

Basic Personal Power to Resist Male Supremacist in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Dr. Suci Suryani¹

Alumni of Language and Literature Education
Doctorate Program, UNESA
Indonesia
sucisuryani@mhs.unesa.ac.id¹

Prof. Fabiola D. Kurnia², Pratiwi Retnaningdyah, Ph.D³

Language and Literature Education
Doctorate Program, UNESA
Indonesia
fabkurnia@gmail.com², pratiwiretnaningdyah@unesa.ac.id³

Abstract—The study aims to analyze three gender issues embedded in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Firstly, it asks sexist oppression experienced by the women protagonists. Secondly, it puts a question to women bonding built between the women protagonists. Thirdly, it enquires basic personal power exercised by the women protagonists. On the basis of bell hooks (1984) and Biana (2000), those three problems in the study are analyzed interrelatedly to show that women have power to resist male supremacist's interpretation of women reality. Besides, the study is conducted since no previous studies analyzed the three problems interrelatedly on the basis of the two theories used. The study applies the content analysis method to analyze the author's narration, monolog, and dialog that show the three problems or issues in the novel. The results of the study are divided into three parts of which describe each of three issues. Firstly, the women protagonists experience sexist oppression in the form of verbal bullying, psychological, and physical abuse. Secondly, the women protagonists obtain solidarity from the women bonding that lead them build the front unity. Thirdly, the women protagonists are able to exercise their basic personal power from the front unity to resist the male supremacist interpretation of their reality as the subordinations who are dominated and oppressed.

Keywords—*sexist oppression; women power; women solidarity; A Thousand Splendid Suns*

DOI: 10.7176/JLLL/99-04

Publication date: November 30th 2023

Introduction

The personal basic power refers to resistance and strength exercised by woman to challenge and stop sexist oppression against her. It is gender issues that women are defined as marginal society so that they are dominated and oppressed. However, by sharing sources they bond each other to build solidarity. Moreover, the strength encourages them to exercise their basic personal power to stop sexist oppression over them. Through the analysis of female protagonists who exercise their basic personal power, the female protagonists' sexist oppression, solidarity, and resistance and strength as those are portrayed in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* will be examined.

Women can reject the status assigned by established social mythology which creates a prejudice that women are weak and need another hand, specifically men as the superior to survive or protect them. Even if they are exploited, poor, and oppressed they can exercise some basic personal power to reject the powerful definition of their reality. Moreover they can develop their positive concept as they are able to exercise their power to reject the femaleness defined by the powerful which mirrors male supremacist interpretations of women's reality. The resistance and the strength they perform can potentially intensify consciousness and awareness of the need to end male domination in a context where the idea of hierarchy is the basis of human interaction [1]

Male domination in the patriarchal society causes sexist oppression that forms gender problematizing challenged by women around the world since time immemorial till nowadays [2]. To end sexist oppression, women must perform the power of solidarity which enables women to build a united front in order to eliminate the barriers that separate them, such as sexist attitudes, class privilege, and any other presupposition. When women build solidarity between or among individual women or groups that means they share the strength, their

identity, resources, and criticize the feminist movement that is equality to men as the purpose. Nevertheless, they should not bond with each other based on the shared victimization that leads them to consider that to be women is to be a victim that demoralizes women psychologically. It can be drawn as the illation that the tenet for women bonding is sharing strength, identity, and resources between or among women so that they can be together to struggle against sexist oppression yet it is not suggested to unite based on the women shared experiences of oppression since it will attenuate women and emphasize women as subordinate, marginal, secondary citizen.

Sexist oppression mostly occurs to women. It is institutionally and socially immortalized by individuals who oppress, dominate, exploit, and by the victim themselves. Women who are victimized by sexist oppression experience defeat physically, mentally, and spiritually daily so that they feel powerless to change their condition in life. Moreover they accept their destiny to be victims of sexist oppression without collective anger and visible questions. In such conditions, they are enforced by familial and social pressure not to articulate their sexist experience which is considered taboo in society [3]. All the more, it sometimes happens in disguised [4]. Feminism activists struggle to end sexist oppression so that it will give positive impact not only for specific group of women, specific class or race of women but also for women all around the world who live under male authority as well. The aim of the struggle is not to privilege women over men. Rather the purpose is to transform a meaningful way of all women's lives. It is stated that sexist oppression refers to women as the victims of any kind of oppression. The fighting to end sexist oppression has the purpose not only for the specific women in terms of class and race yet the purpose is to change all women's lives to be better.

The issues regarding women and their efforts against men supremacy are elaborated by the male well-known Diaspora writer who come from Afghanistan and become American citizen, namely Khaled Hosseini. His move to America in order to get asylum due to the war happening in Afghanistan is reflected in their novel. He narrates in his novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) the hardship life of the female characters due to the patriarchal system applied in the society and the political conflict happening in Afghan as the setting of the story as well. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, a novel by Khaled Hosseini does not only achieve the favourable republication reviews from Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, Library Journal, and Booklist but also becomes a number one New York Times bestseller for fifteens weeks following its release in 2007 as well. Mariam and Laila are the female protagonists who are suffered from sexist oppression conducted by their own husband. Yet, they finally can stop sexist oppression as they exercise their personal basic power. Their power are gained as they are able to share their source that lead them bonding and build front unity.

Based on the background stated previously, there are three questions set in the analysis of female protagonists who exercise their personal basic power to challenge the male antagonists' domination in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. First is to ask about sexist oppression the female protagonists experience. Second is to inquire about the solidarity they obtain from the other characters to lead them bonding and build front unity. Third is to examine the personal basic power that they exercise to stop sexist oppression. Those three questions formulated in the study become the purpose of the study.

As the purpose of the study will have been accomplished, the exploratory study will also be achieved that is to explore the new perspective on power that is commonly defined by the society as domination and control over others to be resistance and strength or creative and life-affirming. The previous definition means that men are powerful yet women are powerless when it is connected to the over others when men and women do relation. The new perception thus changes the perspective on power that lead women from powerless to powerful as they challenge male domination. relation between men and women. The new perception defines no domination or control

LITERATURE REVIEW

To examine the three issues elaborated in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, feminism theory proposed by bell hooks (1984) and extended by Biana (2000) is applied. Under feminism theory by bell hooks (1984), there are sexist oppression, women solidarity, and women power what are necessary to provide to lead the three issues challenged by the the female protagonists in the novel can be revealed well.

a. Feminism

According to bell hooks (1984) feminism should be a political movement in order to have transformative impact on society. She adds that women who are suffered from sextits oppression should become the attention to feminism movement. Some factor namely class, race, sexual preferences, religion, and any other prejudices that make women diffrent are the potential factors to lead oppression force in the lives of individual woman. Even sexism is a system of domination is institutionalized that leads women in the

oppressive situation. Being oppressed makes women experience the chance to have absence of choice. It means that the oppressor exploits and discriminates the oppressed on the basis of sex. The term oppression is very necessary since it places feminist struggle in a radical political framework.

The definition of feminism should serve as points of unification so that feminists have strong foundation to construct theory or engage in overall meaningful praxis. When feminism is defined as a social equality with men it will only effect particular women, such as middle upper class women who are struggle to have an equal chance with men to have carrier opportunity. While the working class and poor women their fate will remain the same as the victimized women who are oppressed based on their sexist. Hence bell hooks (1984) proposed that feminism is focused to the struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination and reorganizing society so that woman can have self-development. Eventually, feminism is defined as the struggle to end sexist oppression including class, race, and sex oppression in order to develop theory of feminism (bell hooks, 1984). Biana called bell hooks's perspective on feminism as a revolutionary feminism which proposes a unifying definition of feminism so that disinterest in feminism would not grow.

b. Sexist Oppression

Women who are most victimized by sexist oppression, they experience daily assaulted physically, mentally, and spiritually. Yet, they are powerless to change their condition in life. They are the silent majority who never protest or show their collective anger. However, bell hooks (1984) explained that they accept their lot in life with no visible questions. Their condition shows that women do not exist. They experience such a sexism since they live daily in oppressive situation and get awareness of patriarchal politics from their lived experience. Hence they develop their strategy to do resistance eventhough it is not a sustained or organized bases.

The sexism should be a focus for feminism movement and its aim is to give benefit for all women and it does not give privillage women over men. Even it has the power to transform in a meaningful way all our lives. Sexism should give the direction for feminist movement to struggle to exterminate sexist oppression on all our lives. Additionally, bell hooks (1984) explained that sexism is primarily important due to its practice of domination experienced by most people. Beside it is the basis of all other oppression and it is happened in family setting. Most children first learned the meaning and the practice of hiearchical rule in which male supremacy is over oppression of women. It means they first learned and accepted the relationship of the superordination - subordination and suprior - inferior as natural.

c. Women Solidarity

Women should struggle to obtain political solidarity since it is a revolutionary achievement. The vision of Sisterhood which is based on the idea of common oppression is first evoked by women liberationists. Bourgeois white women who are radical and liberal in perspective are primarily believers in the notion of common oppression. The idea of common oppression is false that hides the nature of women's complex social reality. The complex social reality women faced are that they are divided into racism, sexist attitudes, classism, and any other prejudices. The divisions must be confronted and eliminated by having eternal women bonding and planning some necessary steps [5]. Whatever experiences of oppression women share will not eliminate the divisions.

d. Women Power

Power is indicated with control over people or things and domination. Feminist activists has two important responses towards the issue of power, firstly they emphasize on women's powerlessness due to male practice of power as domination and secondly they promote women power to request equal protection in politic, equal access in wealth, and equal rights. Cestelle Ware in bell hook (1984) explains that women power refers to the radical concept of power to end domination since domination of one human being by another which is the primary evil in society.

METHODS

The study notices the text's content of the novel, so the design applied in this study complies with the design of content analysis. According to Curtis [6] that content analysis as a research used to establish the attendance of particular words or concepts within texts or other media content such as in psychology, sociology, political science, ethnography, gender studies, literature, and so forth. That explanation meets the objectives of this research well. They are to recognize and verify the presence of the certain concepts of sexist oppression, women solidarity, and women power in the novels. Besides, it is also to accumulate the evidences how those concepts are described by the authors in order to show the readers the concepts of those three terms regarding with women and their lives in the society under the patriarchy system [7].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data in the novel that show the three issues challenged by the female protagonists are found and discussed based on the feminism theory by bell hooks (1984) and its' extension theory by Biana (2000). Mariam and Laila are the two female protagonists who are narrated by Khaled Hosseini in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* who challenge sexist oppression. Then they both obtain solidarity from the their circle to lead them to have strength. Finally the two are able to do resistance against the male domination over them and they are success to stop sexist oppression.

a. *Sexist Oppression Challenged*

Khaled Hosseini reveals a gender issue that creates injustice in Afghanistan, through his literary work entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (ATSS) [8]. He opens his novel by presenting a little daughter named Maryam who is still five years old yet has already obtained verbal abuse. It is as the negative predicate that should be realized by Maryam that she is as the marginal society. Consequently, she will obtain different treatment from the society in which she lives as she does not attain the ideal womanhood [9]. It is a provocative opening describing how Maryam suffered due to the patriarchy system applied in the society that gives privileges to men instead of women as subordinate people [10]. Moreover, it will deliver the next series of sexist oppression Maryam will have in her life as she grows up in the society that holds men as the centre of ruling the society as they believe that the one who have the right to occupy leadership positions are men [11][12]. Arimbi (2020) also stated that this occurs as it is the misinterpretation of Al-Quran and Hadisth. The right interpretation of Al-Quran and Hadisth is done by the companions of the Prophet (PBUH), but some masculine societies misinterpret them to fit their needs and desires at the expense of women [13]. All the more, even the conflict happened in the country aggravates her difficult life as women. The other female protagonist named Laila also receives a lot of sexist oppressions as the reflection of male domination. Inside the novel both are narrated as the female characters experiencing their husband domination and control that lead them suffer a lot.

Sexist oppression which is caused by Maryam's social background is happened since Maryam, a daughter of Nana and Jill was five years old. It is the author narration at the really first sentence of the novel. It shows the word *harami* as the new word for Mariam to hear when she was five years old. The next citation is as the evidence.

Mariam was five years old the first time she heard the word *harami*. (Hosseini, 2007: 15).

The term *harami* is introduced by Khaled Hosseini to the public through his novel. Moreover, it obviously shows the gender issue happened in Afghanistan as the setting of the story takes place. It invites the researcher's interest to analyze the novel in order to see deeper the oppression against the female characters.

Author of the novel continues to introduce to the globe the term *harami* by narrating a moment when Mariam's mother named Nana shocks knowing her favourite thing is taken down by Maryam. Therefore, her own mother mentions harshly against her as little *harami*. Here Hosseini reveals how the extraneous term is used so that it will be understandable. It is used for two occasions to swear and to show the anger against unwanted child. Additionally, it delivers that it is because she is as a *harami* girl so that she gets a bad treatment including from her own mother as she makes a mistake. The repition of the term *harami* as the jibe against Mariam obviously shows that her social background makes her humiliated.

"You are a clumsy little *harami*. This is my reward for everything I've endured. An heirloom breaking, clumsy little *harami*." (Hosseini, 2007: 15).

Hosseini reveals sexist oppression in terms of verbal bullying against Mariam socialized by her own mother. It is a kind of sexist oppression which is institutionalized by the member of the family through the particular term that conveys sexist discrimination. Women do not consider that they experience sexist oppression. It is because they accept their lot in life without visible question and they are powerless to change their condition. According to hooks (1984) as if they do not exist. Mariam can only accept her lot as her mother ridicules over her and she is powerless to change her condition. Her social background is as an illegitimate child who is positioned by society as a subordinate one. The prejudice becomes the potential factor for other people including her mother to perform sexist oppression. The sexist oppression which is embedded through the local value makes Mariam as if she does not exist.

Furthermore the diction *harami* is also presented in order to deliver the gender crisis that is related to the claim that she does not deserve to obtain everything. Mariam is narrated as a illegitimate child who has never

have legitimate claim as well as another legitimate children have. Henceforth, she will not deserve love, acceptance, home, family.

Later, when she was older, Mariam did understand. ... Mariam, was an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people had, things such as love, family, home, acceptance. (Hosseini, 2007: 16).

It is very important issue for the child who was born outside marriage as like Mariam to understand what the next injustice she will receive as she grows older. Through the author narration Hosseini delivers the sexist oppression againsts Mariam still continues. He shows the consequences of being a harami child who leads her to have different social economic in her future life.

The term *harami* is actually originated from a religious term that means something which breaks the Islamic law. Nevertheless there is no term 'little *harami*' in Islamic that refers to the child born outside marriage. Exactly, the sexual activity done outside marriage is forbidden by Islamic law and this activity is called the *harami*. It meets Hosseini's argument inside his novel. Through the author narration he defends that the parents who are guilty and erring not the baby.

...it is the creators of the harami who are culpable, not the harami, whose only sin is being born (Hosseini, 2007: 15)

Somehow, the diction *harami* in this short story refers to the child born outside marriage [14]. Therefore, the child is considered as the illegitimate child and the child is not addressed by Afghanistan's Civil Code at all. For this reason, no wonder her mother reminds her as her mother condemns her as early as possible to teach her the vicious reality of life [15] so that she will understand her status and position in society which is degraded. Henceforth, she will be treated with contempt and disrespect by society. The epithet she obtains is the punishment as she goes beyond the social and religious norms [16].

What a stupid girl you are! You think you matter to him, that you're wanted in his house? You think you're a daughter to him? That he's going to take you in? Let me tell you something. A man's heart is a wretched, wretched thing, Mariam. It isn't like a mother's womb. It won't bleed, it won't stretch to make room for you. ...and when I'm gone you'll have nothing. You'll have nothing. You are nothing!" (Hosseini, 2007: 32).

The citation of monolog containing the verbal abuse against Mariam is aimed to disenchant Mariam. Being an illegitimate child Mariam will not have love, house, and room from her father. Indeed, Mariam will have nothing and be nothing because of her social status. It strengthens the previous citation of author narration which explains the consequences of being an illegitimate child which is embedded gender injustice.

Additionally, the term *harami* is also uttered by Rasheed to remind Mariam her status as an illegitimate child that makes Mariam deserves humiliation from her own husband, Rasheed. It recalls what Nana has ever ridiculed at the same time reminded Mariam about her social background as an unwanted people. Therefore no wonder Rasheed humiliates Mariam in front of Laila.

... she is dehati. A village girl. Not even a village girl. No. She grew up in a kolba made of mud outside the village. Her father put her there. Have you told her, Mariam, have you told her that you are a harami? Well, she is. But she is not without qualities (Hosseini, 2007: 166).

Maryam's husband humiliates her by comparing Maryam as Rasheed first wife to a particular vehicle. The lesson from Nana is described by bell hooks as socialization of sexism that may potentially continue the ideology in the society from old generation to young generation. Rasheed mentions Maryam as like an old car, that is Volga since Maryam is thirty three year old woman when Rasheed gets married to Laila. That is a kind of verbal bullying Rasheed aimed against Maryam in front of Laila by describing how Maryam looks like. Then, that leads Maryam to realize her position as *harami* so that it is reasonable that Rasheed embarrassed Maryam. The word *harami* haunts and traumatizes Maryam making her feel disgust. The animal a pest and a cockroach is

presented as the author narration to symbolize Maryam social condition as framed by society that practices patriarchy system.

I'll say it this way: If she were a car, she would be a VolgaMaryam was a thirty-three-year-old woman now, but that word, harami, still had sting. Hearing it still made her feel like she was a pest, a cockroach. (Hosseini, 2007: 166)

Laila is also mentioned in the story as having the chance to receive physical oppression from her husband. As assumed by the patriarchal system operated in society that a husband conveys the symbol as the head who controls the family, the hit conducted by Rasheed aims to perform his masculinity to show how powerful he is as a husband and assert his authority domination in the family [17]. For this reason, Rasheed holds the authority in his family and showing his misogyny behaviour to control her [18] [19] as he assumes her as a soft target for his sexist actions [20]. So no bargaining any longer as according to Rasheed, Laila makes a mistake as she meets her boyfriend who has not met for ten years. As a consequence, Laila must obtain a punishment that is Rasheed hits her with the belt very quickly till makes her temple blood.

“No. Don't leave, Tariq. No. Please stay.” Tariq nodded... Without saying a word, he swung the belt at Laila. He did it with such speed that she had no time to retreat or duck, or even raise a protective arm. Laila touched her fingers to her temple, looked at the blood, looked at Rasheed, with astonishment. (Hosseini, 2007: 249).

The restriction over Laila is described as another form of sexist oppression she receives. The one who is responsible to do oppression to Laila in her marriage is her husband, Rasheed. In her early marriage to Rasheed, her husband decides each rule for his two wives that they must obey.

“All I ask in return, well, it is a simple thing. I ask that you avoid leaving this house without my company. That's all. Simple, no? If I am away and you need something urgently, I mean absolutely need it and it cannot wait for me, then you can send Maryam and she will go out and get it for you (Hosseini, 2007: 166).

Therefore, the rule does not include the heartiest feeling of affection Rasheed will share to both of his wives. Instead the rule shows his lust to his second wife who is still. Moreover, Rasheed's prohibition to leave his house alone is a form of restriction for his second wife so that she will meet the true fact that Tareq was Rasheed's second wife's first love and a biological father of Rasheed's second wife's daughter still alive. Besides, the restriction is stated by Rasheed against his second wife since Rasheed feels jealous towards Tareq. The social control and isolation over women, particularly wives are commonly occurred in patriarchal society as the most of women are only primarily responsible for handling domestic activities [21]. Therefore, it is not considered as violence of the three quarters of women [22].

Table 1 Sexist oppression challenged in ATTS

Novel	Characte rs	Kinds of Sexist Oppressi on	Concrete Sexist Oppression	Oppressor vs Oppressed
ATSS	Maryam	Verbal abuse	<i>Harami</i>	Nana vs Maryam
		Verbal abuse		Rasheed vs Maryam
	Laila	Physical oppressio n	Hit	Rasheed vs Laila

b. Women Solidarity

Maryam and Laila are the female characters who challenge various kinds of sexist oppression as elaborated previously which lead them to suffer physically and psychologically in ATSS. The oppression they receive is narrated much greater as they become Rasheed's first and second wife. The similar inhumanity

experience as the victimized wife of Rasheed supports them to share their sources. In this case, they both bond a motherly relationship to subvert patriarchal norms [23] and show interdependence to protect each other against male cruelty in a patriarchal society [24]. It is narrated in the novel through the author's narration of the starting moment when Maryam is pleased when she takes care of Laila's baby. Maryam feels that the baby invites her to connect emotionally to the happy moment she has ever experienced when she was child. Moreover, the social status of Laila's baby, Aziza, is the same as her, that is a *harami* child leads Maryam to think that Aziza will be prolongation of Maryam's unfortunate experience as a *harami* child in the world. Therefore, Maryam's love and attention arise bigger to Aziza who is very meaningful for Maryam's life. Since then Maryam and Laila bonding have grown stronger.

And she marvelled at how, after all these years of rattling loose, she had found in this little creature the first true connection in her life of false, failed connections.... But somehow, over these last months, Laila and Aziza — a *harami* like herself, as it turned out—had become extensions of her, and now, without them, the life Maryam had tolerated for so long suddenly seemed intolerable. (Hosseini, 2007:187 and 189)

Furthermore, it is narrated by Hosseini in his novel that the connection between Maryam and Laila becomes sweet and intense. One moment in time Laila who laughs listening to Aziza's gas when she is sleeping invites Maryam to join the funny and happy moment with Laila and Aziza. That time is described by the author as the effortless and genuine moment that makes them comfortable. Hence, Maryam starts to tell her traumatic past experience to Laila who is listening attentively with compassion and love. Laila also wants to tell her story to Maryam.

Then Aziza passed gas in her sleep. Laila began to laugh, and Maryam joined in. They laughed like this, at each other's reflection in the mirror, their eyes tearing, and the moment was so natural, so effortless, that suddenly Maryam started telling her about Jalil, and Nana, and the jinn. Laila stood with her hands idle on Maryam's shoulders, eyes locked on Maryam's face in the mirror. Out the words came, like blood gushing from an artery... "I have something to tell you too," Laila said.

The piece of the decent atmosphere created along the meeting between Maryam and Laila represents what bell hooks (1984) explained about the ability to eliminate the barrier. The relation between them does not show the arrogance of Maryam as the first wife nor the indifferent of Laila as the second wife so that their connection is so natural and effortless. While, at the past time they do not show the harmonious relation as they show the present time. It is because at the current time each is able to remove each individual position and right that may potentially separate them. Hence, the different position as first and second wife does not influence their relationship any longer. Maryam was used to be the one who got a mandate from Rasheed to be the one who replaced his position to accompany Laila to go outside which created a difference between them that made them separate. Nevertheless, as the time goes by, they do not focus to the point that make them different and separate.

Table 2. Women solidarity in ATSS

Novel	Characters Share and Obtain Solidarity	Kinds of Solidarity	Concrete Solidarity
ATSS	Mariam and Laila	Motherhood	- Mariam takes care of Laila's baby - Laila listens to Mariam's traumatic past experience.

c. Women Power Exercised

Although the resistance of sexist acts is not always successful, it is very common, especially since this has been suppress towards women for several times [25][26]. It is evinced by female major character in ATSS, namely Maryam who obtains verbal bullying from her own mother, Nana from an early age tries hard not to react negatively. Instead of protesting her mother, Maryam tries to suppress it to respect her mother. The

bullying shows her mother domination over her daughter regarding the definition of her mother and herself status. as a *mugwort*, a *weed* to teach Maryam how the society puts them as a marginal society so that Maryam will realize her social status. The way Maryam takes to challenge the verbal bullying by rejecting the powerful definition of her reality as a child born outside marriage underlines what bell hooks (1986) as exercising the basic personal power. Basically Maryam disagrees with her mother's bad terms and story. Somehow, Maryam thinks that it is wise for her to listen and not to criticize her mother's bad statement. Here it is time for Maryam to show her strength and resistance as elaborated by the next dialog between Nana and Maryam.

To Jalil and his wives, I was a pokeroot. A mugwort. You too. And you weren't even born yet." "What's a mugwort?" Maryam asked. "A weed," Nana said. "Something you rip out and toss aside." Maryam frowned internally. Jalil didn't treat her as a weed. He never had. But Maryam thought it wise to suppress this protest (Hosseini: 2007: 17)

The phrase frowned internally is chosen by Hosseini to show that Maryam does not understand and disagrees with her mother's explanation. It is because Jalil never treats Maryam as a weed, as an unwanted thing, as a subordinate one which is her mother's story and her bad experience. However, Maryam decides to suppress her protest over her mother. Maryam states that the decision not to protest her own mother is a form of a wise and at the same time it is to show her strength to manage her opinion that disagree with her mother's opinion. It indeed underlines her resistance to refuse her mother's opinion as the representative idea framed by the wide society they live with.

The next piece of the novel narrates Maryam who is finally gets up the courage, she enters her husband room. She will reveal her prejudice against Rasheed's blatant lies regarding Laila's boyfriend, Thareq died due to political war in the country.

She understood with a dread that was like a blinding whack to the side of her head that what she was witnessing was nothing less than a courtship.... Rasheed lit a cigarette, and said, "Why not?" Maryam knew right then that she was defeated. She'd half expected, half hoped, that he would deny everything, feign surprise, maybe even outrage, at what she was implying. She might have had the upper hand then. She might have succeeded in shaming him. (Hosseini, 2007:159).

Rasheed denial, pretend to be surprise, and anger towards what Maryam means are Maryam's hopes when she will successfully expose Rasheed's trickery against Laila so that she will be upper hand and succeed in shaming Rasheed. Rasheed's reaction towards Maryam's bravery to reveal his fraud regarding Tareq's death is the imagination of Maryam that becomes the supporting evidence that Maryam exercises her basic power to resist Rasheed's domination by telling a lie about Laila's boyfriend's death.

Laila is the next female protagonist in the novel which is discussed in this part as the character who exercises her basic personal power to resist male domination.

Laila shielded herself with a forearm and made a grab at the belt. She missed.... Laila caught it briefly before Rasheed yanked it free and lashed at her again. Then Laila was dashing around the room, and Mariam was screaming words that ran together and imploring Rasheed....He caught her, threw her up against the wall, and struck her with the belt again and again, the buckle slamming against her chest, her shoulder, her raised arms, her fingers, drawing blood wherever it struck (2007: 252).

Basically, the three actions, namely shield, make a grab, and dash conducted by Laila is to protect her body from the Rasheed's stroke. The three actions confirm the effort to do resistance against her husband's power and show the strength to stop her husband's rage over her which is embedded his way to show how powerful he is as the husband. Henceforth, her actions symbolize her basic power to refuse the patriarchy system rooted in the society in which they live.

Moreover Hosseini puts the word dashing to describe how Laila does an action to run away from the physical violation against her. The activity best describes how Laila performs her struggle to stop the physical abuse that she has already received and still continues. The next dictions screaming, run, and imploring altogether are also used to describe the activity conducted by Maryam to help Laila to save her from the next Rasheed's stroke. Here, it shows that she does not want Laila to get unstoppable physical abuse. Both female protagonist characters release their energy to perform such actions to stop physical abuse conducted by their husband.

Table 3. Woven power exercised in ATSS

Novel	Characters	Types of Power Exercise	Concrete Power Exercise
ATSS	Mariam	Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - suppress her protest against her mother - her bravery to reveal Rasheed's fraud about Tariq's death - scream, run, and implore to avoid Laila from Rasheed's stroke
	Laila	Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shield herself with a forearm and make a grab at the belt and dash around the room to avoid Rasheed's abuse.

CONCLUSION

Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* illustrates the changing women's perspective of power in patriarchal society that is full of male cruelty which brings women's position vulnerably suffered. As depicted in the novel, the patriarchal system constructed in society assists male characters to act arbitrarily against female characters, even the male characters misuse religion that they do religious subjugation actions to suppress them by physical and verbal abuse such as gibing with term *harami* as well as manipulating women not to appear in a public sphere without any rational reasons as if they are the knight in shining armour. Hence, this is what makes female characters in the novels aware of their own power to resist the sexist oppression perpetrated by the male and causes them to make bonding and help strengthen each other from the sexist actions they obtain by telling their trauma as the process to transmit emotion. Besides, they denote their opposition as they show their power by protesting and liberating themselves from the sexist oppression; these are as the denials to sexist tyranny committed by the dominance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my two advisors, Prof. Fabiola and Pratiwi, Ph.D who have given their best guidance alongside the research.

REFERENCES

- [1]. hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*. US: South End Press, 1984, 131.
- [2]. Zengenene, M., & Susanti, E. Violence against Women and Girls in Harare, Zimbabwe. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 2019, 20(9), 83–93.
- [3]. Abdel, S., & Téllez, R. Talking Bodies: Sexual Abuse, Language, Illness and Dissociation in Camilla Gibb's *Mouthing the Words*. *Atlantis*, 40 (1), 2018, p.117–133. <https://doi.org/10.28914/Atlantis-2018-40.1.06>.

- [4]. Armato, M. Wolves in sheep's clothing: Men's enlightened sexism & hegemonic masculinity in academia. *Women's Studies*, 42(5), 2013, 578–598. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00497878.2013.794055>
- [5]. Biana, Hazel T. Extending bell hooks' Feminist Theory. *Journal of International Women's Study*. Volume 21, Issue 1, 2020, 13-29.
- [6]. Curtis, Anthony. Content Analysis. <http://www.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/Courses/Resources/ForCourses/HowToResearch/ContentAnalysis.html>. Retrieved in May 2020.
- [7]. Furner, Jonathan. *Conceptual Analysis: a Method for Understanding Information as Evidence and Evidence as Information*, 2006, p. <http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/jfurner/papers/furner-04archsci.pdf>. retrieved in May2020.
- [8]. Hosseini, Khaled. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Great Britain: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2007.
- [9]. Shameem, B. Living on the Edge: Women in Khaled Hosseini'S A Thousand Splendid Suns. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)*, 2(4), , 2014, 62–66.
- [10]. Soraya. The Subaltern Voice in a Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Khosseini. *Lingua Cultura*, 9(2), 2015, 81. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v9i2.827>.
- [11]. Rahayuningsih, S., Matulesy, A., Rini, A., & Pandin, M. G. R. The Local Government Transformation, the Big Five Personality, and Anxiety. *Opcion*, 35 (88), 2019, 759–770. <https://produccioncientificaluz.org/index.php/opcion/article/view/24225/24675>
- [12]. Gaikwad, H. V., & Pandey, S. Determination in leadership: A study on women's leadership in Indian government services and armed forces. *Pertanika Journal*, 30(1), 2022, 97–119. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47836/pjssh.30.1.06>
- [13]. Arimbi, D. A. (2020). Politicizing piety: Women's rights and roles in the tarbiyah movement in Indonesia. *Explorations in Women, Rights, and Religions*, 2(2017), 223–239.
- [14]. Mosadiq, Horia and Majorie Kaandorp. *Child Notice Afghanistan*. Netherlands: UNICEF The Netherlands, 2018, p.
- [15]. Rufa, C. S. New Trends in Feministic Thinking in Hosseini's A Thousand Splendid Suns. *Research Journal of English (RJOE)*, 4(1), 2019, 42–46. <https://osf.io/j7s84>.
- [16]. Kumar, A., & Jha, S. Gloria Naylor's The Women of Brewster Place: A Saga of Female Bonding. *Journal of the African Literature Association*, 5(1), 2010, 111–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21674736.2010.11690148>.
- [17]. Zangenehpour, F. Sexual politics revised: A feminist re-reading of D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow and Women in Love*. *NJES Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 19 (5), 2020, 181–201. <https://doi.org/10.35360/njes.620>.
- [18]. Mohammed, R. B. *The Loss of the Self within the Social Context of a Thousand Splendid Suns and the Mountains Echoed* [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. University of Leiden, 2018.
- [19]. Arimbi, D. A. (2017). Abidah El Khaliqy's struggles of Islamic feminism through literary writings in Khaliqy Abidah El (Ed.), *Reading Contemporary Indonesian Muslim Women Writers: Representation, Identity and Religion of Muslim Women in Indonesian Fiction*. Amsterdam University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-43189-5>
- [20]. Imran, M., & Hart, J. L. We are Afghan Women: Voices of hope. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 49 (1), 2019, 178–180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2019.1607208>.
- [21]. Andajani-Sutjahjo, S., Chirawatkul, S., & Saito, E. (2015). Gender and water in Northeast Thailand: Inequalities and women's realities. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 16(2), 200–212.
- [22]. Bennett, L. R., Andajani-Sutjahjo, S., & Idrus, N. I. (2011). Domestic violence in Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia: Married women's definitions and experiences of violence in the home. *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 12(2), 146–163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14442213.2010.547514>
- [23]. Philip, B. A. Endless Endurance : a Feminist study of Khaled Hosseini's Novel A Thousand Splendid Suns. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 2(5), 2019, 791–801.
- [24]. Ruiz, M. I. R. For the Dead Cannot Shrive Me Now": Gender Violence, Precariousness and the Neo-victorian Gothic in Katy Darby's *The Whores' Asylum* (2012). *Es Review*, *Spanish Journal of English Studies*, 42, 2021, 155–177. <https://doi.org/10.24197/ersjes.42.2021.155-177>
- [25]. Ridwan, A., & Susanti, E. Subordination of Women and Patriarchal Gender Relations at Islamic Poor Community. *Society, Culture, and Politic*, 32 (2), 2019, 159. <https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.v32i22019.159-167>

-
- [26]. Mas'udah, S. (2020). Resistance of women victims of domestic violence in dual-career family: A case from Indonesian society. *Journal of Family Studies*, 1–18.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2020.1852952>