

**Trauma and Tenacity: In Nadia Hashimi's *The Pearl that Broke its Shell* and
Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns***

By

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Declaration

Declaration

I declare that the project entitled “**Trauma and Tenacity: In Nadia Hashimi’s *The Pearl that Broke its Shell* and Khaled Hosseini’s *A Thousand Splendid Sun***” submitted by **Sindhujaa D** for the degree of Master of Arts (M.A) in English, is the record of work carried out during the period of December 2022 – May 2023 under the guidance of **Mrs.K.Usha Savithri (MA., B.Ed., M.Phil., (Ph.D))** Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore, and, has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or similar Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

Signature of the Candidate

Certíficate

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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Trauma and Tenacity: In Nadia Hashimi’s *The Pearl that Broke its Shell* and Khaled Hosseini’s *A Thousand Splendid Suns***” submitted to Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts (M.A)** is a dissertation carried out by **Sindhujaa D** during the period from December 2022 – May 2023 in under my guidance of **Mrs.K.Usha Savithri (MA., B.Ed. M.Phil., (Ph.D))** Assistant Professor, Department of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (SF), Coimbatore and has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associateship, and Fellowship, or similar Titles in this University or any other University or other similar Institutions of Higher Learning.

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Supervisor with Designation

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Notes

Abbreviations

TPTS-The Pearl that broke its shell

ATSS-A Thousand Splendid Sons

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Abstract

This paper examines the factors associated with the cultural phenomenon of bacha posh and oppression of women in Afghanistan. The notion of bacha posh refers to the cross-dressing of a girl as a boy which is deployed as a way of disguising gender roles. It is a cultural practice that was widespread in Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan whereby girls were raised as boys during their childhood till they attain the age of puberty so that they could have access to educational opportunity, mobility, economic and public spaces from which they were being deprived because of their gender. But can such cross-dressing truly allow girls to receive the benefits of patriarchy- the freedom that is limited only for the dominant gender? Is the disguise of gender role a means of empowerment for girls or a form of oppression? Is freedom only a kind of illusion? Keeping these questions in mind, the paper will examine the practice of bacha posh as depicted in Nadia Hashmi's novels. One can argue that while hacha pash is practised with a purpose of liberating the girls from the codes of restriction and subjugation attached to the female body. This is due to gender dysphoria experienced by the bacha posh as a result of the incongruity between biological sex and the masculine gender role that the girls have to perform.

Khaled Hosseini's daring effort to highlight and acknowledge the marginalization and subjugation of women in patriarchal society especially in Afghanistan. In his second novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), he introduced many female characters which are victimized, sexually harassed, suppressed by both male and female figures but in spite of all they challenged the brutality. They found their ways to live their lives and proved that if you have the courage to bear, can bear any calamity of the world and make your way to live life. There is a message for all those women of the world who are suffering from any type of male or female brutality that they can stand against all oppressions and suppressions. To be a woman is not bad, but to be a coward woman is really bad.

Chapter I

Chapter I

Introduction

“ Literature is where I go to explore the highest and lowest in human society and in the human spirit, where I hope to find not absolute truth but the truth of the tale, of the imagination and of the heart.”

-Salman Rushdie

The work of art, literature is composed of those books which by reasons of their subject-matter and style are of general human interest. It is also the representation of life through the medium of language. Literature is not an exact replica of life, but it is an interpretation of life as life shapes itself in the mind of the writer. Literature deals with life as it is seen and experienced by the individual writer. It may be described as imaginative reconstruction of life. It has been rightly said, "Personal experience is the basis of real literature". Even an apparently most realistic drama or novel, the very 'slice of life' is constructed according to certain artistic conventions. The creative artist shares his intellectual pleasures with the readers through his artistic or imaginative presentment of the life that has moved him to his depth of feeling and thought. Literature which has a deep human interest, fact that in true literature men and women find true reflections of themselves in the characters depicted in the books who voice the ideals, hopes, fears, aspirations etc that move men in real life.

These printed materials about a particular subject that grows out of life, reacts upon life and fed by life. It is distinct from all other arts. its boundaries cross our lives,

our traditions, culture, social relations , national unity . A window to an ideology, everything that happens in society are recorded in, written, and learned from it. Our life is manifested in the form of literature. It is an embodiment of words based on human tragedies, desires, and feelings. And has provided a gateway to those lifeexperiences from the saddest stories to the most joyful ones. The primary use of literature in ancient settings was to pass down customs, traditions , beliefs and feelings to the present. At recent times , literature has taken on a more comprehensive role of mirroring society in order for human to study themselves and understand the underlying truths common to all people.

Literature works that are published and read across the world are called world literature. Damrosch keeps up with that a scholarly work never truly leaves its place of beginning. However essentially has two foci, one in the host nation and one in the first country. Along these lines, the progression of data is continually moving and moving thoughts and ideas in two unique societies.

Afghan writing alludes to the writing created in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Impacted by Focal and South Asian writing, it is prevalently written in two local and official dialects of Afghanistan, Dari and Pashto. A few provincial dialects like Uzbek, Turkmen, Balochi, and Pashayi likewise shows up in Afghan writing. While Afghanistan is a multilingual country, these dialects are by and large utilized as oral organizations and composed texts by the Afghan scholars and in Afghan educational program. Its writing is profoundly affected by Persian and Arabic writing notwithstanding Focal and South Asia.

The historical backdrop of the more extensive Afghan writing traverses among antiquated and present day Afghanistan. The earliest works of writing were orally communicated. It's composing framework is generally connected with Arabic content. The most established surviving records of the writing are trusted subordinate of the Nabataean variety of the Aramaic letter set, dating to the fifth and sixth hundreds of years. Notwithstanding, it fundamentally began in the early Islamic hundreds of years. Archeological explores directed starting around 1922 has shown compelling artwork of the pre-Islamic contents. The country's writing was initially composed and sent in Arabic letter set, making it to have a rich etymological tradition of pre-Islamic contents, which existed prior to being supplanted by the Arabic letters in order, including Sharada, Kharosthi, Greek, and Brāhmī following by the Islamic triumph of Afghanistan. Bactrian language is likewise connected with pre-Islamic contents.

Afghanistan's contemporary writing has its profound roots in rich legacy of both oral creation and customarily composed texts. The locals of Afghanistan either living inside the nation or outside utilize significant dialects, Pashto and Dari. Afghanistan's writing is generally recorded by artists and scholars. In 1886, a French creator James Darmesteter expounded on the verifiable setting of Afghanistan's writing and the job of writers. It's contended that Pashtun sonnets, including Sher Zaman Taizi's book named *The Field* (1988) played had a critical impact in writing. In the cutting edge time, Afghan artists and brief tale journalists are effectively taken part recorded as a hard copy verse, containing a kept record of writing.

Due to the enormous migration to different nations in the sixteenth to eighteenth hundreds of years, the enunciation of beliefs, and the early foundation of abstract

organizations and learning conditions outside the nation have frequently been viewed as the focal point of early Afghan writing. During those hundreds of years, numerous artistic figures started in the unified district, however following the segment between Mughal realm and Safavid line, a few writers, including Khushal Khattak moved to scholarly focuses. Khattak lived in the Hindu Kush mountain range. By the late nineteenth 100 years, Pakhtuns sung verse with music for making it indistinguishable from ghazals, an old style Urdu sort. Scholarly, Afghan, Turkic, and Pashto writing share indistinguishable practices, and are all in all perceived as Persian writing, be that as it may, Afghanistan's writing is an unmistakable one which has its own practices and customs of composing framework, and oral-equation based piece specifically.

In the twentieth hundred years, Kabul, the capital of the nation turned into the middle for artistic figures and distributing. Mahmud Tarzi was the supervisor of Seraj al Akhbar, Kabul's most memorable scholarly paper flowed from 1911 to 1919. He is frequently known for his commitment for the improvement of present day artistic climate. Throughout the last many years, Afghanistan created a few scholarly figures including Khalilullah Khalili and Sayed Buhaniddin Majruh. Khalili is alluded to as "Renaissance man" for his commitment to current writing.

Afghan verse and culture has a long history tracing all the way back to the ascent of Sufism. Verse was written in different shared dialects like Persian, Dari, Pashto, and not many in Urdu. Verse in unknown dialects, for example, English and Turkic likewise affects Afghan verse. The verse reflects different otherworldly customs inside the country. Specifically, numerous Afghan writers have been motivated by magical and Sufism encounters. Afghan verse is the most seasoned type of writing and has a rich

composed and oral custom. In Afghanistan, lovely articulation exists for quite a long time. The extraordinary writer Rumi was an Afghan artist who wrote in Dari language all through his life. Different artists additionally wrote in Dari, but a few different writers were profoundly impacted by Persian, Pashto and Arabic Dialects. Current ladies for the most part compose the customary Afghan verse structure, comprising of two lines of rhyme, called landay.

"Afghan" generally has been utilized to assign the individuals from an ethnic gathering additionally called the Pashtuns, however Afghanistan is multicultural and multiethnic. The state was framed by the political development of Pashtun clans in the eighteenth hundred years however was not bound together for the rest of the nineteenth hundred years. Afghan society is very complex, and Afghanistan has a very complex Culture. Part of the reason it has remained unknown is because of this Complexity (Makhmalbaf)

A few gatherings are populist, however others have a various leveled social association. There are extraordinary contrasts in abundance and societal position. Society likewise is defined along strict and ethnic lines. During a large portion of the 20th hundred years, individuals from the ruler's family assumed a significant part in legislative issues as clergymen and representatives. Most government employees and technocrats were Persian-speaking metropolitan inhabitants. Ismaelites and Shiites (particularly the Hazaras) had the least status. In the territories, most regulatory posts were held by Pashtuns who had no association with the populace. Neighborhood people group were overwhelmed by the most extravagant property managers, helped by town headmen. The Sayyeds, expected to be the relatives of the Prophet Muhammad through his girl Fatima,

assumed a significant part as middle people, depending on renown as opposed to privately invested money. Family elderly folks were counseled on neighborhood matters, and many questions were settled by nearby congregations. Albeit Socialist land change was dismissed by the populace, significant changes have happened. Customary pioneers have lost their transcendence to military commandants and youthful strict aggressors. A few dealers have become gigantically rich.

Somewhere in the range of 1919 and 1929, Lord Amanullah attempted to advance female strengthening. Under the Socialist government, numerous ladies had the option to concentrate on in colleges. This pattern was switched by the Taliban. Ladies presently should be totally covered by a long shroud and joined by a male relative when they take off from the house. Ladies face overpowering impediments in the event that they try to work or study or acquire admittance to fundamental medical services. Notwithstanding, the Taliban have further developed security in numerous rustic regions, permitting ladies to do their ordinary obligations. Ladies have never partaken freely in dynamic cycles. They are counseled to be humble and submit to the sets of their dads, siblings, and spouses. All things considered, as watchmen of family honor, ladies have more power.

Traveling and laborer ladies assume a significant part in the homegrown economy and are not confined similarly as numerous metropolitan ladies. Shiite pioneers pressure the right of a lady to partake in the political cycle, participate in autonomous monetary action, and unreservedly pick a spouse. Marriage is viewed as a commitment, and separation is uncommon and demonized. Polygamy is permitted assuming every one of the spouses are dealt with similarly. In any case, it is remarkable and happens basically when a man feels committed to wed the widow of his dead sibling. The general example

is to wed kinfolk, in spite of the fact that families attempt to broaden their social resources through marriage. The occurrence of relationships between cousins is high. The main contacts frequently are made cautiously by ladies to keep away from a public refusal. Then the two families arrange the monetary parts of the association and settle on the linen, the brideprice, and the share. The following stage is the authority commitment, during which female family members of the lucky man carry gifts to the home of the lady and desserts are consumed. The wedding is a three-day party paid for by the man of the hour's family during which the marriage contract is marked and the couple is united. The lady is then brought to her new home in a rich parade. In principle all siblings are equivalent, yet to try not to separate family property, siblings might choose to possess it mutually or to be remunerated monetarily. In opposition to Islamic regulation, ladies don't acquire land, land, or animals. I walk through walls, I am an angel, I come and go across the borders drawn between men and women (Manoori)

In Afghanistan, there is cultural strain for families to have a child to carry on the family name and to acquire the dad's property. Without a child, families might dress one of their little girls as a male, with some sticking to the conviction that having a bacha elegant will make it more probable for a mother to bring forth a child in a resulting pregnancy.

A young lady living as a kid will dress in trademark male dress, have her hair style short, and utilize a male name. The reason for the training isn't duplicity and many individuals, for example, educators or family companions, will know that the youngster is really a young lady. In her family, she will possess a moderate status wherein she is treated as neither a little girl nor completely as a child, yet she won't have to cook or

clean like different young ladies. As a bacha rich, a young lady is all the more promptly ready to go to class, get things done, move unreservedly in broad daylight, escort her sisters where they couldn't be without a male buddy, play sports and look for gainful employment. The young lady's status as a bacha posh normally closes when she enters pubescence. Ladies raised as a bacha posh frequently experience issues making the change from life as a kid and adjusting to the conventional imperatives put on ladies in Afghan culture.

The term "Bacha Posh" literally translated from the local Dari language means a "girl dressed like a boy". There are families who bring up their daughters as sons and, once they reach puberty, the girls usually must return to being girls. Parents who have no sons prefer to convert one of their daughters into a Bacha Posh to raise their social standing. In a society where having a male child is of utmost importance and a matter of pride, Bacha Posh provides social relief. The Bacha Posh is treated like any other male, yet, should forget her orientation characterized personality on turning 17 or 18. Her discourse, her walk, her versatility outside the home, this multitude of angles need to change. A training goes back hundreds of years, however it isn't not difficult to acknowledge nor is its provenance known.

The two concepts of freedom and gender are closely related. Freedom is an essential concept in Afghanistan as it is everywhere else. Only until independence is attained and the struggle for liberation is what Bacha Posh is about does defining one's gender become an issue. The average life expectancy of a woman in Afghanistan is 44 years, making it the worst place in the world for girls to be born, according to the United Nations, Save the Children, and the Thompson Reuters Foundation. In Afghanistan,

having a female child means to be doomed to a half-life. Being a girl child is, at best, looked upon with disappointment. At worst, it is a shame that necessitates drastic action since, although having even one son is a requirement for good status and repute, not having any sons invites scorn.

Some Afghan families decide to have their daughter dress Bacha Posh in order to get around these obstacles. Being born a girl has always taken survival efforts and a tenacity that is hard to conceive, therefore the practise has lived right under the surface as a method to artistically challenge a system of gender division. There is severe female inequality and prejudice, and Bacha Posh may offer a temporary solution. The girl experiences psychological anguish, identity problems, and more as a result of her actions, ignorant of their long-term effects.

It is challenging for a nation with strict gender segregation to tolerate such departure, yet in Afghanistan, this custom predates the advent of Islam. There are no precise statistics on Bacha Posh in Afghanistan because each family will conceal the identity of such a child to themselves due to the pervasive "don't ask, don't tell" mentality. Afghan households pretend that their girls are guys for a variety of reasons. These include social pressure to have sons and the need for the females to work outside the home, according to the New York Times, as well as poverty and the belief that doing so will truly result in the birth of a real boy.

It is not difficult to make a girl child a Bacha Posh. Just cut her hair and dress her in typical Afghan men's clothing. There are no specific legal or religious proscriptions against the practice in Afghanistan. Afghan tribal culture only allows sons to inherit the

father's riches and carry on the family name, making sons more valuable. Families without sons are despised and looked down upon. Cross-dressing is a manner of victimising women in Afghanistan, despite the fact that it is not accepted in most societies. For Afghan women, independence means nothing more complicated than the ability to avoid forced marriage and to leave the family. Being a Bacha Posh is a price that girl children must pay in order to be free to study, pursue a career, and get married. The move back to reality can leave a lasting psychological scar, even though they first feel more free. Instead, they constantly worry that their identity will be revealed. In a strongly patriarchal, male-dominated society, Bacha Posh is a fight for a bit of freedom for ladies.

Nadia Anjuman a poet from Afghanistan. It was the time when new Taliban government took the power, woman had their liberties drastically restrained. Anjuman had no hope for education, as the Taliban shut down girls schools and forbade pirate instructions for girls. With the publication of her first collection of poetry, “Gol-e Dudi”(‘smoky flower’), made a strong footprints in introducing a fresh language and youthful point of view into Dari poetry. Anjuman felt a deep commitment to poetry.

In “Light Blue Memories” , written weeks after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Anjuman addresses the victims of politically enforced silence and asks what is lost when one’s voice is lost. The power begins with an address to the nameless citizen of her country-the women- and goes on to ask who has plundered the riches of their inner lives.

Khalilullah Khalili Afghanistan’s foremost 20th century poet, historian. He was the last of the great classical Persian poets and among the first to introduce modern

Persian poetry. His poems are widely read by Afghans, and many see him as the greatest contemporary poet of the Persian language. He is also known for his historical biography of Habibullah Kalakani. One of Khalili's most famous novels, *The Hero of Khorasan*, is a controversial and beautifully written novel based off the life of Habibullah Kalakani, who contested for the throne with Amanullah Khan, the man responsible for the death of Khalili's father. This novel, although based loosely as the biography of Habibullah Kalakani, touched on themes of oppression, love, faith, and hope amidst the horrors of war.

Afghan artist and a modern poet and a writer of the Persian language Parween Pazhwak, completed her career in medicine at Avicenna Medical Institute. Following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, she spent two years in Pakistan as a transit refugee before moving to Canada as an asylum seeker. Her works of literature include modern Persian poetry, and short stories. As a painter she has created eleven works of art. Two of her most famous published books are "Darya dar Shabnam" (oceans in Dew) and "Negin-ha wa setara- ha" (Gems and Stars).

He has also left a record of thousands of articles for different magazines, newspapers, websites, Afghan films and dramas and for the Ministry of Information and culture of Afghanistan. Massoud Nawabi wrote more than forty five-five books. Among those the most famous book was "Keshtzar Zahfaran".

The prison environment represented a motivation for the young Hashem Zamani to gain further knowledge. He had the undoubted goodfortune of being guided and inspired by the great, independence-minded, religious and political scholars of the time. In the era known as the "Decade of Democracy", Zamani expressed his political

resistance through writing. His first book “Qutbi Khers”, or “Polar Bear”, has been translated into English , and some portions also into French, Italian and Spanish. His poems, articles and creative pieces have been extensively published in various prominent Afghan publications such as Anees, Hewad, Wranga . His famous work include *Qutbi Khirs, Loya Qurbani, Sarey Khwara Bala* . The winner of RAW in WAR’s second annual Anna Politkovskaya Award from Afghanistan. She was the youngest elected member of Afghanistan’s national parliament in 2005. She emerged as a leading fighter for women’s rights.

Mohammad Akram Osman was an Afghan brief tale essayist, author and scholarly. He has worked, for a really long time, as storyteller and essayist of a few social - social projects in Afghanistan's Radio and TV. He has been top of the Craftsmanship and Writing Division at Radio Afghanistan[1] for some period. Akram Osman has the Possibility to Academician title from the Science Foundation of Afghanistan and he has been accountable for the Set of experiences and Regulation Establishments at the Science Institute of Afghanistan. He has filled in as leader of Afghanistan's Essayists Affiliation as well.

Osman has been an individual from Swedish Scholars' Association. Osman has been top of Afghans' Pen Club in Stockholm, Sweden. The magazine Farda was distributed by Afghan Pen Club in Stockholm under his watch. In February 2014 the Administration of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan gave a decoration of privileged acknowledgment to Osman for his commitments to Afghanistan and Afghan writing. The Afghan film has delivered two movies in view of two brief tales by Osman. The movies depend on the brief tales Genuine Men Stay true to Their Promise and The Tricky

Article. The 10th yearly Jalal Al-e Ahmad Scholarly Honors, Iran's most rewarding abstract award, honored Osman, the observed Afghan author.

Akram Osman is perhaps of the most extraordinary contemporary Afghanistani essayist. His brief tales address a current of present day Afghanistan writing in which an imported Western type is blended in with native scholarly practices to turn into a mirror reflecting significant issues and human requirements in Afghanistan culture. His works are partitioned into mocking brief tales, accounts of habits and diaspora stories which are not just spearheading in that frame of mind of Afghanistan writing, yet additionally among the best to be made in present day Afghanistan. Among different specifics, his utilization of a type of a language in light of people customs recognizes his work from those of his counterparts. Osman depicts a verifiable and imaginative image of Afghanistan social classes and their qualities. Osman's accounts show creative legitimacy and are of anthropological premium; and they have additionally become well known brief tales by their own doing interesting to the mass of Afghanistan culture.

Malalai is a well-known activist, writer, and a former politician from Afghanistan. She was a Parliamentarian in the National Assembly of Afghanistan, later to be dismissed for publicly condemning the Afghan Parliament. She was the first ever to speak against the democratically elected Karzai administration and its western supporters, specifically the United States. She is renowned for her attempts to teach women and girls to read and write in the refugee camp where she resided during the Soviet-Afghan war. She fled Afghanistan after the Taliban take over and is now taking refuge in Spain. She taught secretly at an underground school for years and opened Hamoon Health Centre in Farah at the age of 25. She started teaching in refugee camps as soon as she could, and returned

to Afghanistan with a mission to improve access to education for girls, in the face of the ban on women's education that had been put in place by the Taliban.

Tamim Ansary is an Afghan American, world traveler, keen observer, and writer. His name leapt off the shelf at the bookstore where his latest book, *East of New York, West of Kabul*, was featured. It recounts his journeys through Islamic countries and the passion and fundamentalism he encountered a shock from which, he says, it took him 14 years to recover. His great love is writing. He runs the San Francisco Writers Workshop and is a regular columnist for Microsoft's learning site, Encarta.com. He has published a literary memoir, several novels, and a series of educational comic books called *Adventures Plus*. His next book is *Destiny Disrupted, History of the World through Islamic Eyes*.

Nadia Hashimi is a pediatrician turned novelist who draws on her Afghan culture to craft internationally bestselling books for adults as well as young readers. Her novels span generations and continents, taking on themes like forced migration, conflict, poverty, misogyny, colonialism, and addiction. She enjoys conversations with readers of all ages in libraries, book festivals, classrooms, and living rooms. With translations in seventeen languages, she's connected with readers around the world. She continues to serve on boards of organizations committed to educating and nurturing Afghanistan's most vulnerable children and empowering the female leaders of tomorrow. She is a member of the US-Afghan Women's Council and the Afghan-American Foundation.

In 2014, Hashimi released her debut novel, *The Pearl that Broke Its Shell*. It is the story of two women in Afghanistan, living a century apart but tied by legacy. In the contemporary storyline, Rahima is made to dress as a bacha posh, a girl dressed as a boy

in order to help provide for her family and escort her sisters to school. Shekiba's story lends a historical fiction bend to the novel, as she dresses as a man to guard King Habibullah's harem.

The Pearl that Broke Its Shell is an international bestseller and was a 2014 Goodreads finalist in the categories of Debut Author and Fiction. It has been translated into multiple languages, including: French, Italian, Norwegian, German, Turkish and Hungarian. Hashimi's second novel, *When the Moon Is Low* was released in 2015 and is her second international bestseller. It was hailed by O, the Oprah Magazine as "A must-read saga about borders, barriers, and the resolve of one courageous mother fighting to cross over." Hashimi's third novel, *A House Without Windows* was released in 2016 and is Hashimi's third international bestseller. Hashimi has also published two children's books. Hashimi is also known for her book *Sparks Like Stars*, which was released in 2021. *Sparks Like Stars* begins in Kabul in 1978. 10-year-old Sitara lives a comfortable life as the daughter of the Afghanistan's progressive president's right-hand man. When the communists stage a coup, Sitara's entire family is murdered. She grows up to be a surgeon after being smuggled out of the palace and into America. Thirty years later, the man who both saved her and who may have assassinated her family, shows up in her examination room in New York.

Hashimi has received the official endorsement of the Feminist Majority. The endorsement was announced at the 2018 Women's March in DC by Eleanor Smeal, president and co-founder of Feminist Majority Foundation. Smeal introduced Hashimi as the first Afghan-American woman and pediatrician to run for Congress. "I came into writing in a most unexpected way," the author told Kimmerly Martin. "I was a cheerful

pediatrician working in a busy emergency room in Washington, DC. Plus, I was an avid reader who felt compelled by the strength and resilience demonstrated by Afghan women writing, like medicine, demands attention to the human stories around us.” *A House Without Windows* (2016) follows Zeba, a wife and mother who is blamed for the murder of her husband. Zeba befriends the women who have stayed in jail for safety and protection and meets an Afghan-American lawyer. The pediatrician also published two children’s novels: *One Half from the East* (2016) and *The Sky at our Feet* (2018).

In Kabul, 2007, Rahima and her sisters can only sporadically attend school and can rarely leave the house. Their only hope lies in the ancient custom of *bacha posh*, which allows young Rahima to dress and be treated as a boy until she is of marriageable age. A century earlier, her great-aunt, Shekiba, saved herself and built a new life the same way. Crisscrossing in time, *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* interweaves the tales of these two women separated by a century who share similar destinies. “The Pearl That Broke Its Shell” is told from two different perspectives, one being Rahima as she narrates her own story, and the other being Khala Shaima as she narrates Shekiba’s story. As Rahima’s perspective is told in the first person, the reader can get a full sense of the emotions she feels through each of her experiences. Rahima’s story is being told from the first-hand source, and so the information is fresh, unfiltered, and therefore possibly easier for the reader to empathize with. It is also important to note that since Rahima tells her story in the first person but hears Shekiba’s story in the third person, the reader can watch Rahima draw strength from the story of her great-great grandmother. by Khala Shaima to be telling Shekiba’s story, the reader is able to relate it to Rahima’s life story.

When she began writing, she was inspired by injustice. Hashimi wanted to convey, through stories, the wrongs of patriarchy, corruption, and disenfranchisement. In Afghan lives, these injustices take on the form of child marriage, poverty, addiction, and displacement. But after the publication of her second book, *When the Moon Is Low*, she found a new source of inspiration. People in book clubs were reacting to my stories. They had learned something about Afghanistan and saw today's situation differently. They looked at refugees in a new light. They wondered what could be done to help. I'm now driven by opportunity. Afghanistan has captured the world's attention and still, its history and culture are largely misunderstood. Each story is a chance to record another sliver of the Afghan experience and to affirm our humanity. Each story is an opportunity to inform, broaden understanding, and deepen empathy. With such a great need for bridges, Hashmi feel compelled to make the most of the pages. This best-selling author, pediatrician, and mother of four, captivates the reader and tells stories of essence that transcend boundaries. Hashimi's writing style is almost poetic and mesmerizing in the way it details human emotions and the history of her beloved ancestral country Afghanistan. Her use of language is one of the biggest reasons I love her books. These novels are an introduction to the lost tales of Afghanistan. These are stories of women, who have been marginalized and neglected, and for years stood as supporting figures in the tales of men without having their stories told. While her books don't shy from talking about themes like conflict, war, migration and misogyny, they also entertain and take you on a whirlwind ride emotionally.

Hashmi's latest book, *"Sparks Like Stars"*, is yet another captivating story, which takes the protagonist 'Sitara' from the Afghan Presidential Palace in Kabul to a foster

home in the US. The two worlds couldn't be more different yet; the author seamlessly weaves them together in this epic tale. Poignant, brave, bold and tragic, the book has a haunting quality to it. It breaks your heart and makes it explode with love. Even when it feeds you tragedy, it shows you the way out. Unlike her previous novels, this book seems more personal, and one can feel the author dipping into her own life experiences throughout the book. I, for one, would love to see this book made into a movie. The author's descriptive writing takes you on a visual voyage that would be brilliant to see on the big screen.

Nadia find inspiration in the women around herself , her mother who was one of the few women to graduate in her year with a civil engineering degree in Kabul, my grandmother who was one of four wives and managed to teach her children that love and family are paramount, my aunt who divorced an abusive husband and saved herself and her son, and my other aunt who is at the gym at the crack of dawn and is equally comfortable in front of a spreadsheet as she is leading an aerobics class. Then, of course, there are the fierce women of Afghanistan serving in government or performing their art despite the threats received from extremists. There are strong women all around us if we are willing to see them. I see myself as a feminist because I want equality in all regards for women. I cannot imagine settling for anything less.

"The pearl that broke its shell" discusses about a corrupt government cannot effectively provide for or protect its daughters. When school funding disappears into the pockets of politicians, young students suffer. When girls are married young, they are more likely to experience health problems or even die during childbirth ,pregnancy. They are unlikely to go to school and more likely to be abused. Add to this the

knowledge that it is really hard to break out of a cycle of poverty or violence in a family, and it's easy to believe some Afghan girls simply don't stand a chance. The landscape is changing, though. It is a much safer world than it was a decade ago and many Afghan women are thankful to the western nations who helped free them from the oppressive Taliban control. Women are now part of government again. They are becoming working professionals and contributing members of their families. Young girls can look up to assertive, accomplished women in their communities and be inspired to do great things.

A novel is a piece of prose fiction of a reasonable length. The word comes from the Italian, *Novella*, which means the new staff that small. The novel developed in England and America. The novel was originally developed in the region from other forms of narrative nonfiction, such as letters, biographies, and history. But with a shift in society and development time, the novel is not only based on data nonfiction, author of novel can change according to the desired imagination. A novel is a totality, a comprehensiveness that is artistic. As a totality, the novel has passages elements, most related to one another in close and mutually dependent. The elements of a novel-builder who then collectively form a totality that-in addition to the formal elements of language, there are many more kinds. The division of the element in question is the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic Elements are the elements that build the literary work itself. Elements are what because the literary present as a work of Martial Arts. Intrinsic elements of a novel element participate and build the story. Extrinsic elements are the elements that are beyond the works .of Martial Arts, but indirectly affect the building or system of the organism's Martial Arts. Extrinsic elements of a novel must be still seen as something important.

The earliest novels include classical Greek and Latin prose narratives.

Characterization is one of many important elements of fiction. A character is a participant in the story. Some examples of characters are protagonist and antagonist. The protagonist is the main character of a story, the one the author spends the most time exploring or developing and the one whose conflict moves the plot along. Sometimes the protagonist can also be the story's first-person narrator.

The antagonist is the character who opposes the protagonist, or the hero and provides the story's conflict. Dialogue is an essential element of fiction and, to some degree, memoir. Dialogue consists of conversations between two or more people, and can be used heavily or sparsely. A good dialogue positively affects pacing makes a novel easier to read by relieving the reader from long descriptive passages it also effectively characterizes and adds to the reality of the speakers. Literary Fiction is quite fluid and for the last few decades has easily overlapped with any number of genres. Even though its definition is a broad target, Literary Fiction definitely has characteristics of its own.

Nadia Hashimi's debut novel *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*(2014) is a powerful interweaving of fiction and reality sourced from real-life incidents from the third-world nations and the disturbing status of women there. It revolves around the life journey of two Afghan families, focusing on the personal journeys of the two female protagonists; Rahima and Shekiba. The tales of both are separated by almost a century but the graph of their experiences almost runs parallel with a politically chaotic backdrop of the Islamic extremist group; The Taliban. For polar reasons and circumstances, Rahima and Shekiba take on male roles, disguise as men; Shekiba as a guard to the female-only harem of the

king and Rahima as a son to fulfil the duties of the family and also as a security measure. In Afghanistan, it is considered risky to have an all-female-only family, like in the case of Rahima.

So, she is turned into a Bacha Posh and lives the initial years of life as a boy child, having access to school learning and everything else reserved as a male privilege. Both of their lives are similar on the base that both find the second identity in a male's disguise in a patriarchal society that believes in suppressing and limiting the scope of progress for women. But sadly, even after tasting the pie of a man's freedom, they are forced into marriages that did not consent to and are subjected to heinous acts like domestic violence and marital rape. In the 1900s Shekiba struggled for the basic human rights as her family dies of cholera and her relatives sold her away.

The narrative arch of this novel can be divided into two very vague halves of the dual tones maintained in constructing the plot. Both Rahima and Shekiba undergo through these two dualities in their lives. The first is when the Shekiba is powerless in her initial years when she loses her parents and is traded for money. But later on, she musters up the courage to find out and make her own "naseeb". But then in a contrast, Rahima is made to live like a boy, is fearless and educated, and has an opinion about everything. Still, when she comes of age, she is married off to a man twice her age for money. The male chauvinistic characters like Asif and Azzizulla are the very example of prototyped tortuous men who chew the freedom and will of women for their own selfish purposes. Asif physically abuses Rahima and sexually torments her to fulfil his lust, even when she is having health concerns and while she is menstruating.

The stories of inspiration are no doubt from women again, owing to Hashimi's unique style of making polarities co-exist. Women like Queen Soroya, whose speech inspires Shekiba to dream of exploring cities like Kabul and the bravery of Shekiba in turn, inspiring Rahima to take fearless decisions regarding her life is the most constructive plot twist in this novel. But again, in contrast to this, the fact that all these plot-lines ultimately signify the fact that wherever there is a free license given to one gender with a biased conscience that one can subjugate the other gender only because it has been an age-old practice, is clearly disturbing by itself. For ages men have internalised sexism to the optimal level where everyone has considered it their right to oppress women. As women are categorized as the secondary sex, they are not allowed to have school learning, can't access formal education, can't go out of the house without a male, etc.

Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965. His father was a diplomat in the Afghan Foreign Ministry and his mother taught Farsi and history at a high school in Kabul. In 1976, the Foreign Ministry relocated the Hosseini family to Paris. They were ready to return to Kabul in 1980, but by then their homeland had witnessed a bloody communist coup and the invasion of the Soviet Army. In March 2001, while practicing medicine, Hosseini began writing his first novel, *The Kite Runner*, which was published by Riverhead Books in 2003. That debut went on to launch one of the biggest literary careers of our time. Today, Khaled Hosseini is one of the most recognized and bestselling authors in the world. His books, *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *And the Mountains Echoed*, have been published in over seventy countries and sold more than 40 million copies worldwide.

In 2006 Khaled was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Inspired by a trip he made to Afghanistan with the UNHCR, he later established The Khaled Hosseini Foundation, which provides humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. A major feature of Hosseini's novels is a vivid representation of his native land, Afghanistan. He shapes his protagonists either as submissive women characters facing patriarchal domination in the Afghan life, or people suffering from the repressive strategies of the state and society. His voice can be regarded as a representative of the Afghan culture. He highlights the traditional values and notions of Afghan society by making them known to the modern world.

Khaled Hosseini began his writing career with "The Kite Runner" in 2001. He used to write the novel at 4 am before going for work as a practitioner. It was published in 2003 by *Riverhead Books* which received instant fame. The novel became the New York Best Selling novel for a long time. This novel recognized Khaled Hosseini as one of the notable writers of the 21st century. In "The Kite Runner" a young boy, Amir, struggles with the haunting memories of the past life. He also tries to create a harmonious bond with his father. The novel occurs in contemporary Afghan society. It is set in a period from monarchy till post-Taliban rule as well as in California in the San Francisco Bay area.

In 2007, Hosseini issued his second novel "A Thousand Splendid Suns". It depicts similar themes of political and social struggles as "The Kite Runner". However, the story turns towards a feministic perspective and narrates the life events of two female characters, Laila and Mariam, both living with their aged offensive husband. The story

depicts the individual lives of the involved characters during the chaotic thirty years of Taliban and soviet rule. The novel received its inspiration from a visit of Hosseini to his homeland where he saw women wearing veils and living a dependent life. The second novel was also issued by Riverhead Books in 2007. In the backdrop of a war-torn country, Hosseini highlights the importance of life and the value of personal relationships. His novels are mostly set in the wartime society of Afghanistan. Therefore, his works depict how war affects the lives of the characters in every possible way. The individuals live in a persisting fear and threat of death. Moreover, they wake up with the news of the death of their loved ones and live amid riots and bombing.

Whenever life is in threat, we care for loved ones and family life regardless of material prosperity. In this way, through Hosseini's novels, we realize the importance of life and family when we are forced to think like a war situation and perceive the death of near ones. As in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Laila loses her family in a bombing incident. She witnesses her father and mother dying before her eyes with their bodies shattered in the air. Only then, she realizes how important survival is in a war-torn society and marries an elderly man for her survival. In his novels, Hosseini depicts his idea of love how love affects the life of a person. Love needs sacrifices and patience. Moreover, he presents love as a powerful feeling that induces intense care and compassion in individuals. It also tests the vulnerability of characters to risks in the journey of protecting their loved ones. Nonetheless, for Hosseini, love is not only the emotion of two opposite genders. He depicts multi-natured relationships of love i.e. between family members, parental love, romantic attachment, and friendship.

In all of Hosseini's novels, the theme of love encourages the characters to fight for a better existence, make struggles for freedom, and grant forgiveness. Another significant theme of Hosseini's novels is the partiality and injustice that his characters face. They suffer through the hands of an insulting husband, forced marriages, war, and dominating parents. The main lesson these victims of society teach is how to fight off the negative impacts of the issues they face.

In his novels, the characters fall in a pit of rejection, depression, anger, and confusion when they face injustice by society. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Laila and Mariam face harsh circumstances because of a failed marriage but they cope with it by gaining independent encouragement. Mariam kills her oppressive husband and Laila begins a new life with Tariq, her former love. One of the most important issues of Eastern society that Hosseini portrays is the patriarchal oppression and male dominance in society. The women are treated as submissive and possession of men. As in "A Thousand Splendid Suns" the female characters are considered toys of their husband, Rasheed, who forces them to work for him. He also beats them like animals. At the end, the first wife kills him. This shows that women are also living beings with emotions and they need love and respect.

Hosseini vividly portrayed the political conditions of Afghanistan in his novels. Although he was not living in his homeland, he was aware of the political chaos and reflected it in his work. This added realism to his work because he precisely pointed out the era of Soviet invasion and Taliban rule in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and "The Kite Runner". Also, he discussed the siblings' divergence of the time in "And the Mountains

Echoed”. Khaled Hosseini is one of the notable American writers. His writings reflect on the life of the Afghan homeland he had left as a child. Therefore, he is considered as a “spokesperson” for Afghan values.

The novels are famous for their empathetic tone and common human feelings. His stories penetrate deep into the human soul and dig out the universal nature of humanity and their values that separate good from the bad. For example, Hosseini’s works have a unified sense of the fundamental human emotions like love, hatred, betrayal, revenge, power, forgiveness, redemption, and loss.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, there is enough destruction caused by the powerful sects on a larger as well as individual scale. Likewise, there is a mutual feeling of love and intimacy between Laila and Tariq, and Laila and Mariam. Similarly, the domination of Rasheed over his wives also shows power over the weak and submissive. These instances create an empathetic feeling with the social life of Middle Eastern people. These universal feelings also develop oneness with the whole of humanity. In “The Kite Runner”, this empathetic tone continues to recur., the protagonist has an intimate relationship with his servant. However, as he grows with time and his social standing is distinguished, he breaks up with him. This is also a universal human trait. Hosseini’s major concern was to impart a positive image of the Middle East. He also tried to change the stereotypical concepts of the West about eastern life. This struggle can be seen in all of his novels in which he describes the cultural and traditional values of Eastern life in satisfying terms. In “A Thousand Splendid Suns”, the stereotypes of veil “burqa” and “nang” (honor) are discussed from the perspective of an abusive husband. These are then

challenged when a dependent and submissive wife kills her husband to get her family out of his unnecessary oppression.

Hosseini's writing style is that of a sympathetic and disgusted tone for the main characters as they face the brutality of the social system in their everyday lives. However, he uses the tone of disapproval for the brutal dominant figures of society. Moreover, Hosseini enforces his tone and thoughts vividly through the use of imagery and symbolism. As in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, when Mariam is compelled by the situation to live with her father who had long deserted her, the author uses the tone of extreme sympathy and pity for her. The works of Hosseini reflect a hidden optimism in the minds and actions of the characters. As they face rejection and failures in their lives, they still succeed in getting themselves out of the challenges. However, he actively struggles to resolve his inner and outer conflicts. Likewise, in 'A Thousand Splendid Suns', Laila moves from traditional conservative family life to a liberal and modern lifestyle by defeating the obstacles that come in her way to get a better modern life.

Hosseini also sometimes applies a dialogic form to his narration to give it a conversational form. For instance, when Nana forbids Mariam from going to the cinema with her father in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the narration takes the form of dialogues. Likewise, his novels have visual representations and create lucid imagery to present his thought more clearly and precisely. Hosseini received several prizes for his great pieces of literature with a realistic depiction of Eastern society. He was awarded the *Exclusive Books Booker Prize* for "The Kite Runner" in 2004. In 2008, "A Thousand Splendid Suns" was awarded *British Book Awards for Richard & Judy Best Read of the Year*. The

same year, the novel was awarded *Book Sense Book of the Year Awards* for Adult fiction and *California Book Award Silver Medal* in 2007. In 2013, “And the Mountains Echoed” got the *Goodreads Choice Award* for fiction.

A Thousand Splendid Suns begins in the early 1960s but quickly moves to 1974. From 1974, the novel covers a nearly 30-year period of turbulent change in the history of Afghanistan. Critical plot points derive from political events in this work of historical fiction. The Afghanistan that Khaled Hosseini describes at the beginning of the novel is a stable and prosperous country. The images of the city of Herat include the successful cinema that Mariam's father, Jalil, owns, and the wealth that he enjoys, along with the freedom to go from place to place without being stopped. Mariam is able, for example, to go to Jalil's house and ask for directions along the way without anyone questioning why a young girl is traveling by herself. The events of the early 1970s and beyond changed Afghanistan into a country torn by bloodshed and war, where women often suffered the most.

In Afghanistan the ethnic class or tribal group that a person is born into largely determines the person's destiny. The two primary ethnic groups in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are Pashtuns and Tajiks. Pashtuns speak a language called Pashto, and Tajiks speak a dialect of Farsi, also called Persian. Since 1964 Dari has been the official language of Afghanistan, a lingua franca, or common language, formed from various Persian dialects. Tariq and his family are Pashtun, and Rasheed is Pashtun. Laila and her family are Tajik, and while Mariam's ethnicity is not directly stated, she comes from an area where Farsi is spoken and the population is mostly Tajik.

This paper examines the factors associated with the cultural phenomenon of bacha posh in Afghanistan in which girls are dressed and raised as boys which occurs against a background of rigid gender norms and the male-centric nature of Afghan families. The primary outcome is a nominal variable, desired from the question, 'Do you have any girl in your family who has been raised for any time as a boy? '. Independent variable comprise women socio-demographic characteristics, family composition, economic characteristics, patriarchal attitudes. Factors associated with bacha posh include women having few daughters. The study focuses on cultural practice of bacha posh, where girls were raised as boys during their childhood till they attain the age of puberty so that they could have access to educational opportunity, mobility and economic and public spaces from which they were being deprived because of this gender. But can such cross-dressing truly allow girls to receive the benefits of patriarchy -the freedom that is limited only for the dominant gender? Is the disguise of gender role a means of empowerment for girls or a form of oppression? Is freedom only a kind of illusion? Keeping these questions in mind, the paper will examine the practice of bacha posh as depicted in Nadia Hasimi's novel *The Pearl that Broke its Shell*.

The study focus on Khaled Hosseini's novel *Thousand Splendid Suns* at female level of resistance, it also concentrates on levels of resistance as a part of Afghan female's lifestyle against the gender oppression that are enforced on them through their lifestyle and culture. Findings on the conflicts of female and the level of resistance factors are seen in the novel though the analysis of the two primary characters Maryam and Laila. How the characters specifically victimized, sexually harassed, suppressed by both male and female figures but in spite of all they challenged the brutality. Is that necessary for

the female to endure the pain and still go through it to live a life? Is that pain worth the results? There is a message for all those women of the world who are suffering from any type of male or female brutality that they can stand against all oppressions and suppressions. To be a woman is not bad, but to be a coward woman is really bad.

Chapter II

Chapter II

Anathema of bacha posh

Two Afghan women who grew up 100 years apart , Rahima, the protagonist of the novel, is changed into an Afghan bacha-posh in modern-day Afghanistan. Rahima's story is entwined with that of Rahima's great-great grandmother, Shekiba. Rahima was born with an illness that only affects women, just like many other Afghan women. For her mother to be able to work outside the home as well, she decides to pose as a boy. Before girls marry their intended partners, an old custom called Bacha Posh encourages them to be treated like boys. Rahima's independence will only be temporary because her father will soon arrange for her marriage to a successful businessman.

The social expectation in Afghanistan and Pakistan is that families have a son who will uphold the family name and get the father's fortune. Families may disguise one of their daughters as a man if they don't have a son, and some hold the view that having a bacha posh increases the likelihood that a mother will conceive a son in a later pregnancy.

The primary characters Rahima and her great, great grandmother Shekiba relate to the tale of the Afghan people, while Nadia Hashimi delivers a message that hasn't changed in decades. The book's title seemed appropriate for the protagonist, who is battling to overcome the difficulties of daily life. She makes a brave effort to escape the encasing shell's restrictions and appear outside as a pearl. Her mother has always soothed her by saying that she is as precious to the world as a pearl, even though she has

sometimes cursed herself for being a girl. Only by then did Rahima realize how valuable and priceless she is and how crucial it is to live each day to the fullest.

Nadia Hashimi gave rise to the issue of feminism at the level of gender biases. Hashimi writes, "There is no way out for her than to lose herself, body and soul in him who is represented to her as the absolute, as the essential" .The two parallel stories in *The Pearl That Broke its Shell* begin in a small Afghan village and end in Kabul. Rahima and Shekiba, two women who are over a century apart in time, use the bacha posh custom to empower themselves in the face of oppressive gender conventions in their community.

The Shekiba narrative, which takes place at the turn of the 20th century, describes the terrible existence that a little girl faces due to her facial malformation. When Shekiba is just two years old, a pot of hot oil spills on her and completely burns the left side of her lovely face. Shekiba thus loses her suitability for marriage and is ultimately gifted to King Habibullah to serve as a "woman-man" guard in the king's harem because "he doesn't trust men to watch over his women and he has collected a group of women who are kept as men" (*TPTS* 114)

Rahima, who is nine years old, spends almost four years living as a boy before her addicted father marries her off to a much older warlord following the fall of the Taliban. Rahima manages to flee after enduring years of brutal beatings and finds safety in a shelter in Kabul. Shekiba and Rahima are forced to live as men at different stages in their life due to the "desire 'to persist in their being'". Although their main motivation is to defy restrictive gender norms, gender-bending is only made possible "because a certain historical convergence of norms at the site of... embodied personhood opens up

possibilities for action". Shekiba and Rahima only manage to survive by turning to the bacha posh tradition because it has been established and approved by Afghan culture rather than because they are endowed with special abilities.

In any cultural setting, clothing can signify several things, including social class, gender, and religion. Clothing, as a result, "allows us to play, either permanently or temporarily, with identity and self-image", yet "boundaries highlighted by gender-specific dress are seldom crossed lightly or without intention" (Suthrell 5). According to Harry Benjamin, cross-dressing is seen as a "conspicuous symptom" of "a disturbance of behavior and emotion" in the context of transgender studies. From a religious perspective, Western nations viewed "sex differences as 'natural,' God-ordained" as early as the sixteenth century. Natural distinctions were violated, which therefore included social and moral ones (Herrmann 296–97). raising the possibility of same-gender obsession. Due to its association with sexual deviation, cross-dressing has been viewed as a violation in both Western and Eastern cultures. In Muslim countries, cross-dressing is completely against the law because it is seen as an attempt to change God's creation a desire to impersonate the gender that God did not design for a particular person.

According to a "variety of contexts, both historically and geographically," Charlotte Suthrell makes a compelling case that the motivations and attitudes behind gender-bending cross-dressing differ significantly. A male-to-female crosser would be stigmatized for adopting "abnormal" features and their motivation would be primarily viewed as sexual if they claimed an "unprivileged" gender identity. Male-to-female crossers may not be accepted by society or religion due to their desire for an unusual

sexual thrill, but female-to-male cross dressers are frequently thought to have "not sexual but cultural desires" .

Bearing many boys is a great source of pride for both the mother and the father in traditional rural civilizations. However, it is solely the responsibility of women to produce male offspring to uphold the family name and "to supplement the family's income in an agricultural or cash economy" (Emadi 47). Rahima's grandmother "hated that anyone in her family was forced to resort to the bacha posh tradition" (*TPTS*45) when she learns of Rahima's transformation into bacha posh. Even though this custom is legal and followed by many families, some individuals appear to view it as a sign that they have failed to produce "real" male offspring.

According to Judith Butler, "the changeability itself, the dream of a metamorphosis... signifies a certain freedom" for female gender-crossers (*Bodies That Matter*, 125). Rahima's mother takes advantage of this intrinsic need for freedom and persuades Rahima to join the bacha posh community so that she can attend school without being bothered by boys. Games were an option (*TPTS*23). But Rahima's transformation into a bacha posh involves more than just dressing like a boy and adopting his appearance; it involves a full performance of what it means to be a man, including name, "gesture, posture, movement, and general bodily comportment" (Bartky 134). Rahima's mother makes every effort to assure that her daughter's transition is real: "She is now your brother, Rahim, Rahima's mother says. You will greet your brother and forget about your sister Rahima. It's crucial that you only talk about your brother, Rahim, and never bring up your other sister." (*TPTS*, 36)

Shekiba surprises everyone by displaying a purely feminine reaction upon first viewing a photograph of her body, blushing at the prospect of showing what she has been taught to conceal beneath the burqa. Shekiba has a feminine psyche despite having a seemingly masculine identity. But her ongoing battle for acceptance distorts how she sees herself as a woman: "I have always been my father's daughter-son. My father hardly knew I was a girl. I am not to be considered for a wife, soWhat of me is a girl?" (TPTS ,83)

Shekiba is not accepted by herself and society as a result of her failure to "comply with certain norms that govern recognition" (Butler, *Performativity* iv). Shekiba's noncompliance, however, opens up new opportunities that are made possible by the same culture that denies her acknowledgment in other situations, even though non-compliance calls into question the viability of one's life, the ontological conditions of one's persistence. Although she is an outcast by the standards of her village, she serves a purpose and has value there. To be acknowledged as a subject inside the palace, Shekiba must declare her commitment to a particular gender identity. She is not allowed to act in her female identity while at the palace because the only requirement for admission is that she must be a guy.

This explains why, although the king hires "women who are already kept as men," these women nonetheless go through a comprehensive defeminizing procedure; it is done to ensure their commitment to their position as guards and prevent them from indulging in the luxuries provided to his ladies. Shekiba adapts to the male gender identity as expected pretty readily; she even "no longer missed being able to pull her head scarf over her cheek. She found it liberating to walk about, her hands in her pockets and the sun on her face" (*TPTS* 225).

Rahima is just nine when she transforms into Bacha Posh, but she is already well aware of the presence of the constricting power that surrounds her body. Hashimi's in-depth account of Rahim's first "errand as a boy" is notable because it demonstrates the legitimate concerns about gender fluidity, especially in young children: "Agha-sahib, how much for a kilo of flour?" I asked, remembering to keep my shoulders straight. I couldn't quite bring myself to look the man in the eye so I kept shifting my gaze to the tin cans he had stocked on the shelf behind him. (*TPTS46*)

Rahima begins to boldly argue with the shopkeeper about the exorbitant price he is charging for flour after being identified as a "little boy" by the shopkeeper. Rahima explains: 'I'm no fool, agha-sahib,' I said, and forced myself to look him in the eye, as a boy should" (*TPTS47*). Yet, despite Rahima's audacity, the bewilderment in her sense of identity is explicit and is mirrored in her "vacillation between masculine and feminine" (*TPTS295*) while seeking acceptance from the scrutinizing male gaze.

As bacha posh which is according to Ann Heilmann, "not the body,... inscribed gender and assigned social power to the wearer" (83). Rahima begins to boldly argue with the shopkeeper about the exorbitant price he is charging for flour after being identified as a "little boy" by the shopkeeper. Rahima explains: 'I'm no fool, agha-sahib,' I said, and forced myself to look him in the eye, as a boy should" (*TPTS47*).

Rahima is conditioned to avoid the male gaze to avoid humiliation, thus when she initially approaches the shopkeeper, she is afraid to "look the man in the eye." This is true both because she fears the shopkeeper will notice she is a woman and because she is afraid of being disgraced if she does. Rahima later decides to gaze into the man's eyes "as

a boy should" as her gender identity begins to take shape. Following her gender reversal, Rahima immediately adopts the power of the male gaze and uses it "as a form of domination" (Garland-Thomson 42) over the shopkeeper.

My walk turned to a jog as I realized I didn't have to be demure and proper. I tested an old man walking by. I looked directly at him, meeting his squinted eyes and seeing that he didn't react to my forwardness. Thrilled, I started to run faster My legs felt liberated as I ran through the streets without my knees slapping against my skirt and without worrying about chastising my eyes. I was a young man and it was in my nature to run through the streets. (*TPTS* 48)

The confinement of women in garments designed specifically to restrict their movement and maintain their chastity is not peculiar to Muslim cultures. In England in the seventeenth century, a campaign was sponsored by King James I against the "insolence" of women who cross-dressed as men. The king's proponents, all men, needless to say, agreed that "for women to wear elements of masculine dress was wrong". Even though women now wear trousers, Iris Young emphasizes that they "still tend to sit with their legs relatively close together and their arms across their bodies" (142). While Rahima's freedom of movement may simply be attributed to the fact that she is now wearing trousers, her sense of liberation seems to be a result of a new mindset provided to her by her newly acquired masculine identity.

Rahima is gradually embracing the perks of her new gender identity. Shekiba's physicality naturally corresponds with her male gender identity due to her early adoption of the boy identity. It seems that women "do not wish to appear too strong" because in

that case their feminine identity would be subverted, a problem that Shekiba would not worry much about in the presence of a disfigured face and “arms and shoulders [that are] knotted with muscle” (*TPTS20*).

Rahima discovers her natural urges as a feminine adolescent by spending more time with boys. Her feminine soul is completely separated from her allegedly male body, which appears to engage in fun conflicts with the guys for its reasons even despite her seemingly manly obsession with martial arts: Sometimes I came away with bruises But it was worth it for that moment when, inevitably, Abdullah would have me cornered or would twist my arm behind me and I could feel his breath on my neck. Somewhere inside I tingled to be that close to him I felt dangerous and alive. (*TPTS 85*)

Rahima's mother is furious when she sees "her daughter pinned under a boy in the middle of the street" because she finally understands the restrictions and limitations of cross-dressing in effecting an actual reversal of gender. Rahima's mother, frustrated and powerless, radically alters her prior instructions for her bacha posh when "it's time to undo Rahim": "You are Rahima. You must always keep in mind that you are a girl and should act accordingly. Look at your posture as you sit and walk. Men don't look people in the eyes, and speak quietly. Rahima must reclaim her female identity to follow the bacha posh custom. To do this, she must first add the letter she lost during her metamorphosis and then modify her behavior.

One of the constructions of masculinity, bacha posh is the result of repressive patriarchy, where there is a complex interaction between the social structure and the body

that eventually gives rise to perplexing concepts of sexuality and gender identity. Hegemonic masculinity that justifies women's subordination has been established by both the Mujahideen (1992–1996) and the Taliban (1996–2001) regimes. In particular, the Taliban regime institutionalizes gender inequality and polices women's mobility to the point where they are unable to enter public areas without being accompanied by a mahram (male relative). Limiting women's access to the public sphere also restricts their access to employment opportunities and public services. In every institution, masculine domination becomes the standard. The birth of a boy child becomes crucial to the family, and women are expected to bear the responsibility for doing it.

Every Afghan family must have at least one son, according to Jenny Nordberg, who makes this claim in her foundational work on bacha posh, *The Underground Girls of Kabul: The Hidden Lives of Afghan Girls Disguised as Boys*. Without a son, the family is deemed weak, incomplete, and vulnerable. Therefore, every married woman in Afghanistan is required to have a son, which becomes her only goal in life; if she does not, she is stigmatized.

The other girls at this age covered themselves. Those who, like me, had spent their formative years dressed as boys gradually gave up their shalwar kameez and the freedom it brought. They gave up their fields and their sports to become a part of the structure that would support them for the rest of their lives: the boundaries of their house. They acquired skills in child care, sewing, and helping their mothers. It took them a few months to accept their gender; by the time they were twelve, they were burqa-clad and wouldn't leave the house without a man.

The dilemma of these girls when they have to revert to their feminine selves is analyzed by Corboz, Gibbs, and Jewkes in their essay "Bacha posh in Afghanistan: factors associated with raising a girl as a boy", when they hit puberty, girls who were reared as guys are typically "converted" back to being girls. Girls, who had more freedom and mobility as children may find themselves in a difficult situation as they are forced to reclaim their feminine identities and, in some cases, prepare for marriage shortly after doing so. For those bacha posh who identify as male and wish to continue living as a boy, changing back to being a girl may be extremely challenging. After transferring to the feminine persona, she has to unlearn the things that she has mastered as a boy and adopt feminine body language.

The overt appearance becomes easy to convert but the psychological impact left by years of performance is difficult to wipe out. Reclaiming the body into the feminine persona requires a constant struggle. Rahima's mother's response was changed as a result of her cross-gender identification as a result of the imposed identity, allowing Rahima to accept the societal standards of maleness. Rahima is not the only family member who engages in cross-dressing, as was previously mentioned.

Rahima learns about her great-great-grandmother from her aunt Khala Shaima. Rahima's great-great-grandmother was a son of her father, worked on the farm as a boy, and served as a harem guard in King Habibullah's palace while wearing a man's uniform. Nordberg defines how Afghan dads are currently using their daughters as playing cards: Men make alliances, and not necessarily in the best interest of their daughters. These alliances are related to the social prestige and honor of the family. But it may also be opportunism.

Rahima's plight serves as a projection by Hashmi of the repression of women in a dominant masculine culture at all levels. Marriage and bacha posh serve as limiting structures that jeopardize the subjectivity of women. She is first made into a boy by the imposition of bacha posh to relieve the family of stigma and take on family responsibilities, and then she is made into a girl by the imposition of marriage to ensure the family's financial security. Both Rahima and her sisters end up in similarly forced marriages, but Rahima has it particularly rough because she is frequently compelled to play different roles. The thought of him made me queasy. I hated the feeling of it. I hated his breath, his whiskers, his callused feet. But there would be no escape. He called for me when he pleased and made me do what he wanted. (*TPTS* 169)

Rahima's individuality and space in her new environment are constrained by Abdul Khaliq's domineering personality. Rahima has been prohibited from performing home duties ever since she was turned into a bacha posh, thus she has found it challenging to redefine her life in terms of feminine responsibilities. Rahima's mother-in-law requests that Badriya, Abdul Khaliq's first wife, keep her under close observation so that she can get familiar with her feminine responsibilities and play the role of a wife appropriately. Rahima marries warlord Abdul Khaliq for the fourth time at the age of thirteen. She has some residual scars from years of playing the male character, which stops her from embracing her new role as Abdul Khaliq's wife fully. Her marriage suffers from extreme dissatisfaction.

She despises her husband because he treats her violently to establish his authority over her and dehumanizes her: The thought of him made me queasy. I hated the feeling

of it. I hated his breath, his whiskers, his callused feet. But there would be no escape. He called for me when he pleased and made me do what he wanted.

Rahima's individuality and space in her new environment are constrained by Abdul Khaliq's domineering personality. Rahima has been prohibited from performing home duties ever since she was turned into a *bacha posh*, thus she has found it challenging to redefine her life in terms of feminine responsibilities. Rahima's mother-in-law requests that Badriya, Abdul Khaliq's first wife, keep her under close observation so that she can get familiar with her feminine responsibilities and play the role of a wife appropriately:

Make sure she does a good job, Badriya. This girl has a lot to learn. She was a *bacha posh*, don't forget. Can you believe that? A *bacha posh* at this age! No wonder she has no clue how to carry herself as a woman. Look at the way she walks, her hair, her fingernails! Her mother should be ashamed of herself. (TPTS 176)

Her mother-in-law criticizes her mother for enabling her to maintain her *bacha posh* persona even after reaching adolescence in addition to criticizing her for lacking feminine qualities. Jahangir, Rahima's son, is the only one who can save her from her dreadful life. Having a son improves Rahima's standing in the family, and Jahangir starts to become one of Abdul Khaliq's favorites. Any solace for Rahima, though, is only temporary. Abdul Khaliq nominates Badriya as a member of the parliament when the new administration takes office and insists that women sit in the parliament to influence political decisions.

Rahima offers to assist Badriya in Kabul because she is literate and can write. She doesn't want to leave Jahangir behind, but when Abdul Khaliq gives her the go-ahead to help Badriya in Kabul, she seizes the chance. Jahangir takes ill while she is in Kabul, and when she gets home, much to her utter dismay, he has already passed away. Rahima had trouble accepting her fate. She had no other comfort in her miserable existence besides Jahangir. She is devastated and dejected by her son's passing. Rahima laments her situation:

I was a little girl and then I wasn't.

I was a *bacha posh* and then I wasn't.

I was a daughter and then I wasn't.

I was a mother and then I wasn't.

Just as soon as I could adjust, things changed. I changed. This last change was the worst. (*TPTS* 384)

Rahima is given so many transient roles in life that every time she tries to fit herself into one, it changes, and she is given a brand-new position to play. Her son's death robs her of her life's vital breath. Abdul Khaliq accuses Rahima of their son's death because she still can't get over the loss of her son: "A *bacha posh*. I should have known better. You still don't know what it is to be a woman" (*TPTS* 408). He curses her for being a bad mother after each strike. Rahima loses her unborn child after he viciously abuses her and savagely rips off her hair: "Fresh tears for a new loss. I may have killed one of Abdul Khaliq's children. But he has just killed another" (*TPTS* 409).

Rahima hears her aunt Khala Shaima's words ring in her ears, but she doesn't give up on hope. She frequently remarked that everyone needed a way to "escape." Rahima is moved by Khala Shaima's comments, and she begins to make plans to leave her miserable situation. She tells Hamida and Sufia, the female lawmakers she befriends, her entire story when she travels to Kabul with Badriya to help her, and she makes arrangements to flee by pretending to be ill. Finally, she chops off her hair, dresses as a man to change from Rahima to Rahim, and flees her stifling existence.

Rahima's response reveals the other servile side of her. when she is asked by her mum to practice bacha posh. She is forced to put on a boy's attire by Bacha Posh. She easily complies when her mother tells her to complete this exercise by changing the way she looks. She just responds, "Are you sure, Madar-Jan? " while wearing a boy's attire. "Don't I look odd?" (*TPTS* 35). She gives her mother free rein to act however she wants. She doesn't complain about her mother's behavior, and up until the point at which she can get married, she is treated like a son.

Rahima's husband expects her to comply with all of his demands as his brand-new bride. Even though she is helpless in his presence, she obeys her spouse. She doesn't feel guilty about rejecting the order. Every time she was in his grip, she felt dirty, helpless, and under his control. She was supposed to be this man's wife, and that caused everything to shift. She is considered to as a courageous lady, yet she is not retaliating because the look on his face told her that doing so would just make matters worse. It can be inferred from her indirect presentation when she walks down the street by herself two weeks after being

pulled out of school. In her culture, no audacious girl goes shopping, but she can. Two weeks into our expulsion from school, the shop owners had gotten to know me. There were not many nine-year-old girls who would walk determinedly from shop to shop.

The actions she takes show how brave she is to take a chance on life. She is courageous enough to take risks that other women would never consider doing, such as going shopping alone or without the company of male family members. For a nine-year-old girl to succeed in the same endeavor, a lot of confidence is required. After she marries, Rahima's mother-in-law bans her from going outside. She decides to leave her husband's house as a result without first getting permission. She makes an effort to leave by edging closer to the front gate despite the difficulty. I moved closer and closer to the front gate; my palms sweaty. Don't hesitate, I told myself and opened the gate to walk out. I waited but heard nothing. No one had even noticed (*TPTS* 184)

Rahima's willingness to go without asking for permission and conceal herself from her mother-in-law to finish her escape is demonstrated by the evidence. Her bravery in accepting the consequences is also shown in her decision to leave her husband's house. Despite the possibility that her mother-in-law will learn about it, she decides to take the chance of pursuing her goals. Rahima's bravery can also be shown in the legislative work that she does. She serves as Badriya's assistant; Badriya is her first husband Abdul's wife. Rahima feels that something is off about the election while she is employed there. During the election, Badriya makes the incorrect choice. The man chosen by Badriya does

not fit any of the requirements. Rahima is aware that Badriya only carries out her husband's commands. She must, for instance, choose candidates from a list her spouse provides. Rahima is brave to contest Badriya's justification for choosing that candidate. Rahima's response serves as evidence of her bravery. Even though Rahima receives a warning as a result, she doesn't hesitate to state that Badriya's choice was inappropriate. Rahima is also told to avoid speaking because she is attempting to disagree with her decision.

Afghan women are subjected to oppression because of their gender identification. Rahima doesn't want to get married, but the story makes it clear that she has no other option. Her father pulls Raisa's arm away from her because he interprets her sobs as a submissive rejection. Through his might and violence, her father subjugates and oppresses her daughter. Men frequently use violence to oppress women in patriarchy so they can act whatever they choose. Her father's physical abuse of her is the cause of her subjugation. Her physical and mental well-being is negatively impacted by this behavior. Despite wanting to play with her friends, she is forced to be married. She is worried that her friends know she will wed Abdul. She had the desire to want to be outside with Abdullah.

Rahima wished she could be playing a ball down the street or chasing after stray dogs alongside him. A woman no longer belongs to her father after she marries. It's because her husband pays a dowry to her family. She must adhere to her husband's directives and restrictions to be the perfect woman. Her mother brought her up to be the kind of wife her husband wants. Rahima unwittingly feels pressured to live up to the standards of the patriarchal system by being aware

of her behaviors. She needs to use precautions when acting. She has little access to every aspect of her activities because she is expected to be the ideal wife. It implies that a woman's mentality was strongly ingrained with patriarchal notions regarding women's attitudes.

The protagonist suffers torture from her husband after breaking the taboo that forbids a woman from looking into her husband's eyes. He does not want his wife to deviate from the norm. She consequently experiences physical abuse at the hands of her spouse. She is knocked to the ground after being struck in the face by him. Due to her neglect of her son, her husband becomes easily upset with her. He's unhappy and dissatisfied after his son's death. It ends up being the cause of her husband's madness. Her husband only holds her responsible for the passing of his beloved kid. Because she didn't properly raise her son, he believes she is a horrible wife. Abdul turns his anger towards Rahima. Her spouse abuses his authority over his wife when things don't go his way. She is subjected to a physical assault when she is unable to carry out her domestic responsibilities adequately.

Because her husband's treatment harms her physically, it is considered physical abuse. There is no life in her second kid. She bleeds and gets bruises easily. Rahima's response to her pain is shown in the therapies as a result of patriarchal culture. Because she is powerless to stop her husband's violence, she must endure the suffering of domestic abuse in her role as a wife.

Men are afraid that their son's death will lower their social position. He loses his pride when he loses his son since in an Afghan household, having a son

is very important. So to retain his power and get whatever he wants from his wife, he turns to physical assault. Rahima searches for a method to escape her oppressors. She realizes that, unlike Shekiba, she does not want others to control her life. Despite having never been there before, she is a positive woman who wants to relocate there to live a better life.

The freedom of Rahima as a woman in society is limited. She wants to change her life as a result, thus she wants to work as Badriya's assistant in the parliament of Kabul. Her decision to leave her sons and work in parliament has presented challenges. Here, Rahima's struggle embodies the feminist idea that everyone should fight for freedom. Rahima illustrates that women are capable of carrying out jobs that are often done by men. She disproves the gender stereotype that says women should only perform domestic duties.

In Kabul, Badriya's assistant shows that she can function in a legislative setting. She can read and write about events that take place in her immediate surroundings. Rahima expresses her desire to not be subjected to her husband's tyranny. She comes to understand that her husband has total power over whatever she does. Her worry about losing her husband drives her. She is believed to be going about her daily activities in a state of perceptual anguish, wondering why she bothered to do anything at all. Rahima is cognizant of the fact that she is completely powerless. Rahima is aware that, as a woman, she is powerless over everything in her life. She dislikes being forced about.

In comparison to men, she is viewed as a second-class citizen. Men abuse their power by obstructing women's rights and stripping them of their

independence. She does not, however, remain silent. She wants to change her unfortunate circumstances for the better. She attempts to decide on her future before her spouse becomes even more controlling.

She has decided that she doesn't want to live with Abdul Khaliq. He will also be married once more. She searches for a means of achieving her objective of freedom as a result. Rahima is constantly subjected to abuse by her husband, but she is aware that nothing can stop her from obtaining her independence and carrying out her wishes. She lives in a culture where men are dominant, thus men see her as a second-class citizen. She ought to be quiet, submissive, and meek. In other words, her spouse mistreats her as a result of his position of power. She does not, however, keep mute; instead, she chooses to take a brave action to shelter in an effort to end the cycle of tyranny.

Rahima's resilience serves as an example for others to defy oppression. She runs to a shelter in search of a safer sanctuary. She is not restricted in her ability to live her own life. She is shielded from male dominance because she can do it without her husband's help. She will eventually be able to break free from men's dominance. She learns in the shelter that knowledge is the only way to protect one's life from oppression. She is aware that education can be a tool in her struggle against the oppressive patriarchal culture she lives in.

Gender was formerly thought to be a biological concept that was connected to humans. According to the biological/essentialist theory of gender, males' behavior patterns and roles are determined by their biological sexes, and these behaviors are associated with masculinity, while female behaviors are associated with femininity

(Diamond, 2000). On the other hand, gender, according to social constructionists, is a process of identity construction that is connected to how people experience gender in social interactions.

Human biology alone cannot fully explain gender performances, which presupposes that men can perform in feminine ways and women can perform in masculine ways. The upshot of gender performativity is female masculinity. It also questions the social dichotomy between gender and sex representations. Masculinity is frequently thought of as behaviors that are stereotypically associated with males or boys. However, the presence of female masculinity opened up fresh ideas on masculinity as it is manifested outside of the male body. There has been discussion on whether female masculinity is a subset of masculinities (such as heterosexuality and homosexuality, economic status, race, and sexual orientation), a different type of femininity, or a third gender category in a patriarchal societal structure.

The phrase "masculinities" refers to the privilege, authority, and power that have been built into society. In contrast to masculinity under patriarchal systems, the situation of female masculinity will be examined in this essay. Females that display these features do not have privilege or authority in a patriarchal culture and are perceived differently from traditional forms of masculinity, even though the gender performance of female masculinity tends to have more masculine ideals than feminine values. This essay will also examine Bacha Posh, the tomboy that many Afghan girls encounter at an early stage of feminine masculinity. This type of tomboyism was developed by a society that required girls to dress and behave like guys.

These girls were raised with a built masculine identity and performativity by their families and society, but as they approach puberty, social pressure will force them to change into feminine girls. According to this phenomenon, male masculinity dominates society and influences gender identity, while feminine masculinity is marginalized in terms of privilege, authority, and power. The male physique, particularly concerning the aesthetic look of a muscular body form and the functional element of strength, endurance, and competence, has been viewed traditionally as a way to define masculinity. However, distinct sorts of masculinities are formed in everyday life as well as inside institutional and economic institutions. The violent masculinity frequently observed in military institutions, masculinity in sports, economic-based or working-class masculinity, ethnic masculinity, and homosexual masculinity are only a few examples of the various forms of masculinities that are created by various social contexts.

It is crucial to understand that views of gender and masculinities are fluid, making it inappropriate to confine them by recognizing their existence as being limited to the biological bodies of men alone. Judith Butler (1990) established a significant claim that serves as a solid foundation for modern gender perception, which constructs gender and even the sexes through cultural methods and culturally unmediated bodies. Different aspects of masculinities are captured when masculinities are constructed from a social perspective. Activeness, risk-taking, responsibility, irresponsibility, aggression, protection, and social reproduction are all considered traits of masculinity. As Connell noted, "Masculinity does not exist except in contrast with femininity" the gender binary between masculinity and femininity is essentially relational. When Connell examined masculinity, he discovered that it was the exact antithesis of femininity.

Men have dominated over women, by and large, because they have managed to gain a stranglehold on meaning. What it means to be a man, what it means to be a woman; what jobs constitute men's work, and what jobs constitute women's work. It is through the ability to control how society thinks about these things that have provided men with the basis of their power (Wetherell,107).

By enforcing gender division, imposing stereotypes, and obscuring the complexity of social processes, the language of gender dichotomy seeks to normalize reality. People are encouraged to identify themselves by conforming to social gender stereotypes. Male femininity and female masculinity manifest as multifaceted gender phenomena in social life.

Female masculinity is viewed as a kind of defiance against gendered expectations that women should adopt and uphold feminine beliefs and lifestyles. According to Halberstam, "female masculinity has been situated as the place where patriarchy goes to work on the female psyche and reproduces misogyny within femaleness" . Halberstam made this claim in her book *Female Masculinity*. The idea that gender is a cultural dynamic that can be turned on and off is challenged by female masculinity. Some kinds of female masculinity are known as "tomboy," "butch," "drag king," "dykes," and other terms in society.

The gender performativity that feminine masculinity contributes is the way that masculine traits and functions are embodied in femininity and the female body. Nguyen concentrated on butch performativity, in which butch lesbians perform masculinity in

terms of appearance and actions that were like men, dress like men, and hide or minimize the feminine aspect of the female body (butches prefer sports bras or strap their breasts rather than wear push-up bras); and functionally, in terms of how things function within masculine values. According to Halberstam, female masculinity appears to be a combination of societal resistance and the expression of male masculinity in terms of dominance. Although it appears to go against patriarchal dominance, female masculinity uses it when acting toward other women. When women are treated like men in a patriarchal system, those who demonstrate female masculinity are accused of rejecting or denying the feminine role and femininity. Feminist movements for women's emancipation criticized the adoption of patriarchal, masculine norms and behaviors that dominated women's places in social life.

They do this by positioning themselves in opposition to patriarchy and challenging the privilege of masculinity. It implies that female masculinity is separate from the idea of masculinity since it places women in positions of opposition to patriarchy and masculinity. According to the article, female masculinity emerged to fight the patriarchal system, but its place within society's gender standards is still debatable and occasionally unacknowledged. According to Halberstam, female masculinity is a manifestation of the maladjustment and misidentification of gender norms in society. It appears that power and privilege are beyond the reach of female masculinity when masculinity is reflected as having power and privilege over the social life position. The category of masculinity excludes female masculinity from the power relationship. It is common to characterize male masculinity as Self and female masculinity as Other; this is because the idea of "maladjustment" is related to the language of exclusion.

Women who have undergone structural abuse in the patriarchal system and who are protective about being lesbian in heteronormative society frequently exhibit female masculinity as a means of self-defense. As with transgender or transsexual identifications that are distinct from masculine and feminine genders, there are attempts to "naturalize" female masculinity or "butch" as a third gender category. According to Levitt and Hiestand, female masculinity is viewed as an "independent gender - a gender that is frequently unrecognized, discredited, and disregarded."

The term "tomboyism" refers to the development of female masculinity in young girls. Tomboyism frequently shows up in girls' experiences. According to Claire and Alderson , a tomboy is a girl who acts and dresses like a boy and has been identified as different from other girls. According to Bailey, Bechtold, and Berenbaum , tomboy females often exhibit male-typical hobbies like athletics, a dislike of wearing women's clothing, male mannerisms, a preference for male-type activities, and boyish looks. To some extent, society sees girl tomboy behavior as typical of childhood and more accepted than guy tomboy behavior (Halberstam). The longing for freedom that boys have is also reflected in tomboyism.

A person learns about the gender and sexual preferences that are accepted in society while they are young. Gender development frequently starts during a mother's pregnancy. After learning their child's biological sex, parents often begin making plans by selecting names, toys, and nursery furnishings that help with gender identification . Early gender socialization is based on gender norms and stereotypes that are entwined with societal cultural, ethnic, and religious values.

The gender norms of masculine and feminine are first taught to children by their parents, family, school, and surroundings. Children are taught that gender has various obligations attached to it as well as physical and behavioral features .

Tomboyism is often tolerated by society just until adolescence (Halberstam). Because tomboy girls can still act like typical girls and in feminine ways, tomboyism is considered a natural phase when it happens as part of the exploration of sex and gender differences. When females enter puberty or the phase of transition to adolescence, according to research on tomboyism, they leave up their non-conforming identity .

In Afghanistan as well, language is used as a means of oppressing women. The words "honor" and "shame" are utilized and integrated into the portrayal of the power dynamics between Afghan men and women. Afghan women are perceived as the family's source of shame, whereas men are thought to bring honor to the family. Therefore, to keep women from disgracing themselves in public, sets of laws that limit women's movement outside of the home were formed. According to a study by Schutte , who conducted interviews with Afghan women in Kabul, the country's capital, Purdah standards limit Afghan women's mobility as well as their access to education.

It has long been held that sending females to school will damage the family's honor and give them a bad name in the community. In Afghanistan, men are granted a plethora of privileges that enhance their position and put them at the top of the gender hierarchy. In Afghanistan, men have more access to economic resources, mobility, and positions of decision-making within the household. Many families have a custom of favoring the delivery of men to carry on the family line; if a girl is delivered, the mother

is held responsible. The honor of the family is thought to be brought and protected by a son or several sons.

Afghanistan's predilection for sons stems from its long agricultural history. Sons are usually physically capable of doing the hard work needed to support their families. They carried out farming, cared for the sheep and livestock, and erected houses. Boys had the freedom to work and travel on their own. The larger family needed to support the generation from the paternal line would result from the boys' bringing their brides into the family when they got married. Sons, therefore, made a real difference in a family's well-being. On the other hand, daughters will leave the family after getting married and joining the families of their husbands .

As a reaction to the great desire for sons over daughters in Afghanistan, Bacha Posh was born. Bacha Posh, a subculture of girls whose parents treat one of their daughters like a son, is defined as "girls dressed as boys" The girl will have a short haircut and a pair of trousers so that she can present herself to society as one of the lads rather than wearing a veil and a female outfit. Parents are permitted to give their female child a bacha posh makeover by shaving her head and dressing her in boyish attire. A boy's name was also given to the girl. Some families begin the process of changing their daughter's gender identity at birth, while others wait until the child is old enough to enter school.

The girls typically live and act exclusively and completely as guys, both within and outside of the house. Before Islam became the dominant religion in the nation, parents would cross-dress one of their daughters to look like a boy to uphold the family's

honor. Many factors, including economics, social pressure to have sons to continue the family line, and in some cases a superstition that doing so will cause parents to have a boy child in the future, lead Afghan families to change their daughters' gender performance into boys.

The change demonstrated a very useful benefit because the boy or the bacha posh can work outside the home to support their family. Since they were still dressed as girls, boys, and bacha posh were free to sell things on the street without any restrictions. They can work as factory workers, bakers, carpet weavers, farmers, or brickmakers, among other jobs, to assist their families financial situation .

Chapter III

Chapter III

The Social Construction and its Subjugation on women

Afghan literature is a rich heritage of written and oral traditions. Pashto and Dari are the two main languages spoken in Afghanistan. It has a richness of literature, but sadly most of it is unstudied, overlooked, and only a few people are aware of it. Afghan literature will aid in bringing its richness to a wider audience.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the sufferings of Afghan women are very clearly shown. While Mariam's life with her husband and parents is pitiful, Laila's life with her parents is a happy one. The lives of Mariam and Laila are predictably miserable. The lives of Afghan women are shown in this book in great detail. Through the character's narration, the reader is given a more accurate image of women in Afghanistan. Hosseini becomes a well-known author thanks to *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, which sells more than four million copies.

The marriage subject in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a recurring one. Women in Afghanistan are compelled to get married. Rarely does the bride know the groom before the wedding. Women are conditioned to become married, according to Virginia Woolf. Forced marriage can involve young children or people who are coerced into getting married against their will because their families or religious authorities want them to. According to numerous studies, 70–80 percent of Afghan women were coerced into marriage.

Nana, the mother of Mariam, was single. Considering that she thought the 'jinn' entering her body wrecked her prospects of being married. In Islamic tradition, jinns are powerful legendary beings that resemble ghosts and goblins and have the power to either make or break people. Nana claims that a jinn allegedly entered her physical body just before her impending marriage and forced her to perform degrading acts.

Her marriage was thus broken off, and her life went from bad to worse. Being single in a country with a religious theocracy like Afghanistan is considered shameful, so Nana's status as Jalil's concubine has forced her to live on the outskirts of the city where she is typically not allowed to leave and has to rely on his son to bring her and her daughter the necessities. Nana is a disgruntled woman who is always cursing everyone and everything as a result of her unpleasant experience of not being married. The revelation to Mariam that she is a "harami" occurs at the beginning of the book. According to Islamic customs, a person who is born out of wedlock and illegally is referred to as a "harami." Because Mariam's mother Nana had an affair with Jalil and grew pregnant as a result, Mariam is known as one. They both managed to conceal their humiliation and lived secretive, bankrupt lives.

Mariam's marriage ends abruptly and without any of her permission. Her father must quickly arrange for her marriage after her mother, Nana, commits herself since she cannot be left alone. She is a child, not even legally an adult, and she is married to Rasheed, a guy who is thirty years her senior and is over forty. According to Nojumi, Mazurana, and Stites, "Countrywide, 16% of girls get married before they turn fifteen, and 52% get married by the time they turn eighteen."

Women want to be more involved in public life, but due to centuries-old principles, they feel that women are already fulfilling their proper roles as defined by tradition, culture, and society. Afghan women adhere to customs and traditions and do not seek to change their place or function in society. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam's father pushes her to marry Rasheed even though she does not want it. She is deeply upset by her father's actions. She even believes her father doesn't care about her. She knows nothing about the man she married. He is also the same age as her father. She imagined working for her edifying, but her efforts were in vain. Though initially, things are not too bad, Mariam thinks that she would gain something from the marriage that her mother had never been able to obtain. Rasheed forcing her to have sex with him, however, gives her her first taste of dread.

The young girl has distress as a result, but she is relieved that Rasheed treats her nicely the rest of the time. Rasheed's affection for Mariam grows when she eventually gets pregnant, although he is clear that he would prefer a boy and is hoping that Mariam would have one for him. She begins to act like a good housewife, cooking and cleaning for Rasheed. She strives to win his favor. However, Mariam miscarries one day after tripping in the loo. Rasheed is horrified and depressed, and Mariam is very depressed. She believes that the child's death was her fault. But a few weeks later, she falls pregnant once more with Rasheed's child and has another miscarriage.

In her seven consecutive miscarriages, Rasheed starts to treat her violently. He starts pounding her till she is bloody and unmindful of her requirements. Now, it is extremely clear that Rasheed's affection for her was motivated solely by the desire to produce a male heir. Mariam's marriage soon turns into a struggle since Rasheed and his

beatings never stop. He continuously makes fun of her and beats her mercilessly for no reason at all. Rasheed once made her chew on stones that broke her teeth when she made substandard daal, causing her to sob in pain. She now finds marriage to be a perfect nightmare. She accepts responsibility for her suffering. She believes that all of this is happening to her because she tricked her mother and went to her father. Once more, the jinn equivalent is employed.

Mariam believes that the jinn steals her children and causes misery in her life. Finally, her marriage breaks down to the point that she kills her husband to save his second wife, Laila, only to be killed by the Islamist Taliban for the most heinous crime imaginable. As a result, Mariam's marriage is a complete failure. Marriage further restricts a woman's freedom and treats her like an object in a man's hands. The position of women in Afghanistan is determined by the male-dominated local culture and the detrimental effects of decades of conflict; as a result, women remain sequestered behind the four walls of their houses and participate little in public life.

In Mariam's case, her husband Rasheed's new life is not at all like the fairy tale her father painted for her during his weekly visits. Rasheed thinks a man has the right to dominate over his wife. Rasheed forbids Mariam from leaving the house without a burqa, therefore marriage takes away her authority. Up until Mariam miscarries, Rasheed behaves rationally well towards her. After her life turned into a living hell and she spent the rest of her days inside four walls.

Mariam's experience with marriage turns into one of mistrust. She isn't able to tolerate Rasheed's beatings. He continually makes fun of her. For no reason of her own,

she is severely beaten. Mariam once prepares daal for Rasheed. Rasheed believes the daal to be subpar after tasting it. Mariam cries out in pain as a result of him brutally forcing her to chew on stones that damage her teeth. Mariam thought that marriage would be a better life in the beginning, but now she sees it as a beautiful abyss. According to Nojumi Mazurana Stites, "For many Afghans, marriage is a part between families, not between individuals. Women are considered to be a part of the property that belongs to their husbands." Marriage frequently entails intricate webs of tribal and familial ties, money transfers, and occasionally restitution for crimes" (ATSS 104). Arguments made by Mariam and Laila that they weren't asked what they wanted.

Laila also has a terrible experience with marriage. A young girl named Laila lives in Mariam's area. Before being cruelly pulled apart, Laila makes love to Tariq and makes out with him. She is unaware that Tariq surreptitiously gave her a child as payment for their illicit liaisons. Only after hearing that Tariq has passed away and that she is currently in Mariam and Rasheed's house does she learn that she is pregnant.

Rasheed proposes marriage to Laila, providing her with the chance to avoid being stoned to death for adultery on the one hand and the chance to raise Tariq's child on the other though no one would know. Rasheed begins hitting Laila more severely than he does Mariam after she gives birth to a girl. However, Laila begins to feel hopeful for her daughter and makes two unsuccessful attempts to flee. Rasheed is a monster, and Laila detests him for it. And after being raped by him, she becomes pregnant with his child and decides to abort it since she fears the child may be a boy, which is tyranny. She is unable to accomplish it, so even the boy's presence gives her hope that she may be able to impart

some valuable knowledge to the youngster. Laila agrees that marriage represents oppression.

Laila does, however, have hope for the future, but it does not come from her marriage but rather from Tariq, her genuine love. As a young girl, Tariq is the one who teaches her the meaning of true love. He shows her warmth, kindness, and sympathy and assures her that he will always love her no matter what. They had known and loved one other since they were tiny children because they grew up together. While a boy named Khadim splashed urine into Laila's lovely, golden hair, Tariq, who had a prosthetic limb, defended her and resisted him. Khadim had been taunting and mistreating Laila frequently. It becomes clear that this friendship has more to offer as they mature into teenagers. Laila, in my opinion, is more anxious to express her love for Tariq than Tariq is, who I believe also feels this way but attempted to "play it cool."

When the two finally had their first kiss, I and the rest of the neighborhood in Kabul instantly understood that this was the beginning of a special relationship. Tariq and Laila's relationship was unquestionably genuine. Nearly everyone is killed when a missile lands on Laila's house as her family is leaving town, except for Laila and Tariq. Her parents pass away, and the attack leaves her with serious injuries that require a long time to heal. Following the incident, there is a lot of commotion, and Laila and Tariq are split up. Rasheed devises a strategy to woo Laila, who is already the object of his affection.

He hires a person to inform Laila that Tariq perishes in the assault. Laila is devastated by the loss of her real love. She accepts her fate, and on occasion, she even thinks about killing herself. Rasheed and Mariam, who later wed Laila, take care of her

housing needs. Laila accepts Rasheed's marriage proposal not out of love but out of necessity to conceal her pregnancy, which came about as a result of her having sex with her real love, Tariq, whom she believes to be dead. However, Tariq surprises Laila by returning, giving her hope that things will now become better after her life had been worse under Rasheed's patronage.

Tariq is killed in the attack, and he hires someone to inform Laila of this. Laila is devastated because her real love passed away. She accepts fate as inevitable and occasionally even thinks about killing herself. Mariam and Rasheed, who later wed Laila, provide housing for her. Laila does not accept Rasheed's marriage proposal out of pure love; rather, she does so because of a need to conceal her pregnancy, which was the result of her having sex with her real love, Tariq, whom she believes to be dead. Laila's life, however, had deteriorated under Rasheed's guidance when Tariq unexpectedly returned, giving her optimism that things would now improve.

Laila's true love protects her and smuggles her into Pakistan after Mariam murders Rasheed. He is a decent man who adores Rasheed's daughter Zalmai without condition. He does not make a distinction in his favor. Additionally, he is kind enough to provide Mariam, the person who makes Laila and Tariq's reunion possible, the name of their future daughter.

Marriage is not entirely a cause of suffering and annoyance in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, though. Despite Laila's fault, her first husband mistreats her. Her first marriage is like living in hell. She still has some chance of finding her loved one because she is a brave woman. She only thinks about her kids when she is living. Laila endures

Rasheed's agony for years before one day her ex-boyfriend Tariq, who she previously believed to be dead, appears and her life is transformed into bliss. Although Mariam's marriage has been terrible, Laila's second marriage has been lovely. Only Laila's first marriage was a failure. Tariq, who is also her true love, is the man she marries for the second time. Laila finds that love and marriage coincide in her second marriage, making it a pleasant experience for her.

Hosseini contrasts Mariam's innocence as a small girl with Nana's feelings. Despite not having a share in their wealth, she respects her father, his family, and their lifestyle. Kolba is content with Jalil's sporadic visits because she is unaware of anything beyond reality. The fact that Mariam enjoys spending time with Jalil and even prays for his long life illustrates how many women are born with a lack of awareness of the world around them. Mariam is not made aware of how callously Jalil treats her until he also betrays her. Jalil stands in for affluent men who value status and attractiveness more than a child who is their flesh and blood. When Mariam initially came to her house, he let her sleep on the doorstep and spent the majority of his life disregarding his treatment of her. Jalil behaves in this way due to society's ferociously pessimistic view of haramis. Just as women are powerless in society, Nana is left helpless in this scenario. Similar to Mariam, who was abandoned by both of her parents and left to suffer at the hands of society, Jalil felt ashamed of Mariam, and Nana, in her deepest misery, took her own life.

Jalil and Rasheed serve as examples of the novel's acceptance of many wives. In this civilization, having several women bonded to one man is acceptable. Jalil has 10 children in addition to Mariam from his three wives, Afsoon, Khadija, and Nargis. Rasheed wed Mariam and later Laila solely for sex reasons, but he defends himself based

on his religion. Mariam is terrified and unsure about Rasheed and Laila getting married. Even though both Laila and Mariam were compelled by the circumstances, even though they were different, Mariam now has a strong hatred for Laila. Women may compete fiercely over the same spouse, but they are aware that if they don't make peace, their misery and helplessness would only increase. Laila and Rasheed's marriage initially infuriates Mariam, who calls attention to the humiliating custom.

Rasheed's handling of Mariam's miscarriages illustrates how society places a strong premium on masculine supremacy. His tone abruptly shifts: "With each setback (the six further miscarriages), Rasheed had grown more distant and bitter. She accomplished nothing now that pleased him" (98). As a result of his agitation and wrath, Mariam feared his return because she believed she had "failed him" and had turned into "nothing but a burden to him." Military aircraft and explosives are audible overhead as Rasheed's dislike for Mariam intensifies. She could make out military aircraft flying north and east as well as abrupt smoke plumes rising into the sky. There was a tremendous battle happening on there once the Tanks burst into the grounds.

People generally have high aspirations that the altered political climate will result in a beneficial change in the lives of commoners, but in reality, these hopes are merely an illusion whenever the power balance alters and a new power center develops. Numerous political changes occurred in Afghanistan, and each one of them was a betrayal. Rasheed makes Mariam chew on a "handful of pebbles" to make her understand the flavor of her food. He grabbed her jaw, pushed open her mouth, and then pushed the pebbles inside. Mariam whispered a request through the grit and gravel in her mouth. Her eyes were

pouring tears from the corners. (ATSS 103) He walks away while Mariam spits out blood, pebbles, and pieces of two smashed molars.

This terrible deed demonstrates Rasheed's frustration with Mariam's lack of political knowledge as well as his anger with her infertility and inability to carry on his son's legacy. When Laila gives birth to a daughter that Rasheed would have preferred not to have been born, this idea is developed further. Rasheed does not refer to his beloved daughter by the name Aziza; instead, he always refers to her as "the baby" or "that thing" (ATSS 231).

The fact that Rasheed shows some attention to infant Zalmai, his cherished son, after Laila gives birth to a son further emphasizes how exploited women are in Afghanistan's male-dominated society. Rasheed started to spend exorbitant amounts of money on Zalmai, neglecting to use any of Aziza's outdated diapers or toys, although they were still functional. He showered Zalmai with presents they couldn't afford, like a TV and VCR that Rasheed bought on the illicit market despite the Taliban forbidding their use. For Aziza, Laila's first kid, he had previously refused to even purchase girl clothing.

He proposes Aziza go into the streets and beg to pay the debt he has on Zalmai's meager presents shortly after giving Zalmai these items. It is possible to comprehend the place of women in Afghanistan because of this heinous disparity. Rasheed wished Aziza would beg and bear the consequences of his deeds like the other local girls. Aziza's expulsion from the family as a response to their financial hardship is proof that she is the most disposable member of her family by providing a male-dominated society as an

illustration of how unfairly and undeserving of life girls are treated. This illogical way of thinking makes one feel bad for Aziza and angry at Rasheed.

The Taliban and Communist rule can be compared in terms of women's concerns. The communists paved the path for women to enter the workforce and pursue careers in offices. In particular, the Taliban cultivated conditions that made it impossible for a woman to pursue an education and live independently. When his wives get married, Rasheed gleefully makes them wear burqas. Rasheed's inclination towards evil and his satisfaction with the Taliban's repressive rules are what give him a bad reputation. He enjoys listening to the Taliban's extensive list of punishments for offenders on the radio program "Voice of Shari'a."

Rasheed was unconcerned about the Taliban since he already accomplished two things that they said he needed to do: "Grow a beard... and visit the mosque." He looked at the Taliban with the same type of tolerant, caring amusement one might look at an unstable cousin prone to unpredictably hilarious and scandalous things. His way of life had not been altered by the Taliban restrictions. He believed that the laws were on his side since they limited the authority that his wives still had.

Laila voiced her dismay at the Taliban policies putting women under involuntary house arrest for inaction. Rasheed advised her that these behaviors were already typical in the rest of Afghanistan. For the first time, Mariam agreed with Rasheed because she and Laila were already living in such a controlled environment; why should the other ladies behave differently? During this conversation, Mariam realized that Najibullah was only

somewhat more despised by the Taliban than a woman due to his status as a communist and as the head of the notorious (*ATSS* 272).

Rasheed introduced Fariba, Laila's mother, as a woman who was astonishingly different from his perspective because Hakim showed her respect and consideration. Fariba did not fulfill the duties of a traditional Afghan mother. She was "ferocious" and rebellious when enraged. Hakim, too, didn't fit the stereotype thanks to his "delicate hands, almost like a woman's." We can tell from this depiction that Hakim was neither a guy of malice nor harsh punishment. After their sons Ahmad and Noor left to fight against Russia, Fariba started spending most of her days resting in bed. Laila received no attention from her mother, who remained engrossed with her son's ideas.

People shouldn't be permitted to have more children if they have already given all of their love to their older ones, in her opinion. It was unjust" (*ATSS* 117). Laila was in charge of doing the household chores and cooking the meals that her mother appeared unable to do. With each passing day, one can see Fariba's strength eroding. She started wearing exclusively black after the deaths of her two sons, never getting out of bed. She becomes a ghost after this loss, ignoring all of her responsibilities, including being Laila's mother. Although this woman is capable of acting on her own, the effects of war have destroyed her. Her sons, as well as ultimately her own and Hakim's lives, were lost due to the war.

The most likely course of action for escaping the destructive Soviet invasions, the tyrannical Taliban regime, or abusive husbands like Rasheed seems to be death. A woman may only leave her home while escorted by a mahram, a male relative, by Shari'a

law. Mariam and Laila, the two main characters, are women from very different backgrounds who are brought together by fate and circumstance. They heroically and fiercely struggle for their survival and self-equality against the shared enemy Rasheed, or the patriarchy. Together, these two women dared to oppose the repressive patriarchal principle. They not only dared to flee from Rasheed despite the realization that their plot was doomed to failure and would have dire repercussions, but they also decided to murder Rasheed.

In defiance of conventional wisdom that instructed her to endure suffering without voice, Mariam killed Rasheed and, at the price of her own life, assisted Laila in escaping the brutality of her abusive husband. Because of the absence of a male family member, Laila and Mariam's first attempt to leave Rasheed and their wretched life with him failed. With Tariq's return in 2001, Laila was able to successfully flee with her two children from Afghanistan to Pakistan, but Mariam was lost in the process. She was forced to remain in Kabul and deal with the repercussions of killing Rasheed, who had been the cause of their pain for years. Mariam describes her horrible relationship with Rasheed as "Mariam lost count of how many times the belt cracked, how many pleading words she cried out to Rasheed, how many times she circled the incoherent tangle of teeth and fists and belt,... " while hitting Rasheed. (ATSS 338). She was able to recall every murderous crime and oppressive conduct committed against them because, Had Mariam been certain that he would be satisfied with shooting only her Mariam, that there was a chance he would spare Laila, she might have dropped the shovel. But in Rasheed's eyes, she saw murder for them both.

Women's physical, social, and psychological wellness are severely harmed by this ongoing social construction of women's reality. It was incorrect to equate sociopolitical and cultural exploitation with fate. The two main protagonists struggle not only with male dominance but also with social stereotypes about women. Mariam lost her life in her fight, yet her battle with society was successful. It led to Leila's happy family life after a brief stint in Pakistan returning to Kabul. She was content with her status as a "person of consequence" because she had loved those in her life. One was not fully safe underneath the house of a man like Rasheed, much like the tenuous situation in Afghanistan. The message is that there are few options available to women in Afghanistan. Rasheed's passing provides momentary comfort, allowing Laila to flee.

A last release comes with Mariam's passing. There won't be any relief for the nation until the war is over, someone dies, or everyone leaves. April 2003, when Laila, Tariq, and the kids returned to Kabul at Laila's request, is the last date mentioned in the book. Even if Kabul has not developed, things have gotten better. From the ruins, the city is slowly being rebuilt. Afghanistan was changing, and for the most part, the changes were positive. Rebuilding and replanting were taking place. As the Kabulis refer to them, "Laila spots flowers potted in the empty shells of old Mudjahideen rockets" (398). To show support for a nation that is progressing towards greater safety and freedom and is better than it was, Hosseini decides to have Laila's family move back to Kabul.

After the Taliban were driven out, "buildings had been reduced to ruins, trees had been cut down, and youngsters were swarming the streets begging. Although the Taliban were no longer in power, the majority of people were still in utter poverty. With the aid

of Laila and Tariq, the orphanage where Aziza was temporarily housed in 2001 is being refurbished. The institution served as a symbol of Aziza's desperation at the time.

They have repainted both the exterior and the interior of the orphanage. Tariq and Zaman have repaired all the roof leaks, patched the walls, replaced the windows, and carpeted the rooms where the children sleep and play. This past winter, Laila bought a few beds for the children's sleeping quarters, pillows too, and proper wool blankets. She had cast iron stoves installed for the winter. (ATSS 399)

They were honored for their work at the orphanage, which served as a metaphor for the changes taking place in Afghanistan. The news of Laila's new pregnancy gives the book's ending some optimism, and the decision to give a female child Mariam's name is an appropriate homage to Mariam. The novel's conclusion captures a moment of hope for Afghanistan and Laila's family. Although there are many possible readings of the book, the social, psychological, and physical oppression of Afghan women by the patriarchal system and their struggle against it are the main themes.

According to one definition, the term "patriarchy" "refers to those political, material, and imaginative systems that give power to men and marginalize women." It shows up both literally (by, for example, denying women the right to vote) and figuratively" (McLeod 173). The patriarchal culture puts on women the idea of "the ideal womanhood," which must be obtained under whatever circumstances. According to the novel, it is the responsibility of women to uphold the patriarchal norms that are ingrained in Afghan society.

The patriarchal culture makes sure that women achieve these aspirations to their fullest potential. This idea turns into a significant tool for the subjugation of women. Jayawerdena and de-Alwis emphasize the importance of female sexuality and its moral regulation as a fundamental characteristic of South Asian societies: Ironically, the common denominator that cuts across all communities, and often classes as well in South Asia, remains notions of female modesty. It seems that violence against women and sexual predation on them are common in Afghan society, all in the name of honor and ideal womanhood. According to Cynthia Cockburn's analysis, "The power disparity of gender relations fosters cultures of masculinity prone to violence in most (if not all) countries. Violence "runs along these gender relations like a connecting thread, a kind of fuse" (ATSS 44).

Mariam is overcome by her defiance. She is coerced into marrying Rasheed against her will and must submit to the strict traditions of her society. Without asking Mariam's permission at the nikka (Islamic wedding ceremony), the Mullah says, "All that is left now is the signing of the contract" (ATSS 53). Rasheed is concerned about the pervasive sexual predation in the culture, which ironically imposes moral standards on its female members. Despite the ostensibly "sophisticated" society of Kabul, about which he frequently boasts, he gives Mariam strict instructions to wear a burqa and stay away from strangers, even their family members and visitors. Since she's not used to wearing one, Mariam finds it to be extremely constricting. She must, however, submit to Rasheed's authority, who assures her, "You'll get used to it" (ATSS 71). Later, he issues similar directives to Laila, his second wife. Rasheed falsely claims that he is preserving his

wives' "honor" and "integrity" by imposing stringent rules on them while torturing and beating them regularly.

Mariam properly objected to Rasheed's second marriage, and Rasheed responded by telling her to "not be so dramatic," publicly bragging about the polygamy that was practiced in the community. You are aware that it is a typical occurrence. I have friends that have three, four, or even more spouses. (ATSS 208). Rasheed's hypocrisy is exposed when Mariam discovers nude magazines stashed away in his closet even though he dislikes the thought of his wife meeting strangers. Mariam considers the existing double standards that are pervasive in society at this point. Men just cannot be wrong in this society; only women can do wrong. She picks it up through her mother's example as well as from her own life.

The essentialist patriarchal traditions appear to be being internalized by women in the dominant patriarchies, further entangling them in the web of marginalization. In light of this, Kavita Punjabi contends that "the social demands of the women, the social construction of what a feminine identity should be, make women vulnerable to internalizing guilt, whereas the former, the feminist identity that attends to the needs of women, makes it possible for them to deal with both the superimposed and the internalized guilt" (Aman 2001). Women seem to participate in the male rule in the book. They internalize and essentialize cultural notions about human diversity that are rooted in patriarchy. What is there to learn?... What's the sense of schooling a girl like you? It's like shining a spittoon. And you'll learn nothing of value in those schools. There is only one, only one skill a woman like you and me needs in life, and they don't teach it in school. Look at me... only one skill. And it's this: tahamul. Endure. (ATSS 18)

When Mariam states, "I don't want this," she is refusing to wed the 40-year-old Rasheed. Jalil's wives ironically urge Mariam to accept the marriage, saying, "Now, be reasonable, Mariam. Don't make me this. You cannot live out the remainder of your days here. Do you not aspire to have a family of your own? You must proceed" (ATSS47). This appears to be a reflection of the patriarchal system's fixed positions and roles for women.

Since the conflict in Afghanistan is anchored in structures that are entirely determined by men, the protracted period of conflict and violence there appears to have made gender inequality and the subjection of women worse. As a result, women who were perceived as defying this standard of female modesty became the targets of violent crimes. Due to the Taliban's involvement in these actions at the government level, a climate was created wherein violence against women permeated across the entire society. In his postscript to the book, Khaled Hosseini himself elaborates on the pitiful conditions of Afghan women during this turbulent time in their country's history, saying, "Women were abducted and sold as slaves, forced into marriage to militia commanders, forced into prostitution, and raped, a crime particularly heinous and unforgivable that was used to intimidate families who were opposed to one faction or another" (ATSS 411). Conflict zones, according to scholars Rita Manchanda and Anuradha Chenoy, provide a favorable setting for gender violence of all kinds.

Rasheed is left jobless and forced to remain at home as the fierce fights in Kabul cause the closure of every company in the capital. His fury mounts and it shows in his increasingly violent attacks on Mariam and Laila. Just his prolonged presence at home is making the two women anxious.

The brutal Taliban leadership distorted Islamic precepts to reinforce its harsh practices against women. As a result, during the Taliban regime, women in Afghanistan endured great suffering. According to the novel, the Taliban regularly stone, flog, and execute women who are accused of disobeying their severe rules. As we learn from the book, Mariam is one such victim. Laila is frequently beaten for leaving the house without a male companion. A young Taliban judge comments to Mariam during her trial, "I wonder God has formed us differently, you ladies and us males. The way our brains work varies.

Women's bodies is used as a tool of political repression in conflict zones. "Rape, or other types of physical assault in conflict or under a repressive regime, is neither incidental nor private; it routinely serves a strategic function and acts as a tool for achieving specific military or political objectives," according to Binalakshmi Nepram's analysis of this situation (8). Such physical coercion intends to keep a lady completely confined and in subjection. For instance, Rasheed's cruel treatment of Mariam and Laila at home while the Taliban treat them similarly outside of it is a symbol of it.

It has frequently been seen that violence against women's bodies is used as a tool of political repression in conflict zones. "Rape, or other types of physical assault in conflict or under a repressive regime, is neither incidental nor private; it routinely serves a strategic function and acts as a tool for achieving specific military or political objectives," according to Binalakshmi Nepram's analysis of this situation (8). Such physical coercion intends to keep a lady completely confined and in subjection. For instance, Rasheed's cruel treatment of Mariam and Laila at home while the Taliban treat

them similarly outside of it is a symbol of it. Afghanistan's inhabitants are said to be being displaced or migrating as the country's living circumstances deteriorate.

Mariam and Laila's situation under Rasheed, the fundamentalist patriarch, is deteriorating just as Afghanistan's quality of life under the Mujahideen is. Like rockets hitting Kabul, "Rasheed's demands and judgments rained down on them" (ATSS 218). She tries to flee. With the Taliban's imposition of their stringent Shari'a rule on the Afghan people, especially on women, the situation in Afghanistan and for its women became worse. If you go outside, you must be accompanied by a mahram, a male relative.

Women were forbidden access to healthcare, and the only doctors who could treat them were female. The Taliban required these doctors to treat patients while donning a burqa, but the medical professionals looked for a way around this. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the doctor working on Laila takes off her burqa and designates a nurse to maintain a watch so that she won't be discovered by the Taliban. The author demonstrates how the ladies embraced this oppression as a method to survive horrors while acknowledging the sign's problematic nature. Under the Taliban, wearing a veil symbolizes Afghan women's tenacity and fortitude in the face of adversity and their commitment to the country's survival. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the burka is associated with the Taliban.

The core of post-colonial writing is organized according to the level of resistance. The published discourse provides the device, and language becomes how the post-colonial authors express their progress and opposition to colonialism values. The charges

against Zawiah Yahya from 1994 estimated the major factors of the written. Substances and devices play a major role in the relationship between feminism and literature. Feminism serves as the foundation, while literary works serve as the finished product, intending to accurately reflect the world of women from a particular perspective. The degree of resistance in feminist literature can be viewed from two angles. The first in a series of challenges to the patriarchal or male-dominated literary tradition that misrepresents and undercuts women's encounters and identification. The second resistance is thought of as the refashioning of new identities for women, which places the discussion of women at the forefront and removes masculine discourse from the background or from being silenced.

According to Selmon (1997), these groups frequently disagree with one another about pedagogy and literary practice. Selmon (1997) provides additional clarification on the meaning and methods of resistance, drawing on criticism from authors like Barbara Harlow, Selwyn Cudjoe, Jenny Sharpe, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Benita Parry, and Jan Mohamed. He establishes the first level of resistance's definition as "an act or set of acts designed to release the people of its tyrants, and it so thoroughly introduces the experience of living under domination and pressure that it turns to be an almost autonomous principle" .

This interpretation is connected to the article because it depicts the amount of resistance by associating the oppressors with the masculine dominator and the oppressed with the female subject. The development of the female characters in the book, as well as their actions, behavior, and ideas in response to the scenario of being physically or mentally oppressed, determines the act's level of resistance. According to Stephen

Selmon (1997:78), who draws his second definition from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and Benita Parry, A theory of literary resistance must recognize the inescapable partiality, the completeness and the untraceable ambiguity of literary or any contradiction or contestatory act which employ a First World medium for the figuration of the Third World resistance.

Here the level of resistance is determined concerning the dominant figure (the First World) through the recognition of the tendencies of the reflection and development of the Third World. In both explanations, the literary level of resistance is underlined as a type of device or procedure to show the idea of staying away from accepting or producing an imposition of developing positions or images by the dominant power. The major dominant figure of the First Globe in post-colonial concept is seen as a similarity of the patriarchal culture and principles in the Afghan community, as the representation of oppression of the women characters in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

The process of exposing the colonizers' framework of knowledge that aims to subjugate the colonized and, as a result, changing that framework, suppressing its control, and challenging its ethics is referred to as reverse discourse (Parry 1997: 87). In this process, the dominant discourse's current shape is reformed or reconfigured to liberate people by highlighting the discourse's flaws and displacing the oppressive, harmful values it upholds.

The final component of Parry's resistance theory is generated discourse, which is seen as the link between post-colonial and feminist approaches. The process of decolonization is related to gender concerns in post-colonial experiences, and gender

discourse that emphasizes these issues refutes the Western patriarchal conceptions of colonized feminine and Western/masculine structures. By recreating the female identity and highlighting the problems with women and femaleness as the core of post-colonialism, this strategy seeks to define patriarchal preconceptions. This feature is the main focus of the examination of the selected novel since it best illustrates how Afghan women are portrayed in Afghan society.

At this level, the discussion aims to highlight the framework for Afghan women's roles, focusing on the notion of wifhood within the framework of tradition. Here, the concept of wifhood is understood as a way of life that is advised for married women and is incorporated into the variables governing the rules and regulations of the Afghan community. The Afghan lifestyle, culture, and religious views, with a focus on the traditional framework, are the group that draws the beliefs in this particular tale. The study will highlight how patriarchal ideas heavily influence and govern the attitudes and positions of women in the Afghan community, as has been described in many instances of Asian and Third World female patriarchal societal structures. The Discussion will serve to highlight how the patriarchal nature of Afghan society frequently fosters the idea that women serve men in practically every role they fill.

It is also essential that the young generation characters Maryam and Laila serve as the primary representations of Afghan women in the book. This illustrates the idea that stereotypes and ideas about Afghan women are largely derived from traditional beliefs that are passed down to the younger generation. The role of the slave to her husband and his family is one of the most common representations of the ideal Afghan wife in the Afghan culture that is shown in the book. A decent woman must be a part of her

husband's possessions because, in all angels, her husband is seen as her boss. He has power over her actions and even her thoughts. A wife should ideally dedicate her entire life to making her husband happy and desire the best aspects of his lifestyle on his behalf.

Hosseini demonstrates several specific aspects of the ideal feminine traits that are seen as the norm in Afghan women's lifestyles. With the premise that a woman must manage her feelings and needs rather than disputing or questioning them to deal with the pressure of discomfort, pleasure, and life's challenges alone. The fact that Hosseini made this concession for her characters and how it made him feel portrays him as the ideal example of a feminist novelist.

There is only one, only one skill a woman like you and me needs in life, and they don't teach it in school . . . Only one skill. And it's this: tahamul. Endure . . . 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. . . There is nothing out there for her. Nothing but rejection and heartache. I know, akhund sahib. Here is the reality of the life of Afghan females that Nana highlights early in the novel.

As Hosseini, a well-known legendary figure in Afghan society who accepts a woman's success in exchange for her sacrifice, becomes representational, it means that all people who are living in the same situation around the world are represented by his characters. It demonstrates how the dominant culture and patriarchal lifestyle are designed within the Afghan community's culture and religion.

This information is acknowledged as the ideal trait of Afghan female dominance and acknowledged as the ethics of Afghan wifehood. As a result, the husband represents the role of the supreme ruler over his wife. In traditional Afghan society, the husband plays a crucial role in helping women identify. Women's identification depends so heavily on the presence of men in their social lives. The virtues of chastity, self-control, and all the things a wife does to serve her husband are used to identify a wife in the proclamation. Only then will a woman's dependability be respected. This is amply illustrated by female characters like Maryam and Laila, who engage in a series of altercations while maintaining their distinct personalities.

Despite the roles they must fill as the perfect wives for their husbands, these identities are gradually managed. These women are constantly little compelled to spend for their husbands' happiness and pleasure, not their own, despite the flaws in their husbands and the hardships they must endure. This portrays the function and circumstance of a wife as a straightforward reproductive mechanism for her husband in addition to being the slave for him and his close relatives, rendering her useless if she is unable to play this role. This demonstrates the idea that an ideal Afghan wife can find satisfaction and fulfillment in her husband's happiness.

Afghan women must therefore retrain their self-satisfaction and personalities to be able to devote their entire lives to their husbands' needs and pleasure to achieve the ideal image of wifehood. Mariam conveys her story of loss and suffering through the subtext of silence. In her book "The Second Sex," Simone de Beauvoir observes that "a man performs chastity upon a woman" while on the other hand performs and demands pleasure for himself.

There is a double demand which condemns a woman to duplicity; he wants the woman to be his and to remain foreign to him. He fancies her as at once a servant, an enchantress but in public, he admits only the first of these desires, the other is a demand which he conceals in the secrecy of his own heart and flesh (*ATSS* 221).

Rasheed's second wife, Laila, needs to move more quickly away from disaster. Despite being the beloved daughter of an educated and contemporary man who encourages her to pursue knowledge and education, Laila finds her way of life essentially ruined when her parents are killed by a bomb planted by a warlord gang fighting for control of Kabul.

Mariam initially sees Laila as a rival and accuses her of stealing her husband, Rasheed, but as soon as Laila's daughter, Aziza, is born, Mariam begins to change her attitude. As they become closer, they each make an effort to defend one another from Rasheed's wrath and commands. Aziza learns to think of Mariam as a second mother, and the two of them develop into best friends for life.

Mariam and Laila are two women who were brought together by war, hardship, and fate. They were from different generations and had very different ideas about love, affection, and family. Both have quite different temperaments and behaviors. “But, mostly, Mariam is in Laila’s own heart, where she shines with the bursting radiance of a thousand suns” (*ATSS* 402).

Maryam shares her expertise from decades of suffering as a woman, as well as the struggles faced by Afghan women who live in orthodox, Orthodox communities. They

represent women who are torn between adhering to traditional values and realizing that they are alienated from society and their responsibilities. We might consider their specifics in terms of both Afghan identity and post-colonial history.

Maryam's transformation into a submissive wife and mother might be interpreted as her rediscovery of her independence. This is consistent with Selmon and Parry's idea, which claims that changing how women are portrayed might reveal different levels of resistance. The process Parry refers to as "discourse-against" here is where the renovation begins, as the taken-over topic "takes up a position of separation" (Parry 2997:88) from the dominant/universal topic. recognizes that her community, family, and religion have failed her and decides to challenge the image they have painted of her. Technically, this is established by Maryam completely cutting off the roles by leaving her hometown and finding a new identity separate from those of her prior environment.

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finding a new identity separate from those of her prior environment. The early years of Maryam's life are depicted as a certified wife and young girl who was drawn to her close relatives and community by the idealized image of women. Maryam strongly believes that to conduct herself as a proper woman after her wedding, she must behave as her husband's slave. She works as hard as she can to fulfill her responsibilities with serious commitment and dependability to create the ideal representation of an ideal Afghan lady and, as a result, to acquire respect for herself via her success.

Soon, Rasheed returns with a handful of pebbles and forces Mariam's mouth open, and stuffs them in. He then orders her to chew the pebbles. In her fear, she does as he asks, breaking the molars in the back of her mouth. He tells her, "Now you know what your rice tastes like. Now you know what you've given me in this marriage. Bad food, and nothing else. (ATSS 94) This highlights that Mariam's inability to give Rasheed a son will continue to make him more and more bitter and unfriendly towards her.

Maryam's portrayal of the women's self inside cultural norms and public perception leaves little possibility for a unique personal identity. A woman's identity is inextricably shaped by the obligations and expectations placed on her at an early age, and the inability to develop a strong sense of self is a manifestation of this.

Similar to how Laila's decision to put all of her struggle behind her and forge a fresh sense of herself free from the pressure to fulfill others' goals and desires is one of the most significant female resistances in the book. At this time, Laila realizes that creating a sense of self that is predetermined by prejudices in her life and community has never brought her any pleasure. Laila is shown as a woman from a middle-class,

prosperous family. She represents the Afghan woman who is associated with the early stages of the adoption of modern ideals in Afghan life and society.

Laila is a representation of the middle-class Afghan woman who understands her situation and has more opportunities to experience life. Every stage of her life demonstrates specific, crucial facets of her identity as an Afghan woman. Through the development of her personality at these levels, mental concepts and situations that cause conflicts and violation of the norms, and finally, the degree of resistance, are depicted in the book. The Afghan community is trapped in a system of male dominance and tyranny, wherein gender inequity is both a divine requirement and a cultural construct.

Hosseini creates a powerful emblem of patriarchal authoritarianism in which women are cripplingly dependent on their husbands, fathers, and sons. In this book, the reader learns about the social roles that women are expected to play as well as the patriarchal society's alleged plot against women's personalities.

In addition to being unable to work and travel without male chaperones, women also lack independence. They frequently fall prey to male rage and misogyny. Women's bodies are marginalized. The nightmare lifestyle has been made worse by the gendered aspects of the attack. Domestic violence, racial riots, cramped spaces, and displacement policies are only a few examples of their effects on lifestyle.

Women can relate to each other through their oppressions, risks, endurances, silences, and dashed hopes and aspirations. The contact with power, perfection, and concreteness is examined and explored by Hosseini. The prevalence of abuse, wife battering, and sexual assault are indications that women are particularly vulnerable to

marital violence. Even as a young child, a woman internalizes the structures created by humans. She has no right to challenge and ask questions.

Chapter IV

Chapter IV

Conclusion

In *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell*, Hashimi occupied with the plight of Afghan women throughout the ages. Though there are different generations projected, there is no difference made in women's empowerment. The characters come out as quintessence of strength and hope who resist and endure, assume subjectively and stand up to take charge of their lives despite distressing circumstances. As they do not collapse in the time of adversity and no one can subdue their spirit, so does the nation; here the level of resistance in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* therefore, become a component that involves ideas, activities, emotions and words as a result of doubting and declining to be captive by the development of their identities by others, namely their community family members, religious beliefs and objectives.

Although each female characters shows resistance in her own way, the very act of it, particularly the transgression that they present to the standards and objective of their lifestyle represents the distributed and singularity that brings them together as resisting females. The question of Afghan women as raised in the novel concerned is entangled with the culture and history of the country. Nana, Mariam, and Laila experience many kinds of gender discrimination throughout their lives. The factors influence their mindsets and they show different attitudes towards the discrimination. Patriarchal ideology forces women, including Nana, to accept the discrimination. The study is an effort to unveil and emphasize some of the wickedness, and gender injustice that prevails in the patriarchal society in order to eradicate these social problems.

Mariam wields her strength to struggle against her tyrant husband Rasheed and resolve her own life by killing him to save Laila and Aziza: her only true love ideals. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a true representation of a patriarchal and imperialistic Afghan society, and describes the factors that have limited women's opportunities for a meaningful and evocative life. In the novel, it is women who suffer alone, have no chances for education, no fulfillment of desires, no freedom to speak, lack warmth and are obliged to suppress their basic needs. The novel truly reflects the philosophy of life and identification of Afghan women.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the dreadful influence of patriarchy is efficiently revealed through the presentation of Mariam's life. She becomes the victim of the viciousness of the political and social canon of the Afghan society and her only fault is that she is simply a woman. What is really tragic about Mariam is her illegitimate birth due to which she tolerates the unsympathetic society throughout her life. What Khaled Hosseini depicts in the novel is very critical not only for the women folk in Afghanistan but also for humanity at large. Women in Afghan society is really struggling and fighting for their survival and existence of being born women.

The study aims to motivate women into developing the resistance and strength which lies within them to fight for their happiness just like the strength that has been displayed by Mariam in the novel. The violence and oppression she endures is not something which has to be moaned only, but it is something to be confronted and fought back. Mariam's efforts and resistance against subjugation and discrimination determines active feminism on her part.

Women, throughout the ages are struggling to achieve their rights in Afghanistan. The situation in the urban areas is better but it is complicated and pitiable in the rural areas, they are not allowed to enjoy the basic rights, they work in crop fields, on the lands and remained with the animals. They lend hand in agriculture but their income totally depend on the males. They are ordered to wear burqa (veil). They are not allowed to wear makeup, even they are considered the property of males. The females are sold and bought as the bride and they are commodified Afghan women are oppressed but they resist revolt and avenged. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is the exploration from subaltern to equal gender. Nana is the deprived generation who points out the follies of males before the females but does not resist.

The females are considered the creatures of the lowest ranks. They are kept with the animals and excommunicated from the mainstream. Every day, Afghan women went through domestic violence and they were confined to the four walls of their house. The central characters' slow but patient fight shows the never say die attitude of Afghan women. The victory of Laila in the novel gives a very positive and realistic message to the females that their life is in their own hand and if you have desire and guts to fight injustice, you can emancipate yourself.

Afghanistan's patriarchal society forces parents to make tough decisions as daughters are viewed as a burden while sons can earn money, care for their aging parents, and carry on the family legacy. To counter economic dependency on males and social stigma surrounding daughters, some Afghan families practice "bacha posh," a centuries-old tradition reassigning their daughter's gender at birth, which allows girls to experience the same freedom as boys.

Bacha posh girls are raised as sons. They dress in boys' clothes and may go outside alone, bring their siblings from school, go shopping, and play a sport. These girls act as sons and do what the sons would do. While the roots of the tradition are unknown, it is becoming increasingly practiced. In poverty-stricken families, bacha posh becomes a normal thing to do. Because boys have a higher status, they are more desirable. The tradition allows families to avoid social stigma affiliated with not having any male children by enabling their daughters to take on the role of a boy in society.

Life for bacha posh girls becomes difficult as puberty reveals their biological gender. The girls often face harassment, risks to their safety, humiliation, and separation from their communities. Others call them transsexuals and Anti-Islamic. Some girls even stop going to school because of the harassment. Families also want their girls to start dressing and behaving like women during puberty, but bacha posh girls do not want to live as a woman in a country that gives them little possibility after experiencing the freedom of males.

When a girl becomes a bacha posh, her hair is cut short, she dresses in perantombon (traditional Afghan male clothing), and she takes a male name. As a result her status in the family and in wider society is elevated, and she no longer performs tasks typically reserved for Afghan girls, like housework and cooking. Instead, she can play outside with other boys, go to school or even work. In the eyes of the community, she is male, so she doesn't need a chaperone and can even escort her female family members outside.

One woman who had been a bacha posh earlier in her life explained that she had felt newfound confidence when disguised as a boy. She said people treated her differently and she didn't have to obey others or do tasks that were typical for an Afghan woman like cooking and cleaning. Being a woman should be equally appreciated as man. But that is not happening, only when women is disguised as men they are valued and need not follow any kind of rules or taboos. It is just an illusionary life until she attains her age of puberty. The woman has to act as boy and then again change to a girl after certain period in life. Her experience demonstrates the clear distinction between the traditional masculine and feminine roles in Afghan society and the freedom and respect gained by being a man in Afghan society.

Despite being treated completely differently from other girls, it is believed that bacha posh has effects on the child mentally and physically. Bacha posh has the potential to further reinforce the preference for sons. Instead of changing societal views and structures, bacha posh is used as a quick solution to circumnavigate rigid gender roles. Furthermore, the restrictive society in Afghanistan won't allow bacha posh to be a permanent solution, as the girl will always have to revert back to herself around the time of puberty in order to live unharmed. More importantly, we must look at the core of why this practice was created – the inability for women to live freely without having men dictate their life course.

Afghanistan is a patriarchal society that follows the system of suppressive gender segregation where a girl has little value. The time the girl is born in the family she is always guarded and escorted with few rights and little autonomy to make her own decision. She must follow typical toxic feminine behaviour. Consequentially there is a

drawback of Bacha Posh practice, irrespective of whether this practice is morally correct or not, is a transition that is quite abrupt as supported by Nadia Hashmi in the interview taken by Foreign Affairs media. This transition process is quite abnormal since suddenly they are told to dress up like women, behave like women, all the liberty and freedom they have enjoyed get snatched away with the snap of the fingers. Nadia explains that these girls are not prepared for this traditional or cultural practice, hence they go through a mental hardship.

Since they were being brought up in the family that has a lot of sisters, they knew the life of the girl, but they are not taught anything about it. But as these girls grow up, they face a gender identity crisis that is unable to relate themselves with any gender as associated by the society. While some of them got the liberty to remain as they are even after entering puberty but most of them do not have this choice. When these former Bacha Posh experienced women reach the marriageable age, they are less preferred by the families as their daughter in law. Since the latter believe that they will not be the same as other afghan girls being meek and timid additionally when the former Bacha Posh gets married her freedom and self-confidence gets stripped away.

The tradition of practising Bacha Posh illustrates constrictive non-conforming gender norms which are allowed until it is restricted to disguise but not as biological phenomena. It is quite ironical that family yearning for a boy instead of the girl seems to readily accept her cross-dressing. However, after a few years, the family and society will have a contemptuous perspective when the puberty begins since it makes them look more transsexual as their physical appearance change which is anti-Islamic for the community.

However, in the contemporary time of Afghanistan, there are some cases where former Bacha Posh are desired for marriage since they are strong and autonomous.

Taliban leaders are currently implementing a raft of discriminatory measures to effectively erase women's participation in civil life in Afghanistan. For many women around the world, such measures are unthinkable, almost impossible to comprehend. In Afghanistan, the changes are not surprising given its past experiences of the Taliban, but they are nevertheless profoundly terrifying.

The measures are forcing Afghanistan backward, limiting the engagement of around half its population at a time in which one of its largest humanitarian crises is underway a crisis that will only be made worse through measures involving, for example, barring women from returning to their jobs, requiring a male relative to accompany them in public spaces, prohibiting women from using public transport on their own, imposing a strict dress code on women and girls, and preventing girls over the age of 12 from returning to their education. The outlook is grim, made worse by reports of female protesters being abused, detained, or even having disappeared for publicly voicing their disagreement to the changes. Beyond Taliban oppression, Afghan women also face long-term sociocultural factors that restrict their access to education, work, and social services, such as health and justice. Before the Taliban takeover, insecurity was the leading cause for women leaving Afghanistan.

Lack of rights, personal and family reasons, economic reasons, and lack of social services were among the other reasons, including fleeing from a forced marriage or domestic violence. The current economic collapse and increased livelihood pressures

across Afghanistan have the potential to severely increase the plight of Afghan women due to upsurges in domestic violence and a decrease in access to food and health services. Afghan women are being pressured to become socially invisible and are now unable to hold any position of authority in public life in Afghanistan. Their rights to education and work exist only in promises that might never be realized, just as they did during Taliban's rein in the 1990s.

Gender-based violence occurs everywhere around the world across all economic and social groups. While both boys and girls are negatively impacted, girls are particularly at risk. An estimated 1 in 3 women globally have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, mostly at the hands of their partners. Types of violence may include: prenatal sex selection, female infanticide, neglect, female genital mutilation, rape, child marriage, forced prostitution, honor killing and dowry killing. Women are still being discriminated in one way or the other. Bacha posh though beneficial to certain extend its not the way women tend to live their . Everyone are born humans despite their gender, if men has the right to walk, talk whatever they feel the same is applicable for women too. There is a law of equal rights, the question is that is that law being followed as such. And women accept the way they have been put into, generation after generation women were said to adopt the life of bacha posh. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable future. Eradicating gender issues means a world where women and men, girls and boys all enjoy equal rights, resources, opportunities and protections.

Empowering girls from the start is proven to have lasting and compounding benefits over the course of their lives. When girls are supported to be active in civic and

political spaces, in particular, they are empowered with the tools and skills they need to be drivers of positive change in their families and communities. Girls are the experts of their own experiences, priorities and needs, and are powerful catalysts for a world where gender equality flourishes. Promoting gender equality is also central to ensuring child protection and the fulfillment of child rights, as abuse, neglect, violence against women and exploitation both reflect and reinforce gender inequalities. These kind of gender equality should not only be preached but practiced. Bacha posh is just created to protect women harms and giving them freedom of education and all the equal but is now being made as a cultural norm.

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