

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS

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Abstract. This article examines Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* from a feminist perspective, focusing on the representation of women in a patriarchal Afghan society. The novel highlights the social, cultural, and domestic oppression faced by women, including forced marriage, violence, and marginalization. At the same time, it presents women as resilient individuals who resist oppression through endurance, emotional strength, and solidarity. By analyzing the experiences of female characters, this study argues that Hosseini challenges traditional patriarchal norms and emphasizes the importance of female bonding as a form of resistance. The article contributes to feminist literary studies by showing how women's voices and struggles are central to the narrative.

Keywords: Feminism, Patriarchy, Women, Resistance, Afghan Society, Khaled Hosseini.

Introduction. Literature has long been used as a medium to reflect social realities and challenge dominant power structures. Feminist literary criticism focuses on how texts represent women, gender roles, and power relations within society. Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* provides a powerful portrayal of Afghan women living under patriarchal control. The novel explores their suffering, silence, and struggles, while also highlighting their strength and resistance. This article analyzes the novel from a feminist perspective to understand how women's experiences are shaped by patriarchy and how they respond to oppression.

Feminism seeks to examine and challenge gender inequality and male dominance in society. Patriarchy refers to a social system in which men hold power and women are subordinated in family, culture, and institutions. In patriarchal societies, women often experience limited freedom, lack of education, and domestic violence. Feminist critics argue that literature can expose these injustices and give voice to marginalized women. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, patriarchy is shown as a controlling force that affects women's identities, choices, and lives.

The female characters in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are portrayed as victims of social injustice and gender discrimination. Women are denied basic rights such as education, independence, and personal freedom. Marriage is often imposed, and obedience is expected.

Through these portrayals, Hosseini reflects the harsh realities faced by many women in traditional societies. However, the novel does not depict women as weak or passive; instead, it presents them as emotionally strong individuals who endure suffering with dignity.

Suffering is a central theme in the novel, but it is not presented as meaningless pain.

Women endure physical and emotional abuse, yet they continue to resist oppression in subtle and powerful ways. Their resistance is expressed through silence, endurance, and moral courage. Rather than open rebellion, their strength lies in survival and emotional resilience.

Hosseini suggests that even in restrictive conditions, women can challenge patriarchy by refusing to lose their humanity.

One of the most important feminist elements in the novel is female solidarity. The bond between women provides emotional support and protection against male dominance. Through mutual understanding and care, women find strength and hope. This solidarity becomes a form of resistance that helps them survive and reclaim their dignity. The novel emphasizes that unity among women can weaken patriarchal control and create spaces of empowerment.

Several scholars have explored the representation of women and patriarchy in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Feminist critics emphasize how the novel portrays women as victims of gender-based oppression while also highlighting their resilience and moral strength.

Hosseini's narrative has been widely discussed in relation to themes such as patriarchy, domestic violence, and female solidarity. Feminist theorists like Simone de Beauvoir and Hélène Cixous provide a useful framework for understanding women's marginalization and resistance.

Studies in feminist literary criticism suggest that literature plays a vital role in giving voice to silenced women and challenging dominant patriarchal ideologies. These critical perspectives help situate Hosseini's novel within broader feminist and postcolonial literary discussions.

In conclusion, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* presents a strong feminist message by exposing the realities of women's oppression in a patriarchal society while highlighting their resilience and solidarity. Hosseini portrays women as central figures whose experiences reflect broader social issues related to gender inequality. Through suffering, resistance, and mutual support, women challenge patriarchal norms and assert their moral strength. This study shows that the novel is not only a story of hardship but also a tribute to women's endurance and courage.

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