience to men’s oppression, shifting moods and violence. Whereas, the second part is about sisterhood, harmony and love which unified women. Also, the sacrifices which women do in order to keep their beloved in security and living a happy life.

The novel unveils the dark face of the patriarchal society through the obstacles faced by the illegitimate girl. In an Afghan society, man enjoys using authority over a woman and she supposes to be obedient to his orders, but if she does not obey, he can go through beatings, murder, and humiliation. Mariam and Laila, the two female protagonists of the novel, suffer continuous victimization, and oppression because they want to provide a better life for the children Aziza and Zalmai who give both the power to resist and endure. Women in Afghanistan have been facing gender discrimination for generations. Which has become a norm of their culture and society. Through the character of Mariam and Laila, the writer raises the issue of feminism and gender inequality.
I-  Silence and Obedience:

It is a long journey of endurance and resistance against oppression and loss of identity of Mariam, being an illegitimate daughter of a wealthy man, Jalil. Throughout her whole life, Mariam suffers oppression and victimization. She experiences conflicts and challenges when she tries to fit into the society’s tasks and search for her identity and recognition at the same time. Since she is an unwanted child, at least for Jalil. She is presented as a subaltern, an inferior woman from the lower class who is deprived of her rights, and the opportunity to have an education, she is just damned to live a life without choices. Mariam is like many women in Afghanistan go through similar experiences when they are forced to marry at a young age. So, being strong is the only option they have. According to Silima¹:

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* describes the struggle of the women to escape subordination imposed upon them by the society and culture of Afghanistan. It shows how these women are caught in the net of different political factions and cultural standards and how the clashes between them have devastating effects on their lives. (457)

As female characters in the novel are living in a patriarchal society. They search for the meaning of life and want to find their lost identity. As Gordan² states: “A Thousand Splendid Suns provides problems of struggle of Afghan females to find their own self-identity, revealed from the picture identified by patriarchal components and principles” (1).

Because Nana doesn’t value education, when she knows that Mariam wishes to go to school, she responds by saying: “What's the sense schooling a girl like you? It's like shining a spittoon. And you'll learn nothing of value in those schools. There is only one, only one skill a woman like you and me need in life, and they don't teach it in school. Look at me […] only
one skill and it's this: *tahamul. Endure*” (Hosseini\(^3\) 12). In supporting that quote, “Mariam can endure to face those facts. She always remembers what Nana’s advice for her as the woman; endure” (Meiyono\(^4\) 8). Mariam Indeed endures much suffering in her whole life, but later on she learns the transcending quality of love.

Female characters in Hosseini’s *A Thousand Splendid Suns* draw their strength from each other. Such as Nana, she resists all her sufferings; she endures people’s look because of losing her honour and bringing shame to her family, then by being abandoned by her family, relatives and her loved ones in the most difficult situations she had been through. Although, all the troubles that she was being through. But the bright side is when turning back and seeing her beloved daughter feels her and stands beside her. Nana gets her strength from Mariam. According to Singh\(^5\):

Nana finds strength from her daughter Mariam, and Mariam finds an admirer when she arrives in a Taliban controlled prison. The novel thus suggests that women have a strong ability to find strength and support in one another. Mariam never would have gained the strength to fight Rasheed if she had not gained confidence and love from Laila. (4)

Jalil is not fair concerning Mariam; he doesn’t provide her a real, and a happy life like that of her sisters, this is clearly shown when her sisters attend schools and plan to join universities. Whereas, Mariam is alone with her mother, far away from her father and her siblings without attending school, acceptance or even getting a real care. But unfortunately she has not the right even to demand or complain because of her illegitimacy. As Hosseini says: “Mariam was an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people had, things such as love, family, home and acceptance” (4). Here poor Mariam, in a very early age has been taught just to be obedient and supposed to endure all that
abuse and resist all sufferings. In that sense, Philip states: “Mariam is told that her only potential is to endure […] as raised by a sacrificing but bitter mother” (794).

The protagonist Mariam lives a bitter life, after being ignored from her father Jalil, marrying her to Rasheed involuntarily and then experiencing all kinds of brutality and violent actions do by Rasheed. She resists and endures. She is silent and obedient in all cases but in every time she feels weak, she keeps remembering Mullah Faizulah when he wants to comfort her, as he teaches her verses from the Koran, he says: “…God's words will never betray you, my girl” (Hosseini 11). Then she feels strong enough to face her bitter life and to stand against her bad experiences.

Mariam, despite her young age, she has endured what the elderly do not. Everything was fatal to her but in a way she is strong enough to resist and endure all the sufferings she has gone through “she has endured rapes and brutality. She possesses a fragmented selfhood; she prefers to be silent and obedient and do whatever she is asked by her husband just in order to survive” (Yawari 16).

In a way, Mariam is so wise because she knows how to deal with Rasheed as a bad and cruel person. Although his hurting words and his maltreatment, but Mariam resists and endures his impoliteness by silence. Accordingly, Meiyono states: “when she becomes Rasheed’s wife, because of his violence, Mariam becomes uglier and older than her age. Mariam shows how strong she is as a woman. She can endure in facing many bad things happened in her life” (7).

Laila is a vivid example of the resistant and the powerful woman. She endures the abuse and cruelty of Rasheed just to keep her dearest persons live peacefully and not to be in danger. Rasheed is merciless when sending Aziza to an orphanage and keeping her far from her mother. But since Laila cannot be patient because her dearness is far from her, she takes the risk of going to visit her in the orphanage despite the Taliban’s beatings. As John states:
Laila chooses willingly to suffer herself for protecting her loved ones. Because Rasheed never appreciates the birth of Aziza and often scolds her. He abandons Aziza to the orphanage and implies that he knows that she is not his daughter. Laila, willingly submits to beatings by the Taliban for travelling alone as a woman, to see her daughter at the orphanage. Mariam of course, chooses to kill Rasheed in order to give Laila a chance of better life, knowing that she will be convicted and executed by the Taliban as a result of her action. This ability to suffer willingly for the benefits of others is portrayed as something women in particular excel at. (3)

Mariam and Laila are so resistant characters. However, their resistance is different from one another. That is to say, Mariam is defenceless so, she resists all Rasheed’s beatings and bad deeds silently. Whereas, Laila is defensive so, she is aggressive when facing Rasheed’s cruelty and abuse. According to Wulandari⁹, “Mariam and Laila are holding out the oppression with patience, how strong they are to endure themselves against such an oppression. While in dealing with it from Rasheed, Mariam tends to be defenceless, in the other hand, Laila is apt to defend and resist” (10).

Because the unbearable abuse of Rasheed affects both Mariam and Laila badly, they plan to run away to Kabul with Aziza. “Their heroic action is revealed when they resist to domination. However, their resistance is most often inspired by their devotion and compassion” (Kazemiyan¹⁰ 70). Unfortunately, they fail to reach their destination when they are caught and beaten by the Taliban authority. Then comes Rasheed’s turn of starving and beating them brutally.
II- Sisterhood and Sacrifice:

Since Mariam and Laila live in the same house. At first, they have ignored each other but as the time passes, they become so closer to each other. Each one of them comforts the other and reveals the pain she has. As Nigam and Dutta\textsuperscript{11} assert that: “Mariam is for the first time, a woman with negativity towards a person. However, this marriage turns out to be Mariam’s salvation. Soon she finds herself a friend to Laila” (224). In that sense, Sebastian\textsuperscript{12} sees that:

The strong bonding developed between Mariam and Laila could be equated with the idea of Feminist Sisterhood […] Mariam hated Laila for losing her husband to a little girl. They used to abuse each other calling each other many names until they realized that they are undergoing the same tragic fate under this abusive man and then they started to realize each other and started to share their strength of endurance to each other. (57)

When Laila is left lonely without a shelter, Rasheed marries her compassionately. However, Mariam doesn’t accept another woman with her in the same house. But over time, when Rasheed becomes so abusive and cruel towards Laila. Mariam plays an exceptional role in Laila’s life. Everything has been changed, Mariam becomes a compassionate mother who rubs Laila’s head and cures her wounds. And in that context, Sebastian says:

Mariam who called Laila a ‘thieving whore’ later becomes a mother figure for her. The strong bonding developed between these two characters serves as a comfort for each other. Laila and Mariam, both of them shared their sorrows as they shared their house hold duties and stood for each other whenever their husband became intolerable towards them. (ibid 57)
It is clearly shown that the two protagonists in ATSS, Mariam and Laila take strength from each other when facing their cruel husband Rasheed, they become so closer and get used to each other, besides that Mariam is playing the role of a second mother to Aziza and Zalmai since she hasn’t gave birth to children. In that sense, Sindhu13 views that:

Mariam and Laila have taken strength from each other because they were closer to each other. The bond that established between Laila and Mariam gives them strength to transcend their limitations and to perform devastating acts of self-sacrifice. They find solace and happiness in each other’s company. Their bond gives them freedom from pain not only physically but emotionally by trusting each other. (7)

Mariam and Laila are helping each other to raise Aziza. Because Mariam finds her happiness in taking care of her as a mother and being responsible for her as Laila is not home. Mariam gets used of Aziza and loves her so much to the point that she may die for her little angel. Mariam and Laila are always looking for the best to their dear, such as teaching her Koran and things that must know. “Attempts at rebellion, Mariam and Laila are determined to educate Aziza in the Koran and in becoming literate and aware. At the end of the novel, Zalmai and Aziza are sent to school together” (Shapiro14 44).

Rasheed becomes so angry, he beats Laila without mercy and he is about to kill her when he finds out that he had talked to Tariq. At first, Mariam feels so afraid then she becomes courageous to defend and secure her closest friend. Mariam gains the strength from her relationship with Laila that makes her accept any punishment for her dear sister. She says: “He’s going to kill her, she thought. He really means to. And Mariam could not, would not, allow that to happen. He’d taken so much from her in twenty-seven years of marriage. She would not watch him take Laila too” (Hosseini 182).
Mariam is a courageous woman for killing Rasheed without an apparent sign of rebellion against him, that courage is brought by Laila and her children whom they are so closed and love Mariam, which let Mariam kills Rasheed without thinking or even feels afraid on doing such a thing. As Sindhu states:

Mariam who never shows any sign of rebellion against Rasheed and his barbarous beating, gained courage to fight back and ultimately kill Rasheed by love and respect that she received from Laila and her children. Mariam makes a calculated decision to kill Rasheed as he is in the act of murdering Laila. Mariam makes sure that Rasheed sees her so that he can acknowledge her action. Mariam, who did everything to appease and accommodate Rasheed is able to resist not only his brutal force but her own revulsion of violent action to save Laila. (8)

Mariam’s bitter experiences are her tools of resistance. In Mariam’s sacrifice, Laila finds her resistance and self-determination. In other words she finds the life that she has dreamed. Mariam’s sacrifice helped Laila to escape from Afghanistan with her beloved Tariq and her children but finally, she comes back to her country so that she can help to rebuild it. Laila feels Mariam’s spirit everywhere and had a sensation that Mariam is a force behind the country’s rebuilding.

Laila sees now that it doesn’t matter. Mariam is never very far. She is here, in the walls they’ve painted, in the trees they’ve planted ...... she is in children’s laughter. She is in the verses Aziza recites and in her prayers....But, mostly, Mariam is in Laila’s own heart, where she shines with bursting radiance of a thousand suns. (Hosseini 217)
It is so hard to be lonely in that world, Mariam feels that but by time, she finds the persons who love her for what she is, that makes a sense of exchanging love, She becomes careful of them. When watching the ones she loves under troubles that don’t let them live peacefully, she wants to reveal the feeling of pain from them. Laila, Aziza and Zalmai in order to live happily, without conditions that she has put on and to do something that will make them living freely without feeling oppressed or get beaten.

She puts an end to their suffering which is the killing of Rasheed. What a courageous woman she is! She just doesn’t want them to live the life she lives or even to be like a subaltern who is put under the clemency of a man with cold emotions. After Mariam’s sacrifice, she is put into a women’s jail guarded by the Taliban, she is considered one of very few women that has committed a violent crime.

As Mariam faces execution for the killing of Rasheed. Thoughts come to her mind that she emerges as true the heroin, willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for her loved ones and her beliefs. Although the Taliban execute her, Mariam leaves the world on her own terms, proud of the person she has become.

…And yet she was leaving the world as a woman who had loved and been loved back. She was leaving it as a friend, a companion, a guardian. A mother. A person of consequence at last. No. It was not so bad, Mariam thought, that she should die this way. Not so bad. This was a legitimate end to a life of illegitimate beginnings. (Hosseini 195)

Mariam took the blame of killing Rasheed so that Laila and her children live peacefully. Her deed is a revolution against suffocating Rasheed’s oppression, his cruelty and to end the dominance. Laila’s and her children’s love is the reason that encourages Mariam to make her do that brave act.
Throughout the novel, men are so tough, rigid and violent towards women, who are seen as oppressed and subjugated. They had to endure and resist all men’s violent actions, besides being silent and obedient to all men’s orders and restrictions. But finally, women as sisters gathered by love and harmony, they take strength from each other and become courageous to sacrifice their lives for the happiness of their beloved. They decided to stand and put an end to all that suffering with their own way, to get rid of the oppressor. Because they believe that every beginning has an end inevitably, there are limits for everything.
Endnotes:


Conclusion

Through all time periods, men have superiority over everything unlike women who are constrained only to serve within the household circle. Hosseini depicted the Afghan society as a patriarchal society. Women within the novel were brought up to life only to suffer and to be under men’s clemency. They were seen as 'inferior and valueless'. They had no right to act openly and were chained by social limitations. Women were in a consistent struggle for survival and for accomplishing their happiness. Their concept of happiness varies from one woman to another. This novel is worthy of consider since it reflects the author's ideas on women's liberty and struggle for self-realization.

Reading and understanding of the novel helps in applying the Feminist criticism and psychoanalysis as two approaches best suited to interpret the novel. Thus, this study aims at highlighting women's struggle in their path to pursue their happiness. This research focuses highly on sensitive topics in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* especially related to gender inequalities, the condemning life under Taliban laws, rape, discrimination, violence, war, and women visualized as the epitome of inferiority. Men’s power over women is strikingly a feminist perspective of gender inequality which is very apparent in the novel and strongly explains the missing values of gender and class equality, as for Mariam who is related to a very low rank because of her false birth. Besides that, the psychoanalytic perspective which focuses on females’ psyche like the case of Mariam. Since she is an illegitimate daughter of a mother who was thrown from society and away from civilization because of her illegal act, and a father who remains powerful as belonging to an upper class, yet ashamed of her. So, indeed, the novel reflects the portrait of women in Afghan society. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a good example of the Afghan society, a deep introduction to its people, a reflection of
cultural and religious values, a correction of many prejudices and stereotypes that Khaled Hosseini strives powerfully to do.

The study's only purpose is to answer the previous inquiries that were asked before conducting it, therefore, the study fulfills its purpose in responding to those questions. As it responded to the way Hosseini depicts happiness through the female characters in the novel through the deep analysis provided in chapter three concerning the matter. It also answered the inquiry concerning the way women struggled to pursue their happiness in the novel and whether they could find it, through the analysis and the theories in the second and the third chapters. The study also responded upon the question of the way women struggled against patriarchy and male's violence to achieve their happiness through the analysis provided in chapter three as well.

The scope of research has always limitations. And as far as this research paper is concerned, further issues have been left unexplored as for the sake of freedom in a society condemned to live in jail forever; and the women efforts endeavoured to reach a respectful position with future generations as Khaled Hosseini expresses it in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* “marriage can wait, education cannot”.

From the study of the novel which is presented, we find that patriarchy is the main problem of women’s depression. Men’s category, which was the dominant brought about violence to the other category, i.e. Women’s category. To the point which destroyed all restrictions and led them committing the crime. To conclude, we might say that patriarchy is the cause of almost all the problems that existing in the world.
Among the results that were found after conducting this study is that some women struggled to find the infinite happiness and they truly found it in the simplest spiritual things like motherhood, sisterhood, friendship, love, courage, and sacrifice. Some women proved their strength to confront the hardships coming in their way despite of their sex, from the oppressive patriarchy to the social laws. Women tried to break away from domestic traditions as a way of expressing their rejection of repressive and degrading laws that ignored their aspirations.
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