

Subordination of Gender in Khaled Hosseini's

A Thousand Splendid Suns

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Preface

History is a silent witness to women's suffering. Since long, women have been treated as slaves and as objects. No matter how the world changes and in which country and social system people live, no one can deny women's marginalization. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* written by Afghan American writer Khaled Hosseini portray the miserable lives of the Afghan women though the principle characters Mariam and Laila. This dissertation attempts to read *A Thousand Splendid Suns* using Gayatri Spivak's 'Subaltern Theory' and 'Gender Subalternity' to examine how Afghan women have no voice under the Taliban rule.

The dissertation is divided into four chapters. The Introductory chapter explains Spivak's concept of the 'subaltern' and 'gender subalternity'. The second chapter "Gender Subalternity in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*" looks at how majority of Afghan's continue to adhere to the outdated traditional and tribal customs. The patriarchal regime suppresses women in Afghanistan and they continue to lead dismal lives that rule over their life. .

The third chapter analyses the characters of Mariam and Laila and presents the contrastive elements in their characters as evident from the two generations in which they grew up. The concluding chapter argues that a novel like *A Thousand Splendid Sun* is a reminder to the outside world of what Afghanistan has been through. The novel suggests that modernization cannot be attained without sacrificing traditional values and that woman should make independent attempt to better their lives.

Chapter One

Introduction

Violence against females is a problem of pandemic proportions. One out of every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime with an abuser usually known to her. Most women in Afghanistan have experienced any one form of abuse in their lifetime. Violence against women is widely tolerated by the community as it is usual with all male-dominated communities. The Afghan society considers females as second sex and hush up their voice if they try to speak out their miseries. In postcolonial theory, the term subaltern ascribes to the populations that are socially, politically and geographically outside the hegemonic power structure of the colony and the colonial homeland.

Subaltern, meaning inferior rank, is a term adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those working-class people in Soviet Union who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers and other groups who are denied access to hegemonic power.

The Subaltern studies which is a post-colonial theory and criticism gained momentum as a corollary to globalization in the Third World Countries in the last two decades of the twentieth century. It takes its force of origin from Marxism, Post structuralism, and became a part of post-colonial criticism. Post-colonial literature persistently generated an enormous literature especially by literary critics, feminist, art of critics, social reformist, political scientists and political economists.

Most prominent academic disciplines in the world of literature. The incessant expansion of post-colonialism in its new account made its own domains of attention extended beyond the fields of global academics like African American Literature, literary theory and cultural studies. Consequently, subaltern studies have become one of the latest sub divisions of post-colonial theory. Starting from the last two decades of twentieth century, subaltern studies, post-colonial theory and criticism increased its momentum, particularly as an upshot to globalization in the Third World nations. If post-colonialism is considered as a consequence of post modernism, subaltern studies originate its energy from Marxism, poststructuralism and turns as a branch of post-colonial criticism. The idea of subaltern was primarily referred to by Italian Marxist political protester Antonio Gramsci in his article "Notes on Italian History" which published later on as part of his most extensively acknowledged book Prison Notebooks written between 1929 and 1935. He affirmed that the subaltern was the term subjected to the people of underclass in a society on whom the dominant power puts forth its hegemonic power and impact. It also refers to, of inferior rank; subordinate, hence, of rank, power authority and action. In general, subaltern classes include peasants, workers and other groups who have been denied access to hegemonic power. Readings of subaltern studies began in India when writings initiated about subaltern studies began in book reviews.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is one of the influential critics who is related to Post colonialism, Feminism, Deconstruction and Marxism. She was a follower of Derrida who translated some of his ideas. She is interested in seeing how truth

is constructed rather than in exposing the discourses leading to the construction. Gayatri Spivak offers the most theoretical perspective, in her article, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', (1988) the answer is a big No, the subaltern doesn't have a voice. She mentions that if the subaltern did have a voice, they wouldn't be the subaltern. 'Subaltern,' Spivak says, 'is not just a fancy word for the oppressed.' (104) 'It critically deals with a variety of thinkers starting from Marx to Foucault, Deleuze to Derrida, where she argues that critical thinking about the 'other' is restricted to the western academia's interpretation of the class. In a way, that would support economic interest. Writers have come forward to represent the oppressed through the medium of literature, where they aim to provide them with a voice.

In her best known essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?," she identifies herself as third-world women, as a marginal, awkward special guest, as an American professor, as a Bengali middle-class exile and sometimes as a success story in the American academic scene. Through this she exposes the irony that the subalterns have awakened to a consciousness of their own rights by making practical utterances against unjust subjectification and unequal treatment. She denounces the harm done to women, especially third world women and non-Europeans. She wants to give voice to the subalterns who cannot speak or are silenced if dared to speak. She focuses on speculations made on widow sacrifice. She attempts to restore the presence of the women writers who have been submerged by their male peers.

Spivak's essay 'Can the Subaltern speak?' challenges the ideas of colonial

(and western) “subject” and offers an example of the boundaries of the capability of Western discourse, even postcolonial discourse, to interrelate with incongruent cultures. This essay marked a paradigm shift in postcolonial studies. It tries to explain why this project is doomed to fail.

It may not be for the reason that the subaltern cannot speak words or produce sentences. The subaltern cannot speak”, instead, because her speech fails short of fully authorized, political speech and her message is being heard, socially and politically. In it she describes the circumstances surrounding the suicide of a young Bengali woman that indicates a failed attempt at self-representation.

Because her attempt at “speaking” outside normal patriarchal channels was not understood or supported, Spivak concluded that “the subaltern cannot speak.” Her extremely nuanced argument, admittedly confounded by her sometimes-opaque style, led some incautious readers to accuse her of phallogocentric complicity, of not recognizing or even not letting the subaltern to speak. Some critics, missing the point, but tressed their arguments with anecdotal evidence of messages cried out by burning windows, her point was not that the subaltern does not cry out in various ways, but that seeking is “a transaction between speaker and listener”.

Subaltern talk, in other words, does not achieve the dialogic level of utterances.

She attacks the Eurocentric attitudes of the West. She holds that knowledge is never innocent; it is always operated by the western economic interests and power. For Spivak, knowledge is like any other commodity or product that is exported from the west to the third world. The western scholars have always presented themselves and their knowledge about the third world as constructed on

their political and economic benefits and concerns.

Spivak criticizes Foucault and other critics accusing them of cooperating with capitalism and imperialism. She agrees with Edward Said in criticizing the way in which western writers have represented the third world (subaltern) in their academic discourse.

A key feature of the subaltern is they have a lack of opportunities which would otherwise alter their fate. This is because, the society they inhabit is dominantly controlled by the elite class, therefore, they are closed to options like education, awareness and equal rights to advance their position and provide mobility. It would be apt to mention that women suffer from all the above, especially in the rural areas of Afghanistan. Fiction has the unique quality of providing a portrayal of the society, synchronic or diachronic which penetrates the message into the very soul of the society. In the portrayal of society, representation of women appears as the most significant aspect.

Gender Subalternity is derived from 'the Subaltern theory' of Spivak in the post-colonial text. According to Spivak, subaltern women are subjected to more oppression than subaltern men. They do not have proper representation and therefore, are not able to voice their opinions or share their stories. No one is aware of the daily struggles they encounter as they are treated as the living ghosts in society. Different societies treated women as the 'other' and the 'colonized' who are the victims of the politics of oppression and repression.

History is a silent witness to women's sufferings. Since long, women have been treated as slaves and as objects. Women have performed the role of both

Mother and the other. No matter how the world changes no matter which country and social system people live, no one can deny women's marginalization in history. Though women are worshipped in the form of Kali, Durga and Shakti the orthodox patriarchal society through the means of force and restrictions like the Sati system, child marriages, denial of education to women, put restraint on their movement in the social, political and educational lives. In the twenty first century we strongly talk about women empowerment and equality but much remains in black and white.

Women are often divorced from the actual world. We manipulate history and give soaring number of women's emancipation stories but close our eyes on the sufferings the majority are facing. Of late, the concept of gendered subaltern has been of much consequence which implies that women have been doubly subalternized on the basis of nationality and on the basis of gender.

The relationship between men and women was downplayed by the community system in a variety of ways and behavioral patterns that demonstrate the acceptance of the men and women in their respective gender roles. While some people believe that men and women should have equal rights, many do not. This may be seen in the way that patriarchy-dominated societies and cultures are depicted in many different contexts in different manner.

Religious ritual speech is produced from the process of interpretation by a group that prevails in a nation where a religion predominates in a community. This occurs in nations that adhere to a strict form of Islam, such as Afghanistan. In these settings, religious language is understood irrationally, which restricts a

woman's options and position. Men therefore possess more authority and access than women, which is accepted by society as a ceremonial norm.

According to Spivak, women are frequently viewed as inferior, and this is actually due to religious discourse, particularly in nations or groups that adhere to strict religious ideologies. Religion actually has a great passion and sensitivity for gender parity when its teachings are interpreted with an open mind and in the context of other beliefs. The foundation for an ideology's development and comprehension will be its interpretation.

There can be a relationship of dominance and subordination within a nation or among members of a particular ethnic group as well as between nations or groups of people. A wide spectrum of gender-power relations can be covered by the literature on postcolonial theory's emphasis on ethnicity. For instance, the perception of women carrying out important responsibilities to ensure sanity and reproduction. In addition, women suffer twice as much oppression from patriarchal authorities that exercise power over them.

This image may be found on the book by Khaled Hosseini, a doctor with the UNHCR who was born and raised in Afghanistan before obtaining US citizenship. American author Khaled Hosseini was born on March 4, 1965, in Kabul, Afghanistan. His mother was a history and Persian language teacher at a girl's high school. His father works as a diplomat for the Afghanistan Foreign Affairs Ministry in Kabul. As a result of his father's employment at the Afghan Embassy in Tehran, Hosseini and his family relocated to Iran in 1970. Then, in 1976, his father relocated to Paris, France. They were welcomed by his father as

well, and two years later they relocated to Paris. Hosseini and his family attempted to return to Afghanistan but were unable to do so due to the invasion of the Soviet army. Hosseini's family sought political asylum in the United States and they got a permanent residence in California after the Soviet war began in Afghanistan.

Hosseini got his graduations from Independent High School in San Jose in 1984 and continued his study in Santa Clara University. In 1988, he got his bachelor's degree in biology. The following year, Hosseini started studying at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine, he got his medical degree in 1993. At Cedars- Sinai medical center in Los Angeles, he finished his residency. He was practicing as a doctor for eight years, between 1996 until 2004. Hosseini published his first novel titled *The Kite Runner* in 2003. Since 2001 while practicing as a doctor, he wrote this novel. This novel becomes Hosseini's debut as an international bestseller writer, because it was sold more than a hundred copies in a week. It was also adapted into a movie and it was released in 2007. Compared with the other novels, he used more images of Afghanistan as the background of the story in this novel.

The next novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was the first on the New York Times bestseller list. The movie version of this novel was directed by Scott Rudin. Hosseini's third novel was *The Mountain Echoed* was published recently. Hosseini became a volunteer for the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2006. He worked as a humanitarian guide for the Afghanistan people. In the following years, he was inspired to establish a

nonprofit corporation which works in humanitarian guidance for people of Afghanistan named The Khaled Foundation. This corporation also focuses on improving the educational opportunities and healthcare of women and children in Afghanistan, a nation in the third world that upholds the patriarchal principles of radical Islamists, serves as the scene for the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Consecutive colonial countries ruled Afghanistan politically for thirty years. Beginning with the Soviet Union's invasion, it continued with the ethnic civil war that saw the rise of the Taliban, Najibullah, and Mujahedeen before being taken over by the United States and now it is again under the political control of Taliban. Afghanistan is treated like a colonized nation, and this has an impact on women there, either directly or indirectly. The setting of the book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* explicates this circumstance. Mariam and Laila, two ladies from different generations, are the main characters in this tale. The study uses Gayatri Spivak's "Subaltern Theory" and "Gender Subalternity" to examine how Afghan women were portrayed as having no voice under the Taliban administration. Many women around the world still experience cruelties like rape, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and various limitations on their ability to make decisions, despite living in wonderful nations and what appear to be modern communities. Similar to the Afghan women in Khaled Hosseini's book, these women are silenced by several rulings that apply to them as victims.

Applying Spivak's theory, this study acknowledges that the Afghani society's strong patriarchy causes gender subalternity for the chosen characters from Khaled Hosseini's writings. They now feel oppressed in their own country

as a result of the loss of space and their inability to express their outrage.

Chapter Two

Gender Subalternity in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Many people have attempted to define literature in various ways.”

Literature, in the words of Abrams (1981), also imitates or reflects the world and the lives of people. It could be interpreted as a depiction of a person's life, experiences, and worth. Therefore, literature has the power to affect readers' emotions.” (21)

Novels are one type of literary work that are used to communicate a variety of ideas. It is a genre of writing that encourages readers to engage with it by reading, feeling, and thinking about it. It is the best kind of literature since it gives readers something worthwhile to read so they may comprehend life's facts. It also addressed a variety of themes that arise in daily life, including feminism, politics, ethnicity, and humanism. The readers can identify with the story's emotions since the novel depicts human life experiences that they may perceive to be their own.

In a novel, some components that complement the plot help to strengthen and make the story seem more realistic. The reader can learn more about the author's message through this. One of the literary genres that includes components like character, plot, conflict, and symbol is the novel. Readers' emotions and feelings are affected while reading a novel based on the aforementioned factors.

The focus of this investigation is Khaled Hosseini's book *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Through this book, the author chronicles a woman named Marriam's battle divorced her husband in Afghanistan. Marriam's fights for her

representation of a women's fight for liberation from her husband's abuse and her family's rejection after she has a miscarriage. This book also explores other aspects of life, such as why individuals strive to live in this society.

The epic tale of three generations of Afghan women and their incredible tenacity is told in the 1990s war-torn neighborhood of Kabul in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Khaled Hosseini makes a statement about women's rights, particularly under the Taliban, in this book. It primarily centres on the lives of two women, their living circumstances (the Afghan-Taliban war), their relationships, the sacrifices they make, and the suffering they undergo, as well as how they manage to get through it all with unwavering, infinite love.

In Afghanistan, many women suffer from violence in one form or another. The community in Afghanistan generally accepts and engages in violence against women. In Afghanistan, violence against women can take many different forms, including physical assault, psychological abuse, and wrongful homicide. Girls and women are ruled by their fathers or husbands from an early age. Since they are still young, both their freedom of movement and their ability to choose their husbands are constrained. Girls and women are denied economic freedom and access to education. Their families place restrictions on their abilities to assert their economic and social independence in their relationships both before and after marriage. The harsh reality is that the majority of married Afghan women must put up with abuse. If they attempt to leave the abusive circumstances, they are almost always met with social humiliation, social exclusion, legal repercussions for leaving their families, and honour killings by their relatives.

Afghanistan's history demonstrates the country's progressive transition towards women's rights and gender equality. Women were granted the equal rights to men by the Afghan law in 1923. Yet, everything abruptly altered with the Soviet invasion of Russia, and Taliban's emergence. Thereafter, Afghan women are subjected to abuse and violence.

Early in the nineteenth century and in the late eighteenth century, Afghanistan experienced the feminism's decline in quality. The majority of Afghan people continue to adhere to the outdated traditional and tribal customs despite all the feminist advances. The native Afghan women continued to lead dismal lives that rule over their life. Females, outside Kabul were deprived of their fundamental rights. Following the invasions of the Soviet union in Russia, the civil war in Afghanistan began. Control was seized by the Taliban in Afghanistan, causing Russia to flee the nation. In 1996, the Taliban seized power and declared Afghanistan as a Muslim country. Women in Afghanistan that is beginning with the working women, they dabbled in begging and prostitution in order to support their families. This demonstrates their opposition to patriarchy. Women being stoned to death became common in Afghan.

Women now have an authoritative voice and authenticity thanks to the feminization of speech. Numerous South Asian authors wrote about the Third World issues women's battles for survival in phallogocentric society, which rules. They include religious, traditional, and political ideologies of those in the Third World using the English language. They created a link that spans cultures between the First World and the Third World. This book symbolizes the ladies

of the Third World from a feminist perspective that depicts them as the victims of their own patriarchal culture and social customs, and they may no longer convey what needs to be spoken without restraint and it was the reason why their population does not allow them to speak.

When centuries-old patriarchal norms dominate customs and traditions, the problem of violence against women becomes more acute. Many Afghan women think that it is normal for their husbands to mistreat them. Afghan women and girls are struggling to maintain their basic existence while simultaneously seeing their rights and aspirations crumble. The Taliban changed the syllabi to place a greater emphasis on religious studies and prohibited women and girls from secondary and higher education. They had agreed on workplace sex segregation, what women must wear, and how they should travel.

Afghanistan's daily life and social norms are greatly influenced by religion. Afghanistan underwent a process of Islamization as a result of its leaders' demands that women cover their heads in public and don traditional Muslim garb. The Taliban's authority led the government to close girls' schools and force women to give up their jobs.

Not only in Afghanistan, but also in the whole world women face violence. However, it is most frequently experienced by marginalised women, such as poor women and girls, and is most frequently imposed on them by their husbands or relatives. There are many distinct types of violence against women and girls, including sex trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, child marriage, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation. It has its roots

in the gender inequity that women experience from early infancy till old life. Many of those who commit violence against women and girls think that it is acceptable and accepted by society. They believe that they can use violence without anyone objecting because the society permits them to do so.

Women and girls are forced into poverty through violence. It restricts women's options, including their capacity to attend education, make a living, and take part in public and political life. Additionally, there is gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is mostly caused by the uneven standing of men and women. The idea that women should be economically reliant on men and that children and women are a man's property and are under his control are examples of this imbalance.

At any point in their lives, and in both the public and private arenas of existence, women might experience violence. These violence and threats frighten many women to silence. A UNHCR doctor named Khaled Hosseini, who was born and raised in Afghanistan before obtaining US citizenship, is shown in this work. The story takes place in Afghanistan, a third-world nation where radical Islamists retain patriarchal beliefs. Afghanistan was ruled by various colonial powers for thirty years. Starting with the Soviet Union's invasion, the civil war between various ethnic groups, including Najibullah, Mujahedeen, and Taliban, and finally, American control in an effort to apprehend Osama bin Laden, led to the seizure of power. As a colonial nation, Afghanistan's women are also impacted, either directly or indirectly. This situation serves as the backdrop for the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Mariam and Laila, two women from different

generations, are the subjects of this book's narrative.

The “Subaltern Theory” and “The Gender Subalternity” by Gayatri Spivak are used in this study to analyse how Afghan women were portrayed as having no voice under the Taliban regime. Even though they live in large countries and what might seem to be contemporary societies, many women still face cruelties like rapes, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and other restrictions on their freedom of choice. Similar to the Afghan women in Khaled Hosseini's book, these women are also being hushed by noises that are present in their environments.

Subaltern studies reflect on the bottom layer of society, not directly put together by the capital logic alone. The theoretical relationship to feminism is that the subaltern is only related to the people of one particular gender and it also needs to be studied with the help of feminist theory. Gender inequality is uncontrollable than the anticipated. In several regions, women's capabilities and quality of life have worsened. Women in everywhere had to fight to get their voices heard and for their participation. Cultural feminism originally evolved from feminism in the mid to late 1970s. In some cases, cultural feminism argues that the way women views the world is actually different and superior to men.

According to Spivak's claim, this study acknowledges that the patriarchal nature of Afghan society causes gender subalternity in the chosen characters from Khaled Hosseini's writings. Due to the loss of their personal space and their inability to talk, they are viewed as the inferior in their own community and in their own country.

Mariam shares a hut outside of the city with her mother, Nana. Mariam is a young woman who consistently hears various accounts of who she is and where she came from. The mother of Mariam, Nana, works as a housekeeper for the Khan household. A man named Jalil made her pregnant. Although Afghan traditions let men to wed numerous wives and to keep them under one roof, Jalil decides against doing so with Nana. As a result, Nana constantly speaks poorly of Jalil to Mariam. Additionally, Nana frequently conveys the idea that the only thing that women should constantly possess is tahmahal, or survival.

Jalil does, however, frequently stop over to see Mariam. Despite the fact that Nana complains to Mariam about Jalil, she still adores her father, who comes to see her every Thursday. Mariam had a lifelong desire to go to Jalil's home and meet with other families in Herat. When she becomes fifteen, the urge becomes more intense. Even the prohibition that has been placed on her does not deter her. She travels far by herself to Herat. She can, however, comprehend what her mother was saying because of the resentment she has gotten from Jalil's family in Herat. Nana is devastated by Mariam's visit to Jalil's house. Nana believes she has been overlooked by everyone. Mariam discovers her mother's deceased body when she returns to her cabin. Choosing to hang, Nana thinks her daughter would prefer to see Jalil.

Mariam's suffering goes on without her mother since Jalil adopts and raises her. However, her presence is unpopular with Jalil's family. She is compelled to wed an abusive old widower. After getting married, Mariam is brought to Kabul. Rasheed, Mariam's husband, is only interested in having a son. He is thus only

considerate when Mariam is expecting. His attitude subsequently reverts to cantankerous when Mariam miscarries. Laila is described as a smart, educated, and contemporary young woman. The family of Laila is a progressive one. Hakim, Laila's father, is a knowledgeable educator. Tariq is a limping guy buddy of Laila's. Laila and Tariq share a close relationship. Many families are forced to emigrate when Afghanistan enters a civil war between the Mujahideen and Najibullah after the Soviet Union leaves power. A rocket that hits Laila's home kills her family and ruins her home. Fortunately, Laila only has minor injuries. Laila learns of Tariq's passing later. Laila loses the people she loves when she is fifteen. Laila's sentiment is hurt.

The families of Laila and Rasheed live next door to one another despite their strained relationship. Young Laila is struggling, so Rasheed considers other opportunities. In order to treat Laila at home and convince her into getting married to him, Rasheed poses as being empathetic. Laila accepts Rasheed's offer after she learns she is pregnant.

Laila and Mariam reside in the same home now that they are married to Rasheed. Mariam initially despises Laila because she perceives Laila to be ungrateful for taking Rasheed away from her. Rasheed cannot be shared by Mariam with another woman. She believes she has taken care of Rasheed completely.

Rasheed treats Laila like a queen at first since she is young and pregnant. Rasheed is going to have a boy. But after the birth of his daughter Aziza, Rasheed became aggressive, especially when he claimed that Aziza was not his

child. Laila never lacks the guts to debate Rasheed but she decides not to fight Rasheed any longer out of pity for Mariam after Rasheed lashes out at Mariam as a result of their argument.

Their economic situation is challenging due to the civil conflict. Rasheed's volatile attitude intensifies as the economy gets worse. However, it transpires that Tariq is still alive. Tariq seeks Laila upon his return to Kabul. Rasheed tortures Laila to the point of death because he is so enraged to learn about it. Mariam, who could no longer put up with Rasheed's attitude, makes the decision to kill him. For the sake of Laila's freedom and the freedom of her family, Mariam is finally given a death sentence.

A person in a subordinate or inferior position is referred to as a "subaltern." With Gayatri Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" the term "Subaltern" became increasingly well-known and widespread. Gayatri Spivak, an Indian literary critic and a pragmatic Marxist feminist, focuses on some of the issues facing women in the developing world in her essay. According to her, the subaltern as a woman is even more cast in shadow because they lack a history and are unable to communicate in the context of colonial production. According to Gayatri Spivak, subaltern women experience more oppression than subaltern men because they lack adequate representation and the ability to speak up for themselves. The background of women's struggle and oppression in the third world is reflected in Spivak's writings. These problems have neither been addressed nor discussed in the Third world countries.

Using the Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak theory, it is investigated why and

how gender subalternity among Afghan women occurs. The framework of the analysis of the two women characters in this novel begins with the usage of Spivak's 'Subaltern Theory' to highlight the existence of gender subordination in Afghan women's life. This is described by the mechanism of gender subalternity, which also includes interpersonal interactions, background noise, failures in interpretation, voice loss, and finally the inability to speak for the subaltern. When interpersonal communication falls short of its goal, general gender subordination sets in. This is because social, cultural, and socioeconomic elements, which are a form of noise, are present. The message being transmitted by the speaker cannot be understood as a result of the noise's distortion of communication. The sexed subalterns eventually lose their ability to speak and become silent.

In the book *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam struggles with a variety of noises, from her father's inconsistent presence in her life to her mother's rigid, stifling love. After refusing both, she is pushed into a marriage at the tender age of fifteen. Due to an inauspicious marriage, she was forced to spend a very long time living in a patriarchal family. Mariam's freedom to live her own life was snatched away by her husband's intrusion into her persona.

Laila, on the other hand, was brought up in a liberal home where a woman's education was valued highly. Despite the fact that schools were closed as a result of the war in Afghanistan, her father made sure she kept up her education. She entered Mariam's home as a result of the Taliban occupation and had to deal with sexism she had never experienced before. Both Mariam and Laila

suffered and perished alike in this situation.

Mariam is a child of Jalil and Nana who is not their biological child. Even though Jalil was one of the wealthiest men in Herat, he was unable to declare Nana to be his wife because she was a domestic helper in his house. Despite how much Mariam adored Jalil, she had to accept his regular visits. When Mariam visited Jalil once in Herat, he refused to speak to her, forcing her to leave without having a chance to do so. When her mother passed away, Mariam was forced to live with Jalil, whom she now despises. As a result, Rasheed and she are swiftly married. Throughout their marriage, Rasheed abuses her.

When Rasheed, Mariam's new husband, told her to put on a burqa before showing her about Kabul, it becomes an initiation of gender subordination for her. Mariam was given a burqa by Rasheed, and he expected her to wear it. Rasheed went into detail about how, as a shoemaker, he frequently interacts with women who speak to him in an exposed manner and look him in the eye. Rasheed was certain that a woman should cover herself and submit to her husband's authority. Rasheed describes himself as a conventional man who believes that only the husband should see a woman's face. Mariam was quite uncomfortable while wearing the burqa and she kept tripping over them. She couldn't see out of her peripheral vision, and felt suffocated. All these were dismissed by Rasheed with: "You will get used to it," Rasheed said. "With time, bet you'll even like it."

(Hosseini 71)

When the Taliban overran Afghanistan and imposed harsh regulations that primarily harmed women, burqa received special attention. Their message, which

became known as the "Voice of Shari'a," went over the nation. One of the regulations dealt with the wearing of the burqa by women and the consequences that would result if they failed to do so. "You will not under any circumstance, show your face. You will cover with burqa when outside. If you do not, You will be severely beaten." (Hosseini 271)

Although slight, the presence of interpersonal exchanges in this scenario is overwhelming. Once again, the speakers are the subaltern women who are made to wear burqa. Rasheed and the Taliban are the listeners in this scenario. The noise aspect of religion and patriarchy is obstructing this interpersonal contact. Taliban utilizes the Shari'a to impose such a strict regulation, and Rasheed's patriarchal society prevents women from having the choice of saying "NO." Women cannot speak out against patriarchy and religion because of their overwhelming restrictions. In fact, women who do not wear burqa are brutally thrashed. By creating dread in the hearts of women in the name of religion and patriarchy, this punishment prohibits two-way communication. The only option left for the women is to wear the burqa. Mariam was unable to refuse. She was not given a platform from which to speak out her mind. This demonstrates that "The Subaltern" cannot talk in the way Spivak suggests.

In another instance, Mariam begs Rasheed to reject Laila's proposal. Another strong female character in this book is Laila. Mariam, who feels denigrated and humiliated by the disrespectful treatment, musters the confidence to ask Rasheed to call off the wedding. Rasheed makes it abundantly apparent that his decision hasn't altered.

I...I don't want this, Mariam said, numb with contempt and helplessness. It's not your decision. It's hers and mine. I'm too old. She's too young, you're too old. This is nonsense. I am too old. Too old for you to do this to me, Mariam said, balling up fistfuls of her dress so tightly her hands shook. For you, after all these years, to make ambaag. Don't be so dramatic. It's a common thing and you know it. I have friends who have two, three, four wives. Your own father had three. Besides what I'm doing now most men I know would have done long ago. You know it's true. I won't allow it. At this, Rasheed smiled sadly. (Hosseini 208)

Mariam's inability to persuade Rasheed of anything is very obvious in their debate. Mariam's cries for help were not heard. It is accurate to say that the issue is with the interpretation rather than the failure of articulation. Rasheed is the listener in this instance, whereas Mariam is the speaker. The presence of two parties indicates that there is potential for interpersonal contact. The speaker must provide a message to the listener. The message in this instance is Mariam's opposition to Laila and Rasheed's nuptials. However, the listener is unable to receive the message because of the interference brought on by the elements of noise. Rasheed's patriarchal ideas lead him to rationalize his actions by claiming that by marrying Laila, he is doing her a favour. Rasheed also cites the patriarchal aspect of the culture as justification for the practice of males marrying multiple women. The practice of taking numerous female spouses is accepted as commonplace and should not be questioned. Therefore, in this instance, the

patriarchy is the element of noise that prevents Mariam's views and opinions from being understood. As a result, Mariam loses her voice and has her opinions and thoughts discounted as unimportant. This illustrates Mariam's experience with Gender Subalternity.

The other Afghan women in this book, like Laila, were brought up by progressive parents. She had become an orphan as a result of the war, and she became pregnant as a result of her relationship with Tariq, who had moved to Pakistan. She married Rasheed after learning of Tariq's passing in order to shield her illegally conceived child. Torment was a constant part of her existence as Rasheed's wife.

Laila's battle with gender subalternity began when she made plans to flee to Pakistan escaping from Rasheed. According to Mujahideen regulations, women are not allowed to leave their houses without a male family member chaperone. The militia members captured them and sent them home without showing any mercy. Rasheed as a result beat Mariam and kept Laila and Aziza for days without food in a dark room.

Let us go officer. She read the name on his lapel tag. Officer Rahman. Honor the meaning of your name and show compassion. What does it matter to you to let mere two women go? What's the harm in releasing us? We are not criminals. I can't. I beg you please. It's a matter of qanoon, hamshira, a matter of law.

(Hosseini 259)

The expert shows that the officer refuses to let them go due to religious

laws.

What about the law, then, Officer Rahman? Tears of rage stung her eyes. Will you be there to maintain order! As a matter of policy, we do not interfere with private family matters,hamshire. Of course you don't. when it benefits the men. And isn't this a 'privatefamily matter,' as you say? Isn't? (Hosseini 260)

The text above demonstrates how the officer logically distinguishes between the public and private domains. Since the man of the house has exclusive use of the home, women who are abused there are not protected at all.

When the policeman refused to recognize the cruelty that would ensue in their home if he does not permit them to flee, gender subordination is displayed. Laila is the speaker and the officer is the listener in the interpersonal communication that took place in this scenario. The listener was unable to understand Laila's intentions because of the noise factor. The law and masculine dominance are the elements of noise that the officer experienced, preventing authorities from intervening in crimes that happen in private spheres. These noise components prevent listeners from understanding the speaker's message as a result of their existence. Laila tried her best to describe the circumstances of her violent home, but the listener was unreceptive because the message was judged in the light of the law and male power. Laila's voice becomes inaudible since the listener doesn't respond to what she is attempting to say. Laila's voice is lost as a result of this. When Laila's problems are disregarded merely because she is a woman, she experiences gender subalternity. Gender Subalternity is a consequence of the

desire to prioritize male domination over the needs of women.

. Another instance that captures the cruelties faced by Laila when she set out of her house without Rasheed can be seen below: 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." But, usually, Laila refused to give in. She made as if she were going home, then took a different route down side streets. Sometimes she was caught, questioned, scolded- two, three, even four times in a single day. Then the whips came down and the antennas sliced through the air and she trudged home, as a glimpse of Aziza. (Hosseini 313)

The aforementioned paragraphs illustrate Laila's struggles as a result of her desire to see her daughter. The Taliban has committed uncountable atrocities. In this instance, Laila, who stands in for Afghan women, and the Taliban are the parties involved in interpersonal exchange. While the latter is the listener, the former is the speaker. Taliban rules, which support patriarchy and male domination, are the element of noise that prevents the speaker's message from getting across to the listener. Failure to interpret the message is caused by the urge to sustain the patriarchal nature of the culture. As a result, the subaltern women are silenced. This fits with Spivak's "Theory of the Subaltern." This piece illustrates how deeply ingrained gender subalternity is. The following are some of the Taliban regulations that are referred to as the Voice of Sharia:

All citizens must pray five times a day. If it is prayer time and you are caught doing something other, you will be beaten. All men will grow their beards.

The correct length is at least one clenched fist beneath the chin. If you do not abide by this, you will be beaten. All boys will wear turbans. Boys in grade one through six will wear black Turbans, higher grades will wear white. All boys will wear Islamic clothes. Shirt collars will be buttoned. Singing is forbidden.

Dancing is forbidden. Playing cards, playing chess, gambling, and kite flying are forbidden. Writing books, watching films, and painting pictures are forbidden.

If you keep parakeets, you will be beaten. Your birds will be killed. If you steal, your hand will be cut off at the wrist. If you steal again, your foot will be cut off.

If you are not Muslim, do not worship where you can be seen by Muslims. If you do, you will be beaten and imprisoned. If you are caught trying to convert a Muslim to your faith, you will be executed.

Attention women:

You will stay inside your homes at all times. It is not proper for women to wander aimlessly about the streets. If you go outside, you must be accompanied by a mahram, a male relative. If you are caught alone on the street, you will be beaten and sent home. You will not, under any circumstance, show your face. You will cover with burqa when outside. If you do not, you will be beaten. Cosmetics are forbidden. Jewelry is forbidden.

You will not wear charming clothes. You will not speak unless spoken to.

You will not make eye contact with men.

You will not laugh in public. If you do, you will be beaten. You will not paint your nails. If you do, you will lose a finger. Girls are forbidden from attending school.

All schools for girls will be closed immediately.

Women are forbidden from working. If you are found guilty of adultery, you will be stoned to death. (Hosseini 270-271)

This passage demonstrates the degree to which the Taliban ruled over Afghans' lives, particularly those of Afghan women. All of these directives to women are harsh. They will be subjected to sexual assault, unrelenting beatings, and heartless executions if they disobey these regulations. When women are compelled to follow these regulations by cruel threats, they are objectified and treated with the worst disrespect. For instance, women are not permitted to laugh in public or establish eye contact with men. Even the act of laughing and gazing someone in the eyes is viewed as sinful. The Taliban force women to accept the lives they believe are best for them. When women are raped just because they were women, their presence is viewed as inferior to that of men's.

Chapter Three

Laila and Mariam: A Study on the Contrastive Elements of Two Generations of Subaltern Sex

Mariam and Laila are two female characters from separate generations that appear in the book *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Mariam is referred to as a personification of the traditional generation. She always dominates and lacks education. From her father to her spouse, she is ruled by the men throughout her life. Mariam learned from her mother how to fight back when faced with extreme domination. Laila, on the other hand, represents a clever, contemporary young woman. She is a representation of a young woman who is intellectual and modern because she is the daughter of a teacher with a modern viewpoint. As the wives of a harsh man named Rasheed, Mariam and Laila are fated to meet. Rasheed is a representation of a man who thinks less of women and treats them alike as his slaves.

Domestic oppression of Mariam and Laila still needs to be considered in the context of Afghanistan's ongoing power transitions. Some women choose to express their resistance because they have been subjected to numerous forms of oppression from both the political authorities and their husbands.

The oppressed parties in this book are the ladies. Rasheed is the "west" or the superior in Mariam, Laila and Rasheed's home life. Mariam and Laila have been suppressed as being less than Rasheed for years. This is not to say that they don't make an effort to flee and express their desire. Mariam and Laila have tried a variety of activities to get away from the stress. Mariam and Laila experience

tyranny both within and outside of their home as a result of Afghanistan's perception of the socio-cultural ideology that is predominately male.

Women who represent the "east" in the book include Mariam and Laila. "East" is inferior, feeble, illogical, and stupid. As spouses, they are an underrepresented group. Rasheed, one of their spouses, is shown as the "west," or the oppressor of their lives. Laila and Mariam, two subalterns, are mute. As subordinates who were unable to speak, Mariam and Laila seek to share their lives. They wish to communicate their aspirations, hopes, and objections. However, women lack the bravery because there are no guys who are willing to listen to them. It is the outcome of patriarchal, feudal, and authoritarian ideologies.

East is a feeble being. She was helpless in the face of the powerful "west." Laila and Mariam represent the "east," in a similar way. Rasheed is a metaphor for the "west" that has the power to repress and oppress the "east." Rasheed behaves arbitrarily towards Mariam and Laila on behalf of the husband's position in the household after learning that Mariam is willfully removed by the family of his father and Laila loses all beloved ones due to war. Rasheed's hubris is dealt with through Laila and Mariam's status as a subaltern.

Mariam is a witness to the repressive patriarchal society in Afghanistan. She is the witness to a child born outside of marriage for no other reason than the fact that her father cannot wed her housekeeping mother. A man is permitted to have multiple wives under the Islamic law that the majority of Afghans follow. However, in this instance, Nana is the one who approaches and teases him, so her father decides not to marry her mother. While women cannot

demand their rights, men have the right to pick who will become their bride.

Mariam simply wants to spend time with Jalil's family as a youngster, but Jalil disappoints her out of sheer embarrassment

As a result, Mariam is also made aware of her mother's advice to girls, such as the statement, "Recalling this now and keep remember, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, the index finger of man is likewise always stretched to accuse women." Always. Mariam, keep this in mind, Mariam." (20) "Men's heart is extremely dissimilar from a mother's womb. Because they must take you in, the womb won't bleed or stretch. She continues to say that "women like us suffer... How can we carry all of our burdens alone? (118)

Mariam experiences the bitterness of living alone as a woman after the death of her mother. She is compelled to wed Rasheed as a young woman in order to avoid burdening her father. Mariam considers herself to be a disgrace to the father. Then, as a wife, she serves as her husband's housekeeper and sexual object while he plans to have a son.

Mariam feels like she has the most stunning grace when she learns she is pregnant. But when the baby miscarries, she believes it is God's retribution to her for leaving her mother and choosing to live with her unloving father. Mariam holds Rasheed, herself, and even God accountable in her heart as her husband mocks her. Mariam, who was raised conventionally with Islamic principles, also begs God for forgiveness. Since Rasheed would rather listen to the radio, Mariam hastily buries the womb of her own child. Mariam also recognizes that she will never be able to have children. Rasheed has consistently attacked her verbally or

physically, over a variety of serious and little offences. Mariam actually has to get dentures since Rasheed despises the rice she made. Mariam is made to eat the gravel by Rasheed for her misbehaviour.

Mariam becomes aware of the fact that Rasheed wants her to live in constant terror. "It is difficult for Mariam to bear Rasheed's attitude, from his yelling voice, derision. Mariam can clearly see how tolerant a woman who is afraid may be. Mariam is indeed terrified." (126-127) Mariam, who is a subaltern, is unable to speak out against her husband's persecution or even to raise her voice of protest since she is a subaltern. Mariam is aware that Rasheed finds her to be a burden. Mariam appeared to be prepared to accept it as a natural circumstance after her mother had warned her about the agony that women experience compared to males.

Mariam, however, breaks her quiet after Rasheed says he wants to get married once more. Rasheed explains that he wants to guard Laila because she is by herself. Rasheed claims that while he could have let Laila go, doing so would have made her a target for a brothel or bandits. Mariam protests to Rasheed after observing this. Despite the fact that polygamy is widespread in Afghanistan, Mariam, who is normally quiet, cannot tolerate it. "I... do not want it... You have made me your first wife for many years...I do not permit it." (262-263)

This demonstrates how Mariam wants to convey her aspirations, dreams, and dissent. She lacks the guts to do it, though, because Rasheed in this circumstance is the only man who will listen to her. Mariam is now reduced to a subordinate who can only stifle opposition as a result. When her family which, while not

ideal, is disturbed by others, Mariam, the subaltern who has spent so many years living in the oppressive home, starts to speak. Mariam feels that Laila is trying to take her husband away from her because he is the only family she has, thus she is unwilling to become the first wife. Mariam has lost her mother, seen her father abandon her, and lost a potential child. Her desire is not to lose her husband as well. Mariam informs Laila that despite Rasheed treating Laila like a queen and treating her like a village woman, she will not allow her husband to be taken from her and she will not allow Laila to expel her from her home and make her the maid in her own home. Later, she decides to accept the circumstances since she cannot allow another woman to be the victim of persecution.

Mariam and Laila's initially tense relationship is improving as a result of Laila taking care of the newborn child soon after Laila and Rasheed got married. Mariam feels that Laila and her daughter love her without conditions. "No one has ever wanted Mariam in such a way before," she says (308). She is never approached by love in an unqualified, unconditional way. Laila and Mariam support and defend one another, especially when Rasheed is oppressing them. Since they are both victimized by Rasheed and the Taliban in equal measure, a sisterhood develops between them.

Mariam gains a lot of advice from Laila on how to handle Rasheed. Rasheed tortures and strangles Laila to death after being enraged at Tariq and Laila's encounter. When Mariam notices this, her courage shows up. Mariam regrets and believes that it was a mistake to wed Rasheed. She believes that all of her efforts to win Rasheed over have been in vain. Rasheed is put to rest at that

very moment as Mariam swings a shovel that was taken from the warehouse.

"Laila would be killed by Rasheed," (428) she believed and Mariam was unable to allow that to occur. In the twenty-seven years of their marriage, Rasheed has taken a great deal from Mariam's life. Mariam will never want to see Rasheed take Laila's life too. Mariam moves the shovel she is holding. Mariam swings it up till it brushes the point of his back, thinking that this is the first time she is in control of her own destiny.

Subaltern, who has been speechless for a long time, ultimately adopts an extreme stance that overthrows oppression and permanently frees herself and her families. The subaltern finally makes a loud, solid statement which is often termed as violent or atrocious. Mariam makes plans for Laila and her family to flee Afghanistan after the murder. She would be the one to receive a sentence for taking Rasheed's life. Since only Mariam was given a prison term for killing her husband, other female inmates in the facility look up to her. Women who have abandoned their husbands or fathers constitute the other convicts.

The climax demonstrates how subordinate and vulnerable are the women in Afghanistan since they are repressed and are unable to express their needs. They favour residing inside the walls of the jail. A prison with bars offers a higher quality of life than a prison without bars in their homes, at the very least. For her fellow-prisoners, Mariam embodies the kind of bravery they need to be able to end the discrimination and sexism that determines their fate as women.

Mariam would ultimately be sentenced to death as payment for her liberation from Rasheed. Mariam does not look back on her decision because she

is aware that she was not thrilled to be born into her underprivileged environment, but she is glad that she will eventually become well-liked by many people. "She departs from this world as a sister, a mother, a friend, and a guardian. a significant individual. No. It is not detrimental. This is a proper finish to a life that started out in disdain." (456)

Mariam is a woman who can endure whatever that befalls her with strength and tolerance. She even dares to do the extraordinary when she receives a sign of love. She has just ever wanted to be loved and to have a family. She dares to struggle for freedom on behalf of her family and loved ones. The subaltern is a group that is marginalised, yet love gives them the courage to stand up at last. Laila, who is descended from a different generation than Mariam, is a representation of a woman with a background in modern education because her father was a teacher. Laila is a lovely and intelligent woman. She has a friend named Tariq who eventually becomes her lover. Laila wishes to communicate her feelings for Tariq to her father when she finds herself in a precarious circumstance in which her family is murdered, Tariq allegedly perishes, and she is carrying Tariq's child. Laila hesitantly agrees to Rasheed's marriage proposal. She actually requests Rasheed that their wedding has to take place as soon as feasible although she is aware that doing this would harm Mariam. In order to prevent Rasheed from suspecting that Laila was pregnant prior to their marriage, something is to be done to deceive him.

Laila deceives Rasheed on the night of their wedding by cutting her finger and dripping a little blood, leading him to believe she is a virgin. Rasheed

appears uneasy. Her fingers work nonstop to unbutton his own shirt. Laila requests Rasheed to turn out the lights while grunting. Laila reaches beneath the bed and retrieves a knife after concluding Rasheed is dozing off in silence. She uses the knife to sever the tip of her finger, allowing her blood to drip across the sheets where they both sleep. It demonstrates how well women like Laila can solve a problem. Laila is still not a subaltern at this stage. Rasheed still has control over Laila due to his heightened masculine arousal at the sight of a young, attractive woman. Rasheed's queen is Laila. Rasheed strives to impress Laila with his positive outlook. Rasheed's male libido prevents him from realizing how oppressed he has been by Laila's lies.

Laila, on the other hand, feels uncomfortable about the marriage because she feels bad for Mariam. Rasheed offers her a wedding band, but she declines it because Mariam's wedding ring was used to pay for it. Mariam receives numerous excuses from Laila. She is unable to tell Mariam the reality, though.

Rasheed's attitude radically alters once Laila gives birth to a daughter. Rasheed's roughness converts Laila's position into "east," which is oppressed. Laila, on the other hand, is raised in a modern, free-thinking family, brings up her the confidence to confront Rasheed head-on. Laila is a subordinate who speaks out. Mariam is a traditional character who usually remains mute when Rasheed abuses her, hence Laila's resistance causes Rasheed to constantly express his fury at Mariam. "Usually after a few minutes, their quarrel will end on its own, but after half an hour, the conflict is even more hot." Mariam could hear Rasheed's raucous noise. Laila's voice sounds powerful and determined, no quieter than his. The

following day, Rasheed barges into Mariam's room and yells, "She defies me."
You must be the one who instructs her (293-294)

Laila lessens her opposition since she is aware that Rasheed makes Mariam the object of his rage. "I surrender... I bailed. Stop doing this immediately. Thank you, Rasheed. Do not strike her!" (294) Laila cannot endure that Mariam has to suffer as a result of her sisterhood solidarity. Laila observes that Rasheed, their common oppressor, is who they both deal with. Laila holds back and begins to act like a voiceless subaltern group in order to protect Mariam. Since Laila is unfamiliar with violence, she dislikes it. She still receives outpourings of love from her parents, who are plainly more fond of her brothers: "I cannot leave just like that... In the home where I was raised, nobody had ever carried out such an action." (305) Mariam is at danger of being tortured as a result of Laila's frontal resistance to Rasheed. Laila wants to be free, so she plans to flee from Rasheed. Laila steals money from Rasheed day by day in order to pay for her shelter with Mariam and Aziza.

The traditions and political structure of Afghanistan prevent this strategy from succeeding. In Afghanistan, women are required to wear a burqa and are not permitted to leave the house without their husbands. As a result, Laila is forced to approach a guy for assistance so that he can accompany them and identify them as family. Unfortunately, the man breaks his word and chooses to inform the Taliban about Laila, Mariam, and Aziza. They are subsequently detained, brought home, and Rasheed starts to lose his cool.

Later, Rasheed also makes a conscious decision not to go with Laila to

visit Aziza at the orphanage. Rasheed does this on purpose so that Laila will be detained and sentenced by the Taliban for leaving the house without her spouse. Despite being subjugated, Laila always loves her kids without worrying about being detained, imprisoned, or tortured by Rasheed or the Taliban.

The agony is not as painful as Laila's predicament after learning she is expecting Rasheed's child, the guy who dominates her life. Laila had contemplated abortion in the past. Her maternal instincts and abhorrence of war, however, demoralise her. "Laila is holding the bicycle spokes, which she made from waste tyres using pliers, tightly in her hands. Laila had been resting on the ground with her legs spread out for such a long time." (348) Although Laila now fears she won't be able to love her own children, this is a very awful thing. It is peculiar. Laila questions her ability to feel the same level of love for Rasheed's offspring. Laila eventually failed to succeed. Laila became discouraged because she could not agree with the Mujahideen's viewpoint that it is sometimes acceptable for innocent civilian lives to be taken during times of war. Rasheed was up against Laila. She has seen enough innocent men being killed in crossfire; babies in the womb are innocent. Despite the injustice in her life and the growing intensity of her anger for Rasheed, she would not have the heart to murder Rasheed's child. Love of a mother is more significant than animosity and violence found from society. After Zalmai is born, nothing changes for the better. Rasheed spoils the young child. It worsens their financial predicament. Additionally, Rasheed becomes angry with the women in the house as a result of the economic situation. Rasheed also sells Mariam's and Laila's treasured things from inside the

house in addition to using violence. Rasheed, Laila and Mariam face the economic hardships brought on by the war's conditions.

The moment Tariq arrives to retrieve Laila, the oppressive situation is finally over. Mariam has saved Laila and her family from Rasheed's brutality by killing him. Laila and her family eventually evacuate with Tariq to Pakistan, where they live contentedly until the conflict is ended. Happiness, though, is not something that comes easy or for free. Laila and Mariam have given of their love and sacrifice because they are unable to endure the brutality that constantly poses a threat to their lives.

Laila and Aziza frequently dream about and remember Afghanistan while they are in Pakistan. Laila often has unpleasant feelings. Laila frequently thinks back to the period when she and Mariam were still together and recalls her father's remark that Afghanistan is still her country, despite how terrible it is. "Laila, you can be whatever you want to be... Afghanistan will need your help after this war is over." (475)

Laila and Tariq decide to bring their family back to Afghanistan and launch a campaign for education there due to the happy memories they have of their own country and their affection for it. The subaltern or "east" of males in Afghanistan are represented by Mariam, the symbol of the traditional woman, and Laila, the sign of the modern woman. Economic difficulties and Afghani customs continue to exacerbate their oppressive situation. Because they care so much about their lives and families, Mariam and Laila choose to remain silent and tolerate injustice. However, they are prepared to combat and even eradicate

oppression for the benefit of the cherished people. The power of love is one such force that would enable subaltern communities to speak out loudly and firmly even though they often could not.

The title *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, which alludes to a poem in which the city of Kabul has been described as having a thousand splendid suns and also served as a sign for Mariam, as the story's primary symbol. Laila understands that Mariam is still looking out for her and her family as she always has because Mariam sacrificed her life so that Laila could live out hers. Mariam is in Laila's own heart, where she radiates with a thousand suns' worth of bursting shine. The Persian Sufi poet Hafiz's poem, from which the title is derived, contrasts the spiritual relationship with God with the might and brilliance of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. One who has attained this mystical link is joined to eternity and cannot be damaged by evil. When Mariam thinks back to Nana's words that "each snowflake was a sigh heaved by an aggrieved ladies somewhere in the world," she recognizes yet another instance of symbolism that each and every sigh would rise upward, congregate as clouds, and eventually break apart into little bits that would silently fall on the populace as a torrent.

Chapter Four

Conclusion

In addition to detailing the governmental corruption that caused harm to innocent citizens, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* also closely examines the limited position of women in Afghan society. The author of the book meticulously recorded many of the facts in the book during his 2003 journey to Afghanistan, as well as all of the experiences that the burqa-clad women patiently related with him. The primary protagonists of the book, Mariam and Laila, use the facts they learned and overheard to portray the domestic environment in an Afghan. These two dissimilar characters experienced political upheaval while fighting the Soviet Union and living under Taliban rule, which continues to this day. For the former, women experienced some degree of liberation, while for the latter, they reached a point where they were no longer aware of freedom. The author's attempt to draw attention to the denial of rights to health services, individual voice, and education to Afghanistan's downtrodden women was an eye-opener for the audience to consider. Feminists are currently criticizing the Taliban and its patriarchal views for restraining women's rights, which had already been granted to them before the awful ruling of the conservatives and fanatical religious group that exploits Islam as justification for their own mistreatment of Afghan women. These limitations were not relaxed again for very long, if at all, until the US army assault that left to the Taliban's ouster in 2001.

The Taliban seized control of Afghanistan in 1994, and they took control of Kabul in 1996. They took it, resulted in a civil war and twenty years of

unrest. Many people believed that the Taliban would provide stability to the nation early in their rule. Later, based on its distortion of Islamic law, they enforced a rigid and draconian order. All of them are required to abide by the Mujahideen's stringent restrictions because they have been wrongly perceived to be Islamic law. Each of them will face punishment if they are determined to have broken the law. Afghan society was deemed to be gendered because of the patriarchal structure and stark differences between the roles that men and women play in society. Women's status is seen as decreasing to second to none in a culture that solely prizes masculine virtues, and as a result, they are compelled to have their freedom of action restricted.

To maintain the full honour of their family and to protect their virginity so that their bloodlines are truly guaranteed, it is essential that they cover their aurat, or the permitted region of exposed flesh. The society makes rules on what people wear and who they marry. Rasheed, Mariam's spouse in this book, forbade her from socializing with their neighbours even while she was with him. In Afghanistan, a large majority of women are essentially excluded from social

engagement outside of their own homes with their mahram. This makes it easy for us to comprehend the societal challenges that Afghan women had to endure. In Afghanistan, women who wear the burqa symbolize the honour of the family and the tribe. If a woman is assaulted, frequently by rape, for example, the family's honour is deemed to have been damaged and tarnished. But it's also crucial to keep in mind that, particularly during the Soviet era, several areas of Afghanistan did not require women to wear burqas. Many women keep their

faces uncover in places like Herat, where Marriam's from, where the burqa is viewed a viable option for women. The first of the four sections of this book, which covers Marriam's first four years of marriage, is divided into four parts. A women can only leave the house with her husband's consent under the strict Taliban laws. They would receive harsh beatings if they disobeyed this regulation. At a scenario where Lila tries to visit Aziza in the orphanage, she is apprehended by the patrol soldier, who violently beats her several times. This scene shows this idea very well. Mariam and Laila attempt to flee Rasheed's abusive household in a similar manner, but they are caught and returned to Rasheed's home by the troops before they can get very far. Their attempt had a negative outcome. They were put in the barn outside their home to starve after the attempt to flee.

In a patriarchal society, particularly one with traditional beliefs like Afghanistan, women were seen as a machine to bear children and take care of household chores. The worth of a woman is determined by her capacity to have male children, who will subsequently bear her husband's name. Rasheed becomes enraged with Mariam at her inability to bear him a son, and he begins to abuse and beat her. When Laila was transported to Rasheed's house, she received much worse abuse from the household. Her birthright as a member of the lower class in a hierarchical system does not help, and Rasheed's disdain and disgust for her are only made worse by her infertility. Laila, on the other hand, is an adult as she likes and, as her father has taught her, she will not accept anything less. Her father thought that because she consistently placed top in her class and could be just as good as or better than boys, she could accomplish a lot in life. Laila and Mariam

are very different from one another as people because Mariam lacked Laila's level of boldness.

Of course, there are various ways in which tyranny manifest itself. In addition to the ongoing against Afghan women, education is a challenge for them, particularly during the Taliban's control. Girls wearing as well educated as boys. For instance the orphanage residents learn in secret because, during the Taliban era, education is not prioritized. Mariam's mother also forbids her from attending school like the rest of the children. The educational experiences that the women in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* underwent were diverse. Mullah Faizull also teaches Mariam the Koran, and after that, she learns to read and write. She debates going to school with her mother and is informed that the only lesson she needs to learn in life is to endure. Prior to the Taliban taking over and restricting women's access to education, Laila had the opportunity to attend school with the males. In a patriarchal household, the senior man has the power to rule over everyone, including the younger men, and women are subordinated regardless of culture or religion. Because the mujahideen troops in Afghanistan support them more than women, patriarchal men are able to get away with everything.

In Afghanistan, mistreatment of women by their husbands is accepted as the norm. It is thought to be a technique to rule out female conduct. Despite adhering to Islamic principles, they continue to defame Islam by abusing women. Islam's teachings state that a woman should be treated like a queen in her own home, adored, treasured, and safeguarded at all costs, and that the household chores should finally be split between the spouses. But in Afghanistan, men

viewed women as the object of their lust. They claim to own women, and they treat them in the way they choose. They thought that women's positions were always beneath them and unworthy of any respect.

The assault on women's rights started as soon as the Taliban took control of Kabul. They pushed women to resign from their employment, shut down all the women's universities and give up their valuable abilities and expertise to the nation. Aside from brutally enforcing a severe, constricting dress code and limiting women's mobility outside of cities, the Taliban restricts women's access to medical treatment. The other hospitals turned Laila away when she was about to give birth since they exclusively care for men. The hospital won't treat her since the segregation is so extreme and her condition is already life-threatening. Finally, she was admitted to a women's hospital, but it was understaffed and lacking in supplies. While historically accurate, it seems harsh to depict a caesarean section without anesthesia. Through that, we are able to comprehend the women's resilience and strength. Anesthesia played a crucial role in surgery; without it, one could experience severe agony. In spite of the issue, Laila also insists to the doctor that she be cut open. The two women's love for their children outweighs the suffering they endured during childbirth.

Millions of people are now forced to live in poverty as a result of the economic devastation caused by the Taliban's control. As women lost their right to earn their own living, men became the primary provider for all households. Many of them make their children beggars due to their great poverty. Rasheed also tries to make Aziza beg on the streets, but Laila objects to his plan.

A Thousand Splendid Suns provides a wonderful summary of the situation facing Afghan women. The way Khaled Hosseini depicts the characters shows that there are women in remote areas of the world who do not have the freedom to be who they want to be or merely to live a normal life. The book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* serves as a reminder to the outside world of what Afghanistan has been through and that no one who is still living there hasn't suffered some sort of loss. The Afghan war and the Afghan culture of the period affected the lives of two girls who were born into quite different circumstances. It is a genuinely amazing and completely engrossing tale.

In general, this study addresses the factors contributing to the occurrences of gender subalternity and how they all contributed to the subaltern's inability to speak, adhering to Spivak's "Theory of Subaltern."

To attract the attention of organizations that may make a substantial contribution to the empowerment of Afghan women, it is essential to be aware of the situation of Afghan women. In the name of compassion, these depictions of the suffering of Afghan women would subsequently draw attention from all around the world.

Following are the findings that can be made from this innovative investigation. First, women are stereotyped as being helpless, illiterate, and illogical. They have been reduced to a voiceless subaltern by men and culture. There are no positions where women may express themselves personally, and there are no male ears that would pay attention to them. They can speak up and even destroy the oppressor, though, if a great force erupts within them. The

narrative in this book also suggests that modernization cannot be attained without sacrificing traditional values. Laila represents modern women's values, whereas Mariam represents women with traditional values. Mariam makes a personal sacrifice to ensure Laila's freedom.

Women should make independent attempts to better their lives, which were ostracized by the male hegemony and rulers. Women are among those who experience the dual effects of colonization—that is, from the men and the rulers who always receive more special rights than women—regardless of who is in power in Afghanistan. A crime against humanity is also committed when women are oppressed by the authorities or a closed society.

The major characters in this book are depicted as people who battle for love and freedom. After meeting Laila, Mariam, who has long suffered from loneliness, isolation, and depression, gains confidence. Mariam gains strength as a result of Laila's devotion, whom she regards as her own kid.

This study may be limited to identifying how women are portrayed in a male-authored novel as subaltern voices. Additional study on books by authors with the same background as the author can be used to get a more complete image of characters portraying the voice of the oppressed woman.

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