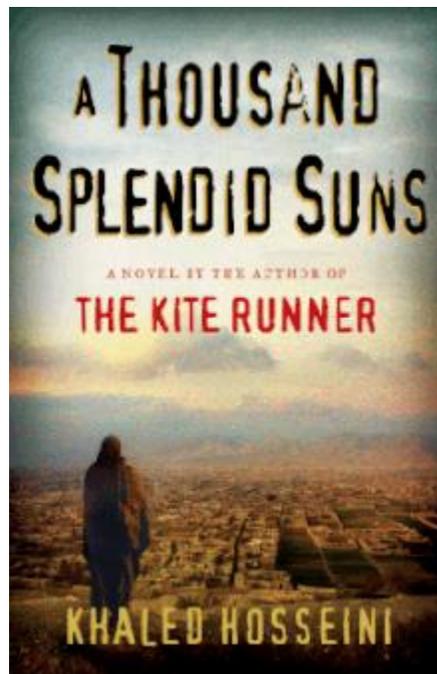


Picturizing the Characters of Afghan Men in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

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Abstract

This paper deals with picturizing the characters of Afghan men in the Post-Colonial novel *A Thousand Splendid Sun* by Khaled Hosseini. It focuses on how the men characters plays vital role in Mariam and Laila's life. It implies the both darker and lighter side of men character. This paper portrays Jalil, Rasheed's brutality and Hakim, Tariq's respect toward women. This novel deals with Feminism and Women's Right. This paper focuses on the importance of

characterization of the attitudes of males towards women and it also mainly focuses on male character and their effects on women in every situation.

Keywords: Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Diaspora, Post-Colonial, Betrayal, Dominance, Equal Rights, Love, Care and Acceptance.

***A Thousand Splendid Suns* and Khaled Hosseini**

A Thousand Splendid Suns is a post-colonial novel written by Khaled Hosseini. He is an Afghan born American novelist and his notable works are *The Kite Runner* (2007), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and *And The Mountains Echoed* (2013). The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* depicts the vivid imagery of Afghanistan. He deeply portrays the women society and their means. The tribulation of people and survival is the deep core of the novel.

Two Sides of Men

Hosseini brings out the current story of Afghanistan. He depicts two sides of men. Jalil and Rasheed's brutality and Tariq and Hakim's care and love for women. The author brings out the visible controversies of male characters.

In the same society, men reflected domination, support and care for women. The characterization of Jalil and Rasheed in the novel represents the traditional hood and both are considered as typical men of Afghan-Society.

Jalil

Jalil the wealthiest man who owned many properties. He had three wives and nine children. The main protagonist of the novel is Mariam, who is Jalil's illegitimate child and her mother Nana, who was abused and cheated by Jalil. All the faults of Jalil were poured on Nana, who carries the burden of the family. Mariam trusted her father that he loves her truly but once again he cheats his daughter. When Nana died, Mariam was taken to Jalil's home. His wives forced Mariam to marry Rasheed. At that time Jalil remained silent and dumb. If he had a little concern about her, he would have saved her life. "In a thin, thread bare voice, "Goddamn it. Mariam, don't this to me". (Hossieni 49) this quote state that Jalil is disloyal to his daughter. He

does not love her truly. In the beginning of the novel, Jalil brings many gifts for Mariam. But all his love and gifts were only temporary. Jalil does not allow her to get educated.

When Mariam went to Jalil's home and had an acquaintance with his daughter Nilofar, Mariam thinks that Nilofar's toys and gifts were costlier than gift of her. Finally, she realizes the betrayal of Jalil.

Once again, Mariam's life is influenced by her husband Rasheed, who initially treats her in a good way, but later, because of her continuous miscarriages, he starts to treat her brutally.

Cruel Violence of Rasheed

This novel depicts the cruel violence of Rasheed. His violence on Mariam was in both a physical and emotional way. Rasheed compares his two women's background and teases Mariam in front of Liala, who is married to Rasheed later in novel. "A blessing, really, we are city people you and I, but she is *dehati*. A village girl. Not even a village girl. No. She grew up in a *kolba* made of mud *outside* the village. Her father put her there. Have you told her, Mariam, have you told her that you are a *harami*?" (Hosseini 216)

Rasheed also abuses her in a physical way.

Hosseini says:

Through the mouthful of grit and pebbles, Mariam mumbled a plea. Tears were leaking out of the corners of her eyes. "CHEW!" he bellowed. A gust of his smoky breath shammed against her face. Mariam chewed. Something in the back of her mouth cracked. "GOOD," Rasheed said. His cheeks were quivering. "Now you know what your rice tastes like. Now you know what you've given me in this marriage. Bad food, and nothing else." Then he was gone, leaving Mariam to spit out pebbles, blood and the fragments of two broken molars. (Hosseini 102)

The above lines reflect how hard Mariam's life was to survive because of her father and her husband's violence and dominance. Because of that her entire life is filled with pity and fear.

Laila for Modern Afghan Society

The other main protagonist in the novel is Laila, who stands for the modern Afghan Society. She loves her childhood friend Tariq and her life moves in normal sounding. Meanwhile she faces two changes in her life, when Tariq fled to Pakistan and another, her parents dies in a bomb blast. Laila is also injured severely, but she was rescued by Rasheed. He betrays Laila and marries her by framing a story that Tariq has died and in an emotional way he uses Laila to fulfill own desire to get a boy child. Later when Laila and Mariam tried to elope from Rasheed, they get caught by police men and brought back to their home. Rasheed treats them cruelly and violently.

Males's Behaviour Towards Females

The following quote reveals the behavior of the male in the Afghan Society towards women. "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.*" (Hosseini 265), this quote portrays the death threat and intimidation that men use on women. So, that woman can remain under the men's control.

Hence, the character of Jalil and Rasheed reflect the darker side of the Afghan Society.

On the other hand, Hakim and Tariq are termed as modern men of Afghan Society. They give respect and care for women. Hakim stands for a revolutionary father of Laila, who provides education in the society, where women are uneducated.

Laila is longing for the love and care from her mother, but she did not show her this love, and because she always thinks about her sons who sacrificed their lives in the battle. She fails to show her love for Laila. On behalf of Fariba, Hakim takes great care and shows love for Laila. Hakim protects, teaches, cares and guides her daughter Laila.

Hosseini says:

Marriage can wait, education cannot. You're a very, very bright girl. Truly, you are. You can be anything you want, Laila. I know this about you. And I also know that when this war is over, Afghanistan is going to need you as much as its men, maybe even

more. Because a society has no chance of success if its women are uneducated, Laila. No chance. (Hosseini 114)

Hakim brings up Laila as an intelligent girl. Her character is portrayed as a quite bold young girl. Laila's another gift of life is her beloved Tariq. They were childhood friends and later they fall in love with each other. Tariq understands her even during hardships that occurred in Laila's Life.

When Rasheed is murdered, Tariq accepts Laila to come along with him to begin a new life and treats Rasheed's son Zalmai as his own son. While Laila wanted to go back to Mariam's place Herat, Tariq respects her feelings and accepts Laila's decision to make a journey to Kabul.

Henceforth, Hakim and Tariq represents the softer side of the society. Due to which, the society did not accept them and treated them well. Therefore the Afghan society termed them as a typical woman.

Thus, Jalil and Rasheed's character reflects dominance, brutality and betrayal of women and whereas Hakim and Tariq's character reflects as love, care, acceptance and respect for women's feeling in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Work Cited

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