



KHALED HOSSEINI'S WORLD VIEW ON AFGHANISTAN SOCIETY DEPICTED IN A *THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS*

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Abstract

Culture is the complex whole that man has acquired as a member of society. The culture shows the result of the behavior and habits of the societies of its place. Khaled Hosseini through his novel tries to extend his thought based on his view over the sociological problem which exists in Afghanistan. This investigation aims to explain the author's world view which focuses on a novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini. The setting of the novel is in Afghanistan from the 1960s until the early 2000s. Through this novel, Khaled Hosseini describes the Sociological issues which happen in Afghanistan at that time. In analyzing the data, the author uses a descriptive qualitative method and focused on Lucien Goldmann's theory of genetic structuralism. The result of this research shows that there are some problems within Afghan society such as (1) the education system, (2) marriage, and (3) domestic violence.

Keywords: Afghanistan Society, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Genetic Structuralism, Lucien Goldman, Social Life

INTRODUCTION

Wellek and Warren (1949) state that literary work is considered as an expression of society, which means it is not only pure of the author's imagination but can be influenced by the real event that happens in a particular society. As it is considered as an expression of society, the content of literary work acts as a recorder tool of human lives. Furthermore, the main aim of literary works is to entertain and educate the readers, in other words, the readers learn something from the fiction works. To gain the message within a story, the readers have to correlate several aspects. Some aspects that can not be separated are the interrelationship between the society, the literature, and some phenomena that exist within both, the society and the literary work. Mertania & Amelia (2020) state that in literary works, especially the ones from Africa, the Middle East, and India, often the characters are struggling with their identity.

The second book of Khaled Hosseini entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (ATSS) is one of the manifestoes from the historical moment. Through his novel, he depicts Afghanistan and tries to deliver his contribution, sympathy, and respect to the social circumstances (Hosseini, 2007). *A Thousand Splendid Suns* acts as his response to the social phenomena that happened in Afghanistan during his lifetime. Afghanistan's society influences the author to write the novel. Through the novel, the writers want to know the author's view of Afghanistan's society in the past. Society has a big role to help the author in writing the novel. Those points make the writers want to reveal Hosseini's World View on Afghanistan's Society as depicted in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Laurenson & Swingewood (1972) also argue that in writing a story, an author is always inspired by the events that happen in his society. Also, Goldmann in Heaverly & Woro Kasih (2020) underlines a point which deals with the sociological approach that emphasizes social phenomena. Further, Goldmann states that Genetic Structuralism theory focuses on both intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the novel. Goldmann also adds that literary works are displayed by the author's creativity and originality in his relation to society (Goldmann L.,1981). Goldmann's theory also relates two aspects within a novel; the human's creation, and the social condition at a certain time. Moreover, Kardiansyah (2018) states the structure created in the story is representing the author's world view. The writers apply the worldview concept as the main theory of current research. Goldmann argues that the world view represents an individual as a member of society. It can be concluded that the current writer has to pay attention to several aspects of world view such as the relationship between social

context both within the society and the real-life, and the relationship between the social-cultural background of both the author and the literary work.

The writers use previous studies and they are, Jane Austen's View on the British Society During Industrial Revolution (Heaverly and Woro Kasih, 2020), J.D Salinger's World View as Reflected in *The Catcher In The Rye: A Genetic Structuralism Analysis* (Priyono, 2019), Masculinity: A Gamut in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini (Lynisha and Shanti, 2018), *A Thousand Splendid Suns: Sanctuary and Resistance* (Stuhr, 2011), and Middle Eastern Women's Issues: An Analysis of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and The New York Times (Shapiro, 2010). The previous studies contribute to the current research since they are related to the object of analysis and the theory used in the current research.

METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative study as the research methodology. According to Blaxter (1997), the term qualitative data is a type of data that deals with collection and analyzing information in the form of non-numeric. Additionally, the writers also use library research to collect the data from written sourcebooks that would be useful for the data analysis. The primary data of the current research comes from the novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini published in 2007. The data are taken from the data source which eligible to answer the research question of the current research. Thus, the data are in the form of dialogue, and narrations taken from the novel. Samanik & Lianasari (2016)) said that data analysis has to break down to make it easier to be understood. The secondary data are taken from the biography of the author, journals, critical essays, and books that relate to the topic to support the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part of the research focuses on some critical analyses followed by some quotations and explanations to explain Hosseini's world view towards Afghanistan's society in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Goldman in Heaverly and Woro Kasih (2019) explain that world view is dealing with historical and social facts. The social facts that happen in the history of Afghanistan have influenced Hosseini to write his version of the story. Thus, a world view acts as the view of the author towards the structure of a particular society which is reflected in the story. Here are some views from Hosseini's view on Afghanistan Society:

Khaled Hosseini's View towards Education in Afghanistan

Naziev (2017) elaborates the idea that education is a process of transmitting and receiving. Education is the basic development and empowerment for every nation in this world because education is included in the measurements of the development of a nation. In the broadest sense, education is any act or experience that effect on mind, character, and physical ability of an individual. In the history of Afghanistan, access to education is limited. Under the Soviet Union's control from 1979 to 1989, only a few schools exist in Afghanistan, especially in the cities. According to Mehtarkhan Khwajamir in his writing "History and Problem of Education in Afghanistan" from 1996 to 2001, the Taliban bans education for females and close all-girls' schools in Afghanistan (2016). In this era, girls are prohibited to get a formal education except to learn *Qur-an*. Most of society believes that women can only receive their education from home. Considering that condition, it might be one of the reasons why Hosseini portrays the education system of Afghanistan during a certain time, especially to the two females characters, Mariam and Laila. The quotations below show the educational system happens in the city outside the government's control.

"It's our lot in life, Mariam. **Women like us. We endure. It's all we have.** Do you understand? Besides, **they'll laugh at you** in school. They will. They'll call you *harami* **They'll say the most terrible things about you.** I won't have it."

Mariam nodded.

"And no more talk about school. You're all I have. I won't lose you to them. Look at me. **No more talk about school.**"

"Be reasonable- Come now. If the girl wants-" Mullah Faizullah began.

"And you, *akhund* sahib, with all due respect, you should know better than to encourage these foolish ideas of hers. If you really care about her, then you make her see that **she belongs here at home** with her mother. **There is nothing out there for her.** Nothing but **rejection and heartache.** I know, *akhund* sahib. I *know*." (Hosseini, 2007:18)

The quotation vividly captures the educational field in Afghanistan that happens outside the government's control. It is proof that women are struggling to get an education there. It is not easy for women to get into school in Afghanistan because society has such a stereotype that they belong at home (Stuhr, 2011).

Related to this, it is harder for Mariam not only as a representative of females but also as a *harami* child. Through the words "She belongs here at home", Hosseini's view towards the educational system in Afghanistan for those females who live outside the government's control. Furthermore, the words "rejection and heartache" are the act of warning of what happens to Mariam if she is brave enough to go to formal school. Moreover, it describes that even Mariam's mother, her family, her inner circle, do not support her to get a better life through formal education because the family holds on to the stereotype that the society has.

But Mariam's favorite, other than Jalil of course, was Mullah Faizullah, the elderly village Koran tutor, its *akhund*. He came by once or twice a week from Gul Daman **to teach Mariam the five daily namaz prayers and tutor her in Koran recitation**, just as he had taught Nana when she'd been a little girl. It was Mullah Faizullah who had taught Mariam to read, who had patiently looked over her shoulder as her lips worked the words soundlessly, her index finger lingering beneath each word, pressing until the nail bed went white, as though she could squeeze the meaning out of the symbols. (Hosseini, 2007:15)

This quotation supports the previous statement about the girls who are prohibited to get a formal education except to learn *Qur-an*. Mullah Faizullah comes to Mariam's house which is depicted as if he knows that females can only be educated at home. That is why it is not Mariam that comes to Mullah Faizullah's house even if she is the one that wants to be educated.

On the other hand, a girl named Laila who lives under the government's control, Kabul, acts as the representative of females who live in the capital city of Afghanistan. On the contrary to what happened to Mariam, Laila has a chance to go to the formal school where she lives. Moreover, Babi, Her father, her family, her inner circle, support her to get a formal school because they believe that education has an important role in the country, Afghanistan. In his hard time, Laila's father believes that Afghanistan has no chance of success if the education system is not equal both for men and women all over. At the time Hosseini moves to Afghanistan, Little Hosseini is drawn to fiction prose. He finds it so easy when he wants to learn or even to go to school. He finishes school and receives his B, in Biology at Santa Clara University. Moreover, he completes his doctoral residency at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. His education life depicted that as an Afghanistan, he was not facing the problem as his characters faced. Hosseini shows the educational system in the history of Afghanistan, especially during the Taliban era. The result shows that the education system is not equal especially for females.

Khaled Hosseini's View towards The Marriage Life in Afghanistan

Under the Taliban's control, early marriage often happened. Early marriage usually happens for girls under the marriageable age. In Afghanistan, the legal marriageable age is 16 for girls and 18 for boys. However, forced marriage is a marriage without valid consent either physical or emotional duress of one or both of the It acts as a response to the economic issue and it happens under the marriageable age. Grigsby stated on his writing entitled *A Hidden Crisis: Early Marriage in Afghan Society* that early marriage leads to some issues such as violence and abuse that happens to Afghanistan women (Grigsby, 2013). Unfortunately, the girls who were involved in early marriage were usually treated no better than chattel in their husband's home. Grigsby (2013) also added that the girl's parents usually sell her to an older man than the girl's age. Therefore, this issue also happens in Khaled Hosseini's novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The main character named Mariam is forced to marry an older man at an early age.

"Now he *is* a little **older than you**," Afsoon chimed in. "But he can't be more than...forty. **Forty-five at the most**. Wouldn't you say, Nargis?"

"Yes. But I've seen **nine-year-old girls given to men twenty years older than your suitor**, Mariam. We all have. **What are you, fifteen? That's a good, solid marrying age for a girl.**" There was enthusiastic nodding at this. (Hosseini, 2007:44)

Through this quotation, it shows that Khaled Hosseini tried to depict about early marriage that happened in his birthplace, Afghanistan. Mariam's stepmother forces her to marry at an early age, 15 years old. Even by the dialogue between Mariam and her stepmother, it is depicted that child marriage is a common issue that often happened in Afghanistan society. Through this dialogue, Khaled emphasizes that society has no issue with child marriage, even they see it as a solid marriage for women.

"**You have a suitor**," Khadija said.

Mariam's stomach fell. "A what?" she said through suddenly numb lips.

"A *khasiegar*. A suitor. His name is Rasheed," Khadija went on. "He is a friend of a business acquaintance of your father's. He's a Pashtun, from Kandahar originally, but he lives in Kabul, in the Deh-Mazang district, in a two-story house that he owns." (Hosseini, 2007:43)

This happens to Mariam when she moves to her father's house. All of Jalil's wives want nothing to do with Mariam so they try to get rid of her by forcing her with a forty-five widow shoemaker. By forcing Mariam to marry Rasheed, Jalil's indirectly sent her away from Jalil's house because they do not like Mariam since she is an illegitimate child between Jalil and one of their housekeeper, Nana, Mariam's mother.

She turned to Jalil again. "Tell them. Tell them you won't let them do this."

"Actually, **your father has already given Rasheed his answer**," Afsoon said. "Rasheed is here, in Herat; he has come all the way from Kabul. **The nikka will be tomorrow morning**, and then there is a bus leaving for Kabul at noon." (Hoseini, 2007:45)

This quotation also depicted that Afghanistan women have no right to stand or give their opinion toward their own life. Setri & Setiawan (2020) stated that patriarchal society is merely based on the domination of men's power and authority in society. Related to this, Khaled Hosseini could focus on his education because her parents do not push him to marry at an early age. Khaled Hosseini married his wife, Roya Hosseini at 28 years old. Khaled Hosseini emphasizes that education is important, he stated that marriage can wait but education can not. That is why he tried to finish his education until finally, he married Roya in 1993. Thus, force marriage for Afghanistan women under their marriageable age is simply described in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* novel. Through his novel, Khaled Hosseini shows the marriage issue in the history of Afghanistan, especially during the Taliban era. The result shows that child marriage is such a common thing that happened to Afghanistan women within Afghanistan society.

Khaled Hosseini's View towards Domestic Violence in Afghanistan

National Domestic Violence Hotline defined Domestic Violence is a pattern of behavior in a relationship and one of them maintains power and control over the other. Domestic violence usually happens to people who are married or who are dating. Khan in Kamal states that women and children are in great danger in the place where they should feel safe: within their families (Kamal, 2006). Domestic violence is also called Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), Relationship abuse, and domestic abuse. It means that domestic violence can happen to any race, age, religion, or gender. In Afghanistan, many acts of violence faced by Afghanistan women that happen at an early age have been extreme and unforgiving (Lynisha and Shanti, 2018). Khaled Hosseini described Verbal abuse and physical abuse faced by his two main characters named Mariam and Laila. Khaled Hosseini also depicted the life of Afghanistan women after they got married.

Verbal abuse is the way of criticizing, assaulting by words which can make the people who got this abusive feel not confident and the former is going to exhibit Rasheed's abusive behavior that gives affects Mariam and Laila's mental condition. In the novel, within the plot story, we can see the way Rasheed talks or responds to his wives which are Mariam and Laila. Chapter 14 of the novel depicted the abusive behaviors of Rasheed towards Mariam. The problem begins when Mariam miscarried her baby then she could not give birth anymore then Rasheed always got mad at her, even talked in a bad way. He always answered Mariam's questions with intimidating words.

"You know nothing, do you? You're like a child. **Your brain is empty.**

There is no information in it."

"I ask because-"

"*Chupko*. Shut up."

Mariam did.

It wasn't easy tolerating him talking this way to her, to **bear his scorn, his ridicule, his insults, his walking past her like she was nothing** but a house cat. But after four years of marriage, Mariam saw clearly how much a woman could tolerate when she was afraid And Mariam was afraid **She lived in fear** of his **shifting moods, his volatile temperament, his insistence** on steering even mundane exchanges down a confrontational path that, on occasion, **he would resolve with punches, slaps, kicks, and sometimes try to make amends** for with polluted apologies and sometimes not (Hoseini, 2007:89).

The quotation above shows that Mariam as the representative of Afghanistan women's under early marriage lived in fear. Rasheed as her husband often uttered bad words to speak or respond to Mariam. By saying his brain is empty or other bad words, it indirectly will turn down the mentality of Mariam. Not only through verbal abuse, but Rasheed also abuse Mariam physically. Through the quotation above, it shows that Mariam often got attack by her husband for every single mistake that she did. It is not that easy for Mariam to tolerate this but she has to deal with it. Besides that, the abusive behaviors of Rasheed also happen to Laila as the second wife of his.

"You duped me. You lied to me," Laila said, gritting her teeth. "You had that man sit across from me and... You knew I would leave if I thought he was alive."

"AND YOU DIDN'T LIE TO ME?" Rasheed roared. "You think I didn't figure it out? About **your harami** You take me for a fool, **you whore!**" (Hosseini, 2007,329)

Laila also becomes the representative of Afghanistan women's under early marriage who lived in fear. This statement came out from Rasheed's mouth because he knew that Tariq came to his house since what they both know is Tariq died in the war that happens in Afghanistan. The word *harami* and whore uttered with a high tone which indicate by the capital letter and ended by the exclamation mark. However, Physical abuse is more related to the way of suspect doing bad things to the victims through action or physic, it is also when a person uses a physical force against another person (Shapiro, 2010). Typically, Physical abuse is shaking, slapping, and pushing using something to hit the victims and others. However, in this novel, Rasheed's abusive behaviors are not only depicted by verbal abuse but also physical abuse as well, as seen in the novel when Rasheed did not satisfy with Mariam's cooking. Rasheed insults the food while he also physically abuses Mariam. He continued the abuse and ends up clasp Miriam's jaw. He also shoved his fingers into her mouth to force cold hard pebbles (2007). Rasheed's actions indicate that Afghanistan men represented by Rasheed have full power over the Afghanistan women represented by Mariam and Laila. Just like what happened in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini that Afghanistan women have such a limitation for them to do something. Further, Afghanistan men have full power over Afghanistan women. They even allowed to attack Afghanistan women both in verbal and physical abuse. The Afghanistan women have no right to defend themselves both verbally and physically just because of the norms and their belief that stick in Afghanistan society.

Both Mariam and Laila accepted all the domestic abuse that have done by their husband, Rasheed. They still give as best as they can just like Mariam still cooked for her husband even her husband never appreciates it, because in their culture it is such a common thing that happened in a household that a husband does such an abusive thing to their wife both verbal and physical way. Further, the domestic abuse makes the Afghanistan men have full power over the Afghanistan women make it worst. On the contrary to this, Khaled Hosseini lived happily with his family. Her father and her mother treat him well. His family supported his education until finally, he could reach his dream. There is no limitation that Khaled Hosseini's father gives to his mother. Furthermore, Khaled Hosseini did the same as her father to his wife. Even, Roya Hosseini is an actress. There is no limitation that Khaled Hosseini gives to his wife because he lives in peace, love, and happiness.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on Khaled Hosseini's view on Afghanistan Society depicted in the novel entitled *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. There are three aspects found as the view from the author, Khaled Hosseini, toward Afghanistan and it reflected in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. First, Khaled Hosseini portrays how the education system of Afghanistan. The access to education was limited and not equal at all because the Taliban banned education for females and they could only be educated inside their homes because society has a stereotype that females belong at home. The females are prohibited to get a formal education except to learn *Qur'an*. Furthermore, the inequality of education also can be seen when the author depicted only a few schools that exist in Afghanistan, especially in the cities under the control of the central government, Kabul. Second, the marriage life, especially early marriage life influenced Khaled Hosseini to write this novel. Afghanistan society sees that marriage under the marriageable age is a common issue, even they see it as a solid marriage for women. Khaled Hosseini puts his two main characters as the victims of the early marriage culture in Afghanistan. Furthermore, early marriage leads to domestic violence which also becomes a common issue for Afghanistan women. Third, The view of Khaled Hosseini toward the result of early marriage, domestic violence. Afghanistan women also faced both verbal and physical abuse. His two main characters lived in fear during their marriage life. Furthermore, the domestic violence even happened outside their house which relates to the stereotypes that the society agreed that is the way to punish and educate women. The author also depicted that Afghanistan men have full power over Afghanistan women. The results of this analysis, the terms that he used, and what is his concern, show that Khaled Hosseini as the author act as the representatives of the society of his birthplace, Afghanistan.

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