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## **Master Thesis**

Letters and Foreign Languages  
English Language  
Literature and Civilization

**The Representation of Female Afghan Experience through the Lenses of  
Male writers , in Khaled Hussein's *A Thousand Splendid Suns***

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### **Dedication**

I would like to thank my parents Abd Allah Azzi and Laila Lazhari for believing in me, for empowering me to dream huge and permitting me to create it happen. In addition, for their valuable feedback that continuously guided me within the right direction. For my brothers Mohamed and Belkacem and for my lovely sisters Ibtissem and Noor Elmen who have propelled me to do more and more .

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### **Abstract**

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* scrutinizes carefully the Afghan women under the Taliban Regime's and patriarchal society's oppressions. The literature *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini, the Afghan Writer, helps in highlighting the sufferance of two subjugated women of two different generations, one is educated and the other is not. by as a male to females. Both Meriem and Leila were the core characters of Hosseini's novel and his vision as a male to women . From this perspective, the choice of the post colonial feminist was sought to be the suitable approach to approach Hosseini's novel. To do so, the researcher starts investigating and asking the question of whether a male writer can depict the true experience of Afghan women based on his background . Hosseini chooses to conclude the story by giving a positive sight to women and that after the sufferance in a country like Afghan , still there is hope . Hosseini also, as a male writer choose not to judge female , in accordance to his gender, but to sympathize with them and tries to give them a way to liberate themselves by any necessary means to fight for their freedom whatever the costs are .

### **Key Words**

Afghan Women, Men in Feminism, Male Authors With Female Pen Names, Post colonial Feminism, Third World Women

### ملخص

تدقق ألف شمس رائعة بعناية في النساء الأفغانيات في ظل قمع نظام طالبان والمجتمع الأبوي. يساعد أدب ألف شمس رائعة للكاتب الأفغاني خالد حسيني في تسليط الضوء على معاناة امرأتين خاضعتين من جيلين مختلفين، إحداهما متعلمة والأخرى كذكر للإناث كان كل من مريم وليلى الموضوع الأساسي لرواية حسني ورؤيته كذكر للمرأة. من هذا المنظور، تم السعي لاختيار النسوية ما بعد الاستعمار ليكون النهج المناسب للتعامل مع رواية حسيني. للقيام بذلك، يبدأ الباحث في التحقيق وطرح سؤال حول ما إذا كان بإمكان الكاتب الذكر تصوير التجربة الحقيقية للمرأة الأفغانية بناءً على عزوبته. يختار حسيني اختتام القصة من خلال إعطاء رؤية إيجابية للمرأة وأنه بعد الكفاية في بلد مثل الأفغانية، لا يزال هناك أمل. كما اختار حسيني، ككاتب ذكر، عدم الحكم على الذكور، بما يتوافق مع جنسه، ولكن التعاطف معهم ويحاول منحهم طريقة لتحرير أنفسهم بأي وسيلة ضرورية للقتال من أجل حرية أكثر مهما كانت التكاليف.

### الكلمات الرئيسية

نساء أفغانيات، رجال في الحركة النسوية، مؤلفون ذكور بأسماء أقلام نسائية، نسوية ما بعد الاستعمار، نساء العالم

الثالث.

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## **General Introduction**

It has always been the tradition thoughts writing about female suffering since they will project better the terrible experience of women. However, there exist some male writers who are as much interested in women's sufferance as women themselves.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As far as Afghan women are concerned, women are always subjected to certain kinds of sexism and patriarchy. It has always been the case with western as well as Arabic women. This bitter fact led to the emergence of female awareness in the whole world claiming that women are no more men properties , this tendency or tradition that lately was labeled feminism did not affect only women, but even males. These males sometimes did not show in public their rights attitudes toward the issues of women. There are many examples to be listed, however, there is Khaled Hussein who wrote *A Thousand Splendid Suns* in 2007. This novel deals with issues of oppression, sexism, and male control of women the under Talibani regime, this regime that takes religion as an excuse to disrespect women.

### **Research Questions**

1. How can patriarchy affect females claiming justice for patriarchy affected women?
2. How did Khalid tackle the issues via feminist lence in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*?

### **Aims of the Study**

This study aims to provide a review on feminism and talk about the sufferance of women under the Talibani regime. Also ,offer an analysis of the male writings and female writings concerning femaleissues . In addition , answers the question of how Hussein's novel tackles the position of women under Talibani's regime from male lence.

This research will explore many events in the characters' personal lives, and investigate the status of women in Afghanistan through different generations.



## **Methodology**

This study is qualitative and interpretative in nature which the research will examine the novel being said looking for the analysis will be based on the reading of the primary source *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. For this analysis, the researcher chose the postcolonial feminism approach will dominate the study process that will provide an in-depth insight into the Post-colonial reclaiming of the past, and will dominate women's experience.

This research is based on textual analysis. The researcher follows three steps in conducting this research. The first step is to collect the data. The second step is data analysis. The final section presents the analysis's results. Primary and secondary data are used in this study. The primary source is Khaled Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The primary data is then supplemented with secondary data gleaned from various books and articles on the status of women in Afghanistan.

## **Structure of the Study**

The current study is divided into two main approaches. The first chapter is theoretical and the second is practical. The first chapter is devoted to having a literature review on concepts of feminism and post-colonialism, in addition to a brief overview of waves of feminism, and male and female writings. The second section of this chapter will deal mainly with Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*; its setting, context, style, etc. In addition, the section will section an overview of Hosseini as a male writer writing about female subjects. The practical chapter is the analysis and interpretation of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* using the feminist and post-colonial approaches. This analysis will provide further explanation of how can a male writer treat female issues.

## **ChapterOne: Theoretical Framework**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Some people believe that feminism is no longer necessary, but this couldn't be further from the truth. Women have fought for equality and against oppression for centuries, and while some battles, such as the right to vote and equal access to education, have been partially won, women are still disproportionately affected by all forms of violence and discrimination in all aspects of life. It has been always the tradition that female writers write about female sufferances since they will project better the terrible experience of women. However, there exists some male writers who are as much interested in women's sufferance as women themselves. Thus, the researcher devotes the first chapter to have a literature review on concepts of feminism and post-colonialism, in addition to a brief overview of waves of feminism, male and female writings.

### **1.1 Definition of Feminism**

Naima Yahia defines feminism as a women's movement that arose in response to gender discrimination in patriarchal societies. To combat the tyranny of patriarchal control, many women have voiced their opinions and spoken their languages of freedom for all oppressed women. Feminism, according to Bhasin and Khan, is an awareness of patriarchal control, exploitation, and oppression at the material and ideological levels of women's labor, fertility, and sexuality in the family, at work, and in society in general, as well as conscious action by women and men to change the current situation (Yahi, 20).

### **1.2 Waves of Feminism**

Malinowska believes that the first-wave feminists' faith in organized and visible protest was evident in public gatherings, speeches, and writing. Their activism was centered on the press, which was the primary source of information at the turn of the century. Women of

color were often marginalized in the first-wave movement. The first wave ended with the recognition of women's right to vote.

The second wave, indeed, began after the postwar chaos atmosphere of social role differentiation to focus on women's work and family environment. The second wave, which lasted from the early 1960s to the late 1980s, posed questions about the components of gender roles and women's sexuality, poststructuralism, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis influenced the second wave. Nanette Rainone created the first feminist radio programs, *Woman kind* and *ElectraRewired*. These landmark feminists were the pioneers in introducing the third-wave feminism (Malinowska, 3).

Third wave feminism introduced new consciousness of women's role in technological evolution. Around 1991, cyber feminism was born to remind us "that there are differences in power between women and men specifically in the digital discourse". Both Hawthorne and Klein claimed that it was also to bring to the fore both past and contemporary histories of women in tech environments to show the emancipatory potential behind new information and communication technologies (4). All in all, the long tradition of feminism was influenced with a set of ideas based on social and economic needs.

### **1.3 Types of Feminism**

#### **1.3.1 Liberal Feminism**

According to Taghreed Mahmoud Abu Sarhan, the theme of Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* was that women were confined to the primary « job » of wife and mother. Women seeking jobs or aspiring to positions in politics were suspect unless they were also « good » wives and mothers. According to liberal feminism, gender differences are not based on biology, and thus women and men are not all that different. Women should have the same legal rights as men, as well as equal educational and employment opportunities. Liberal

feminism accepts and works with the gender system aiming to remove it of its discriminatory effects on women (22).

### **1.3.2 Post-Modern Feminism**

According to Taghreed Mahmoud Abu Sarhan, in the early 1980s, postmodernfeminism emerged. It also overlaps with third-wavefeminism, which emerged in the 1990s. Postmodern feminist thought questions and rejects the essentialist definitions of femininity popularized during the period of modern feminism. Postmodern feminists have expanded on the ideas of Foucault, de Beauvoir, Derrida, and Lacan. While postmodern feminism differsgreatly, there is some common ground. Postmodern Feminists accept the male/female binary as our society's primary categorizing force. According to Simone de Beauvoir, women have been cast in the role of the Other (24).

### **1.3.3Racial Feminism**

It dates back to the 1960s, but some of its philosophy can be found in the nineteenth and twentieth century American cultural feminist tradition. Radical feminism represents women's rage against male power, and it stems from second-wave feminism . AS added by Collins , their radical workaims to create a space for women to write, think about, and express their emotions and personal experiences (Abu Sarhan 27-28). Taghreed claimed that racial feminists look into the realms of female sexuality and socialization.Radical feminism wields considerable power in addressing issues that directly affect women's personal lives,physical and mental well-being (28).

### **1.3.4Social Marxist- Feminism**

According to Lengermann and Brantley, the oppression of women islinked to Marxist ideas about exploitation, oppression, and labor in socialist feminism. Socialistfeminists direct their energies toward broad change that affects society as a whole, rather than just individuals.

They see the need to collaborate with all groups, not just men, because they see women's oppression as part of a larger pattern that affects everyone involved in the capitalist system (Augustini 6).

### 1.3.5 Post Colonial Feminism

According to Niwayan Agustini, postcolonial feminism investigates colonialism's interactions with gender, nation, class, race, and sexualities in various contexts. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini depicts the devaluation, cultural, and political structures that support the violence experienced by the female characters. The ethnocentric assumptions of Western feminists, which assume that all women are in similar situations, resulted in the universalization of female characteristics and experiences, particularly in radical and liberal feminism (7). As an example that is taken from Hosseini's novel, "One day, a young Talib beat Laila with a radio antenna. When he was done, he gave a final whack to the back of her neck and said. 'I see you again, I'll beat you until your mother's milk leaks out of your bones.'" (qtd. in Augustini 7).

Both Shabanirad and Seifi agreed on that one of the leading figures of the 'Third World feminism's movement is Chandra Talpade Mohanty (243). Chandra contends that much Western feminist writing about Third World women. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* depicts females' resistance to Afghanistan's patriarchal and male-oriented society, as well as the gender oppression imposed on them through their culture, lifestyle, community norms, and principles. This written text depicts the conflicts and struggles that the main female characters face as they try to find their place in their own culture and achieve their subaltern voice. This demonstrates that the happiness of her husband is the only source of satisfaction and fulfillment for a perfect Afghan wife. In other words, the ideal image of an Afghan woman in

society is one who give shereintire life to retrain herself to copewith the new personality and identity imposed on her by male ideology (Shabanirad and Seif, 43).

There are several factors that contribute to women's oppression. As previously stated, one important factor is the political institution. Afghanistan experienced colonial power and successive power transitions, such as the Soviet Union's invasion, civil war, Taliban sovereignty, and the United States' invasion in 2001, which resulted in political instability. Women in this situation suffer the most, as outlined below, because the Taliban regime's governmental rules regarding women were so strict and harsh.

Here are some examples ,

You will always stay inside your homes. Women should not wander through the streets. You must become panied by a mahram, a male relative if you go outside. If you are caught on the street alone, you will be beaten and taken home. Under no circumstances will you show your face. When you go outside, you will wear a burqa. You will be severely beaten if you do not (246).

According to Sedumath Dhakal, Women are known for their endurance, even in the most trying of circumstances.

#### **1.4 Position of Men in Feminism**

Since the late 18th century, American men have advocated for women's equality ( Kimmel and Mosmiller 1992). Even before the first Woman's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, heralded the birth of the organized women's movement, American men began to argue for women's rights. For example, Thomas Paine, the celebrated radical, opened in 1775 that any formal declaration of independence from England should include women because women have, as he put it, « an equal right to virinforms them as men. Through the last century and into the present, the evolution of pro-feminist men's rhetorical strategies roughly paralleled the history of feminism. Although he was not a fully sequential pattern in which one form superseded the other, three distinct patterns of profeminist male rhetoric

emerged during this period, each of which defined the profeminist male discourse of its time. They also do not fit into any specific historical epoch (21).

### 1.5 The Role of Men in Feminism

According to Jessica Baily, Feminist activists are concerned around men's support in women's activist activism. A few women's activists are concerned almost the affect of men's nearness on female activists, who may feel uneasy within the nearness of men, particularly in case they have experienced male savagery (Luxton, 27). Another issue is that men tend to overwhelm in blended bunches, which can quiet ladies (Luxton, 1993) and hazard occupying the plans of the bunches to male concerns. Mohan and Schultz (2001) recognize a number of sexist behaviors among the male volunteers with whom they worked, counting falling flat to tune in to ladies, anticipating ladies to sustain them, verbally assaulting female coaches, and making "unseemly sexual divulgements that clearly objectify ladies" (27).

According to Jessica Baily, in spite of the reactions raised, there are potential benefits to counting men in women's activist activism, and for this reason, a few women's activists have supported for men's association within the women's activist development. For starters, counting men within the development (or in a particular women's activist organization) broadens the pool of potential activists, giving more openings for the development or organization to grow. As Hooks has argued, excluding men from women's liberation has too brought about within the prohibition of numerous ladies (29).

Furthermore, a few contend that men can contribute to women's liberation in interesting ways, for example, by acting as a 'bridge' between women's activist

Ladies and men (Schacht and Ewing, 169), by « exposing, going up against, contradicting, and changing the sexism of their male peers » (Hooks, 83). Or by contributing their knowledge of male-only situations and male subjectivity (Morgan, Sterba, 75). Thirdly,

including men can emphatically influence the 'message' passed on by women's activist activism.

In conclusion, numerous women's activists have contended that woman's rights will basically not succeed in the event that it does not incorporate men. Both Schacht and Ewing (1997) and Hebert (2007) contend that men got to be included in arrange for women's liberation to realize the 'critical mass' of supporters essential for far reaching social alter. Others contend that since men are portion of the issue of patriarchy, they must too be portion of the arrangement (29) .

### **1.6 Male Writers as Feminist Writers**

Cheryl Lange suggests that when gender plays an evident role in humanlives, beginning withbirth, when they are given a blue or pinkblanket and sent on a path that will shape the men to what their culture considers proper men or women. Humans are taught to follow a strict code of behavior that varies depending on their gender from the moment they take their first breath. In a patriarchal society, thisoften meansthat a male will lead a privileged life in which heisthought to be the standard for human experience, while the female will lead a subjugated, subservient life in which she is defined only in relation to males (1).

Forcing men and women to conform to gender roles is harmful because it fosters the belief that these roles represent truth, allowing gender stereotypes to persist. It also forces men and women to experience life solely through the lens of their gender, rather than as human beings. If art is a reflection of life, one would expectliterature to depict worlds where these gender roles exist and women experience life differently than men and suffer as a result. Gender roles are difficult to break, but some male authors have attempted to see life through the eyes of a woman (1) .



### 1.6.1 John Stuart Mill

*On the Subjection of Women* by John Stuart Mill, it is worth noting that Mill was a strong supporter of women's rights, suffrage, and equal access to education for women. His essay *On the Subjection of Women* (1869) remains a powerful argument for gender equality. *On the Subjection of Women* was written to demonstrate that women's social and legal disadvantages were unjustified, and that relations between the sexes should be governed by a principle of perfect equality. In terms of the principles asserted in *Liberty*, Mill recognized that the disabilities suffered by women, particularly their disenfranchisement and exclusion from the political process, their status in the marriage contract, and their denial of entry to professions and educational institutions, are unjustified (Seddiki 85).

Furthermore, Mill emphasized that women should be given the value of personal independence as an element of happiness because subordinating them would rob them of their freedom as individuals, which would result in their unhappiness. Mill emphasized once more that women should be given the right to vote in order to protect themselves. Women, according to John Stuart Mill, would achieve self-respect and self-control in a society based on equality and justice, which are necessary conditions for both individual prosperity and social virtue. Furthermore, Mill argued vehemently that women should vote and be capable of holding positions with significant public responsibilities (86).

As found in Mill Stuart web page, *The Subjection of Women* was a call to end the legal and political constraints placed on women. It was founded on his firm belief in equal rights for men and women in education and marriage before the law, as well as in the individual rights of men and women to achieve their full potential. His belief that women should be active agents of their own emancipation led him to encourage and assist the growing women's sufficiency movement. His contribution was crucial not only for the female feminists of his time, but also for future generations of women and men committed to the same cause. Mill

asserted that marriage was the oppressive relationship for women, and *On the Subjection of Women* provided one of the most incisive and critical depictions of marriage to emerge in the nineteenth century, emphasizing the moral and physical degradation marriage entailed for both men and women (Seddiki, 89-90).

### **1.6.2 Roald Dahl**

Both Joyita Shaw and Elham Ghahremani Fard'sid, Dahl is an Edwardian writer born in 1916, mostly explores the theme of the harmonious bond between family members in his writings. Dahl's well-known novel *Matilda* depicts a thought-provoking narrative that unravels layers of issues concerning children, women, and social evils. The story compels the reader to consider 1990s social behaviors and their impact on children, women, and society as a whole. It is said that studying a society's treatment of women and children proved that society (101) in order to attract men. Miss Trunch Bull might be portrayed as a lesbian who wishes to open up other gender options. She despises women because they lack power and idolizes men because they are strong. Miss. Honey, the all-white and frail structure may become a major source of concern for black feminists, However; in any case, Trunchbull's or Matilda's Mother's treatment of Matilda (101).

### **1.6.3 Yassmina Khadra**

According to Dr. Assia Kaced, the two novels that were chosen support patriarchal domination and the use of force by husbands against married women. The wives in the two novels are brutally beaten, dragged by their hair, whipped with belts, denied food and water, and locked in dark rooms for days. They have black eyes, broken teeth, and bruised bodies. Things worsen when these wives are unable to bear children/son to carry on their husbands' line. The violence becomes not only physical but also psychological. They are frequently isolated and struggle alone against their husbands' violence. Despite the sacred bond of

marriage that binds them to their spouses, nothing seems to stop the husbands from belittling and battering their wives. The end of such relationships is tragic in both novels (539).

Musarrat, in *The Swallows of Kabul*, is also forced to comply with her husband's desires and serve him despite her poor health. She works extremely hard to clean the house, cook, and tend to her husband's needs. Her husband, Atiq, is very frustrated by his wife's long illness and can't hide his rage at her continued condition. Although he pretends to understand and tolerate at first, his inner feelings and actions betray him.

« He's angry at himself for not daring to lance the abscess once and for all, for not telling his wife a few hard truths, who should consider herself fortunate in comparison to the depraved women roaming the streets of Kabul. » Musarrat is making the most of his patience. Her sickness is now not an palliating circumstance ; she must learn to bargain with it... » (Khadra43-44).

Whereas Atiq imagines to care for his wife and needs her to create no exertion to serve him, he hollers at her, harms her physically and mentally, and wishes to see her dead. As a result, within the two books, none of the spouses questions her husband's specialist or dissents his controlling and rough behavior. Spouses comply with the desire that they comply their spouses since they are socialized from a youthful age to see spouse specialist and manhandle as ordinary (541).

In spite of her sick wellbeing, Musarrat within *The Swallows of Kabul* goes out of her way to if you don't mind her spouse by cleaning the house, cooking his favorite nourishment, and bantering with him. She is profoundly concerned around his well-being and endeavors to illustrate to him that she isn't 'flawed.' In any case, her spouse, Atiq, never shows up to be upbeat. He disregards her, insuperable her, and indeed endeavors to defeat her. Musarrat endures from both declining physical wellbeing and mental self-degradation and disgrace as a result of her conviction that she is fragmented and inadequate. She accepts she is falling brief

of her husband's desires of her. These sentiments are declined by her husband's states of mind and words. Atiq's position towards his spouse is bolstered by his companions who don't see any use in him remaining with his wife while she isn't able to go to to him.

Atiq said , « You don't owe her anything. She's the one who ought to bow down some time recently you, Atiq, and kiss the toes of your feet, one by one, each time you take off your shoes. She has small significance exterior of what you speak to for her. She's as it were a subordinate (542). Atiq needs to form his wife Musarrat feel blame worthy rather than feeling abused. He denounces her of being provocative and of not recognizing all the penances he does for her. For Dobash & Dobash, incitement may be a exceptionally effective device utilized by the husband to legitimize his control of his spouse, and to evacuate ethical anger around his use of constrain against her.

Nagging—continued dialog once the spouse has made up his mind—represents within the eyes of the spouse an ill-conceived challenge to his specialist and his right to create the extreme choice. In this way, bothering is one of the practices recognized by the man as inciting his rough reactions (542) .

## 1.7 Writing Styles

Feminism is a subset of cultural studies in the literature that arose as a result of women feeling discredited and treated unequally by men as human beings. What is not acceptable, however, is the distinction in position, implying that men are superior to women. This awareness inspires women to stand up and fight for their rights. Feminism is concerned with women's freedom, appreciation, and fair treatment. Meanwhile, women wish to develop as human beings with equal roles and opportunities in their own lives and societies. Feminists faced domestic patriarchal opponents who used various means to denigrate feminism and its supporters in both the West and the East.

### 1.7.1 Atiq Rahimi

Both Rizki Syraya Adi Putra and Ali Mustofa, detractors in the West portrayed feminists as man-haters. In the East, opponents labeled feminists as agents of cultural subversion, ironically in doing so. As a result, what can be integrated from this Islam feminism understanding is the way Islam sees equality between men and women, from the agents of truth about equality between men and women, rather than creating women to hate men just to beg for equality, as western feminism claims. It is clear that this problem has finally inspired some authors to write about it in beautiful work, one of which is Atiq Rahimi with his novel *The Patience Stone* (3).

The way feminism is presented in Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* is the main thing that is hidden. This novel, particularly the main character, the woman, erodes the readers' desire to sympathize and cry over what has happened to the woman. The woman can not fight the system of men he faces, but she can deliver it to her comate husband, which does not change anything in her fair life. As a response to this problem, the Woman can only tell the truth about how she feels, what she hides, and what she wants to deliver because she does not want to hurt anyone.

As a result, she wants to tell no one, and she must be afraid of saying what she feels because what she faces is culture, misunderstood religion, and social truth. This issue is conveyed through the following quotation; she believes that it is better to remain silent and tell no one. This is what the Woman's sister goes through. Her sister is forced to marry, and her father sells her is there after losing a bet, but what can the Woman do? She is just a woman, she has no voice, her voice is not to be heard or listened to, she is just a creature created by chance, so a woman should be in the room, cooking, bearing a baby, feeding a baby, and doing « female » activities. She is not required to have something like a man's voice (3).

### 1.7.2 Khaled Hosseini

It is mentioned in Yahi's dissertation that Khaled Hosseini is an American-born Afghan novelist and the son of an Afghan diplomat and teacher, who wrote *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. He relocated to California and studied medicine, but he prefers to write. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is his second novel, following the successful *The Kite Runner*. It is a reference to Kabul and the troubled women, their weakness, dependence, and imprisonment intertwined with despair, torture, and beatings as portrayed by the routines of Mariam and Laila. In his novel, Khaled Hosseini depicts the pitiable conditions of Afghan women.

He brilliantly portrayed the novel's characters. The author describes the strict laws forced on Afghan women and the torture they endure daily. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are also set in Afghanistan, which has a recent history. In the novel, Hosseini crafts the story of two Afghan women to deal with the plight of women and to reflect the chaotic last three decades of Afghanistan's history, when women are subjected to harsh treatment and discrimination by both their husbands and despotic regimes, resulting in the establishment of a gender Apartheid system in the country (9).

This latter is based on the complete exclusion of women from public life, as well as limiting their role in the home; bearing children, and obeying their husbands (9). The novel is divided into four parts, with the first focusing on Mariam as an illegitimate child, the second on Laila, who is a generation younger than Mariam, and the third on their relationship. They travel in their separate vehicles in the final section.

### 1.8 Male Writings Versus Female Writings

Cherly Lange said that many critics believe that because men and women have different life experiences, male and female authors' writing will differ. Some argue that male authors can not write accurately from a female perspective or present feminist ideals because they have not lived as women. The majority of the time, life is portrayed in literature from the female

point of view by female authors, but male authors have also taken on the female perspective. When writing about women, authors may describe them differently depending on gender, nationality, and culture (1).

For Langue, there are some similarities between the works of male and female authors. Tragic events occur in the lives of the women in all of the works. Rape, abandonment, divorce, forced marriage, and war are examples, and many are the result of men's actions. Despite the female protagonists' difficult lives, all of the novels and the short stories have happy or hopeful endings. Another parallelism the occurrence of generational differences, particularly those concerning women's issues. The older women in the novel tended to agree with traditional gender deas, whereas the younger women expressed more modern ideas. All of the authors sympathized with their characters and the female condition (4).

However, male authors haven't written many novels solely from the perspective of women. Men are maybe incapable of writing from a female perspective . It's also possible that male authors are afraid of being labeled as « feminine » and failing to fit into the masculine gender role. Women would be regarded as « experts » on the female race, for obvious reasons. Male authors, on the other hand, may contribute to the research but may feel out of place or have a lack of authority on the subject. Third, the majority of feminist theory has focused on past works by male authors. Despite the fact that we still live in a patriarchal society, attitudes toward women in society have evolved. As a result, current gender ideologies should be reflected in today's novels (4-5).

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter focuses on the theoretical foundations upon which, the researcher devotes the first chapter to a literature review on feminism and postcolonialism concepts, as well as a brief overview of waves of feminism and male and female writings. While some battles, such as the right to vote and equal access to education, have been partially won, women continue to be

disproportionately affected by all forms of violence and discrimination in all aspects of life. It has always been customary for female writers to write about female suffering to better project the terrible experience of women. However, some male writers are as interested in women's suffering as women are in their own.



## Chapter Two : The Analysis of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher examines the status of women in Afghanistan through the female characters, Mariam and Laila. Furthermore, the section of this chapter will focus on Husseini's notable *A Thousand Splendid Suns*; its setting, context, style, and so on. In addition, this section will provide an overview of Husseini as a male writer who writes about female subjects.

### 2.2 An Overview of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

According to Rebecca A. Stuhr, the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is divided into four sections. Part one tells Mariam's story, while part Two tells Laila's. Part three focuses on Mariam and Laila's shared lives as they share a home, and Part four serves as an epilogue, relating Laila's life with Tariq and her children in the aftermath of Rasheed and Mariam's deaths (57).

According to Time Ramphiphatthamrong in his thesis, the story of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) begins in the early 1970s, with a focus on Mariam, one of the female protagonists who live in a small village in Afghanistan with her mother, Nana. Jalil, Mariam's father who is a wealthy businesss man in Herat. Mariam has always had conflicting feelings about her parents because she is forced to live with her father in Herat after her mother, Nana, committed suicide in her home (8).

Jalil and his new wife, on the other hand, force Mariam to marry Rasheed, an elderly widowed shoemaker. Rasheed gently takes care of Mariam at first, and they quickly become close. Unfortunately, due to health complications, Mariam has several miscarriages, which causes Rasheed to become an abusive husband. Parallel to Rasheed and Mariam's relationships is another main female character named Laila, who was born on the night the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Laila's childhood is disrupted and influenced by the Afghan

resistance to the Soviet invasion, which forces both of her brothers to fight. Soon after, Laila learns that her older brothers have been killed in the war. Mariam is then forced to relocate to Rasheed's home in Kabul, where she becomes pregnant. Violence and chaos have spread throughout Afghanistan, eventually, many people consider leaving the country. Tariq, Laila's close friend who lost a leg when he was young, and his family have decided to travel to Pakistan. However, the night before their departure, Laila's parents are tragically killed by a stray rocket. The rocket attack has also injured Laila. Fortunately, Laila is being nursed and cared for by Mariam and her husband until she recovers. Rasheed, who has a crush on Laila and wishes to marry her, has Abdul Sharif tell Laila a lie about seeing Tariq killed near the hospital. Believing that she has lost her beloved Tariq, Laila, who is now pregnant with Tariq's child, agrees to marry Rasheed, who will become the father of her child (9).

When Mariam learns that Laila has become Rasheed's second wife, tensions between her and Laila arise. Mariam is in pain. Nonetheless, after Laila has a daughter named Aziza, Mariam grows closer to both Laila and Aziza. Both Mariam and Laila believe they are victims of Rasheed's abusive behavior. Laila then informs Mariam that she intends to leave Rasheed and invites her to accompany her. They escape Rasheed's house together the next day, but Rasheed discovers this and sends them home. Rasheed's rage is heightened by the two women's attempt to flee, and he nearly kills them. A few years later, Laila gives birth to a son, Zalmai, and the family's financial situation worsens.

Rasheed forces Laila to send Aziza, to an orphanage due to the family's financial crisis. Laila meets Tariq on her way home one day after visiting Aziza at the orphanage. Rasheed beats Laila that night after learning she had met Tariq. Mariam ends up killing Rasheed with a shovel in an attempt to protect Laila from Rasheed's abuse. Mariam is imprisoned and then transported to Ghazi Stadium to be executed by the Taliban by shooting to death. Tariq and Laila marry and begin the life of which they had long dreamed. At the same time, the situation

in Kabul improves, prompting Laila and her family to return to the city to help rebuild the buildings. They make a stop in Herat to see Mariam's old house. When Laila visits Mariam's old house, she mourns Mariam's execution by the Taliban. Finally, Hosseini concludes his novel with Laila working as a schoolteacher at the orphanage where Aziza was once sent. Laila becomes pregnant around the same time and knows that if she has a daughter, her daughter's name will undoubtedly be Mariam in honor of her best friend. (10).

### **2.3 The Setting in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns***

According to Sabiha Att Rahman and Salima Yesli, in their dissertation, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is set in Afghanistan, fundamentally within the cities of Herat at that point Kabul, from Zahir Shah's run the show to the Soviet intrusion and afterward to the rule of the Taliban and post-Taliban revamping of Afghanistan. The novel portrays Afghanistan amid a time of peace when Hosseini sheds light on the provincial scenes and the country's legacy at that point the torn Afghanistan is a result of repeated intrusions and inner changes when forces are battling to require control of the country (27).

### **2.4 The Plot in *A Thousand Splendid Suns***

According to Yousra Serir, the novelist used *A Thousand Splendid Suns* to introduce different generations to the reader, each beginnings contradictions, differences, and characteristics. Beginning the novel in 1974, when Mariam was 15 years old, she is thrown by her father because she reminds him that she is a sin and then thrown by the death of her Nana in the hands of the shoemaker Rasheed who becomes her terrible husband and is eventually killed by her. During the course of events, Laila should mark torture by living under Rasheed's rule until she is free to meet her true love, Tariq. So the entire story is a complex narrative woven by the author through the eyes of two women of a younger generation in Kabul, which sacrifice alarms when Mariam protects Laila from Rasheed's

torment; whom she kills and executes to allow Laila to live her love again with Tariq and her children. As a result, the women in the novel are metaphorically the title's splendid suns, which should always set and shine again to represent hope for a better Kabul in the near future (27).

### **2.5 Feminism in *A Thousand Splendid Suns***

According to Rebecca A. Stuhr, in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini provides a distinctive representation of a nation smashed by an arrangement of ideological pioneers and wars forced on it by outside and inner powers. The narrative, which ranges a few decades, is driven by the stories of two ladies despised Mariam, who, indespitetarkly distinctive beginnings, discover themselves personally associated and subordinate upon one another. Hosseini's ladies, much just like the nation of Afghanistan itself, show up to be moved by the impulses of exterior powers, familial and societal, with a small chance of affecting their possess lives and prospects. However, Laila and Mariam are not one or the other detached nor defenseless as they make choices and acknowledge results to influence wanted closes, both cheerful and appalling (53).

According to Time Ramphiphattamrong, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini is based on the nature of women in Afghan society as a target. He is interested in exposing the discrimination and struggles that the central characters, Mariam and Laila, face, as they live in Afghanistan during a difficult period for women's rights. Hosseini demonstrates his intense devotion to his homeland of Afghanistan by describing everything that pertains to it, whether in the past, present, or future particularly in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, where he attempted, in one way or another, to mirror the realities and his depiction of the struggles of women in Afghanistan. He could sow the seed of compassion in the minds of the readers to pique their interest throughout the novel. Hosseini was able to successfully reflect the true image of Afghan women by using feminist and womanhood perspectives, as he shed light on the

discrimination and victimization of women caused by patriarchal lifestyles imposed in society. As oppression predominated throughout the novel, Nana, Mariam, Laila, and Aziza are typical examples of bad treatment and show the abuses and seizures faced by Afghan women, as demonstrated by Hosseini in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* ( 8/9/10) .

## **2.6 The Impact of Norms and Religion on Women**

According to Yousra Serir, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was an excellent representation of the conflict and animosity that existed in Afghanistan. Because of the war, women were frequently oppressed, religion had a negative influence in Afghanistan since the Taliban's rise in 1996, and social norms had a powerful influence (34).

The Taliban had an incorrect understanding of Islam. They mingled the right and the wrong, interpreting religion in a way that satisfies their desires and meets their needs. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, for example, women survive in Islamic theocracy due to the Taliban, who construed Islamic law for their gratification. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, for example, women survive in Islamic theocracy due to the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic law for their benefit. Mariam, for example, was forced to marry Rasheed, who was thirty years her senior, even though such compulsion is forbidden in Islam, but she was obligated to obey. He also began to physically and mentally abuse her after she had a miscarriage. However, Islam encourages husbands to treat their wives with kindness because men are instructed to be good and nice to them. According to the Quran ( 4:19), "...And live with them in kindness..." (qtd. in your Serie, 35).

Similarly, his second wife, Laila, witnessed his brutality as he beats his wives to the core because Afghan men believed that women are property of their husbands, and they are allowed to do whatever pleases them, and treat them in a way that infringes and violates their role as husbands in Islam; as if Islam promotes and encourages inequality, cruelty, and brutality. Nonetheless, the Prophet, Peace Be Upon him, urged men to mollycoddle and treat

their wives with gentleness, because their behavior shapes their image as Muslims and reflects the faith and sincerity of the Muslim's good character, as he said: "The most perfect of believers in belief is the best of them in character." "The best of you are those who are the best to their women." (Al-Tirmidhi, 35)

Furthermore, Quran supports equality; men and women are equal, but they play different roles in life. Women must obey and protect their husbands, while men must protect and maintain their wives. The existence of women in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is questioned, and their only role in life was to cook and clean. They were considered inferiors and maids, and the Taliban prohibited female education. Women were not allowed to learn, work, or even go outside without a man of their relatives.

According to Yousra Serir, in fact, the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, was unsatisfactory for many readers who have an awful vision of Islam because of the Afghan people's negative thinking and their misunderstanding of the religion in many situations. But, in reality, Hosseini attempted to demonstrate the consequences of the horrors of war that occurred in Afghanistan, leading to the emergence of the terrorist group known as the Taliban period, during which the image of Islam began to be distorted. This means that religion has nothing to do with the outcomes of war time tortures, which can occur in any other country that has already experienced the chaos and devastation of battles. Furthermore, religion is not guilty if it is misused and misunderstood (35).

## **2.7 The Analysis of Female Characters**

According to Sedunath Dhakal, women's lives in Afghan society are miserable, as depicted by Khaled Hosseini in the novel. This novel examines how women are victims of patriarchal despotism, as well as endurance as a characteristic of women in Afghan society. In his novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini (2007) realistically depicts the plight of Afghan women. Afghan women face a pitiful existence not only as a result of patriarchal

social structures, but also as a result of war and crisis , even in the twenty-first century . During the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the women were treated indifferently and became major victims . It's a story about women's sufferings and endurance on the one hand, and their hopes and struggles for survival on the other. As he writes about the conditions of the novel's female characters , Hosseini (2007) depicts pathetic life situations of women (229).

For Ramphiphatthamrong, this novel is told from a third-person point of view, alternating between Mariam's and Laila's points of view as reflecting female Afghans' lifestyles within Their culture and communities. Correspondingly, even though the female characters in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are Afghan women living in the same Afghan culture, unfortunately some of them are treated differently simply because of their ethnicity, upbringing, family, and class. Compared with *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* presents in greater detail the conditions of women living in Afghan society. That is, the novel presents how Afghan women live their lives during the harsh time when The country is ruled by the Taliban ( 49) .

### **2.7.1 Mariam**

Ramphiphatthamrong, asserts that, at the start of the novel, Mariam is portrayed as the harami, which means « an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to be the things other people had, such as love, family, home, acceptance ». Mariam is revealed to be the daughter of Jalil, a wealthy business man in Herat, and Nana, a house keeper who works in Jalil's house. Jalil realizes that having a child with his own housekeeper will bring him a bad reputation. As a result, when Mariam was born, she was sent to live in the kolba with her mother. Jalil used to visit Mariam every weekend when she was a child; however, Mariam is not allowed to see Jalil and the rest of the family in Herat. As a result of this situation, Afghan women are assumed to be treated as second-class citizens because of their

gender. At the same time, they must deal with the consequences of being a woman, the inferior gender.

As a result, it also applies to the concept of patriarchal society in Afghanistan because Mariam is in a lower position. Similarly, she must be taken control of by her protector, her father. Mariam is thus portrayed as a woman who is always dependent on men. Jalil and his wife, Khadija, force Nana to marry Rasheed, a friend of Jalil's business colleague, as Hosseini has when Khadjira introduces Rasheed to Mariam. Hosseini's depiction of Mariam's family is identical to the traditional and conservative model. Mariam is not only ruled by men, but she also has few opportunities. She is eventually compelled to marry a man chosen by her parents. This situation demonstrates the family's power over their children, as parents are always the decision-makers. After her marriage, Mariam is portrayed as a traditional Afghan woman who is submissive and must obey her husband(50). Despite the fact that, as Mariam points out, "I don't want to," Mariam said when she looked at Jalil. "I don't want this. Don't make me." Mariam is subjected to men's restrictions on women. First, her body is constrained by the dress code. Rasheed is constantly reminding Mariam to wear a burqa. Wearing a burqa is important for Afghan women because it demonstrates women's honor and pride. It is believed that by wearing it, a woman's body is shielded from male gaze. Wearing a burqa, according to Rasheed, demonstrates that women maintain their modesty and honor. This, however, makes Mariam hesitant to wear it. She is bothered by wearing a burqa because she feels uneasy in it. It also restricts her movements and makes eating difficult for her.

Actually, the burqa has been the subject of much debate throughout history. A ban on the wearing of the burqa is a violation of the rights of women who wish to wear it, as is forcing the veil on women who do not wish to wear it. Some women may even enjoy wearing it. When it irritates women, the burqa in Afghan society is a symbol of oppression and subjugation. Mariam, as depicted in the novel, is distressed to wear a burqa because she feels



uncomfortable inside it. It restricts her movement and makes eating difficult for her. It's also heavy, strange, and unsettling because she loses her vision, as shown in the quotation below. Mariam had never before worn a burqa. Rasheed had to help her put it on. The padded headpiece felt tight and heavy on her skull, and it was strange. Seeing the world through a mesh screen. She practiced walking around her room in it and kept stepping on the hem and stumbling. The loss of peripheral vision was unnerving, and she did not like the suffocating way the pleated cloth kept pressing against her mouth. (Time, 54).

### **2.7.2 Laila**

Ramphiphatthamrong states that Laila is another female protagonist in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* that has a story that parallels Mariam's. Laila is first portrayed as a beautiful and intelligent young woman who grew up in an educated Kabul family. Laila's life is filled with books, schooling, and hope for a bright future because her father is a teacher. Though Laila is portrayed as a curious girl who seeks knowledge and learning, she does not have complete control over her life. Laila's life will never be the same again. Her family was destroyed by a bomb detonated by one of the world factions vying for control of Kabul. The bomb has also injured Laila. As a result, she is unable to reach her full potential.

Laila's life, like that of her country, Afghanistan, is shattered. Mariam and Rasheed tend to her medical needs. However, her new life is only the beginning of a tragic one, making her similar to Mariam. Laila, like Mariam, who is much older than she is, is victimized after agreeing to become Rasheed's second wife. Laila makes this decision because she does not have a better option. She is not only an orphan, but she is also pregnant by Tariq, her deceased husband. In Afghanistan, a woman living alone is not an option. Mariam and Laila share a similar situation in that they are both forced to marry Rasheed, who is much older than they are (Ramphiphatthamrong, 60).

For Time, Mariam and Laila are expected to follow Afghan cultural norms regarding the ideal wife. That is, a perfect wife is considered her husband's property. As a result, Rasheed has complete control over Mariam and Laila at all times and can impose his ideas on them (61). This supports Rahimi's contention that the patriarchal ideology underlying Afghan society, which regards women as inferior to men, has an impact on Afghan women's positions. According to Rahimi, « In fact, Afghan women, even until the beginning of 20th century were the slaves of their father, husband [. ] Her most valued characteristic was silence has obedience » (qtd. in Time, 61).

According to Time Ramphiphatthamrong, Each female character in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* has a unique perspective on her life. Laila is portrayed as a young woman who is aware of the importance of gender equality. She is the only female character who has ever attended school, and her father constantly emphasizes the value of education. When Laila is young, she has a conversation with a friend who believes that women are incapable of obtaining an education. Laila, on the other hand, believes that women and men should have equal access to education. This implies that Laila's education consciousness is directly related to her awareness of women's rights and equality. As a result, her awareness of women's rights manifests itself when she encounters difficulties becomes aware of her in the novel, Laila becomes aware of her equality in one scene. Laila, who married Rasheed and lives with Mariam, invites Mariam to accompany her outside. Mariam, who has never been concerned about gender equality and has always been submissive to her husband because of her strong beliefs, refuses to let Laila go outside (68).

Laila, on the other hand, believes that women have the right to live free of subordination and limitation, as she asks Mariam, "We're leaving this spring, Aziza and I. Come with us, Mariam" (quoted in Time, 68).

### 2.7.3 Mariem and Laila sisterhood relationship

According to Orsolya Nemeth -Kilinc, Mariam's character gradually progresses to the third stage of embeddedness-emanation, at which point she is able to verbalize the oppressed woman within herself. Although Mariam accepts the traditional gender roles of her marriage, the 'newcomer' serves as another catalyst in her critical feminist identity consciousness. Rasheed becomes very eager to have Laila, a young and attractive woman who could finally give birth to a much desired male offspring, as his second wife, and proposes to her despite Mariam's objections. Laila quickly realizes that accepting the marriage proposal is her only chance of survival under the oppressive regime. When Laila tells Mariam about her plan to flee her abusive husband Rasheed, she realizes that Aziza, like herself, is a harami. Mariam decides to join Laila and Aziza after realizing they have become the only joy in her life. Rasheed's vengeful retaliation nearly kills all three of them. While the two women are described here as oppressed 'Third World Women' and victims of their husband's brutality, the fact that they attempted to flee demonstrates their resistance to it (102).

Two years later, the Taliban take power and impose even stricter rules on the entire society, particularly on women, in the name of 'True Islam.' Laila is currently pregnant with Rasheed's child and, as a result, is being treated very well by him. Rasheed loses his job after his shop burns down in a fire, and he vents his frustration on the two women by beating them. When Rasheed places Aziza in an orphanage, her two mothers pay her a visit, despite the Taliban's prohibition on women going outside without a male escort. Laila's character is nearing the end of her active commitment. Laila's persistent resistance, at times overt, demonstrates that Afghan women are not all passive victims. Laila's strong commitment encourages Mariam, but her character has not yet fully evolved to the next stage. She remains in the stage of embeddedness-emanation, despite the fact that Laila's friendship allows her to expand further (Time, 103).

Gordan and Almutairi emphasize in this context that , “[...] the perspective of Afghan womanhood (...) shows that Afghan females displays a very simple yet resolute method of level of resistance that highlights the originality of Afghan Femininity within their culture and community” (104). In other words, the Afghan Feminist is a way of resistance.

The author tells the story of Mariam, an Afghan woman who kills her husband Rashid in order to free herself from the oppression of their husband and Laila. Her willingness to accept death, as the ultimate liberation from a life full of suffering that she feels has come full circle, was her only solution. Mariam is regarded as a « hero » by the other women in the prison because her actions are seen as exemplary for all oppressed women. The author emphasizes that the majority of the prisoners were arrested for fleeing their homes, which is a crime under the Taliban regime. This highlights the struggles of Afghan women fighting for their freedom once more it is a double burden leaving under colonization and being a woman in living in a patriarchal society. While Mariam’s public execution is one of many shocking examples of the Taliban regime, it should not be used to characterize her as an oppressed « Third World Woman, ». We can tell from the way she behaves during her interrogation that she morally triumphs over her executioners. She had a few executioners before her execution. Before she was born as harami, she died as a loved one and a free woman.

To summarize, Mariam’s character develops throughout the novel until she reaches the third stage of embeddedness-emanation. According to Downing and Roush, many women will « revert to earlier stages when their skills are insufficient to respond to the demands of current life stresses » (qtd. in Nemeth-Klinc, 105).

## **2.8 Women’s Hardships**

According to Tania Shaikh, Komal Ansar, and Rafique A. Memon, gender violence is not a new phenomenon. It is one of the key social mechanisms that confines women to a subservient position(9). According to Taylor , women continue to be marginalized, and the

discrimination against them is prevalent. Many women are treated negatively and oppressively in everyday life (9).

### **2.8.1 Violence**

According to Tania Shaikh, Komal Ansar , and A. Memon, Women face a variety of forms of violence in the Islamic world .Physical, psychological, and sexual violence are the most visible types of violence (9).

#### **2.8.1.1 Physical Violence**

Both Tania Shaikh, Komal Ansar , and Rafique A. Memon, confirmed that kicks, slaps, and beatings that cause physical injury or harm to the body are examples of physical violence (9). Anissa, Mariam and Laila suffer from different types of injuries in the novel. Rasheed uses coercion on his wives. He sees them as an object to be beaten at any time. In his erratic bad moods, he treats Mariam harshly, inhumanely, and brutally. As a result, she is constantly terrified of Rasheed's shifting moods and volatile temperament. Rasheed is cruel to her, mocking her, scolding her, and threatening her. When Mariam fails to cook to his specifications, he beats her with his belt. Laila is also a victim of such physical abuse and threats (10). She frequently witnesses horrific physical injuries. She was hurt on her lips, tongue, and mouth, which resulted in the breaking of her lower incisor. This exemplifies the male dominant rule and control over women's brutality, cruelty, and harshness.

Laila is also beaten by Taliban fighters who have come to take control of Afghanistan. They beat Laila because she travels alone to see her daughter, Aziza, without the company of her mahram or any other male family member. The following textual reference illustrates the violence that women face, "One day, a young Taliban beats Laila with a radio Antenna. He gave a final whack to the back of her neck and Said, "I'll beat you until your mother's milk leaks out of you Bones" (qtd. in Tania Shaikh, Komal Ansar , and Rafique A. Memon, 10).

### **2.8.1.2 Psychological Violence**

Tania Shaikh, Komal Ansar , and Rafique A. Memon argue that, verbal aggression, humiliation, threatening, mocking, bitterly criticizing, insulting, and alienating from social gatherings are all forms of psychological violence. Women’s dignity and individual creativity are undermined when they are psychologically abused. This type of violence is also depicted in the novel. Rasheed is constantly mocking and insulting his wives in order to demonstrate his superiority over them. For example, Mariam puts on makeup and looks beautiful for her husband, Rasheed. Rasheed, on the other hand, looks at her with such disdain, anger, and harshness that she rushes to the room and removes everything with tears and a sense of shame and embarrassment. During a dinner scene, Rasheed informs Laila of Mariam’s low status in a humiliating manner (11). He claims “A blessing really, we are city people you and I. Mariam Have you told her that you are a Harami ?”( qtd. in Tania Shaikh, Komal Ansar , and Rafique A. Memon, 11).The word ‘Harami’ degrades Mariam and makes her feels shamed and worthless on this planet.

### **2.8.1.3 Sexual Violence**

For Tania Shaikh, Komal Ansar, and Rafique A. Memon, Sexual violence includes coercive sexual behavior without the partner’s cooperation or consent. The novel depicts how men sexually abuse women. Jalil, a wealthy business man, sexually abuses Nana and forces her to have an illegitimate child with him (12). As stated in the text, “Nana had been one of the house keepers until her belly be Gantoswell.” (qtd. in Subjected Status,12) . Jalil refuses even to give the child a name or dignity. He dispatchy Nana to remote area of Kolba to protec this reputation and ensure that no one learns of his disgraceful act or brings him shame. Nana’s life is marsed by the consequences of her sexual result. Her father abandons her , and Jalil abandons her as well. Because of her illegitimacy, she gives birth to a baby girl , Mariam , who is labled as a bastard or harami child (12).

### 2.8.2 Marriage

According to Tania Shaikh, Komal Ansar, and Rafique A. Memon, women face a variety of forms of violence in the Islamic world. (Marriage or institution of marriage' is the formation of a 'Patriarchal family,' According to Rahimi, Afghanistan is a patriarchal society where all decisions including the household, child education, and residence are made by male folks (4).

According to Narges Mirzapour and Azin Samadian, when Jalil's wives want Mariam to marry, she is once again oppressed by society and her family, both men, and women. In one scene, Mariam is seated at the far end of Jalil's dining table, facing his wives, Afsoon, Khadija, and Nargis. The wives arrive quickly at the meeting's point. They've found a suitor for Mariam. Rasheed, the suitor, is about forty years old and works as a shoemaker in Kabul. The wives show their support for the marriage and ignore Mariam's suggestions (8). As an example illustration from the novel, the wives says, "You have a suitor. His name is Rasheed, lives in Kabul. He's a shoemaker. He is a little older than you, can't be More than . . . Forty. Forty-five at the most Mariam looked at Jalil, "I don't want this. Don't make me" ( *A Thousand Splendid Suns*,44).

Mariam eventually asks her father to stop the marriage. Jalil refuses to look to his daughter in the eyes and refuses to interfere with his wife's suggestion. The wives then inform Mariam that her suitor is in Herat and that the two will marry the next day. She will leaving Herat and traveling to Kabul with Rasheed. Mariam realizes during this meeting that the wives want to get rid of her because she does not belong to them what is significant about the novel's postcolonial feminist ideas in this section is that Mariam, the rich man's daughter, is not welcomed in his home. Furthermore, Mariam is only a teen who must live to marry a man much older than her. In that context, these events demonstrate that Mariam is oppressed by

both the colonized and the colonizer. The majority of Mariam's problems stem from her migration. (8)

According to Sadia Qamar and Rana Kashif Shakeel, When Jalil's wives decide on Mariam's marriage, he is portrayed as a silent observer. In the face of the power of his three wives, he appears to be an impotent figure. His silence and weakness, on the other hand, give birth to an uncivilized character's brutality towards his daughter Mariam ( 60) .

According to Sadia Qamar and Rana Kashif Shakeel (61), for the WCLRF report and Rahimi, Jalil is obligated to not arrange his daughter's marriage before she reaches the age of 15. Rasheed, her current suitor, is forty-five years old. In this context, the violation has been elaborated through the ages of Laila and Rasheed, who are 14 and 63, respectively. This incident occurred as a result of her family's absence, particularly her father. (61)

According to Narges Mirzapour and Azin Samadian, the story of Laila depicts another generation that is shown in the novel and is subjected to both the colonized's and colonizer's oppression. Laila and other women in this society represent a generation that has been doubly marginalized by postcolonial society. They are marginalized groups that have been oppressed by various groups that have been controlled by various forces. Laila's oppression indeed, as a woman is depicted symbolically from the start. Laila was bullied by another boy when she was eleven years old. In the neighborhood, Khadim, a bully, points a water gun at Laila and begins squirting her with urine instead of water, humiliating her and causing her to flee.

Laila is colonized by men of various generations and positions throughout her life. From Khadim to Tariq and Rasheed, all have actively participated in the suppression of Laila and her generation. After all of her misfortunes in life, when she learns that Tariq is no longer alive, she knows she can live with Mariam and Rasheed. She is, however, pregnant, and society will not accept her because she is not married.



This demonstrates that Laila is oppressed by multiple forces. Rasheed tries to show her his affection as she begins living with them. Because Rasheed is older than her, he wishes to marry her, which alludes to colonial oppression. This concept is also oppression for various groups of women, including Mariam and Laila. Hosseini emphasizes in his narrative that Laila is both a displaced subject within religious codes and a passive victim of patriarchal violence within the tension between the Taliban and Russian rules and principles go on to say that both systems ignore the social and political agency of Afghan women and that because the voices of women in Afghanistan are so fixed and covered by Taliban patriarchal moral codes and Russian colonial intentions, there is no place for Laila to speak. Hosseini demonstrates how the language of universal political struggles can have potentially harmful effects on the lives of disempowered groups such as women and the colonized, as represented by the character of Laila( 9).

### **2.8.3 Ignorance**

According to Dr. Bindu Ann Philip, Khaled Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* depicts the lives of Mariam and Laila, who are currently the heartbreaking reality of women in Afghanistan. Both the protagonist who are born in different generation are forced to meet in war-torn Afghanistan due to unfortunate circumstances. Mariam is a young girl living on the outskirts of Herat with her unmarried mother. She is the harami, the illegitimate daughter of Nana and Jalil, Herat's richest man. This word, 'harami,' has a long-lasting impact on Mariam, defining her status in Afghanistan and establishing a lifelong struggle with self-worth. Nana frequently refers to Mariam as a 'harami,' which Mariam learns as she grows older that "is an unwanted thing." Mariam appears to be misguided as a result of her difficult upbringing. The combination of a frequently absent father and an emotionally damaged mother creates a difficult situation (794).

Throughout her childhood, she received little direction or love. Mariam describes herself as having dark hair and skin, as well as a "long face," which is insecure of hers. Her mother, who constantly brings her down, is most likely the source of her physical and emotional anxiety. As a young girl, she wishes to further her education and be accepted by her father, but Mariam has been rejected by society for no fault of her own since her early childhood. Less fortunate girls do not attend school. When Nana expresses a desire to attend school, she states, "There is only one skill a woman like you and me needs in life, and they don't teach it in school." There is only one skill. And the word is tahamul, (Endure, 794).

Mariam's half-sisters have had the opportunity to educate themselves and are now planning to attend university. Mariam is told that her only potential is to endure, despite her desire for an education and a better life. It is always in her favor. Mariam is taught from a young age by her sacrificing bitter mother that she "would never have a legitimate claim to the things other people had, such as love, family, home, and acceptance" (794). Rather than rejecting her mother's negative idea, Mariam absorbs everything and stores it away for the rest of her life. Her mother tries to prepare Mariam for a life of injustice and abuse at the hands of men, assuming Mariam's future will mirror her own (Endure, 794) .

According to Tania Shaikh Komal, and Rafique A. Memon, the educational infrastructure, social behavior, and traditional and conservative perceptions are not always favorable to women's education. They believe that women are only supposed to serve their families and are assigned household chores as a traditional responsibility. As a result, they are deprived of such valuable educational insight and clear understanding (15). In Afghanistan, the Taliban forbade girls from attending school, and even girls' schools were closed. The novel exposes women's educational deprivation, revealing that Nana is uneducated, which is why she never realizes her worth, dignity, and rights. Because of her ignorance and lack of courage, she

willingly accepts inequalities. She even refuses to send Mariam to school because she believes that education is harmful to girls.

According to Dr. Bindu Ann Philip, in the novel, Laila laments the lack of rights for women. Due to the male-dominated world, Laila's restrictions on education, choices, and liberation also limit their great potential. Throughout her life, she has experienced great potential in education, numerous opportunities, and freedom from everyone's words and ownership. All of this changed as she grew older and people in her environment began to regard her as a woman rather than a mere girl. But as she matures into a woman, she also matures into a feminist. The novel also emphasizes the limitations on education, choices, and liberation that limit their great potential in a male-dominated world. It depicts women gradually conforming to the rules and regulations imposed by society, as in the case of Laila. Throughout her life, she has struggled to obtain freedom from every man, and as she grows older and becomes a woman, she gradually realizes her place in the world. Women's rights concepts have been superseded. Laila finally realizes that the world is dominated by men, but she does not give up hope. In this world, women are regarded as properties of men (796).

On the other hand, for Dr. Bindu Ann Philip, the educational experiences of the women in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* appear to be very different. Mullah Faizullah tutors Mariam in the Koran, and she learns to read and write. When Mariam inquires about going to school, Nana insists that the only lesson Mariam needs to learn is to endure. This demonstrates the social bias against women who have been taught endurance since childhood. Laila's father, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of her education. Hakim diligently works with Laila on her homework and assigns her extra work to further her education. He stresses that Laila's education is just as important as any other boy's. Women in any society require education (796).

Furthermore, proper male education is critical. As the dominant leader in a Muslim family, fathers must have received proper education to encourage their daughters and sons to follow in their footsteps. Most well-educated men, such as Laila's father, Babi, and Mullah Faizulah, understand how education can transform women and lead to a better country. Babi, a university graduate, has also worked as a high school teacher. Babi emphasizes to Laila from a young age that her education is the most important thing in his life, second only to her safety (795). He says this to assure Laila of the importance. «Marriage can be postponed, but education can not ». You're a very bright young lady. And I know that when this war is over, Afghanistan will need you just as much as its men, if not more. Because an uneducated woman has no chance of success in society (795).

## **2.9 Conclusion**

This analytical chapter is essential and meant to probe and analyze the characters in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* regarding the protagonist Mariam and Laila. This chapter also seeks to investigate the position of women under the Taliban regime as their sufferance and the way how Khaled Hosseini depicts it. The chapter concludes to that both Mariam and Laila suffer from men and women.

### General Conclusion

Being a woman writing to advocate women's writing is deemed as normal, it has a long tradition, but being a man writing to look for justice for women, this is new. When Khalid Hocesini first starts writing as a feminist writer defending the rights of women, it was shocking. He dedicated his his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* to scrutinize the horrible situation that Afghan women go through. It was not really welcomed in the Afghan society, but afterward, it widely gained a world wide recognition for not having a sexist view since the writer is a man. The novel was not questioned for its honesty, truth, sympathy for women, but it was questioned for whether it a man can understand women's suffering which what instigates our research at the first place. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* finds a closure to women's suffering, or is it an awakening to masculine patriarchal society to stop violating women's rights and use women as marionettes to pleasure themselves.

For a humanistic view point, women are humans, they have their lives, they own them and they are independent. Nana's daughter Mariam is illegitimate child, thus from the beginning she is unlucky girl. Because of hatred of her father, she was unaccepted. He hates her because he thinks that she is a bad reputation to his family. Also, Mariem was married to an old man named Rashed whom she doesn't like. She was only 15 when she first married him, she was forcibly married him.

After she got married, he mistreats her especially when she got pregnant. At the end, Mariam kills him to save Laila's life, his second wife. Despite the fact, the murder was for self-defense, unfortunately the Taliban executed Mariam. Even though Laila was an educated girl and her father supported her to study. Despite being born in generation apart and living completely different childhoods, these women's lives intersect in a unique way. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is also considered to the fight that was shed on how Religion, the Holy, is misinterpreted to be used, not as a tool for equality between men and women, but a tool for

oppression. Unfortunately, masculine societies use religion as a cover for hiding their sins and pleasure themselves, which is totally the opposite of what Holy Quran came for. In fact, Good and Quran advices men to take care of women because they are insensitive and need to be treated the best, as our prophet Mohammed PBUH advised men.

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## Literature Review

The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khalid Hosseini attracts a variety of critics to review it because it is concerned with the depiction of the female character from male's vision.

According to Mariam Elgohary, Afghan ladies are amid different intrusions. The characters of Mariam and Laila have brought up the issue of women's liberation and sex value. Their destinies are connected by an awful bend of destiny. Be that as it may, since of women's social standing, their choices are forced on them. Mariam is constrained to wed Rasheed, a shoemaker who is numerous a long time her senior, by her father and his spouses. Because she is orphaned and pregnant, Laila, the other protagonist, is forced to marry Rasheed. In her society, both situations are untenable. The novel emphasizes the rights denied to women, as well as the limitations on education, choices, and liberation that limit their great potential in a male-dominated world.

Only one hospital in Kabul serves women when Laila is ready to give birth to her son. This hospital is severely understaffed and severely lacking in medicine and anesthesia. The way Taliban is so imaginative in their ways of mortifying ladies so much likely to those of today's Da'ish. Once they entered Kabul, a message of the modern law is expressed day and night, in amplifiers and composed in fliers, hurled within the lanes. This law indicated a awesome space for ladies as takes after: Attention ladies: You may remain inside your domestic all the time. It isn't legitimate for ladies to meander heedlessly almost lanes (27).

According to Josh R (2007), Critics thought he might not have surpassed what he accomplished from *The Kite Runner*, but Hosseini demonstrated all the skeptics' off-base when he distributed *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The story takes put in Afghanistan, amid the same time period, the 1970s to the early 2000s, but takes after completely distinctive

characters. The story is based on two ladies, Mariam and Laila, who confront the hardships that most ladies confront in Kabul, Afghanistan as wearing a burqa, not being permitted out of the house without a male, need of instruction, and numerous others. Mariam, the ill-conceived girl of a well off businessman, is constrained to wed a much more seasoned man named Rasheed when she is as it was 15. Laila, a youthful adolescent whose guardians were slaughtered in a rocket strike, gets to be Rasheed's moment spouse in arrange to spare herself from a life of prostitution. The story switches back and forward between the two, who inevitably ended up incredible companions, reinforced by their scorn of their. For him, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a truly incredible story that receives 4.5 stars from me. Despite its flaws, this is a novel that most high school students will enjoy (1) .

According to Ben Newhouse, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini could be a perfectly difficult novel approximately two ladies who are isolated by age and foundation, but who are connected by misfortune, catastrophe, and inevitably marriage to the same pitiless man. To begin with, it shows up that the things that separate them will only lead to hatred and doubt, but within the conclusion, it is their likenesses that tie them, permitting each to end up a given companion to the other (64).

The Novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a well-written book approximately a difficult story with an excellent finishing. This determination would be exceptionally fruitful in unused under study perusing program since there are various curricular and co-curricular exercises that would improve or disprove the perusing of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. As understudies start college, the book gives an opportunity to investigate verifiable occasions from a viewpoint that's possibly distinctive from what was depicted in history course in high school, within the media, and in well known culture. Moreover, a few topics and concepts presented in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* give an opportunity for understudies to look for out extra data as a follow-up to the perusing (66).

The novel tells the story of Afghan ladies who were persecuted not as it were by political educate (Taliban), but too by the fiendish of society, which included their possess family individuals, most outstandingly spouses (as said within the novel). In spite of the fact that this was an unbelievable epic with an emphasis on feeling, the author did not disregard to incorporate a few amusing substance where it was required. A few places basically require sentiments. A few scholars make it through long passages, whereas others make it through a straightforward, rich, and unpretentious collection of important, however basic words.