

**WOMEN'S REBELLION IN
KHALED HOSSEINI'S *A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS*:
A MARXIST APPROACH**



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by:

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**DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
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APPROVAL

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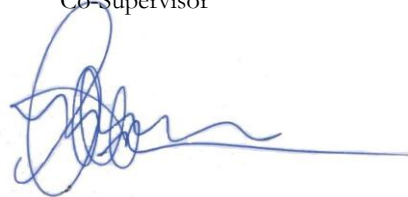
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presented by

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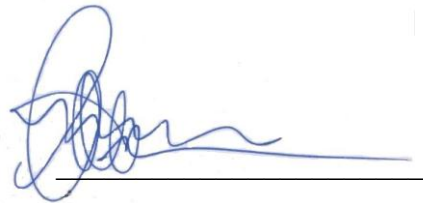
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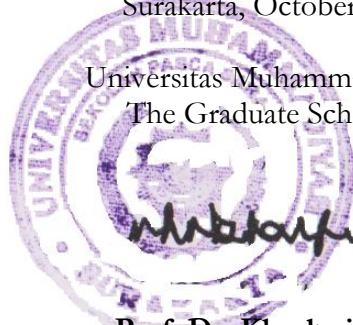



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Abstrak

Sebagai salah satu karya sastra, novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* karya Khaled Hosseini bisa dilihat sebagai sarana untuk menyampaikan pesan tertentu kepada masyarakat. Pesan tersebut bisa dianggap sebagai 'perjuangan penulis' untuk memperoleh kesetaraan. Selanjutnya, penelitian ini mencari bagaimana pemberontakan kaum wanita dijabarkan didalam novel tersebut dan indicator apa saja yang dinyatakan sebagai pemberontakan tersebut. Penelitian ini termasuk penelitian kualitatif yang menggunakan dua sumber data. Sumber data primer adalah novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* itu sendiri sedangkan data sekunderr adalah berbagai buku atau penelitian – penelitian sebelumnya terhadap novel tersebut. Berbagai data baik dari data primer maupun sekunder di kumpulkan dalam bentuk dokumen sebagai bagian pembuktian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan hal – hal sebagai berikut; pertama, Hosseini menjabarkan adanya pemberontakan melalui tokoh – tokoh wanita yang diperbudak oleh tokoh lelaki. Kedua, novel tersebut bercerita tentang tindakan pemberontakan kaum wanita yang terbagi menjadi pemberontakan biasa dan pemberontakan radikal (keras) yang bisa dianalisa berdasarkan teori Marxist. Terakhir, Hosseini menulis cerita berdasarkan sudut pandang wanita dengan tujuan agar bisa menarik simpati bagi kaum wanita di Afghanistan.

Kata Kunci: karya sastra, kaum wanita, pemberontakan, teori Marxist

Abstracts

As one of the literary works, Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* can be seen as the means to deliver the certain message to the society. The message can be considered as the author's struggle to find equality. Therefore this research investigates how the women rebellion is described in the novel and what indicators are stated as the women rebellion. This research belongs to a qualitative study, which uses two data sources. The primary data source is the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* itself meanwhile the secondary data sources are any literatures or previous studies related to the novel. The data from the data sources are collected in a sort of document as evidence. The findings show that; first, Hosseini describes the rebellion through the women characters that are subordinated by the men characters to show the oppression relationship. Second, the novel tells of the women's rebellion actions which are divided into the common rebellion and the radical one which can be analyzed in the frame of Marxist theory. The last, Hosseini writes the story from the women's point of view in order to raise the sympathy of the Afghan women.

Keywords: literary works, Marxist theory, rebellion, women

1. INTRODUCTION

Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is the second work of Khaled Hosseini after *The Kite Runner*. Many researchers had seen it as the symbol of Hosseini's freedom in giving the form and meaning to the story as reflected in the novel. Written based on woman point of view, some researchers had studied *A Thousand Splendid Suns* based on some approaches like what had been done by some local researchers in Indonesia. They had studied the novel by a humanistic approach (Rezdha 2010); a feminist approach (Agustina, 2012); a sociological approach (Puspitasari, 2013); and an objective approach (Indriyany, 2014). Some global researchers had studied the novel based on social and family context perspectives (Pepelar, 2008; Coleman, 2012 and Marciniak, 2015); the Afghan women position (Stuhr, 2013; Shameem, 2014; Sruthi P., 2015; and Ligoria, 2016) and also from ideological translation version (Mansourabadi and Karemnia (2012).

The studies based on the Afghan women position are varied in their discussion. Sthur (2013) presented a complex view of women in Afghanistan that goes beyond oppression and the stereotype of the veil which is similar to Shameem (2014) who contextualized the Afghan women's experience in a specific set of historical, political and social factors which would offer an alternative view of the condition of Afghan women rather than the stereotyped descriptions. The other researcher,

Sruthi P (2015) discussed how Hosseini describes the cruelty and problems faced by Afghani women in their daily life, meanwhile Ligoria (2016) presented the factors that marginalize the Afghan women through the social, political and religious restrictions unwillingly forced upon them in realitypenelitian.

This recent study analyzed Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by using Marxist theory, especially in Class Struggle which is represented in the form of women rebellion in the novel. The novel is interesting to study by seeing the fact that Khaled Hosseini is the man, but in the novel he told of the women's rebellion in gaining equality for their rights in some aspects of life. Marx as quoted in Suseno (2001: 112) said that the history of the man is the history of the class struggle. The main point of the class struggle is to gain the equality. The class struggle, in the large scale, can be represented by the oppressor in one side and in the oppressed in the other side. In the small scale, the oppression can happen between the men to the women like what was presented by Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* which tells of Laila and Mariam's rebellion to the man's oppression.

2. REBELLION AND CLASS STRUGGLE

Rebellion is a revolt action of resisting authority or control; a part of revolution which is uncommon action to overthrow the state (the oppressor) and transform the social structure (Boswell and Dixon, 1993: 682). Rebellion happens after the oppressed class has experienced the class consciousness; it is the awareness of belonging to particular social or of the differences between social classes (Hornby, 1995: 204). Rebellion is believed as a motor of revolution movement, an individual or a small scale of class struggle which happens because of the class consciousness. Revolution is the way for the proletariat to sweep the class stratification, to stop the exploitation and to make a new society, which in Marxism is called as a classless society. Eagleton (2011: 64) stated that classless society in Marxism is a dream of utopia which believes in the possibility of a perfect society, without hardship, suffering, violence or conflict where there will be no rivalry, selfishness, possessiveness, competition or inequality, nobody will be superior or inferior to anyone else. Eagleton (2011: 216) stated that Marxists were in the van of the three greatest political struggles of the modern age: resistance to colonialism, the women emancipation and the fight against fascism. To simplify, the class oppression can be seen in a family as the small unit of the society. Generally, women are considered as the second class. Consequently, they are oppressed by the men. Based on this assumption, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* represented the women's willingness to reach the equality to the men because it represents class struggle which is represented by the women rebellion in the story.

3. RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA

As a qualitative study which is concerned with the meanings as they appear to, or is achieved, by persons in lived social situation (Sherman & Webb, 2005: 174), the paper uses library research (collecting the data which is correlated to the problem of the study) and note-taking technique and also employs documentation technique. This paper uses the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* itself as the primary data sources meanwhile the secondary data sources are previous studies on it and also any literatures related to the novel. The material object of the study is the novel *A Thousand of the Splendid Suns* itself while the formal object is women rebellion in Khaled Hosseini's focusing on the characters of Nana, Mariam and Laila.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the study tells of how Nana, Mariam and Laila represented the women rebellion. Through the caharacters and their characterizations, Hosseini represents how the women are sub-ordinated by the men. Nana is Mariam's mother who was Jalil's housekeepers, the low position in the society. Mariam is a *harami*, an illegal daughter of Jalil. This fact made her occupied the lowest position in the society. The last character, Laila, represents the middle class position. She is an educated woman who realizes that the woman should get equality in the society. Through the profiles, Hosseini talks of the rebellion and its indicators. Further, any finding based on *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel will be abridged into ATSS in order to make it easy in understanding the data source.

4.1 Findings

Rebellion is a revolt action of resisting authority or control; a part of revolution which is uncommon action to overthrow the state (the oppressor) and transform the social structure (Boswell and Dixon, 1993: 682). This part discusses the rebellion indicators and description in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by exploring how the women characteristics of the novel, especially Mariam and Laila and also Nana make a different rebellion to reach their ideal world, the equality.

4.1.1 *Profile*

Talking about the profile cannot be separated to the characters and their characterizations. This part will also present some important parts of the structural elements of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, especially in the way Hosseini describes the rebellion in the novel. In some previous studies, they only focused on Mariam and Laila but did not notice at Nana, Mariam's mother. According to me, Nana plays an important part of the oppressed side. She is the first woman who became the man's victim in the story. Nana also guides Mariam how a woman should face a man in this world. Because of the reason, I will give a brief description of Nana, Mariam and Laila in this part.

4.1.2 *Nana*

Nana is a tall bony woman who has lazy eyes and sunlit hair (ATSS: 6). Nana is Mariam's mother (ATSS: 1), and was one of the Jalil's housekeepers who had an affair with Jalil (ATSS: 2).

Nana is an petulant woman (ATSS: 2) and likes to make yelling (ATSS: 6) and even cursing to anyone she doesn't like. However, she has a good mentality. She can endure to face the bad fate she has (ATSS: 9). Unfortunately, in the end of her life, she does the contradictive thing: committing suicide because Mariam has left her for Jalil (ATSS: 19).

As one of the Jalil's housekeepers (ATSS: 2), Nana shows her position as the lowest part in the society. The fact that she has illegal daughter affirm her position. She is so antisocial (ATSS: 7), she does it because she considers that everyone will underestimate her because of her condition.

Nana is a good mother who loves her daughter much (ATSS: 7). She is very overprotective in taking care Mariam, she doesn't permit Mariam enter the real school (ATSS: 8) but she lets Mariam is taught by Mullah Faizullah at least once a week (ATSS: 7). She does it because she thinks that their lower position in the society will make them invaluable whatever they do.

Nana is the character who introduced the plot in the story. The situated faced by Mariam happened because of her affair with Jalil. When she got pregnancy, the indicator of oppression appears; Jalil's family could not accept the condition because Nana was only the housekeeper who had the low position in the society even that her pregnancy was happened illegally (not based on marriage).

This condition led the society to underestimate Nana. Nana experienced the plight condition by knowing that Jalil did not have a will to be a responsible man for what he did, even Jalil said that it was Nana's own responsibility:

Jalil didn't have the dil either, Nana said, to do the honorable thing. To stand up to his family, to his wives and inlaws, and accept responsibility for what he had done. Instead, behind closed doors, a face-saving deal had quickly been struck. The next day, he had made her gather her few things from the servants' quarters, where she'd been living, and sent her off.

"You know what he told his wives by way of defense? That I forced myself on him. That it was my fault. Did? You see? This is what it means to be a woman in this world." (ATSS: 3)

Nana's words - This is what it means to be a woman in this world- show that the woman has the low position in the society. Further, Nana gives the clear statement about the men's position and the women's position:

Nana said, "Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always. You remember that, Mariam." (ATSS: 3)

4.1.3 *Mariam*

We have three phases of Mariam in the story; phase one is Mariam before getting married; the second one is Mariam after getting married and the last one is Mariam after having Laila as Rasheed's second wife.

In the first phase, Mariam is described as the girl who has the archless face, unshapely eyebrows and flat hair (ATSS: 28), she is also a curious girl of her father (ATSS: 1); her education (ATSS: 8) and the world-outside (ATSS: 14).

In the next phases, when she becomes Rasheed's wife, because of his violence, Mariam becomes uglier and older than her age. Mariam shows how strong she is as a woman. She can endure in facing many bad things happened in her life. This condition goes continually up to the third phase.

The fact that Mariam is a *barami*, a bastard or an illegal daughter of a housekeeper shows how low Mariam position in the society (ATSS: 1). This situation makes her is overprotected by Nana and isolated from the society (ATSS: 7). After getting married by Rasheed, she is still having a limited social interaction (ATSS: 52),

after realizing that she and Laila have ‘the same enemy’, she has a good relationship with other for the first time in her life (ATSS: 128)

Mariam has a good mentality. She proves it in the whole of the story. She experiences many bad things in her life, the facts that she is an illegal daughter (ATSS: 1); how her mother died because of her (ATSS: 19); how her father doesn’t love her (ATSS: 20); how Jalil treats them badly and how Rasheed ‘replaces’ her with Laila (ATSS: 112) and even how she faces the death sentence (ATSS: 192). However, Mariam can endure to face those facts. She always remembers what Nana’s advice for her as the woman; endure.

In the beginning, the story introduced Mariam, she is five years old and somewhat aware of her lower class position as a *harami* – a bastard child. Because of her illegitimacy and the pressures of the hierarchical culture in 1950s Afghanistan, her father, Jalil, was forced to banish Mariam and her servant mother, Nana, from his household. Although Jalil comes and visits Mariam every week, Nana consistently, and bitterly, warns her that because of her status her father will never accept her into his home. Nana’s negative reaction to Mariam’s preconception of self and the misgivings that to Mariam, Jalil, as a father and a patriarch, could do no wrong are strongly justified within Marxism. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in Marciniak (2015: 3) passionately denounce the “small-minded ignorance and ideological hypocrisy” of capitalists, who in communist terms look at women, especially lower class women, as merely prostitutes:

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and naturally, can come to no other conclusion that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to women. For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous that the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women which, they pretend is to be openly and officially established by the Communists.

4.1.4 *Laila*

Laila is a beautiful, clever young lady (ATSS: 60) who has a blonde wavy hair, thick lashed, turquoise green eyes, dimpled cheeks, high cheekbones and pout lower lip (ATSS: 57). The description shows that Laila is not a custom woman.

Laila has an extraordinary courage as a woman. She believes that she can get education up to university level (ATSS: 73); she will not get married in the young age (ATSS: 89); she protects Mariam from Rasheed’s violence (ATSS: 1240 and even she is brave enough to escape from Rasheed (ATSS: 131) and goes outside alone although it is prohibited by the *Taliban* (ATSS: 163).

Laila comes from a middle class family, her chance to get education (ATSS: 59) makes her has a good relationship with others. She is a cooperative woman who can make a friend with anyone, even with an isolated woman like Mariam (ATSS: 128).

Laila is a clever girl, she gets an award for her achievement (ATSS: 61). She has a plan in facing any situation she has. How she decides to get married to Rasheed (ATSS: 114); plans to escape (ATSS: 131) and breaks the law in order to meet her daughter, Aziza (ATSS: 163) show her clever thinking.

In short, Laila is all that Mariam is not. Born into a middle class family in Kabul, she is taught the value of women’s rights by her father, Babi. The Marxist symbol appears when Babi enforces equality between men and women by insisting that his daughter not get married in her teenage years like the culture in their country, but staying in school:

“Women have always had it hard in this country, Laila, but they’re probably more free now, under the communists, and have more rights than they’ve ever had before . . .,” Babi said. “It’s a good time to be a woman in Afghanistan. And you can take advantage of that, Laila. Of course, women’s freedom . . . is also one of the reasons people out there took up arms in the first place.” (ATSS: 121)

4.2 *Indicators of Rebellion against Patriarchal Culture*

There are some indicators to show the women rebellion in the novel. Furthermore, those indicators will be explored as follows:

4.2.1 *Yelling*

The man usually yells to the woman when he makes a command which indicates his superiority position. Yelling is giving a loud speaking of anger to others (Hornby, 1995: 1387). Nana do yelling to Jalil’s sons who always deliver the daily needs for Nana and Mariam monthly: (ATSS: 9). By yelling to Jalil’s legal sons, Nana wanted to show that he could be the one who took ‘the authority’ in *the kolba*, her own house.

4.2.2 *Enduring*

Hornby (1995: 381) defines endure as an ability to suffer patiently for something that is painful or uncomfortable even to tolerate something that one does not like. Man always says that he can face anything in his life. He can endure for any situation, which indicates that the man has superpower in controlling anything.

It is Nana 's advice for Mariam about their condition as the plight women: "*Only one skill And it's this: iahamul. Endure.*" (ATSS: 9)

By enduring, Nana showed that she could still go on her life although she had experienced the worst experience ever as a woman. It showed 'her superiority' in facing Jalil, the man who had made her life suffering. In the whole part of the story, Mariam proves how her mother was right. She endures all the time from Jalil, her husband, who abuses her both physically and verbally (ATSS: 53). Mariam, even, still does it when she is jailed after killing Jalil, and does not use her chance given to her to make any objection for her punishment. Even when she will be executed to the death, she only does one thing: endure:

Mariam wished for so much in those final moments. Yet as she closed her eyes, it was not regret any longer but a sensation of abundant peace that washed over her. She thought of her entry into this world, the harami child of a lowly villager, an unintended thing, a pitiable, regrettable accident. A weed. And yet she was leaving the world as a woman who had loved and been loved back. She was leaving it as a friend, a companion, a guardian. A mother. A person of consequence at last. No. It was not so bad, Mariam thought, that she should die this way. Not so bad. This was a legitimate end to a life of illegitimate beginnings. (ATSS: 192)

4.2.3 *Educating Oneself*

Well education will bring someone to the higher position in the society. In patriarchal culture, a high education is an obligation for a man but prohibition for the woman. Nana, although she does not permit Mariam to go to the formal school, as a matter of fact, concerns of the important of education for Mariam. How she lets Mullah Faizullah teach Mariam about the Koran is a proof of it (ATSS: 7). Mariam wants the better condition and she thinks she will get it by having the education: "I mean a real school, akhund sahib. Like in a classroom. Like my father's other kids." (ATSS: 8).

On the other hand, Laila is luckier than Mariam, because she gets the formal education. Her father realizes that the women should get the same chance as the men in get the education.

... Babi had made it clear to Laila from a young age that the most important thing in his life, after her safety, was her schooling.

I know you're still young, but I want you to understand and learn this now, he said. 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.

But Laila didn't tell Hasina that Babi had said these things, or how glad she was to have a father like him, or how proud she was of his regard for her, or how determined she was to pursue her education just as he had his. For the last two years, Laila had received the awal numra certificate, given yearly to the top-ranked student in each grade. (ATSS: 60-61)

4.2.4 *Getting Marriage*

Getting married will have a direct change to the couple. When the man comes from the higher position, his wife position will be better than before. Although Mariam is married under Jalil's family pressure but in the beginning of her marriage to Rasheed she feels something new which makes her happy in her life.

Mariam thought of Jalil, of the emphatic, jovial way in which he'd pushed his jewelry at her, the overpowering cheerfulness that left room for no response but meek gratitude. Nana had been right about Mil's gifts. They had been halfhearted tokens of penance, insincere, corrupt gestures meant more for his own appeasement than hers. This shawl, Mariam saw, was a true gift. (ATSS: 41)

Mariam didn't mind. In truth, she was even flattered. Rasheed saw sanctity in what they had together. Her honor, her namoos, was something worth guarding to him. She felt prized by his protectiveness. Treasured and significant. (ATSS: 44)

Laila experienced a dilemma when she realized that she had been pregnant. She would get Tariq's baby. She could not tell it to any one, moreover she had got news that Tariq had died. In order to protect herself and her baby from the society's punishment, she made a revolt action; agreed to be married as Rasheed's second wife. The man who is much older than her. (ATSS: 114)

4.2.5 *Having Pregnancy*

It is a common thing in Afghanistan that how a woman is valued by her ability in giving a birth, especially gives a son to her husband (Marciniak, 2015: 6). When Mariam gets pregnancy, she feels very happy. She gets more attention from Rasheed. (ATSS: 46). Meanwhile Laila, how she endures from her pain when she must give a birth for the second time in the limited time and tools. (ATSS: 147)

4.2.6 *Acting Radically*

Acting radically means any rebellion which brings a great and direct effect to the one who does it. It also has risky consequences for the actor.

4.2.6.1.1 *Leaving Mother for the Father*

Finding a father for a good care and protection is a sign that man, as a father has a higher position than a woman as a mother. Mariam waits Jalil's arrival but he does not come. She decided to go to Herat for meeting him directly: She waited until her legs were stiff. This time, she did not go back to the *kolba*. She rolled up the legs of her trousers to the knees, crossed the stream, and, for the first time in her life, headed down the hill for Herat. (ATSS: 16). For the first time, Mariam find the equality between her and the others when she has reached Herat:

Nana was "wrong about Herat too. No one pointed. No one laughed. Mariam walked along noisy, crowded, cypress-lined boulevards, amid a steady stream of pedestrians, bicycle riders, and mule-drawn garis, and no one threw a rock at her. No one called her a harami. Hardly anyone even looked at her. She was, unexpectedly, marvelously, an ordinary person here. (ATSS: 17)

4.2.6.1.2 *Committing Suicide*

Problem will end by itself if one has died. This rebellion action can stop the oppression, because when the oppressed has died there will not be the lower position anymore. Nana committed suicide because Mariam left her for Jalil. Mariam left her alone in the *kolba*. She was afraid that Nana would not go home again. She was afraid that the society would put her in the worst position because of that, and then she decided to suicide (ATSS: 14). Nana proved that she would die by hanging herself on the tree (ATSS: 19). By committing suicide, she ended the oppression onto her. She would not be oppressed anymore because she had died.

4.2.6.1.3 *Protecting Fellow Woman from Man's Violence*

The man's gentle action is when he can protect his fellows. By doing this, the man shows that he has a power to control the situation. Laila did it when Rasheed wanted to make any violence to Mariam, he wanted to abuse Mariam physically and verbally. For the first time, Laila did a brave action by holding Mariam.

Rasheed raised the belt again and this time came at Mariam.

Then an astonishing thing happened: The girl lunged at him. She grabbed his arm with both hands and tried to drag him down, but she could do no more than dangle from it.

She did succeed in slowing Rasheed's progress toward Mariam.

"Let go!" Rasheed cried.

"You win. You win. Don't do this. Please, Rasheed, no beating! Please don't do this."

They struggled like this, the girl hanging on, pleading, Rasheed trying to shake her off, keeping his eyes on Mariam, who was too stunned to do anything. (ATSS: 124)

4.2.6.1.4 *Taking Away the Oppressor*

It is the contradiction of committing suicide. If in committing suicide the oppression is stopped because the oppressed vanish, in this case, the oppressed build her class consciousness to make a class struggle in order to find an equal position. The most rebellion action of the women in the story is in this part. How Mariam allied Laila to show their rebellion toward Rasheed's oppression. When Rasheed knew their plan to escape from him, Rasheed was going mad; he abused Mariam and Laila in very rough way. This condition lets Mariam and Laila do the bold action, a revolt action. When Laila was put in the danger because of Rasheed's manner, Mariam did the most radical action; she killed him.

And so Mariam raised the shovel high, raised it as high as she could, arching it so it touched the small of her back. She turned it so the sharp edge was vertical, and, as she did, it occurred to her that this was the first time that she was deciding the course of her own life. And with that, Mariam brought down the shovel. This time, she gave it everything she had. (ATSS: 180)

4.2.6.1.5 *Escaping to Live Together with the Loved One*

In Afghan culture, it is common for the girl to get married soon if there is a suitor for her. It does not matter whether she loves him or not, the important point is that she has been considered adult enough and the suitor comes from the higher position.

After Rasheed was killed, Mariam asked Laila to escape with Thareeq. Mariam told her that she herself would take any responsibility for what she had done. Realizing that what Mariam said was true, Laila finally decided to live together with Thareeq and married him. (ATSS: 193)

4.3 *Text and Context*

When Laila comes into her life, as Rasheed's second wife, Mariam initially feels herself being replaced. Although Rasheed often abuses Mariam physically and verbally, she thinks that what Laila does is the impolite thing. The difference in class, and Mariam's lack of understanding, including her inability to bare children, allows her to be even more devalued by Rasheed.

One day, Rasheed finds that Laila has made a mistake. Laila is not afraid to disobey him. When Rasheed goes closer to Mariam with a belt, blaming her for teaching Laila to hold back sex from him, Laila jumps on him, crossing the line between hegemony and subjugation. So instead of punishing Laila for her own disobediences against him Rasheed began punishing Mariam. For Laila, abusing a hamshira physically was offensive, and she would not stand for it. Because of Laila's action, there is no beating that night.

By standing up to Rasheed's position as the dominant male, Laila presents oppressed perseverance over her designated gender role of the man. Ironically, this echoes Mariam's Marxist-style rebellion years earlier, when as a child she broke class boundaries, running through the gates of Jalil's house where she was uninvited. By physically attacking the dominant male, Rasheed, in defense of Mariam, a lower class woman who has done nothing wrong, Laila establishes this connection of Marxism by retaliating against sex and class oppression simultaneously. In *Marxism and the Oppression of Women*, Vogel in Marciniak (2015: 10) says the dual systems theory also varies by class, which makes it even more relevant because Mariam was poised to take a beating for a patriarchal violation that Laila, a higher class woman, actually committed. She also adds that women's repression and the "sex division of labor" parallel prominent patriarchal values of production. Although these factors may be found outside the central point of the oppression of women, Vogel in Marciniak (2015: 10) insists they are necessary in understanding that "class and sex oppression therefore seem to be autonomous phenomena from the dual systems perspective".

As important as repression is in the relationship between Laila and Mariam, the moment they completely overpower Rasheed's dominance is even more so. In the climax of the story, Laila is being choked by Rasheed as punishment for letting another man come into his house without his present. Rasheed's sense of Laila's betrayal, especially being that it is with another man, infuriates him to the point of needing to dispose of her, this broken object, this "dishonorable woman" (ATSS: 177). In Laila's defense, Mariam breaks free of her ingrained servitude as housewife, maid and cook and becomes Laila's savior as well as her own, killing Rasheed with her own physical strength, encouraged by years of sadness, solitude and repression. (ATSS: 180)

By killing Rasheed, Mariam not only returns the favor for Laila, who saved her from Rasheed's beating earlier, but she literally "digs" herself out of the gender and class oppression she had suffered all her life. Mariam could not just maim Rasheed or he would certainly kill her. On the other hand she could not stand by and let him kill Laila, leaving their children motherless. Her only choice was killing him, which leftist theorist Herbert Marcuse in Marciniak (2015: 11) would most definitely label as a certain degree of radical social change. In his *Essay on Liberation*, Marcuse in Marciniak (2015: 12) attempts to find motivation and resources for extremist retaliation. In the case of Mariam and Laila's oppression, gender exploitation is considered a formidable reason for social upheaval, and Marcuse says the triggering of this type of radical social change comes when one cannot bare domination any longer: "Freedom would become the environment of an organism which is no longer capable of adapting to the competitive performances required for well-being under domination, no longer capable of tolerating the aggressiveness, brutality, and ugliness of the established way of life".

Mariam wished for so much in those final moments. She thought of her entry into this world, the harami child of a lowly villager, and unintended thing, a pitiable regrettable accident. A weed. And yet, she was leaving the world as a woman who had loved and been loved back. She was leaving it as a friend, a companion, a guardian. A mother. No. It was not so bad, Mariam thought, that she should die this way. Not so bad. This was a legitimate end to a life of illegitimate beginnings. (ATSS: 192)

Until now, Mariam's illegitimacy put her into the lowest social class and her barrenness put her into the lowest class of women. But now things have changed. Since she committed a crime against the patriarchy, she must face a patriarchal death. In expunging the repressed image of herself and becoming "a person of consequence," Mariam puts herself into a higher social class. This is supported by the reverent way the other women in the prison look at her, act around her and want her attention. Among the imprisoned women, she was seen as higher feminist class because she had killed her husband. Here, the Marxist act of the oppressed rebellion against oppression change the course of life not just for Mariam, but for Laila, her children and her children's children. Once Mariam stripped of her social rights because of her status as an illegal daughter, she is now a class-breaking rebel who overcame "illegitimate beginnings" to find a "legitimate ending."

Accordingly the novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* has portrayed the problems of political dominance in a larger scale and the study of the suffering of its people living under varied political governing parties, such as the Soviets, Mujahideens, and Taliban, gives a clear picture of the political injustice throughout Afghanistan.

The first is Soviet's Regime. In this regime, The suffering of the Afghan people, particularly the Afghan women, starts with the former Soviets invasion in 1979. During ten years of war with the Soviets, the Afghan women were subjected to torture, rape and various other inhuman acts in order to obtain information from them on the activities of the Mujahideen, the opposing party of the Soviets.

The second one is the Mujahideen Regime. The Mujahideen took Kabul and liberated Afghanistan from the Communists and the Mujahideen formed an Islamic State. Eventually a civil war broke out, and during this time, gross violations of abuses occurred not only against women but the population in general. Massacres and mass killings occurred and the war took on an ethnic tone. Despite all of the chaos, women were still allowed to work, and get an education under the Mujahideen government of Burhanuddin Rabbani.

The last one is Taliban's Regime. Next to the rule of the Mujahideens is the terrific reign of the Taliban from 1996 – 2001. During the rule of the Taliban, women were treated worse than in any other time or by any other society. The Taliban claimed to follow a pure, fundamentalist Islamic ideology, yet the oppression they perpetrated against women had no basis in Islam. Within Islam, women are allowed to earn and control their own money, and to participate in public life.

The Taliban's Regime made some radical actions, they are expulsion of education and health, gender apartheid, dismissal of mobility and eviction of employment. *Expulsion of education and health* can be seen in the mid of 1990's. When they took control in 1996, the Taliban initially imposed strict edicts that include the banishment of women from the work force, prohibited schools to girls and women which expelled women from universities prohibited women from leaving their homes unless accompanied by a close male relative., Women were brutally beaten, publicly flogged, and killed for violating Taliban decrees. This cruel act of beating women by the Taliban is illustrated in chapter 4.1 & 4.2

Another significant element of women's suppression during the Taliban rule is *Gender Apartheid*. From the age of eight, women were not allowed to be in direct contact with men, other than a close blood relative, husband, or in-law. Other restrictions were like women should not appear in the streets without a blood relative and without wearing a Burqa, and prohibited from wearing high-heeled shoes as no man should hear a woman's footsteps lest it excite him.

Dismissal of mobility means the restriction of women's activities. The Taliban rulings regarding public conduct placed severe restrictions on a woman's freedom of movement and created difficulties for those who could not afford a burqa or didn't have any mahram. These women faced virtual house arrest. As many women lost their male members in the battle and had no close male relatives to accompany them and hence they had no way to escape the beatings from the Taliban officials.

Eviction of employment means that the women cannot work or occupy many position or jobs like the men. This is another important feature of the Taliban's suppression which was greatly reflected on the employment of Afghan women. The Taliban disagreed with past Afghan statutes that allowed the employment of women in a mixed sex workplace

4.4 Discussion

Based on the previous findings, it is clear that *A Thousand Splendid Suns* portrayed the condition of Afghanistan. Through the novel, Hosseini can picture the real life in Afghanistan in three different reigns. Afghanistan experiences three reigns but they have the same condition. They are oppressed.

Hosseini then specifies his writing on women's position. How the women in Afghanistan are always put in the lower position in the society is told vividly in the novel. The women do not have any right to decide their own life. The women

cannot decide with whom they will live together, they cannot get the same chance to get better education and the most prominent proof is that the women do not have the idea to discuss. They must follow what the men say to do without asking or giving any other ideas. The women are in the oppressed side in the society.

Any reign has their own justification to affirm that what they do to the women is right and legal. In the Soviet Reign, the women were tortured, raped and got bad treatment from the invaders. The invaders did those by this reason; they wanted to know the information about the Mujahedeen's activities. They wanted to give no chance for Mujahedeen to overpower their reign. The invaders also limited the women's education right by allowing the certain position only to join the school.

When Mujahedeen could take the authority from the Soviet reign, the women had the chance to work and to get education in their reign. But the women were considered as the second class in the society. They were treated differently to the men. Further, they were exploited to work and got a little payment for their work. The condition was getting worse by the fact that in Mujahedeen reign, the never ending civil war broke out.

Finally the civil war could end and Taliban were the winner of it. In Taliban's reign, the women got the worse condition. They could not go alone, they could not get a chance to get education and even to argue with the men. The Taliban used Shariah (Islamic Law) as their justification. They did not accept any reason for 'any mistake' done by the women.

Through Mariam, Hosseini gives the real pictures of reality in Afghanistan during those three reigns. How women are always oppressed and put in the lowest part of the society, even in a family. Further, through Laila, Hosseini shows that the condition can be improved if the women are educated. By education, the women will realize their rights and have any courage to rebel any oppression done to them without the right reason.

4.5 Khaled Hosseini's Concern of Women's Rebellion

It is interesting to know the reasons behind the main theme of his second novel – A Thousand Splendid Suns; the Afghan women plight was taken to be the story in the novel. In this novel, he portrays the everyday life of two women who became victims of oppression. It is very difficult for a man to act, to see and even to retell from the woman's point of view but Hosseini can do it perfectly. He can picture the Afghan women condition well. How Hosseini, as a man, take the women plight and oppression into his main discussion of the novel had attracted many critics to know the reason behind it. Many people wonder where Hosseini got his inspiration because it is not easy to write from a woman's point of view while being a man besides, but Hosseini explains that:

In the spring of 2003, I went to Kabul, and I recall seeing these burqa-clad women sitting at street corners, with four, five, six children, begging for change. I remember watching them walking in pairs up the street, trailed by their children in ragged clothes, and wondering how life had brought them to that point. What were their dreams, hopes, longings? Had they been in love? Who were their husbands? What had they lost, whom had they lost, in the wars that plagued Afghanistan for two decades?

....

When I began writing A Thousand Splendid Suns, I found myself thinking about those resilient women over and over. Though no one woman that I met in Kabul inspired either Laila or Mariam, their voices, faces, and their incredible stories of survival were always with me, and a good part of my inspiration for this novel came from their collective spirit. (www.khaledhosseini.com and Pepelar, 2008: 13)

The conclusion is that Hosseini did not want to speak for these women but he wanted to raise sympathy for women in Afghanistan. He continues explaining his intention with A Thousand Splendid Suns on his website, where he writes:

As an Afghan, I would like readers to walk away with a sense of empathy for Afghans, and more specifically for Afghan women, on whom the effects of war and extremism have been devastating. I hope this novel brings depth, nuance, and emotional subtext to the familiar image of the burqa-clad woman walking down a dusty street. (Khaled Hosseini in Pepelar, 2008: 13)

After knowing the reason behind the novel theme, it will be easier for me to breakdown the women rebellion portrayed in A Thousand Splendid Suns. By finding some indicators of women rebellion in the novel, which were discussed previously, I will try to know the main point of Hosseini's view related to the women oppression and how to end it.

5. CONCLUSION

After studying and analyzing Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, some conclusions can be drawn as follows. First, Hosseini describes the rebellion through the women characters that are subordinated by the men characters to show the oppression relationship. Second, the novel tells of the women's rebellion actions which are divided into the common rebellion and the radical one. In the story, the radical one is proved as the way to end the women oppression. Although the radical rebellion action can end the class oppression instantly, it is not what Hosseini offers to end the women's oppression permanently. The radical rebellion action will take a risky consequence. How Mariam must die because of her rebellion action is a proof of it. Hosseini describes clearly how education will give the women the equality to the men. In the story, he says both directly and indirectly about the importance of education for the women. Moreover, he also underlines how the educated women can give a significant change to the nation. The last, Hosseini writes the story from the women's point of view in order to raise the sympathy of the Afghan women. The fact that he was born in Afghanistan before moving to United States of America shows how he can write the story perfectly. He knows the real condition of the Afghan women. That is why he created the characters of Nana, Mariam and Laila. By those characters, he can bring the readers into 'the reality' and by feeling it directly; he hopes that the readers will give their sympathy to the Afghan women

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