T.C.

İSTANBUL YENİ YÜZYIL ÜNİVERSİTESİ

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Fighting the Patriarchy in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Master Thesis

Aya Riyadh Jawad AL-RUBAYE

18131306019

İSTANBUL, March 2021

T.C.

İSTANBUL YENİ YÜZYIL ÜNİVERSİTESİ

FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND LITERATURE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Fighting the Patriarchy in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Master Thesis

Aya Riyadh Jawad AL-RUBAYE

Supervisor

Assist. Prof. Olgahan BAKŞİ YALÇIN

İSTANBUL, March 2021

Aknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to my supervisor, Assist. Prof. Olgahan Baksi Yalçin, who has kindly advised me, and gives me her assistance, unceasing support, guidance and her precious time to complete this research. Thanks to her, I decided to write about women's writing and feminism since she gives me the enthusiasm to choose it as my research study and support and encouragement to talk about significant issues at in academic level or personal life. I am grateful to Assist. Prof. Gökben GÜÇLÜ for her supports and valuable feedback in this process. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Prof. Dr. Günseli İŞÇİ for her moral and intellectual support throughout my postgraduate education. At the same time, I owe my special thanks to Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University and Boğaziçi University to make my study possible through useful sources throughout the completion of this thesis

I am profoundly indebted to my parents for their support, love, motivation to encourage me all the time and help me finish my thesis. I will be forever grateful for their constant help. My special thanks to the love of my life, my husband, Ali, who assists me whenever I need. His support is undeniable and I am grateful for his motivation and patience. I also thank my daughter, the source of happiness in my life, for every moment full of joy that changes my mood and makes me the happiest mother. Also, I could not do without her patience with me for not devoting my all-time to her especially when she needs me.

İSTANBUL, 2021 Aya Riyadh Jawad AL-RUBAYE

Table of Contents

ÖZET

Yükselen Güneşin Ülkesinde ve *Bin Muhteşem Güneş* Başlıklı Eserlerde Patriyarka ile Savaş

Bu tez, haklarını keşfetme yolundaki kadınların karşılaştıkları temel sorunları ele alan Halit Hüseyni'nin *Bin Muhteşem Güneş* romanı ile Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie'nin *Yükselen Güneşin Ülkesinde* eserini incelemektedir. Çalışma bu amaç doğrultusunda feminist hareketler tarihini takip ederek, dünyanın farklı yerlerinden kadınların çıkış noktalarını ele almakta ve seslerini duyurmaktadır. Ayrıcalıkların çoğuna erişimi olan erkekler otorite olarak kabul edilirken, kadınlar birçok engel ile karşılaşmışlardır. Bu çalışmanın göstereceği üzere, feminist hareketlerin çıkış sebeplerinden bir tanesi de ev içerisinde kendini gerçekleştirmek yerine erkeklerin kurallarına uyan kadınların ihtiyaç duyduğu söz hakkıdır. Ataerkil görenek ve kurallarca kısıtlanmış ülkelerde kadınların statüsü, kadınların ötekileştirilmesi ve insandışılaştırılması düşüncesi bu çalışmanın ana odağını oluşturacaktır. Bu düşüncenin analizinde, etkisizleştirilmiş Afgan kadınının durumunu açıkça sunduğu için Halit Hüseyni'nin romanı ele alınmıştır. Çalışma aynı zamanda erkeklerinkine eşdeğer becerilere sahip olduklarını eğitim ve öz farkındalık ile kanıtlamak isteyen ve patriyarka karşıtı direniş gösteren kadınların başvurduğu yolları incelemiştir. Bu yollar, karakterlerin kadınlara yönelik kısıtlandırılmış ve kalıpyargısal imgesini yıkmaya çalıştıkları *Yükselen Güneşin Ülkesinde* adlı eserde de betimlenmiştir. Ayrıca bu çalışma, farklı kültürlerden, sınıflardan ve etnik kimliklerden kadın karakterleri barındırdıkları için Hüseyni'nin ve Adichie'nin eserlerini karşılaştırmaktadır. Tez, geleneksel anlamda kadınları kısıtlayan tüm sınırları aşmak adına, bu iki romandaki kadınlar aracılığıyla patriyarkanın sebep olduğu sorunları ve düzensizleşmiş bir toplumda kadınların var olma çabası sonucunda oluşan travmaları sorgulamaktadır.

Aya Riyadh Jawad AL-RUBAYE, 2021

Anahtar Kelimeler: Feminizm, patriyarka, aile, Afgan kadınlar, Nijeryalı kadınlar, baskı, özgürlük, eğitim, kimlik

ABSTRACT

Fighting the Patriarchy in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*

This thesis examines Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* in view of the theory of feminism, as both novels tackles the major issues of women in their way to find their rights in this big world. For this purpose the study deals with the motives of women all around the world to have their voice heard, by tracing the history of feminism movements. By the time women find a new obstacle in front of them and men had access to the majority of rights and were considered to be the higher authority. As the study will illustrate the reasons behind the emergence of feminist waves is the need to give a voice for women whose lives are wasted around the household and obeying the rules of men. The focus will be on the status of women in highly restricted countries that follow the rules of patriarchy and to find a solution for the marginalization and dehumanization of women in such societies. This view is analyzed through the deep investigation of Khaled Hosseini's novel as it delivers a clear picture of the passivity of Afghan women. The study also concentrated on the ways women used to dismantle the chains of patriarchy by education and self-awareness to be independent, strong and prove that they have equal capabilities with men. These ways is depicted in *Half of a Yellow Sun* as the characters deliver a picture for strong women in their ways to break the stereotypical image for the limited access for women in restricted society. Moreover, the study compares between Hosseini and Adichie's novels as they picture the female characters in different cultures, classes and races. The thesis interrogates the problems and the trauma women face every day in their lives through the events of both novels either by the rules of patriarchy or by the need of asserting themselves in a disordered country in order to cross all the limits that surrounded traditional women.

Aya Riyadh Jawad AL-RUBAYE, 2021

Keywords: feminism, patriarchy, family, Afghan women, Nigerian women, oppression, freedom, education, identity.

Introduction

The status of women in society is a worldwide polemic issue, therefore, each country has a different set of rules in which women have different roles according to these rules. In the past, the social and political distinction between the status of women and men was very noticeable in many countries especially with the rules being more in favor of men. Women, on the other hand, have had a very limited role in society and lacked active participation in public life. Thus, women who have lived in patriarchal societies suffered more from discrimination and limited recognition in the society. As a result, some brave women have broken constraints and raised their voices to find a suitable and acceptable position in public life. The issue of women's marginalization and dehumanization has been of much interest for many groups of women to change the stereotypical image in a world dominated by men. Equally important, the rules imposed on women make their status inferior to that of men and they are controlled by the superiority of men. They become submissive and have a subordinate role in front of men and they should accept their inferiority as to their destiny in life. This leads to the emergence of women's movements to fight the dominance of men and to dismantle the patriarchal system. In this respect, the current study aims to analyze:

1- The status of women in patriarchal cultures.

2- What factors lead to lower women's position in society?

3- The reasons behind inheriting patriarchal ideologies.

4- What women did to free themselves from the dominance of men and achieve equity?

The issues and the questions above are answered and analyzed by examining women's place in the past and how it has changed in the present time. The establishment of the feminist movement and how they are able to empower women's role in society are also examined. For making these factors clear, it is important to analyze literary texts as "it serves as a reflection of reality, a product of art, and window to an ideology, everything that happens within a society can be written, recorded in, and learned from the piece of literature" (Ahmed, 2017, p.129).

This means, literary works can give direct examples of how people live and it also reflects the writer's life and how he pictures the social or the political situation around him in a piece of work. Thus, my study will analyze two novels by contemporary writers: while the first one is *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Afghan-American writer Khaled Hosseini, the second one is *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Both Hosseini and Adichie are concerned with the life of the people in their hometowns. Thus, through deep analysis of these novels, this study also tries to answer the following questions:

1- How is the status of female characters depicted by Hosseini and Adichie's novels?

2- What problems do women face in restricted societies and how do they overcome them?

3- How do women present themselves despite the differences in culture, class, and education with their shared desires to fight for their family's survival?

My intention in writing about *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Half of A Yellow Sun* is that they draw issues about one of the biggest controversial subjects in the world, which is the position of women in society and their fight for getting equal status with men. For Hosseini, he represents in his novel the plight of women and their submissiveness in the restricted rules of the patriarchal society while Adichie's novel denotes the empowerment of women in traditional societies and their ability to pass through the worst difficulties such as war and the constraints represented by patriarchal power and the limited opportunities for women progress.

Hosseini's Life and Work

A medical doctor shifts his interest to literary works, the Afghan-American writer Khaled Hosseini, born in Afghanistan in 1965 and later settled in the United States. In the first five years of his childhood, his father worked in Afghanistan Foreign Ministry as a diplomat and his mother was a teacher in a high school. Then, the family moved to Iran where his father worked in the embassy of Afghanistan in Tehran. After that, the family went back to Afghanistan and they stayed there for nearly three years, and then they moved to Paris where his father relocated to a new job in the Afghanistan embassy. While he was having an

interview on a public radio show called Fresh Air in 2005, and releasing his first novel *The Kite Runner* and working on his second novel, the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated because of the communist coup and the Soviet invasion. Many people were executed, especially when they heard that their friends and relatives were dead in bad conditions in the country then the Hosseini's family realized that the return to Afghanistan was impossible. Khalid Hosseini adds in the interview that his father covertly arranged to have political asylum in the United States because the members of the previous regime might have been in danger (Gross, 2005). The Hosseinis settled in California, where Khaled Hosseini studied biology at Santa Clara University and later received his medical degree from the University of California, in 1996. In the meanwhile, encouraged by his wife and his father, he wrote his first novel while practicing medicine at the same time.

Hosseini's novels have gained worldwide popularity due to the variety of issues and themes that depict the real life of Afghan society. His first novel, *The Kite Runner*, published in 2003, is set in Afghanistan and talks about male lives through the tumultuous events under the occupation of the Taliban. After it achieved unrivalled success and became New York Time's bestseller, the novel was adapted into a movie in 2007. The next bestselling book by Hosseini was his second novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, published in 2007, gained the same popularity and fame as his first one due to its success in revealing the life of women in Afghanistan through the eruptive events that lasted for thirty years, with the focus on the suffocated life of Afghan women. In 2013, Hosseini released his third novel, *And The Mountains Echoed*, and it gained the same success, and became very popular soon after it was published.

Adichie's Life and Work

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the contemporary Nigerian writers, who published works about her country's people. Adichie was born in 1997 and grew up in Nigeria. Her parents worked in a university which gave her a chance to grow up in such an atmosphere that helped her become more knowledgeable about literature and gave her the motive to write. She finished her secondary school at the

University of Nigeria Secondary School. After her graduation, she studied medicine and pharmacy for nearly a year and a half at the University of Nigeria. Later, she went to America and studied political science and communication at Drexel University. During university studies, she worked as an editor in The Compass magazine run by the university's Catholic medical students. Adichie's writings continued and never stopped- stories, poems, and a play were published in many literary magazines.

Similar to Hosseini, Adichie's novels paint a clear picture of Nigerian society. Her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2013), is set in Nigeria and revolves around family life and the tyranny of its male figures under the tribulations of Nigerian political history. Her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) is also set in Nigeria and explores the life of Nigerian people before and during the Biafran war. In my analysis of *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), I mainly concentrate on female characters and try to show how they are depicted as strong and independent women. Other than the two famous books, a collection of short stories, *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009), and her third novel, *Americanah* (2013) with its significant themes, both receive many positive reviews after they are released.

Literature Review

The two works under my study and analysis in this thesis have gained large popularity and fame by researchers and critics due to the breathtaking topics and themes they present especially since they choose to talk about their hometown. For instance, the article by Sruthi. P *Gender Bias Crossways Borders: With Reference to Khaled Hosseini's A Thousand Splendid Suns*, analyzes the novel and suggests that it is a full representation of the life of women in Afghanistan. Sruthi (2014) explains that Hosseini's work pictures the struggles of women in Afghan society through his female characters, Mariam and Laila. Hosseini describes the cruelty and the problems that his female characters face under the brutal rules of society. The novel also sheds light on the history of Afghanistan from the post-soviet war to the Taliban regime. Sruthi (2014) praises the work of Hosseini and mentions reviews in which writers and critics admire the novel, which becomes so popular that it

affects the world's notion about Afghanistan as it represents the true face of Afghan history.

In the article "Endurance and Resilience: A study of the subaltern voice in *A Thousand Splendid Suns,"* Suhana PA (2017) focuses on the characters Nana and her daughter Mariam; Laila and her daughter Aziza who are the subaltern women in Afghan society. This article analyzes female characters and how they deal with patriarchy as the subaltern women who are second-class citizens and are subjected to different kinds of oppression. It also shows the position of women in the marriage institution with the example of Jalil's rejection to legitimatize his relationship with Nana and Mariam and Laila's ability to endure the unfair treatment of their tyrant husband Rasheed (Suhana, 2017).

In the same fashion, Soraya Soraya's (2015) "The Subaltern Voice in A Thousand Splendid Suns" represents how female characters in the novel are directly linked to the real life of the women in Afghanistan. Also, these female characters are characterized as the subaltern in the Afghan community. Soraya's article analyzes *A Thousand Splendid Suns* through the postcolonial theory of Gayatri Spivak, in which Afghanistan is portrayed as a country that is exposed to the colonial forces for thirty years. During these years, the status of women is degraded and their rights are taken from them; women are regarded as the oppressed group, and according to the postcolonial theory they are the 'other' or the 'east'. Women are the bearers of sanctity and reproduction and they should accept a lower position. By this, as Soraya suggests, this representation is clearly seen in the novel as it tells the story of two women, Mariam and Laila, who are oppressed by their country's rules and endure unfair treatment by men (Soraya, 2015).

Naima Yahi's thesis, "The Rise of Taliban and The Women's Status in Khaled Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*," analyzes Hosseini's female characters under the brutal power of tribal forces that control the life of Afghan people. Yahi's study focuses on the Taliban regime, and at the same time explores how it affects women's lives directly; the rules and laws serve to benefit only men while women's rights are violated and the freedom is taken away from them. Yahi (2014) illustrates in his thesis the terrible history of war and the suffering of its

people in Afghanistan through the incidents of the novel and also the life of Khaled Hosseini. Thus, the core idea of this study "is to investigate the Middle Eastern women's issues in the novel by extracting the core events which led to the birth of a gender Apartheid system in Afghanistan under a harsh despotic patriarchal society ruled by the Taliban" (Yahi, 2014).

Namita Singh (2013) in her article, "Feminism v/s Gender equity: Socio-Political Activism in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*," focuses on the limited opportunity that women have in Afghanistan and how women potentials are restricted in a male-dominated society. Also, the author shows how the novels tackle the problems that face women through the social and political changes in the country, Singh (2013) "aims to explore social and political injustice that has been done to the Afghan women vis-à-vis gender equity and socio-political activism by the women of Afghanistan during their tough times." In an article entitled "Biafra as Heritage and Symbol: Adichie, Mbachu, and Iweala," John C. Hawley's (2008) purpose is "to assess the war's impact on Nigerian cultural expression in the twenty-first century… [and that] Adichie portray[s] the war as a backdrop for interpersonal ethical questions." Thus, Hawley draws attention to the war incidents and their effects on Nigerian people. The novel depicts the Biafran war through the main characters of the novel Ugwu, Olanna, Kainene, Odenigbo, and Richard to deliver a full view of the war events and the injustice that people suffer during tough times.

Umelo Ojinmah's article "No Humanity in War: Chimamanda Adichie's Half of A Yellow Sun" examines the Nigeria-Biafra war in Adichie's novel through the attitudes of the characters and how they are affected by the war. Ojinmah (2012) exemplifies that the novel is a perfect portrayal of Nigerian war and states that "*Half of A Yellow Sun*, is not just a story of the horrors of Nigeria's civil war; Adichie refreshingly explores some thematic concerns through which the harrowing experiences of the war are highlighted. Majorly, she explores the themes of war; human brutality and bestiality; betrayal of love, trust, friendship and country; and child soldiering, amongst others." Ojinmah also highlights that there is a strong image in the novel that the characters either suffer from the ferocity of the war or the brutality and the hatred between Nigerian people since they are from different

social classes and multiple ethnicities. Adichie (2012) makes it clear in writing the novel and her "refusal to forget" the history of the Nigerian civil war.

The article by Sindhu Joseph "Glocal Identity Replaces Stereotypes: A critical examination of Chimamanda Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun and Meena Kandasamy's The Gypsy Goddess" focuses on the historical, geographical, and cultural events of the novels and the writer's intention in depicting a new style of writing that will ultimately provide a new reading for literature in mingling both global and local stereotypes and attempt to deconstruct them in order to create a new identity. Thus, Joseph's (2018) article "critically examines the two texts for geographical, cultural, and individual narratives that counter the established stereotypes and create new glocal identities while revisiting the past." Yet still in another article "Representation of History in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun," Morve Roshan K discusses the ordeal of the Nigerian-Biafran war that is represented in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Roshan (2014) studies the novel as a war novel and tries to highlight the events through "four questions: (a) What are the causes and effects of Biafran/Civil war? (b) Why have Nigerians been suffering during wartime? (c) How does the representation of Nigerian history enable understanding of the post-colonial issues? (d) What is the role of conflict in Nigerian history?" Thus, the article analyzes the novel by focusing on the events and factors that caused the war and how the risks of war were dealt with by the Nigerian people. Therefore, Roshan (2014) argues that "the novel successfully makes a war frame with a picturing fictional history of horror, terror, and disillusionment."

From this survey of literary works, I can say that my work may be unique in the sense that no one so far has seemed to analyze and compare these two novels in terms of the similarities and differences between them. Mariam and Laila with Olanna and Kainene, from different cultures, class and different level of education, they all have the same goal in life: to achieve equality and have the same opportunities with men. Although they do not have the same chances and capabilities to discover themselves as women and find their real identities, each of them has an inner strength to either try to face the oppression or empower themselves to reach for another higher level. Mariam's weaknesses such as her lack

of opportunities and the rejection she faces from society as she is an illegitimate girl all make her endure the oppression and the brutality of society and her husband. Unlike Mariam who could not claim her independence and still receives similar brutal and aggressive treatment from her husband, Laila has more self-awareness, is more educated, and grows up with a family that helps her develop her sense of selfhood. As the two characters live in a society that suppresses women, they both endure hardships yet are marginalized due to the strict rules limiting their lives and freedom.

The novel mainly focuses on Mariam's weaknesses entangled with Laila's intelligence at the beginning, but toward the end, their roles alter with the bravery of Mariam taking a decisive step and killing her husband. This action cannot be done by Mariam without the aid of Laila. Laila empowers her, gives her life meaning, and fills the void of love deprivation she lacks in her own family. Olanna and Kainene's family provide them with every element that enables them to be independent and have responsibility for their own decisions. They have a free life and a higher level of education and are fully aware of their rights. Despite many obstacles they face to follow the traditions of society, they have the courage to oppose the rules and break the stereotypical image of women's inferiority. Adichie depicts women in a time of war to highlight the courage of women taking an undeniable role in difficult times to save their families and also to show the world when women have equal opportunities with men, they are capable of overcoming the crisis at the same level or even better than men.

My study will be centered on analyzing women's weaknesses as well as their strong qualities and how they can overcome the inherent thinking of women submissiveness. Hosseini delivers the reality of women in Afghanistan in his novel who suffer from menfolk because they treat them as servants in a society praising the patriarchal system and make women accept their inferiority as a natural formation. While the novel of Adichie portrays women differently such as being aware of their rights and also possessing an ability to have decisive decisions related to their families, it also presents the effects of the difficulties and violence women endure caused by the patriarchal rules in spite of the progressing nature of the world. My study also examines how women have the potentials to end gender

discrimination and free themselves from male dominance to be independent. Thus, the investigation of Hosseini and Adichie's novels will be conducted in the light of a feminist theory due to the concentration of the female characters and their voyage from bondage to freedom.

Hence, the study's questions are (1) To what extent do women endure discrimination in their daily lives? (2) How do women empower themselves to change the prevailing thinking on the limited roles assigned to them in society? (3) How are female characters in these two novels affected by the changes in political and social scenes? Thus, my research aims to highlight the main obstacles women encounter and deliver a clear picture of the status quo under the patriarchal system. This is illustrated in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, where women live unpleasant lives and their plight is portrayed as those having very limited opportunities and highly discriminated against. Together with the discussion of women's weaknesses in Hosseini's novel and *Half of a Yellow Sun*'s analysis, it is aimed to show how women can achieve independence once they have unlimited opportunities to be at the same level as men.

In order to understand the struggle and the difficulties of the female characters trying to find a suitable place in society, my current research will be divided into three chapters excluding the introduction and the conclusion parts. Chapter one, entitled "History and Theory of Feminism," is concerned with the state of women in male-dominated societies and how the patriarchal ideology undermines women's existence in every field of life. It also includes the motives behind the emergence of feminism, for they are urged to obtain rights for women an equal place to that of men. It also exemplifies the movements in detail and how women gain their rights with every new wave.

The second chapter, titled "The Portrayal of Afghan Women in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*," deals with the historical background of women's situation in Afghanistan. I endeavor to deeply illustrate the status of women in an Afghan country in a troublesome period and how it is depicted throughout the novel, and how Hosseini successfully focuses on presenting the reality of women suffering in Afghanistan to the rest of the world. Hosseini's motivation to write about his

homeland and break the boundaries as a male writer about the oppression of the silenced women comes from the fact that he wants to show that women all over the world have no rights and they are excluded from the social realm and many aspects of life. The female characters analyzed in this chapter are examples of women who struggle in a male privileged society, where women consider the lower status as normal and are regarded as the property of the male figure in their families.

Chapter Three, "The Portrayal of Afghan Women in *Half of a Yellow Sun*," which analyzes the second novel of my study, deals with the situation of women in Nigerian society. It presents the history and the sphere of Nigerian women before and after the Biafran war. The women in Nigeria have some rights like education and employment as illustrated by Adichie's novel in her female characters. Thus, the focus in this chapter is on two female characters in their ways to oppose the patriarchal norms and be independent. I have chosen to analyze two women in Adichie's novel because they are portrayed as strong women who are aware of their rights. Adichie also clearly shows women's strength in breaking the restricted rules imposed on them and in occupying positions assigned to men. For example, they play the role of breadwinner and they are the source of survival for their families.

In the conclusion, I provide a comparison between Hosseini and Adichie's novels: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* with *Half of a Yellow Sun.* My illustration in this part is about the two novels' protagonists who are portrayed through the struggle and suffering to have their freedom and achieve their dreams. It focuses on how Hosseini depicts his characters as a symbol of endurance and silences victims of the patriarchal system until they take the final step to end the oppression by sacrifice and free their lives. The female characters are depicted from very early on in Adichie's novel as those who reject the patriarchal norms, cross all the traditions to be independent, and adjust to any situation to overcome difficulties. Thus, the dissertation will discuss and compare the following issues in both novels as outlined: (a) women's sphere in society, (b) the education system, (c) the concept of marriage, and (d) women's portrayal in a socially and politically disordered country.

Chapter One

1. History and Theory of Feminism

1.1. Introduction

For centuries, history recorded the long lists of men's vast contributions; they indulged themselves with a life that offers them a high capacity to access any field with full rights. Meanwhile, the static image for women generally in a society deals with patriarchal ideology was to be under the umbrella of a male figure, raising children, doing the domestic duties, and obeying the will of their husbands. The limited opportunities bestowed upon women outside the domain of their houses have been illustrated by many different authors; an American feminist and activist Betty Friedan named the situation of women as "the problem that had no name" (Friedan, 1997, p. 7). A considerable number of women around the world are discontent with the cruelty of the male-dominated societies they live within where they are primarily expected to be housekeepers, reproductive, taking care of their households and children: "Women were blamed then for a lot of problems—not getting the kitchen sink white enough, not pressing the husband's shirt smooth enough, the children's bedwetting, the husband's ulcers, their own lack of orgasm" (Friedan, 1997, p. 7). Not only are these images transmitted down through generations, but also women in this context are forced to live in a world built by men to suffer (and perhaps even die) to continue the tradition even in contemporary societies.

Women in a number of cultures have experienced various kinds of abuse and oppression for a long period; they have not had a unified status or an equitable level that is comparable to that of men. Despite being conscious about the inequality they experience in their daily lives, they have chosen to endure this gender-oriented abuse on a daily basis inside and outside the domain of their homes. As Margaret Walters explained in *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction,* the sole role of women in life is as follows: "For a married woman, her home becomes a prison-house. The house itself, as well as everything in it, belongs to the husband, 'and of all fixtures, the most abject is his breeding machine, the wife'. Married women are, in fact,

slaves, their situation no better than that ‘of Negroes in the West Indies” (2005, p. 44). The patriarchal societies have a set of beliefs against women in that men have a higher status and authority over women. In other words, men form the rules of society and hold the power to suffocate women’s freedom. They tend to impose the belief that if you are a woman, it means that you are weak and devoid of any rights, and ultimately you are expected to endure segregation, repression, and inequality without questioning.

Therefore, women in these societies appear to live only to fulfill the needs of men. The different social spheres that men and women are designated to demonstrate the gender discrimination and division of work, according to which men occupy more opportunities in work fields, and ultimately enjoy their privileged positions. In this manner, women are addressed as physically weak, and when they ought to decide things about their family, their behavior is assumed to be driven by not their intellect but their emotions. More to mention, in the United States of America, preceding the actions taken by women in the advocation of their rights, they had had very restricted lives; they could not vote or participate in the making of any social or political decisions. As critic Deborah L. Madsen informs us, “In the nineteenth century a woman in America was unable to vote, and after the marriage had no control of her property or her children. Nor could she make a will, sign a contract or instigate legal proceedings without her husband’s consent. Her status was akin to that of a minor or a slave” (Madsen, 2000, p. 3) .Based on these rules, men had access to the majority of rights and were considered to be the higher authority. Women after marriage did not have any power over any aspect of their lives, and they had little control over their children.

The use of coercion on women to yield to social traditions and patriarchal rules spread around the world: in many different countries from the west and the east women are oppressed and discriminated against because of their gender, race, and class; their contributions are limited to domestic duties only. If this is the case, how can the outside world recognize women's worth? How can they prove that they are talented in the same way as men? More importantly, how can they change the

static rules that have been imposed on them? All women should be given a chance to express their opinions, a chance to have a job and possess the money belonging to them so that they can show their creativity and be equal with men, as a result of which men and women develop the welfare of their societies. The reason why the feminist movement has emerged can be explained as a need to give a voice to women whose lives are wasted around the household, taking care of children. The starting point of the history of feminism is the 1840s "in the United States with the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 and the resulting Declaration of Sentiments, which claimed for women the principles of liberty and equality expounded in the American Declaration of Independence. In Britain, too, the 1840s onwards saw the emergence of women's suffrage movements" (Freedman, 2001, p.2)

Early actions by those activists are concerned with the demands of women and with providing them with the simple things they are deprived of. Eighteenth-century and later the earlier years of the nineteenth century mark the period in which women first started to push for their demands: the right to vote, recognition from society, and an essential position in the public voice (especially in political and social matters). Women all around the world start gathering in groups to demand their simple rights and to reject the sole role of females in the home and fight to end the domination by men. As June Hannam further asserts that by the mid-nineteenth century women in Europe, North America, and the white-settler colonies of Canada, New Zealand, and Australia started to work together to achieve changes and improvements in the social, political and economic lives of women (Hannam, 2007, p. 7). Based on these demands, feminism appears as a demand to gain autonomy, and fight for women's freedom mainly in western countries.

1.2. Motives behind the Emergence of Feminism

Many decades before the rise of the feminism label, when men had privileges in various aspects of life, women had to undertake domestic work that was beyond their capabilities, and in return were subjected to bad treatment by their husbands. The significance of women suffering appeared in a time when the world found no meaning as to what the word feminism was. The words of Abigail Adams, who as told by History Channel, "was one of only two women to have been both

wife and mother to two U.S. presidents" and "was also famous for her early advocacy of several divisive causes, including women's rights, female education and the abolition of slavery" (2020). When she wrote letters to her husband, they had no valuable meaning at a time when society was only concerned with the value of deeds of men over women. Certain parts of these letters seemed like an appeal to take care of women and not let men have the authority over them. To illustrate, Adams said:

> "…I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember, all Men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice or Representation" (Adams, 1876, p. 149).

Though she was not known as an ardent feminist, she clearly realized that society would be cruel to her gender, and thus, she demanded equal rights for women as her letter above exemplifies. Feminism in its initial steps was defined as an action aimed at obtaining women's rights that are equal to that of men, as the aforementioned miserable conditions historically made women fight for a recognizable place and to have their voices heard. Karen Offen defines feminism as "a concept that can encompass both an ideology and a movement for sociopolitical change based on a critical analysis of male privilege and women's subordination within any given society" (Offen, 1988, p. 151). In other words, feminism emerged to prove the presence of women in all spheres and to fight against the segregation they face by men.

Moreover, the main purpose of feminism is to prevent the oppression and suffering of women by breaking them free from their restricted lives and creating a space for them in society by changing their positions and assisting the development of their abilities. Women intend to acquire an acceptable rank within the community, as they are equal human beings and have equal rights in all fields. In the western world, the feminist movement has led to an awareness of women's status, their relationship to their environment, society, and the extent to which they influence them. The starting point that makes women seek to protect their existence

and identity, to prove their capacity and to demonstrate their ability in various social, cultural, political and economic fields, is that society is considered highly dominated by men. These movements reject the false beliefs and practices upon women that hinder their progress in various fields of life, whether as homemakers or in their public lives. Thus, these women suffer all kinds of injustice and segregation. As a result, feminists demand the freedom of women and equality with men in all rights and duties. Feminists see there are no differences between men and women besides the biological sex factor. In this vein, the feminists refuse many beliefs (such as the belief that men have rational thinking that grants them the ability to communicate in social life whereas women lack this capability) to ensure that this singular difference does not affect women's way of achieving a considerable situation within society. Thus, the most important thing is to spread new ideas and erase the most common tradition of the power differential, as well as the belief that men have power over women.

The effort by women to defend themselves and other silenced groups from being dehumanized and isolated requires an active role that changes the weak image of women in the entire world. At this instant, what women want is to be active in the community, to be heard by the other - the man - and reject what was prevalent in the old thinking; primarily making women an active element in their society and a leading figure independent from the others. Feminism's core interests are erasing the common ideas of the patriarchal society such as the belief that any woman may have no opinion and that men decide what is good for them. Because all the rights are available for men and the thinking of men allegedly dominate the thinking of women, the awareness of some women to this oppression makes them take the first step in the fighting for their equal rights.

Accordingly, feminism's purpose in their campaigns is to deconstruct the concept of patriarchy and to take into consideration the complexities women face during their lives. Feminists try to raise the awareness of women in that they do not live only for the benefit of men. As Rebecca West gives an explicit definition for feminism, regarding her own experience as a feminist: "I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat or a

prostitute…" (Charlton, 1983). Therefore, feminists try to grant women the leverage to express their notion and experience and to comprehend that their value is equal to that of men in the public world. Feminists reject any idea that deals with or praises the prevailing system in which only men have superior power and control the society.

Considering the popular dichotomy of rationality and emotionality, and that men are more rational in their thinking whereas women tend to be emotional, men in this sense, with their tyrannical authority, celebrate their domination and control they have established over their families whilst women cannot make healthy decisions, for they lack the ability to think rationally as all their thoughts stem from an emotional perspective. In placing the reason in the same line with passion, it seems one completes the other, but it is not the same in the patriarchal societies; the prevailing notion is that always men have a logical manner of thinking which is above passion. This notion should be linked to the question of whether a man possessing reason and being always right in his decisions also possesses passion. Because the division between the two is highly widespread in these societies. As is the nature of human beings, both men and women have a reason as well as passion, and they can make both right and wrong decisions; not only do women have irrational opinions or thinking, but men also can make wrong decisions. Who is to blame for turning women into puppets that do what is required of them without question, fulfill domestic duties and follow their masters' orders all the while being asked to remain quiet in the face of cruel treatment. The reason is that the social system has a set of static rules, which are inherited from one patriarchal group to another, and they invent more rules to subdue all women who are considered inferior to them. Moreover, they wholeheartedly believe in this superiority as their pure right to control women by imposing on them their harsh rules and making women captives to their prejudice.

As a result of the endurance they have encountered for many decades, women find themselves fit only for a life of routines in which they breed children and take care of their husbands with nothing awaiting them outside the house domain. Men think that women's job in life is to serve and obey them; the result is that women are outraged by these actions, which has led to the birth of thoughts

that call for rebellion and rejection. To change the status quo and to call for a world where both sexes have equal rights under the same circumstances, in which women's words are taken into consideration, a world where they have the freedom in deciding the number of children, making an opportunity to have a job with equal wages with men (if not more), and changing the rules of marriage that it will be free and the spouses can cancel it whenever they wish.

The need to change women's status from being discriminated against as they are considered the inferior gender is the need to change society rules not only from the family realm. The social structure as a whole has a direct effect on oppressing women and limiting their opportunities to participate in the social realm. Deborah L. Madsen in *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice* stated that the social class structure enhances the gender divisions: "This collective oppression of all women by men is the effect of culture or the social relations which define our existence as gendered individuals" (Madsen, 2000, pp. 185-186). Feminism's purpose is actually to break the bonds that constrain the freedom of women. It is not an ideology trying to manipulate the rules of society and/or replace them with ones which are only to women's benefit. Feminism works basically to achieve gender equality and to emphasize the equal status of the thoughts and ideas of women to that of men. In the first place, feminists want to prove that they are talented and can do things and acquire a position in society equal to men. Altogether, they can encourage a significant group of women to speak loudly and express their needs. They aim to reach a recognizable position to spread their demands for better opportunities all over the world.

1.3 Feminist Movements

Feminist movements or waves cause a significant development by bringing the spotlight onto women's situation and searching to fulfill an enhanced position. Any attempt that exists to end the discrimination and inequality in the case of women falls under the label of feminism. In this regard, feminism is best understood as a dynamic, multifaceted and adaptive movement that has evolved and changed in response to the different practical and theoretical problems faced by women. (Bowden & Mummery, 2009, p. 8). In the struggle to establish women's rights as

fully recognized human beings, for example, they are deprived of making their own money. Also, they were not provided with opportunities for work and education in raising the slogan of complete symmetry between men and women in all aspects. Therefore, the feminist movement refers to a series of political campaigns for reforms on issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, women's suffrage, sexual harassment, and sexual violence, all of which fall under the label of feminism and the feminist movement. Majorly, feminist activities were influenced by the works of Christine de Pizan, in which she discusses frankly the limited experience of women. Simon de Beauvoir wrote about her defensive thoughts in addressing the importance of women's situation and their contribution to society, she stated that it was "the first time we see a woman take up her pen in defense of her sex" (Schneir, 1994).

The women's movement, by drawing the attention to the concept of 'victim'; seeks to emphasize that women are victims of the hegemony of men that leads to this inferior status of women. Women are victims of rape, victims of violence, victims of sexual harassment and victims in all situations. Those women are not obliged to bear all these damages, instead, they should be protected from them, since they no longer need to marry a man to provide for their economic needs. In other words, it is the beginning of liberation movements; it is a series of movements with various ideas that have happened mainly to build gender relations and to seek social and political change. It seeks to solve gender conflict and provide new readings on history, religion, language, and culture. The significant difference between men and women proves the inequality between them, which is considered the central issue in the search for gender equality. In this manner gender equality is the cornerstone of thought in the Age of Enlightenment. Naturally, all people are born to seek freedom and justice in all spheres of life. This equality is a reasonable demand that women want to achieve, despite the objection they face on their way to get an acceptable position. Women's liberation movements usually demand full rights: political (the right of women to vote and participate in politics), social rights (women's right to divorce and child custody), economic (women's equality in wages with men).

Feminism rejects the linking of human experience with the experience of men and giving a new point of view and perception of things through the perspective of women to improve their lives. It also promotes an understanding of breaking the barriers concerning men's hierarchal authority and domination. They are opposing the societal norms and laws that paint women as weak creatures, incapable of obtaining the jobs addressed to men. Also, any woman should have full control over herself and should be liberated from the false assumptions that they have duties without rights. Thus, feminism can hold multiple meanings to reach for absolute equality with men, to seek the autonomy of women and to correct the inaccurate belief that women's lives are constructed by society rules.

Feminist movements are planned for effective changes in the lives of women who are consistently subordinated to men. Therefore, women's effort to encourage other silenced groups and strengthen their movements is done to identify their autonomy in society. In this regard, feminist movements work to assert their demands by inventing new thoughts gradually with the emergence of a new wave. In June Hannam's book *Feminism* in which she mentions the ability of feminism for 'turning the world upside down' for its cultural and political demands and how 'it changes the way women think and feel and affect how women and men live their lives and interpret the world' (Hannam, 2007, p. 2), Feminism is divided into three waves and more recently a fourth wave, each wave having different issues and reforms in society rules to call for. Every wave has its approach and a set of achievements to empower the status of women. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the seeds for the first wave are sown, but the name "first wave" is not coined until the second-wave appears to tackle and produce different demands. Although it appears first in the western part of the world and it focuses primarily on white women's suffrage, it spreads quickly to other countries. Second-wave feminism focuses on liberation issues and gaining social rights for women such as equality between sexes. Third-wave begins in the early 1990s to 2000s, and its goals are extended to more critical issues such as violence against women, sexual harassment, and reproductive rights.

Gradually, these waves become a global issue to include all women despite their race, class, sexuality and other minority groups. The idea of generalization is

illustrated in Barbara Smith's definition as follows: "Feminism is the political theory and practice to free all women: women of color, working-class women, poor women, physically challenged women, lesbians, old women --as well as white economically privileged heterosexual women" (Smith, 1980). From patriarchal society's perspective, against the biased treatment they face, purely because they are weak, inferior, emotional and passive, unlike men who are powerful, superior, rational and active, women's only solution is through feminism to get outside the patriarchal paradigm; for that reason, the endeavor to free their lives unites them to form this sequence of movements.

In the early 19th century in the Western countries, feminist activity started to advocate primarily the freedom of women from patriarchal beliefs, by gaining the legal right to vote. As they were not men's property, the feminists tried to justify their position in social and political fields, destruct the laws that discriminated against women and marginalize them; and put an end to their suffering. As Martha Rampton asserts: "The goal of this wave was to open up opportunities for women, with a focus on suffrage, [and] the wave formally began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 when three hundred men and women rallied to the cause of equality for women" (Rampton, 2015). Additionally, feminism united in calling for temperance and abolitionist movements in the voice of Sojourner Truth (1883), under the title "Ain't I a woman?" discusses the domestic life of women and their right to participate in political and social spheres (Rampton, 2015). This means that women attempted to defy their rights from an early time before the emergence of women's activities, with rebellious actions to change the status quo and save their dignity.

Feminists of this movement re-view Mary Wollstonecraft's writings by calling her a 'fore-mother' for fighting for women's rights of independence, and for her series of activities to demand the women's right to vote. Furthermore, they "were claiming [her] as a founding figure in the struggle for female suffrage" (Tauchert, 2002, pp. 4-5). Mary Wollstonecraft is considered one of the first writers who eloquently and successfully talks about women's suffering and oppression. In her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), she emphasizes explicitly the right of education as a natural right for its essential effect for a better position

for women and their lives as housewives. Her work has never been forgotten, and a great many advocators eagerly abide by her thoughts, a position which helps them establish their autonomy, as it is their right as individuals to have equal and respected status with men.

Identically, Jane Austen's works at the end of the eighteenth-century and the beginning of the nineteenth century had a vital role in establishing the fundamental ideas for this movement. Austen's novels provide elements to feminist main goals that introduce issues that affect women in the patriarchal culture and the social restricted norms in her era. Feminists in this movement began to question their place in the world, and they worked in their campaigns to eradicate these labels surrounding the freedom of women and to make sure that these efforts would not lose their effect for the coming generations. Also, the book *A Room of One's Own* (1929) by Virginia Woolf had a significant effect on women to realize their status in society and gave them the motive to be economically independent of men's domination. In the United States, similar to Wollstonecraft, Margaret Fuller set the basis for this movement in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845). Other activists such as Lucretia Coffin Mott, Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are prominent in this wave with a focus on gaining the right to vote and trying to make women's voices heard in public social life. Leaders involved in groups such as Matilda Joslyn Gage in the National Woman Suffrage Association were also important figures and reacted radically in making necessary amendments for women's suffrage.

To sum it up, first-wave feminists were campaigning to grant the right to vote to all women, as well as other freedom issues including the right to receive education. Although it was first allowed to women over thirty in 1919, in 1928 it extended to all women in the United Kingdom and the United States above the age of twenty-one. Activists tried to gain a political voice as the first step in advocating for their rights. Despite the rejection women encountered from the harsh rules imposed on them, feminists, therefore, became more and more aware of their situation and their lost identity. They needed to address women's problems and put them in one category, as their situations are all the same. Feminists were trying in different ways to mobilize and establish a new method each time, to have enough

space in expressing their thoughts and to prevent any discrimination between the sexes.

A continuation of the first wave, from the early 1960s onward to the 1980s, started the second wave which focused primarily on women's liberation. The outset of the second-wave was marked by Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* in 1964, incompatible with the primary duty of women who are confined to their homes, leading to reduced opportunities for women to further develop their possibilities for gaining a high rank in society, with the fact that women are equally privileged human beings and not marionettes in their master's hands. Also, women will realize their value and occupy an improved place in society, after entering the work spheres and their urgent need to gain a chance of education. Gradually, this happened during and after World War II. Friedan clarified that women who worked outside their homes were more active and happier than women who were accustomed to working inside their homes. Social and political rights intermingled with the need of economic power are the essential demands for women's liberation.

Second-wave feminism reacted against many opposing ideas such as the idea that women's roles are limited to the house domain as well as the oppression of women due to their class and race. In this regard, they proposed more diverse issues than only issues like gaining the right to vote and enfranchisement, such as reproductive rights, opposing the domestic role of women, sexuality, allowing access to work and involvement in political spheres. Their response to this restriction was taking various forms of feminism to strongly express their claims, such as liberal feminism that focused on women's rights with equal opportunities. When Mary Wollstonecraft insists on gaining the right to equal education with men, she is considered the first woman, with her liberal thoughts, to call for women's autonomy and freedom. The notion that confines women's freedom is that they lack the reason that all men possess. Wollstonecraft insisted if rationality is the capacity distinguishing human beings from animals, then unless females are mere animals, women, as well as men, have this capacity. Thus, society owes girls the same education that it owes boys, simply because all human beings deserve an equal chance to develop their rational and moral capacities so they can achieve full personhood (Tong, 2009, p. 15).

Liberal feminism “continued the work of their predecessors by fighting for women’s liberation through rights and recognition in freedom of expression and choice, and equal rights, treatment, and opportunities for women” (Gray & Boddy, 2010, p. 4). They attempted to obtain high-ranking positions in government, business and industry by breaking the barriers of ‘the glass ceiling’, despite the difference between sexes. The aim behind this was to acquire legal and civil reforms; they worked for democratic engagement, reasoned argument and peaceful campaigning in a way that was not affecting or changing the social structure in order to protect them from exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment (Gray & Boddy, 2010). Moreover, they intended to raise their voice, to show that they were physically and intellectually equal to men, and that they wanted to have chances to develop their abilities through access to social life and be provided with an opportunity of employment with equal wages to men. In other words, when women can enter the societal realm, they create a reform rather than a change in the laws and rules of the community, so this leads to gender justice.

For radical feminism, as another attempt to abolish the oppression of women and decrease the supremacy of patriarchy, it was through making radical transformations in social norms. Radical feminism saw the root of women’s oppression located in the discrimination and marginalization of women, due to the rules of society imposing the principle of gender roles. Feminists who urged other women to take a step forward and to end the oppression gathered in groups, such as the National Organization for Women; the purpose was to reform the system and its strict rules by reducing the discrimination in all the fields and laws to achieve equality, as it was considered the essential goal to gain their rights. The oppression women encountered was not specified to one group, but rather their fate was linked to the same issues concerning men's control over women's sexual, reproductive lives and their identity. Therefore, the focus was on abolishing sexism as it was the leading cause of women's oppression. Radical feminists split into two different camps, radical-libertarian feminists and radical-cultural feminists, which attempted to fight sexism but with different views and thoughts. For radical-libertarian feminists, they believed that femininity was not sufficient to make women full human beings, but on the contrary, they urged women to develop both feminine and

masculine characteristics whether it was good or bad. Thus, the urge is to transfer them to androgynous persons is an earning power in shaping their own identity. Radical-cultural feminists, in contrast, emphasized women having only feminine traits to assert themselves as independent females in order to acquire autonomy with only their feminine characteristics (Tong, 2009, pp. 48-50).

With Socialist and Marxist feminism, women sought to eliminate their oppression by changing their status quo. This happened when their position in the family was not as highly emphasized as compared to their participation in the public sphere. Increasing the opportunities to work equally with men meant an increase in their chances of raising their economic position. They also concentrated on social inequality, by making a revolt against male dominance resulting from the capitalistic hierarchy, as it was the source of women's oppression and their low status in both the private and the public domain because they were under men's control and authority. They also raised issues such as fighting against men's domination and violence and unequal pay in the workplace. Thus, the link between women's oppression and the capitalist structure sought to eliminate women's participation and the division of labor in the workplace. The fact that women inherit their inferiority status has a high impact on them, based on the past assumption of social division between men and women, as Peta Bowden and Jane Mummery clarified Mary Wollstonecraft's words to solve this issue in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*: "[it is] by providing women with the education in reason that would allow them the autonomy and independence to participate equally in the opportunities in society" (2009, p. 2). Their biological nature does not mean that they must be subordinate to the biological superiority of males.

In the second wave, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) was a significant source in describing women's oppression from an early stage of their lives and their lack of recognition and education, in a society where men do not consider women as humans with the capacity to do more than childbearing and occupying a domestic stature. De Beauvoir

adopted many thoughts concerning women's condition in a male-dominated society in which they are confined to only domestic work and enslaved to the function of reproduction, which prevents them from contributing to the outside world. Feminists tend to redefine the rules and see the differences that discriminate against women as constitutive factors and struggle to dissolve the barriers that eliminate women's ability to have independence. By gaining the right to vote at the end of the first wave and achieving a respectable place for women in the second wave, women "began to challenge their own internalized views of a woman's proper place, their desire and demand for equal status and free choice began to grow exponentially" (Faludi, 1991, p. 74). The majority of women did not accept their traditional status and attempted to change the prevailing notion of a man, who is the primary source of income; and the wife, who is existing only for the household works.

Beginning with the 1990s, with the demands of women for their liberation and freedom of their sexuality as well as having control over their reproduction, feminists were not satisfied with the results as they found the progress made insufficient in maintaining their freedom and equality. For this reason, women raised their voices once again to tackle the issues that were neglected or not solved by the first and second waves. Thus, the term 'the third wave' came to be known thanks to Rebecca Walker and her essay "Becoming the Third Wave" (Walker, "Becoming the Third Wave" , 2007), in 1992 for Ms. Magazine. She sharply urged women to speak for their rights and not let men insult, ignore or harass them and remain silent; she also added: "I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the Third Wave" (Walker, "Becoming the Third Wave" , 2007). She was both a black woman and the daughter of feminist Alice Walker, a most-notable second-wave feminist.

Although they were from different generations and they did not share the same experiences, they could still bring the issues black women suffered from to the forefront with white women. Again, she emphasized establishing the third wave, and she said "no, the fight was not over. The next curl was just about to crash onto the shore" to carry over their fight for equal rights and most prominently to have full control over their bodies and lives (Walker, 2011). They sought to make it an

international movement; it broadened the horizons and improved the thinking of many women who wanted to change the false image imposed on them; it taught them to fight regardless of their class, race, religion, or ethnicity. Associated in the same period with the movement, the emergence of the Riot subculture was considered one of the peculiar activities against the stereotypical image for young women, in which women created their music separated from the male punk music that alienated women and silenced them from expressing their ideas. Although they originated in the United States, their shared beliefs spread to most other countries, focusing primarily on giving women a voice in a patriarchal society.

Third-wave feminism was different in that it was inclusive; it was not only about older women, but also about young girls. The new generation had a different view of life and different demands. Hence they wanted to offer new perspectives and ideas apart from the old versions of feminism that were demanding political and social equality. Instead, they wanted to organize for a new form of feminism by showing issues related to their personal life and experience. The purpose behind the arising of another wave was that they wanted to deal with issues related to more than just owning a space in politics and social spheres for them. These actions were to alter the habitual direction that feminists used to take, to resolve the problems which women faced in the second wave and could not find a solution to by acting with active steps and not only by directions and talking to urge other women.

This wave wanted to empower its actions to an improved level of effectiveness. They wanted to be recognized, especially with the development of technology, which helped them in spreading the awareness that all women from different races, classes, religions and nationalities must realize that their situations were the same. Instead of the traditional ways of writing books and articles in advocating for their rights, they benefited from the new methods and the improvements in the 20th century. For example, via the progress and the emergence of T.V., radio and media, they could press for their rights in a more different and faster way. Additionally, they wanted to shift the attention to more than advocating on gender discrimination; to extend it to other issues such as racial inequality, class division and sexual tendency. Because the fight was limited to white women, feminists of this wave wanted to establish a new form of feminism, but with the

same characteristics in fighting for their rights. They concentrated on demolishing the stereotypical image, and the most important point in their agenda was to succeed in putting women in a higher status. Another central thing was ending the segregation of women from not only social or political life, but the entire domain and giving them a place in any field that allowed them to create a better image in the coming years.

In the United States and the United Kingdom, with the appearance of media and various communication tools, they had more chances in education and employment. Women could seek out their rights quickly in establishing campaigns and voice their opinions. So it spread further not only to Western countries but also to other countries to form a loud voice that could affect the controlling domain and the prevailing thoughts on women. Therefore, these feminists could gain more respect by introducing new solutions to improve their status and convincing men to join them in calling for their demands**.** One of the campaigns was the *HeForShe campaign* held in the United Nations, the purpose of which was to convince men and all the other people regardless of their race or gender to stand with women in establishing a suitable position within the society. The speech presented by Emma Watson (2014) at this conference had influenced many people who were interested in the main subject of ending gender discrimination. Also, in this speech Watson discusses the solutions of how to fight gender inequality, for instance, men and women should share the same roles in life, and most importantly women have to stand for their rights and refuse to be controlled.

In this respect, the manner of advocation was different due to the change that was happening in the world. The progress of technology helped with spreading new ideas in order to affect a large number of women dramatically. Feminists made an effort in convincing their peers that the word 'feminist' did not belong to women solely, but rather it could address men also. Heretofore the equality between genders had not been erased, but it remained that women were not equal to men. The aim was to change the rooted thinking that men were superior and women were inferior by nature. Men were ought to include women when it came to addressing all the rights of human beings. Accordingly, the movement they took emphasized mainly the equality between men and women and women should be acknowledged and

respected all over the world in the same line as men. Since women were from different nations and they had many voices, they had different demands and needs to achieve their goals.

The role of this advancement in technology and the media helped as a practical tool in spreading the main ideas of their campaigns against gender discrimination and consequently; it established the basis of this wave in uniting the voice of women from different countries. However, the influence of the movement has continued its activities, so that the young generation can trace its presence until now. This wave of feminism, much like a lot of other recent changes in the world, owes to the notion of using different tools in order to distinguish itself from its predecessors. The sequence of evolution has resulted in their multiple demands as they are the new generation. Also, the third wave sees that not all women have the same kind of abuse, and "that no account of oppression is true for all women in all situations all of the time" (Gamble, 2001, p. 43). Since there are differences in women's situation in their private as well as public life, their needs are also not the same. The third-wave considers contradiction, plurality, and hybridity as acceptable and natural (Gamble, 2001, pp. 43-44).

As has been noted, the second wave solved many of women's tribulations in allowing their access to a broader scope of social and political contributions. Thus, this intention led to a new wave, most typically, to lead the new generation to perceive the work that was done by their mothers and not to make a gap in the process for advocating for their rights and more to enrich the consciousness of young females that their situation must be improved to have a more respectable status. Defending oneself and having the right of controlling one's own body, gaining full independence and reproductive freedom are the essential elements of this wave. It is clear that the influence of feminism has no end; its continual goal urges all women across the world. Since the condition of women has been one of the central topics for many centuries, the progression and the vast advancement in all the fields and the capability to assert them both in the past and in their current lives has never prevented them from approaching the motives of their predecessors. Hence in this way, the campaign never has a border; it continues the fight for women's liberation.

Through investigating women's position in the Arab world, one notices that women all over the world have the same struggles, facing the same obstacles in society, and are forced to accept the rules imposed on them. Thus, in Arab countries, women seek freedom from the resections of society in the same line with western endeavors. Women activists demanding their legal rights as they are their natural rights in having education and having a suitable position within the social realm. Pernille Arenfeldt and Nawar Al-Hassan Golley stated that "The early Arab women's movements—as early women's movements in other parts of the world—were dominated by maternalistic priorities. However, this included widespread efforts to improve healthcare and women's education. Although the education that was promoted often sought to reproduce the ideals of woman as wife and mother " (Arenfeldt & Golley, 2012). İn this vein, in the way that women seek to liberate themselves, one of the essential issues is that to have education and that in turn will lighten up women's mind for their other rights. The roots of feminism in Arab countries started almost at the same time as western feminism but its progress is very slow because they are either abandoned or rejected by political or social rules. Also, the picture of non-western women is passive, silent, and veiled in the eye of western countries due to many reasons. One of the reasons for this picture is the restricted religious laws in some Arab communities. Arab feminism flourished with women who wrote boldly to voice their problems in society by the late nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century. The deplorable situation of women in Arab countries urged some women to take a step forward to gain their rights in both private and public life.

For example, in Egypt in the 1920s a very brave activist, Huda Shaarawi formed The Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU), calling for women's rights in education and an opportunity in having jobs, so she is regarded as one of the first women who demanded the rights of women in the Arab world. Another Egyptian feminist Doria Shafik, create the Bint El-Nile group to demand women's rights in political fields. Also, one of her achievements is to gain the right to vote for women, which is accepted by the Egyptian constitution in 1956. Shafik also makes an effort for improving women's position mainly in socio-economic fields in society. Several Egyptian women activists fight for justice and equality despite being devalued by

the ruling class especially in the period of European colonialism. This is because women throughout the colonial period are used as tools to empower the dominance and power of the colonizer over the colonized.

Women formed organizations from different countries such as Syria, Jordan, Iraq Lebanon, and Palestine varies in the development of the position of women and also for the different approaches they take. In Syria and Iraq women experience many challenges in their way for defining their rights due to many factors such as colonial interference and political power coupled with religious conservations. Feminist organizations in Lebanon and Jordan have worked actively to advance women's social and political rights and rejecting many discriminatory laws. In Palestine, women lead liberation movements against the invasion of Israel and British colonialism. As a result, women activists aim to launch public roles instead of being only supporters to their male figures.

In 2010, the advocators came back and renewed the debate, using the internet and the street as their unique tools to announce fourth-wave feminism. The fourth wave begins to spread increasingly and "[it is] shift from second to the third wave took many important forms, but often felt broadly generational, with women defining their work as distinct from their mothers'. What's happening now feels like something new again. It's defined by technology: tools that are allowing women to build a strong, popular, reactive movement online" (Cochrane, 2013). The new wave sets the frame of their fight and focuses on sexual abuse, harassment, raping, and equal opportunities with men as its fundamental elements. Thus, they intend to get a high level of liberation, social justice, a chance to express their opinion freely and self-autonomy. Although these days they hold a respectable place equal to that of men, if not better, they yet want to empower the situation of women. Every new campaign, as a result of one factor or another, makes women outraged and encourages them to intensify their work into a cohesive wave in having their demands met. Women in this wave can do more than the women of previous waves; the use of social media has a useful facility in strengthening their actions.

In this vein, the fourth wave propagates their claim by the use of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and more. They utilize easier

ways for their campaigns such as the use of hashtags and pages on Facebook. Women assemble using the hashtag #MeToo after it has been posted for the first time by the actress Alyssa Milano on Twitter, calling for ending the harassment and assault and for fighting against violence. The use of the hashtag has its significance in establishing the base of this wave. It creates ample space for free discussion online with the concept of hashtag feminism, building an online community, and bringing more hashtags campaigns to the public such as #bringbackourgirls, #YesAllWomen, #NotYourAsianSidekick, and #SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen. The invention of the hashtags brings all victimized women to gather and share their own experiences so as to put an end to their shared pain and suffering.

It is, therefore, evident that these movements aimed at achieving a measure of real justice and equality within society. With active feminist attempts to make a fundamental change in the life of women, they are capable of altering the static image of women by allowing them a place to participate in social and political fields due to the developments that occur with each feminist movement rooted from the different demands they call for and the manner of writing that changed over the centuries. As a result, these movements appear to give new and unique chances to all women in offering new topics such as the importance of the female body and freedom and sexuality. Although they are from different countries, related to more than one social class, and race, their voices that emerge against silence and subjugation are united to struggle in acquiring their freedom. Thus, their views form a strong relationship around the globe, to alter their place within the society from the margin to the center. Women as members of any given society must be included in building the community they live in, and feminism's demands are not arbitrary but are all linked to one another; if women are given their chances in education, they can participate equally with men in building their community as well as raise their children in a better way.

1.4. How Literary Works Affect Feminism

The literary works that authors write have different types for they are penned with different goals. The writer writes his ideas, experience, or imagination depicted in a creative piece of work. Writing literary works

gives an insight into various facets of life such as having a full view of the real lives of a particular group in society; they are produced to shed light on their beliefs and traditions. As Vyomakesisri puts it, "…literature is the reflection of the society. Literature reflects the perceptions and attitudes of society. It portrays human life through characters, by their words and deeds convey a message for the purpose of instruction, information and delight" (Vyomakesisri, 2017). They also create a vision into how people live through a specific period and how their lives are affected by changing political or social rules, thus they sometimes concentrate on issues that have been neglected by other mechanisms of life. The scope of conveyed literary topics deal with the writer's imagination or with the reality of a specific subject of a literary work; in either case, it should include and represent all human beings.

However, by examining the number of works written by male authors, they are undoubtedly further doubled than the work of female authors and are valued on a greater scale than works written by female authors. In fact "Literature is no less prone to inequality than any of the other forms of artistic expression. The plight of women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries can be seen through the pages of the great literary works of the time period (Essays, 2018). For this reason, before women raised awareness and inserted themselves in history in the fight for their rights and beginning their movements, male writers had written multiple texts which deal with lots of issues but still they were written from men's point of view. In other words, the works written by men are biased and far from depicting women's roles in society and they are restricted by only males' imagination and thoughts. Women are, in comparison with men, silent and weak as societal systems consider them to have no rights even within their private lives.

The focus of these literary works is to convey essential issues that represent the situation of women, such as their struggle for freedom and how the prejudice of men puts women in low status. Since the issues of women lie under the most needed subject to be discussed and depicted

over literary history, it is necessary to write them in literature with various forms of literary works such as novels, poetry, plays, and short stories. Novels have a large part in portraying these issues of women and in providing a clear understanding of these issues. The novel can reveal meaning, values, and the experience of its characters in the course of events in the narrative of a particular era. For example, at the turn of the 19th century, in her fiction, Edith Wharton presents vulnerable, helpless women who are treated as beautiful objects for the male aesthetic appreciation and are expected to conform to the ideals of nineteenth century American womanhood (Bakşi Yalçın, 2018, p. 1099).

Ultimately, literary works can show and express the reality that surrounds the writer. To illustrate, Shirley Jackson is one of the female authors who reflects the silent discontentment with the status quo bubbling just beneath the surface of the placid peacetime American society in which women are "constrained and silenced by social expectations, tacit understandings, and habituated relations" (Bakşi Yalçın, 2020, p. 43). Specifically, works created by women have a crucial impact on urging other women to write their own stories and experiences such as "The Laugh of Medusa" (1976) by Helen Cixous. They try to construct a study concerning mainly female goals to fight against their dominated status by men. Thus, the intention behind women's urge to write about the experience of other women who suffer from the marginalization in their society, and to pave the way for all women to get their voice heard and to encourage them to express their opinion in public. Women intend is to write in different ways but nearly for the same reasons.

On the other hand, they try to present a response to those who write against women's liberation and also to those who suggest more methods to control women's life. In this regard, the history of literature has a variety of literary texts by male writers, scholars, and philosophers, most of whom focus on patriarchal vision and apply more methods to control women's lives. This vision has been established specifically by

western male writers such as Plato, Aristotle, Martine Luther, Alexander Pope, Mark Twain, and Valentine de Saint-point. (Bressler, 2011, pp. 144-145). For example, Plato argues that "[he] thanks the gods for two blessings: that he had not been born a slave and that he had not been born a woman" (p. 145), Alexander Pope says that "most women have no character at all" (p. 145) and Valentine de Saint-point declares that "feminism is a political mistake. Feminism is a mistake made by women's intellect, a mistake which her instinct will recognize" (p. 147). All in all, society witnesses how the importance of feminism's portrayal in literature plays a significant factor in the presence of all women, despite the works of men used to suppress women's roles in the literary domain.

The aforementioned ideas and thoughts of feminism and its advocators have become widely important issues to give much attention to women's roles. As thus, the scope of feminism's approach expanded to include male supporters to feminist goals, in their writing men drew issues about women suffering and hardship they faced every day in their lives. One of the writers is Khaled Hosseini, an Afghan-American writer with his striking novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns that* became popular for talking about women's struggles in Afghanistan from a male perspective. The coming chapter will discuss how this novel portrays women's lives facing discrimination and oppression through male dominance and tyranny. It will also show the real-life of women in Afghanistan based on the novel's two protagonists Mariam and Laila in their fight to end the suffocating life they live in the tent of their abusive husband and the restriction of Patriarchal society.

Chapter Two

2. The Portrayal of Afghan Women in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

2.1. Historical Background

In the past, as explained in the previous chapter in detail, the patriarchal system limited women's mobility and their role in society, which was never significant compared with the role of men. However, today the world witnessed women's success in achieving a better status and entering the public sphere with much power and assertion. Thus, women can gain their rights and increase their chances to be equal with their male counterparts. Moreover, the contribution of women improves many fields of life; they manage to establish a stable presence in jobs and positions formerly assigned to men. They can prove themselves and their success more than men. This success proved by the announcement of International Women's Day gives women an imprint for their significant existence in society.

Accordingly, women became teachers, nurses, employees, and some held political positions. Before the declaration of women's international day, the case for some women was pitiable as they have been silenced and stripped of their basic rights due to the prejudicial treatment of their societies. Although there is a measure of progress made in the world and all the prevailing ideas being changed, women in some countries still suffer from an inferior place or status determined by the society they are living in. Particularly for those who still follow the pre-Islamic thoughts on restricted women's domain, Nikki Keddie argues that "men monopolized politics and most powerful religious and economic positions, while women were increasingly specialized in the domestic sphere, which included bearing and raising children and a variety of vital occupations carried out in or near the home" (p.14). Specifically in Afghanistan, an Islamic country, the culture has not been affected by the surrounding countries but instead has remained undeveloped and uncivilized. The community keeps on imposing harsh rules in limiting women's life to the needs of men. Thus, this chapter aims to discuss the portrayal of women's lives under male dominance and tyranny in Afghanistan in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). It will also illustrate the real-

life of Afghan women based on the novel's two protagonists Mariam and Laila in their fight to end the suffocating life with their abusive husband and the restriction of society.

In this regard, it is fundamentally important to understand the historical background of how and why the Afghan society has become intensively oppressive to women and prevented them from gaining their freedom as well as examine how women resisted the oppression of social structure to seek liberation and achieve independence. To examine these factors *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is used as the main text to elucidate the predicament of women in Afghanistan living where most of the rules of the society are to their disadvantage. Women's liberation is determined not only by the family sphere but also by the outside rules of government and the surrounding community. As a result, the lives of women in some countries in the Eastern world are majorly affected by every renovation in political or social change. It becomes a central issue to construct the rules for the new reign. Regarding women as the weaker creatures helps to establish a restricted program for them that focuses on victimization, oppression, and exploitation.

The history of Afghan women is best determined with certain factors in mind; namely their living conditions, the places in which they live, and mainly their status in accordance with different periods. There is a measure of differences in the opportunities provided by the surrounding societal rules between the rural and urban societies of the early 20th century. In urban regions, depending on class, ethnicity, religion, or some other factors like the general position in the political and social realm, women's lives differ from the ones in rural areas. In urban areas, women enjoy a certain level of freedom; they almost do things similar to those assigned to men. They are educated and they work outside their houses but besides their household work and taking care of their families, wearing a burqa is not an important issue; they are allowed to walk alone without the company of a male relative. However, in shedding light on the work field, the burden is doubled, especially if they are the only moneymaker, due to the customary rules of families denoting that women alone are responsible for all of the domestic duties.

On the contrary, in rural areas, a different way of living rules supreme among women whose freedoms are seldom discussed. Women are uneducated, and they cannot work unless in agriculture and their fields. In this matter, women in rural areas suffer the most, as it is also noted by a BBC article; a young married girl at the age of 15 was tortured severely: "Sahar Gul was left starving in a basement by her new husband and his family… Sahar had been severely tortured, both physically and mentally… [In such cases] Women in many parts of Afghanistan continue to suffer domestic abuse, often at the hands of their own family or in-laws" (BBC News, 2012). It is because "the plight of many women [in Afghanistan], especially in rural areas, is being sidelined as the international community focuses on its military drawdown, and puts less emphasis and less pressure on the Afghan authorities over human rights" (BBC News, 2012). The majority of the responsibility falls on the country that legalized laws that had a great impact on their female citizens since "Under Afghan law, the earliest age of marriage for girls is 16. However, almost half of Afghan women are married when they are younger" (BBC News, 2012). In this case, women in Afghanistan have little or no rights and face unfair treatment and violence.

Through different phases of change in regimes and the conflicts in Afghanistan, women have been suffering directly and indirectly from the rules imposed upon them. These regimes can be reviewed in three eras; the Soviet Union, civil war and then the Taliban movement. The civil war (1992-1996) and then the Taliban (1996-2001) was proven to be the most brutal and vicious on all population especially women:

> "During the civil war, schools were destroyed. Thus the Taliban's gender policies only worsened an ongoing crisis. Illiteracy was a major problem before the Taliban, affecting 90 percent of girls and 60 percent of boys. Within three months of the capture of Kabul in 1996, the Taliban closed schools and Kabul University, affecting hundreds of thousands of female students and teachers" (Rostami-Povey, 2007, p. 25).

Through the struggle against violence and oppression under these three destructive regimes, women of all classes appear to fight for their basic rights and

dignity. Anne Brodsky reveals in her book *With All Our Strength* the history of the pitiable situation of Afghan women and the establishment of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), and the need for giving women a voice. The book also contains stories about the real-life experiences of Afghan women during the years of war and constant persecution. The foundation of RAWA is attributed to Meena in 1977, a young activist at the age of 21 who set the primary aims for this organization as stated by Anne Brodsky (2003, p. 2). As for their core ideas, the organization was about tackling the problems that women faced by fighting for human rights and social justice, first in Kabul and then in Pakistan, working for the fundamental rights of Afghan women .Before the three temporary rigorous regimes, women had equal rights to men and they participated in social and political realms, yet these rights were taken away from them in the 1990s. Women's status deteriorated at its highest level specifically when the Taliban succeed to control the country. The Taliban were considered as the primary source for practicing violence against women and they were the main offenders of women's rights. Afghan people and especially women suffered from intense depression and psychological struggle especially from 1996 to 2001.

Also, the misunderstanding of the Islamic norms and tradition gives men unlimited authority over women. In all areas of Afghanistan that are rural and tribal, women and especially young girls are economically the burdens on their families. Since they are not allowed to have a job and are deprived of education, the only way is to marry them off, which means their role is shifted from serving their families to help their husbands and provide children, prioritizing male ones (*Ayub et al., 2009, p. 13*). This control over women's life is powered by social customs that allow all men to benefit from patriarchy. On one hand, they practice their authority in their households where women are oppressed and discriminated against: patriarchal norms legitimize violence, servitude and disrespect; women are the property of their husbands. On the other hand, in public life women are passive, and they do not have a recognized position in the political or social realms. However, Afghan women experience a constant threat that may undermine their status and limit their progress in various fields. According to a comparison of the

position of women before and after the Taliban regime by women's rights activist April W. Palmerlee:

> "Women in Afghanistan used to be active participants in society. Before the Taliban took over in 1996, in fact, 70% of the teachers in the capital city, Kabul, were women. Forty percent of the doctors were female. Women were engineers, architects, lawyers, and judges. During the long years of war, the economy of many families became dependent on women's income" (2002).

But due to the deterioration in Afghanistan's political situation, the Taliban have been succeeding in taking over and controlling the country. The situation has become deplorable concerning women's lives inside and outside their homes. Palmerlee also addressed the main issues forbidden by the Taliban:

> "The Taliban banned: any form of female education, from kindergarten through graduate school; wearing makeup, nail polish or jewelry; plucking your eyebrows or cutting your hair short; wearing colorful or stylish clothes, sheer stockings, white socks or shoes, or high heels; laughing, talking or walking loudly in public"(2002).

Women have been suffering significantly since the Taliban came to power and undergoing enormous challenges as of the rapid changes in their new, restricted lives. Throughout their rule, the Taliban have been creating a set of rules under the name of Islam and following Islamic ideology. But in contrast with the fundamental Islamic norms, by which women are respected, have self-esteem, and above all, they are equal in rights and status, they were subjected to disgraceful treatment; facing oppression and enduring cruelty more than any other society or religion. Moreover, one of the Islamic laws is asking women for consent before marriage, and generally, they choose their spouses, but this is not the case in a society structured by patriarchal norms. The Taliban set that a woman's place is her home and her home alone; it is unacceptable for women to go out without a male relative or *mahram*. Also, they must hide their full body from head to toe in a shapeless garment named *Burqa* or *Chaddari*. As Elaheh Rostami-Povey pointed out to an

experience by an Afghan citizen explaining the difficulties they face if they do not obey the rules:

> "Sometimes they would beat women in the streets and nobody could do anything. People just stood and watched. They had a stick with lead at the end of it to beat women to cover themselves. It was difficult to see through the chaddari. When we went shopping we couldn't see what we were buying. If we put the chaddari up to see, they would hit us and close the shop. So shop keepers were not selling things to women" (2007, p. 27).

The severities of these restrictive policies have become a habit for all women since they constantly expected harsher rules to obey and be silent. The permanent image for Afghan women is behind that of men, but these rules are not limited to women under the Taliban government, since it includes men and their general situation as well. Julie A. Mertus gives examples of the things that legislated by the Taliban during their rule:

> "Men were affected as well. They were not permitted to shave or trim their beards or to wear Western-style clothes, and were required to pray five times a day. Movies, videos, televisions, games, kite flying, dancing, and music were forbidden. Anything associated with Western practices was outlawed as "un-Islamic." Violators were dealt with severely and publicly, with amputations and executions in the Kabul stadium after Friday prayers" (2000, p. 53).

Gender segregation as well as other rules had a huge impact on both men and women, but especially women. Accordingly, the reason behind the low status of women is the idea of putting them in an inferior position as well as not considering them a full human being creeps into all generations. Focusing primarily on women's oppression in all its kinds, issues including gender discrimination, alienation, abusive treatment and domestic violence played an essential factor in restricted women's life. In this regard, the characters of Khaled Hussein's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* represent the ideal example of women suffering from all kinds of subjugation, but at the same time, it is shown how these characters resist and stand against society's rules to free themselves from oppression. On one hand, the novel depicts women suffering from all kinds of oppression. On the other hand,

the setting of the novel shows that Afghanistan is one of the countries which face destruction and social violence: "Perhaps the history of no other nation has affected women as the history of Afghanistan. The upheavals in it are the upheavals of its women" (Dharmani, 2018). Hosseini uses through his novel a link between the repressive circumstances of the country and the suffering of its women. Consequently, the lives of Afghan women are determined by the political shifts and the conflicts of three periods of war, and they are denied their opportunities of equal values with men.

2.2. Representation of Women in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

The vast difference between women's position in the past and present creates a historical shift from a restricted life shaped by patriarchal rules to a life of freedom full of achievements in gaining the power to prove their existence. Patriarchy is shaped through history and fed by society members, who in turn keep the old thinking to extend male dominance in a broader category. As a term, patriarchy is not shaped for all society members in the same way, but it has different factors that help in wide-spreading it. These factors relate to the dominant ideology in a specific society. For example, countries with a higher percentage of citizens who are religious intensify their thinking around a religious aspect. As Kamla Bhasin stated: "Religions have played an important role in creating and perpetuating patriarchal ideology. They have spread the notion of male superiority through stories like, Eve was created from Adam's rib; or man is created in the image of God, etc." (2003, p. 21). Exaggerated religious customs by the Taliban, which enacted difficult constraints in shaping the lives of women, played an essential role. As a result, under the Taliban regime, they reconstructed the whole system that led to a division of social work and roles between men and women (Bhasin, 2003, p. 21). Taliban religious policies had enforced extreme laws and in time they became more atrocious towards women, taking control as their base power to restrict women as well as to spread their own authority across the whole country, but most importantly barred women much of their rights.

A Thousand Splendid Suns is full of evidence on how a woman undergoes a lower social setup. It pictures both the compliance of women and the complete

authority of men. In other words, it is a portrait of the submission, discrimination, and injustice the characters Mariam and Laila face in a patriarchal society and in obeying their husband Rasheed. All women in the novel suffer from either the rules of society or from domestic oppression. They do not have the basic rights of a human being since "The human rights of women throughout the Middle East and North Africa are systematically denied by each of the countries in the region, despite the diversity of their political systems" (Rushfan, 2014). In some countries, women were deprived of their simple rights as human beings with the same rights as men. At the same time, men enjoy absolute authority, they marginalize and dominate women and use their authority as an instrument to minimize women's role in society. Women are subject to a host of additional gender-specific human rights violations. For example, family, penal, and citizenship laws throughout the region relegate women to a subordinate status compared to their male counterparts. This legal discrimination undermines women's full personhood and equal participation in society and puts women at an increased risk of violence (Rushfan, 2014).

The lives of both Mariam and Laila in Hosseini's novel are not that different from other Afghan Women in particular or women in other countries where women severely suffer from patriarchy. Although they live in a progressive world, they remain under the mercy of male dominance. Through the story of these two characters, the novel provides a clear example of the real-life of Afghan women. As such, the characters are viewed as typical women with courageous characteristics, though they are removed from the external life. They are shown to lack the most basic opportunity to gain independence and have a chance for education. In any case, Afghan women in the novel experience male dominance, authority and oppression in society. Thus, the aim is to have a full view of how the characters of the novel, especially Mariam and Laila, are treated in private and public life, taking into consideration that they belong to different backgrounds, as well as how this suffocates them from gaining their freedom.

A Thousand Splendid Suns portrays Afghan women as passive victims and mere tools in a system controlled completely by men. The protagonist Mariam and other characters like Nana and the wives of Jalil experience agonizing life in

unsupported circumstances. Mariam is a symbol of traditional culture: such types of women are not expected to demand their rights or to argue with their husbands. Mariam has lived a traditional life from her childhood to her married life. Born and living in a *kolba*[1] in a secluded area isolated from the city with her mother, Nana. Mariam is the result of fornication between Nana and her master Jalil, a wealthy cinema owner. He isolates them from his other three wives and children and refuses to accept her as one of his ten children. Consequently, she lives an unhappy life, from the beginning of her story; she is accused of things she has no hand in. Nana puts the blame for the circumstances of their life on her. The thought that she is a *harami*[2] chases her with every step in her life. Mariam is not aware of her inconvenient origin until her mother calls her *harami*, which is to mean "an ugly, loathsome thing to be a harami, like an insect, like the scurrying cockroaches Nana was always cursing and sweeping out of the kolba" (Hosseini, 2008, p. 4). Nana with her unstable behavior treats Mariam harshly at times, and at other times shows that she loves her, albeit in a coarse way.

Mariam as a child does not have friends and cannot socialize with neighbors because Nana hates welcoming visitors except "Gul daman's leader, the village arbab, Habib Khan…[and] old women that Nana called Bibi jo…[but for Mariam's] favorite other than Jalil of course, was Mullah Faizullah" (p. 15). Mullah Faizullah is an old religious man, the only person Mariam feels comfortable with. She openly tells him whatever comes to her mind. In the case of Mariam and her mother, they have isolated themselves to avoid people because of their reality and especially because of the illegitimacy of Mariam. The little girl is deprived of enjoying her childhood like any other child; she lacks love, acceptance, and a superior position. This is stated by her mother: "[you will] never have a legitimate claim to the things other people had, things such as love, family, home, and acceptance" (p. 4). The sense of shame reflects on her, she tries to overcome it by entering the school once, but it ends with refusal from Nana, and then when she goes to Jalil's house, she faces an unexpected rejection from him, who eventually sends her back to home.

1 A small muggy cottage in deserted areas, it refers to a kind of isolation and entrapment from the rest of the world.

2 An illegitimate child that is born in an illegal relationship out of marriage.

Nana condemns her daughter due to stigmatization all her life. Nana characterizes her as a person who has a disgraceful mark, that she will never have any kind of acceptance in her life. She tells Mariam that they are thrown off from being socially and legally recognized: “To Jalil and his wives, I was a pokeroot. A mugwort. You too. And you weren’t even born yet [Nana explained that a Mugwort is] A weed, something you rip out and toss a side” (p. 6). He also never treats you as one of his ten children or does what he promises you, she further explains to her daughter: “Rich man telling rich lies… He betrayed us, your beloved father. He cast us out. He cast us out of his big fancy house like we were nothing to him. He did it happily” (p. 5). Through Nana’s words, she tries to tell her daughter that men only care for their status in society, without paying any attention to women in their own family. Continuously, Mariam's life is full of difficulties and miseries, especially after her mother's death and Jalil's wives marrying her to an older man named Rasheed in Kabul. The intention behind this action is to get rid of her since they do not consider her as one of their children as “she is the walking, breathing embodiment of their shame” (p. 48). Her father Jalil does not exhibit any signs of compassion or care when his wives hasten the procedures of her marriage. This leaves Mariam disappointed and she realizes that she does not belong to her father’s big family and she has no place among them. Mariam farewells her father, saying “I used to worship you… on Thursdays, I sat for hours waiting for you… I thought about you all the time… I did not know you were ashamed of me” (p. 54). Jalil is a well-known cinema owner, and he would be worried about his reputation if she were to stay in his home.

Moreover, as girls in undeveloped countries are treated as burdens to their families, Mariam is degraded into a lower status. Her life is meaningless after her marriage, and she also remembers her mother's word *Tahamul*, suggesting that all they should do in life is obeying their husbands and doing house chores. Thus, she should endure the bad attitude toward her by Rasheed, who treats her like a slave and holds the right to control her life due to the society rules giving the husbands unlimited power over their wives. Although the lives of Afghan people are not controlled by tribal groups, Youngerman declares: “The status of women in rural and tribal areas remained largely unchanged. Traditionally, women were required

to obey their husbands and in-laws. Forced marriages remained commonplace, and young girls were often given in marriage to much older men" (2007, p. 247). Thus, this is the same case for Mariam who is forced to marry a man three-generation older than her.

This privilege of absolute male domination over women keeps their status in a lower rank with having no rights or recognition in both private and public spheres. Women are considered inferior and devalued. They are restricted to only household activities and caring for their children. When they try to break these shackles they are pushed to the peripheries in the world and labelled as ignorant, witless creatures with no sense of humor (Khan & Faran, 2016, p. 12). Besides, Mariam is a woman with an inferior status, and she is forced to obey her abusive husband and wear a *burqa*. She is also not allowed to go out or talk with the neighbors. Over time, Rasheed becomes crueler to her, especially after her seven miscarriages because it is part of her duty to bring and raise children in such a patriarchal society. Mariam experiences hardship as a child and as a wife as she is the property of Rasheed, fulfilling his orders. If she cannot please him and does wrongs, she should accept the consequences as he becomes bitterer to her and punishes her at the slightest mistake. Once she encounters physical violence:

> "His powerful hands clasped her jaw. He shoved two fingers into her mouth and pried it open, then forced the cold, hard pebbles into it. Mariam struggled against him, mumbling, but he kept pushing the pebbles in, his upper lip curled in a sneer…"Now you know what your rice tastes like. Now you know what you've given me in this marriage. Bad food, and nothing else" (Hosseini, pp. 102-103).

This example shows how cruel he acts in return for whatever she does. Her endurance and silence give Rasheed more space of authority to control her life; he, directly and indirectly, points at her work, he continuously judges her work and finds faults to have power over her. Mariam experiences various forms of oppression and subjugation. She is not able to express her opinion or justify her deeds when Rasheed accuses her. As a result, Mariam not only experiences physical

violence, but she is also psychologically abused by Rasheed and endures his ridiculous treatment:

> "It wasn't easy tolerating him talking this way to her, to bear his scorn, his ridicule, his insults, his walking past her like she was nothing but a house cat. But after four years of marriage, Mariam saw clearly how much a woman could tolerate when she was afraid. And Mariam was afraid. She lived in fear of his shifting moods, his volatile temperament, his insistence on steering even mundane exchanges down a confrontational path that, on occasion, he would resolve with punches, slaps, kicks, and sometimes try to make amends for with polluted apologies and sometimes not" (pp. 97-98).

His aggressive nature enables him to impose strict rules on Mariam that do not differ from the rules of the Taliban. Rasheed's acts show how women experience fear, hardship and loss of self-confidence in a strongly patriarchal society that has legalized women's punishment. Moreover, according to the fact that women exist for domestic duties and reproduction as portrayed in Mariam's life, Mariam represents the ideal woman in a patriarchal society. She lives to please Rasheed and fulfil his needs, though she is unable to bear him a child. Apart from this, she is an illegitimate daughter and a shame in the eyes of society. Mariam always feels that he can blame her for simple things and tries to avoid his insults:

> "There was always something, some minor thing that would infuriate him, because no matter what she did to please him, no matter how thoroughly she submitted to his wants and demands, it wasn't enough. She could not give him his son back. In this most essential way, she had failed him-seven times she had failed him-and now she was nothing but a burden to him. She could see it in the way he looked at her, when he looked at her. She was a burden to him" (pp. 98-99).

Mariam's endurance increases every year with every miscarriage and she realizes that all she could give Rasheed is a disappointment; she is nothing but a burden on him like she is a burden to her father Jalil. As a result, he decides to marry again, this time with Laila, a young, educated and liberated girl who can bear children for him and please his sensual appetite.

Miriam's mother, Nana also appears as a symbol of endurance in the novel. She finds no meaning in life other than just to raise her daughter and her only goal is to stay at home doing things assigned to any traditional woman. She teaches Mariam that a woman's place is at home and prevents her from having a chance at education. She clearly tells Mariam the following:

> "You will learn nothing of value in those schools…there is only one, only one skill a women like you and me needs in life, and they don't teach it in school… And it's this: *tahamul*.. Endure… Women like us. We endure. It's all we have… They'll laugh at you in school. They will. They'll call you a *harami*. They'll say the most terrible things about you... No more talk about school" (p. 18).

Nana wants her daughter to face the cruelty of this world and the harsh living conditions with endurance and wants her to comprehend the fact that women belong to their homes obeying their husbands and remaining silent. She strongly asserts that a woman's value is only in taking care of her household and doing domestic duties. She makes her daughter believe that all the suffering they face and the entire struggle they encounter as women living in a male-dominated society is due to destiny and they should accept it. Nana teaches Mariam how to become an ideal, traditional woman as she constantly tries to shift her attention from the outside world and directs her to do housework: "Mariam and Nana milked the goats, fed the hens, and collected eggs. They made bread together. Nana showed her how to knead dough, how to kindle the tandoor and slap the flattened dough onto its inner walls. Nana taught her to sew too, and to cook rice and all the different kinds of toppings: Shalqam stew with turnip, spinach sabzi, cauliflower with ginger" (p. 15). From Nana's lens, life for women like her is destined to be submissive and she willingly accepts discrimination believing that they must endure all the suffering within a society shaped by the patriarchal framework. To her, this is a widely common phenomenon. Her advice to Mariam has had a great effect when "She remembered Nana saying once that each snowflake was a sigh heaved by an aggrieved woman somewhere in the world. That all the sighs drifted up the sky,

gathered into clouds, then broke into tiny pieces that fell silently on the people below" (pp. 89-90).

Although Mariam faces Rasheed with an abusive and moody attitude as he practices all the rules of the patriarchy she should continue her life as a traditional good wife and be silent. Nana becomes highly possessive in her love for her daughter, she does not want her daughter to be deceived and rejected by men and fall for the same mistakes as she has. She tells Mariam: "You are all I have, I won't lose you to them…" (p. 18). Then, Nana further explains: "I'm the only one who loves you. I'm all you have in this world, Mariam, and when I'm gone you'll have nothing. You'll have nothing. You are nothing!" (p. 27). Nana tries to make Mariam understand the nature of all men that they are selfish and they do not care about women's feelings unless it serves their interest. Nana tries to enlighten her with the fact that even her father will not love her as he will not endure the hardship that Nana herself has faced alone to make her happy. Nana's core understanding is to be a woman in this world that holds no sympathy and has no hope for justice. With any small guilt, society will cast you out to the periphery of normal life and you will experience all kinds of abandonment, rejection, frustration and, oppression from a society that sabotages women's freedom.

Nana's attitude causes Mariam to think that she hates her and prevents her from getting a better life by living with her father. As Mariam tells her: "You are afraid that I might find the happiness you never had. And you do not want me to be happy. You do not want a good life for me. You are the one with wretched heart" (p. 28). But on the contrary, Nana tries to forewarn her daughter from failing for Jalil's lies and deception. Her vision in life is that all women are part of men's patrimony; they should endure and remain under the authority of men. In the novel, Nana is ostracized and marginalized from the outside world; she is a victim in a patriarchal culture. Although she lives with only her daughter in the *kolba* and with no male relatives, she follows the rules imposed on any traditional woman, especially because of her case of having done adultery, resulting in an illegitimate child. The restricted society she lives in and the narrow-minded people around her make her accept injustice both in society and in the family. Nana's life changes from living in a wealthy urban setting to an isolated life with a young daughter.

Also, women are always the object of men who control them in various ways. Women are described as weak, uncivilized and having a lower rank. Jalil has abandoned Nana twice when he has betrayed her and refuses to accept her as one of his wives. When Nana gives birth to Mariam; he leaves Nana and shows no concern for his daughter. Jalil acts cruelly, aided by societal traditions and laws where women suffer from continuous victimization. Besides, his selfish attitude shows that he is a supercilious wealthy man that cares only about his status.

Nan's father also leaves after her pregnancy because it is considered a shame for the family name. Apart from all this misery, she wishes that her father has got rid of her to save his honor: "I wish my father had had the stomach to sharpen one of his knives and do the honorable thing. It might have been better for me… but he was coward, my father. He didn't have the *dil* the heart, for it" (pp. 6-7). Nana's attitude towards such inequality shows that she accepts her fate without resistance to her oppressor Jalil, and she becomes self-destructive. Women like Nana have no space in fighting for their rights. The scars she bears her whole life make her silent and acquiesce to the harsh status that society imposed on her. Nana's sense of marginalization where she is distant from the rest of the society, besides Jalil, makes her life miserable enough to commit suicide. She is discriminated against and feels different from other members of society. She is pushed to the edge of society and left out of normal life, which contributes to her bitterness.

The characters who are Jalil's wives appear as a symbol for traditional women who follow the principles of a male-dominated culture and also the laws of Islam. Since they accept the idea of multiple marriages, they have no objection to marrying the same man, because Islam has legalized polygamous marriage. On the other hand, as they control Mariam's fate, they decide to marry her off at the age of fifteen. In doing so, the three wives refuse to give her a space in their big house or regard her as one of the family members although they know that she is Jalil's daughter. It is clear when one of the wives says: "You can't spend the rest of your life here" (p. 47). Besides regarding her as a burden on their family, Mariam's marriage is seen as a "chance to erase, once and for all, the last trace of their husband's scandalous mistake" (p. 48). Although Jalil loves his daughter, his treatment of her is indifferent and he stands with his three wives in giving his quick

consent to marry Mariam off. The result is that he refuses to admit her as one of his legitimate children as she may bring shame to his name, so Jalil wants to preserve his honor. Accordingly, Jalil's wives play the role of the oppressor in controlling the fate of Mariam instead of her father, who in turn remains silent.

Laila is the second protagonist of the novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Her parents are the intellectual father Hakim and the unstable mother Fariba. In contrast with Mariam's mother, although she is also a housewife, Fariba devoted her life to her grief over her two sons, yet this did not prevent her from standing beside her daughter. Hakim gives Laila a space of freedom and allows her to decide her future. They have allowed her to attend school, and they care about carving a bright future for her as they believe that women's education is a huge part of building a better society: "And you, you would continue going to school . . . That would be our absolute top priority, to get you a good education, high school then college" (Hosseini, p. 148). Hakim always encourages his daughter to have self-confidence and determine her own future:

> "I know you're still young, but I want you to understand and learn this now, he said. Marriage can wait, education cannot. You're a very, very bright girl. Truly, you are. You can be anything you want, Laila. I know this about you. And I also know that when this war is over, Afghanistan is going to need you as much as its men, maybe even more. Because a society has no chance of success if its women are uneducated, Laila. No chance" (p. 114).

Hakim implants in Laila the love of study, the awareness of her rights and the capability to change the prevalent image of Afghan women. She also has a lover named Tariq, a neighbor boy. They walk and talk in the street, which signifies the liberty of the community she lives in, but it is no longer possible after the deterioration of the Afghan political situation. As a result, their relationship is threatened and the fear of Tariq leaving depresses Laila. Consequently, one night they partake in coitus. Soon, however, he leaves the country due to the disorder and conflicts in political matters. Laila's family also decides to leave Kabul, but their plan is not fulfilled as a result of a rocket falling on their house. She is eventually saved by Rasheed and Mariam but Laila's sexual relationship with Tariq ends up

with her pregnancy. To protect herself and to avoid prostitution or starvation, she accepts Rasheed's proposal, as she also wants someone to care about her and the unborn child. On the other hand, Rasheed acts with deceit when it comes to Laila: he cares about her to show that he is a kind person but behind his acts he wants something in return from Laila: "One day he came home from work with a new blanket and pillow. Another day, a bottle of pills" (p. 194). Rasheed's unusual acts with Laila, whom he cares for instead of his wife Mariam, clearly illustrate show that he wants to fascinate her to what her life is going to be after accepting him as her husband. He wants to marry her under the pretext that she cannot live alone and that she might be taken by the Taliban or killed.

Rasheed shows bias towards Laila with the hope that she can give him a child; he starts flattering her and brings her gifts. Ultimately, he succeeds in his goal as he knows this is the only option for Laila to save her life by accepting his proposal. The evidence of Rasheed's altered attitude is concluded from his obvious comment when he differentiates between Mariam's and Laila's lives. He talks about Mariam in a disgraceful manner: "We are city people, you and I, but she is *dehati*. A village girl. Not even a village girl. No. She grew up in a *kolba* made of mud outside the village. Her father put her there. Have you told her, Mariam, have you told her that you are a *harami*?" (p. 216). Rasheed shows obviously how Mariam is valueless to him and that she has less self-respect. He even clarifies to Laila how he sees Mariam: "If she were a car, she would be a Volga… [and] you, on the other hand, would be a Benz. A brand-new, first-class, shiny Benz" (p. 216). As a means of distinction between the two women, this shows appears how Laila is valuable to him and cares more about her, who is as precious as a Benz car, while he puts Mariam in a lower rank as cheap as a Volga car. Besides, he puts Laila in a dignified position higher than Mariam and obliges Mariam to serve Laila: "You are the queen, the *Malika,* and this house is your palace. Anything you need done you ask Mariam and she will do it for you" (p. 217). While Rasheed calls Mariam awful words, he flirts with Laila, and treats her respectfully. He even compares two women to cars, which shows his way of objectifying them.

Laila's so-called happiness and Rasheed's affection for her does not continue long after she delivers him a daughter instead of a son. Rasheed becomes more

brutal to both Mariam and Laila, and they are also subjected to physical punishment. Laila is more aware of her rights and thus, she sometimes resists the oppression and unjustified treatment from Rasheed. Unlike Mariam, she refuses to remain silent when Rasheed accuses her of made-up things. Laila has a strong character and self-esteem, so she defends herself although she knows the consequences. She argues with Rasheed and she stands against him: "Then a flurry of hurried footsteps in the hallway before Mariam and the children were in the living room, their eyes shifting from her to Rasheed and back. Then Laila punched him" (p. 292). Rasheed becomes more brutal and rougher towards Mariam since he believes that Laila is manipulated by Mariam to oppose him. It is clear from his attitude that he blames Mariam again: "'it's your doing. I know it is,' he snarled, advancing on her. Mariam slid out of her bed and began backpedaling. Her arms instinctively crossed over her chest, where he often struck her first. 'What are you talking about?' she stammered. 'Her denying me. You're teaching her to'" (p. 234).

Later on, however, Rasheed changes his attitude towards Laila and exhibits affection to her when she delivers him a baby boy named Zalmai. The temporary joy and the good treatment ends, again, as he turns cruel when they plan to escape. When they fail to follow their escape plan, he puts the blame on Laila, starts beating her and isolates her without food for days: "Laila didn't see the punch coming. One moment she was talking and the next she was on all fours, wide-eyed and red-faced, trying to draw a breath. It was as if a car had hit her at full speed, in the tender place between the lower tip of the breastbone and the belly button. She realized she had dropped Aziza that Aziza was screaming. She tried to breathe again and could only make a husky, choking sound. Dribble hung from her mouth" (p. 261). It is a common phenomenon for women to be submissive in a strongly patriarchal society where they are treated as defenseless objects. Accordingly, Mariam's share of punishment comes. Rasheed, outraged, does not stop at Laila but also extends his violence to Mariam, severely beating her:

> "Downstairs, the beating began. To Laila, the sounds she heard were those of a methodical, familiar proceeding. There was no cursing, no screaming, no pleading, no surprised yelps, only the systematic business of beating and being beaten, the *thump, thump* of something solid repeatedly striking

> flesh, something, someone, hitting a wall with a thud, cloth ripping. Now and then, Laila heard running footsteps, a wordless chase, furniture turning over, glass shattering, then the thumping once more" (p. 262).

But Rasheed in his tumultuous manner turns his anger onto Mariam, Laila, and even young Aziza when his shop burns down and he loses the source of his income: "After the fire, Rasheed was home almost every day. He slapped Aziza. He kicked Mariam. He threw things. He found fault with Laila, the way she smelled, the way she dressed, the way she combed her hair, her yellowing teeth" (p. 297). Rasheed's anger keeps turning to his wives and Aziza, which indicates that men always blame women. Rasheed's bad temper increases every day, as he witnesses the bondage between Mariam and Laila growing against him, and they can no longer be submissive and they can defend each other.

In spite of the differences between Mariam and Laila, they share the same fate and are obliged to accept it. They are treated badly and are objectified in a patriarchal society and endure the worst types of violence. The cases of both women in the novel are deplorable as well as until they take a decisive step one day: "they make common cause and endure degradation, starvation and brutality at the hands of their husband until they are forced to take up a desperate, joint struggle" (Thompson, 2020). Rasheed applies his authority over his wives because it is accepted in their social laws. The Islamic laws of the Afghan country, which allow the control of women encourage Rasheed to impose these laws on Mariam and then Laila, which ultimately validates his cruel acts. As stated in a report about women's struggle in Islamic societies, Islamic laws are misrepresented to serve the legal and political system of a specific country besides helping them gain more power in the name of Islam. Almost everywhere in the Muslim world, religion-based law is a component of the legal system, and a major demand of resurgent Islam, whether in Iran, Malaysia, Algeria, Bangladesh, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, or elsewhere, has been revisions in the part of the legal system –the personal status or family laws– whose foundational sources are the Qur'an and Islam's other sacred texts. Addressing religious doctrine thus aims not just at undermining normative cultural notions of gender patriarchal rationales for women's subordination but also

at challenging aspects of current or proposed women-unfriendly laws of the land (Offenhauer, 2005; p.32).

Under the changing of government rules and the escalating of the fight between the parties to control the country, the most affected of these changes are women from the Taliban regime. Thus, the historical changes lead to the reshaping of customs and laws relating to women's situation. They impose all types of domination to suppress women using a revised version of Islamic norms. This is all depicted in Laila and Mariam's real lives in the novel; the lost identities and the worst living conditions suffocate their freedom which they face every day of their lives, as it is stated by Elaheh Rostami-Povey**:**

> "Even in Kabul and other urban centers, women are restricted. Images of shrouded women in the blue *chaddari* are a visible reminder of the way women are under pressure from both local males and imperial domination and so do not feel safe without it. Yet the *chaddari* is only the tip of the iceberg of male control over female bodies. Patriarchal family laws with regard to marriage, divorce, custody of children, forced marriages, and honor killing, and the denial of women's access to healthcare, education and employment are continuing" (2007, p. 133).

Women in Afghanistan are characterized by wearing the burqa, a claimed symbol of Islamic societies in which women keep their honor and pride. Apart from that, the burqa signifies the power of the male gender, and it represents repression cast by patriarchal society upon women. It is also used as another burden on them to weaken their characters and to prevent them from searching for their freedom. In the novel, before the coming of the Taliban rule, women wear the burqa depending on the area they live in and most importantly through different periods of change in politics. Mariam as a traditional woman depicts some of the women in the modern areas that are dissimilar to where she lives: "Modern Afghan women…walked among strangers with makeup on their faces and nothing on their heads…swinging handbags and rustling skirts… They walked in high heels…wore sunglasses…they all had university degrees, that they worked in office buildings" (Hosseini, p. 74). This significantly shows how the Afghanistan community is divided according to where its people live, also the rigorous doctrine for some Afghan people in limiting

women's freedom. Mariam and especially Laila used to live a life without a burqa, Mariam wants to enter school like other girls and Laila used to express her ideas freely and dreams of entering college and be a strong woman. However, these unfulfilled dreams to become modern Afghan women end with falling under the tyranny of Rasheed and also for all women in Afghanistan in obliging them to obey the strict rules of society.

2.3 Motive behind Writing about Female Identity and Sphere in AfghanSociety

Hosseini's motive to write such a sorrowful novel is caused firstly by his grief for women in his homeland and the fact that they are not treated equally with the women of other countries. Second, he wants to show the world and other civilized communities how these women still suffer and are excluded from society in various aspects of life. It is an endeavor to raise the consciousness of Afghan women and other women as well as to rebel against subordination. Through writing such a heartbreaking story, the author tries to captivate the readers in a deep investigation of women's actual lives in a system divided by gender roles, where they struggle with discrimination, violence, and lost identities. Hosseini breaks the borders and writes, as a man, about the oppression of silenced women.

Hosseini investigates the real lives of these women in a visit he makes to his homeland after leaving it when he was a teenager. He shows in his novel how pitiable their lives are via the depictions of protagonists Mariam and Laila. Together with all the cruelty and the problems of Afghan women, the whole situation of Afghanistan is shown with different and challenging reigns that bring with them tumultuous consequences on the Afghan people. He explains the real life of people from Afghanistan: in 2003, when he goes back to Kabul, he sees women "walking down the street, wearing burqa, with five or six children, begging." As he talks to them, he learns that "she was the wife of a policeman who hadn't been paid in six months. The family was starving, so she sent her children out to beg. She told me another story of a widow who ground bread and laced it with rat poison and fed it to her children, then ate it herself. These stories were the germ, the starting point for the book" (Ermelino, 2007).

He specifies his narration on Afghan women facing problems and cruelty through religious, social and political norms in their daily lives. Moreover, he presents successfully the current state of Afghan women in their struggle for suitable and dependent lives. The two protagonists narrate the story; the author wants to depict the real-life of Afghan society from the perspective of women. The absolute power and control over women's life are covered through the whole story, and each of them is forced to accept the rules imposed on them because their only fault is that they are born as females and they should be dependent and silenced in a dominated society. Hosseini, thus, depicts a land where the law bestows men with privileges while the women are considered deserving of the death penalty if found involved in adultery or found to be disrespectful towards her husband (Silima, 2013). Their lives circle the household and around delivering a male child that is to live happily and have self-respect. If not, they should endure the abuse and the unjust treatment of their husbands. The female characters of Hosseini's novel are depicted as women who endure oppression and remain silent. It is widely common for women living in countries where religion, male domination and tradition are the stem of women's subjugation. Accordingly, the novel represents women degraded into the lower status and the victims of men's power. Through their lives, women cannot decide or give any opinion on things related to their own lives; they should obey and do what men say.

To conclude, women of all ages fall victim to patriarchal societies and its traditions. These traditions undeniably have a huge impact on women's status within the family. Thus, female identity is affected by the rules, traditions, and the general social and political situation outside and inside their families. Consequently, this leads to discrimination between genders in which men have higher status than women. For many reasons, they undergo different struggles for their true selves in an attempt to deconstruct women's identity, either by outside forces such as imposed religious norms and social restrictions or by inside forces represented by male authority. Women's quest is finding a clear way to obtain a suitable place, even gradually, that is equal to that of men in society. In a patriarchal system where men and women hold different positions of strength and weakness, men possess a place of authority and women have a role of obedience to this

authority. As John Stuart Mill points out: “The legal subordination of one sex to the other - is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other” (1995, p. 1). In this regard, the force of patriarchal society needs to be deconstructed instead of deconstructing female identity. Women can choose between staying in the submissive role or taking firm actions and rebelling against the patriarchal ideology.

The next chapter will discuss the situation of women who choose to take firm decisions and make their own way away from obeying the rules of their society. This will be illustrated by analyzing female characters of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, in their quest for asserting themselves in a patriarchal society that has limits on women’s participation in public life. Adichie’s novel is set in Nigeria and picturing the history of Nigerian people through many themes and topics, but the focus will be on the role of women in the Nigerian community. Also, the core idea of the chapter is on how Adichie intended to depict women through difficult circumstances to prove that they have equal capabilities with men in overcoming the worst times of war or in crossing the borders of the social realm of women’s place.

Chapter Three

3. The Portrayal of Nigerian Women in *Half of A Yellow Sun*

3.1.Historical Background

Generally, a woman's place has been mediocre compared to that of a man, yet what position should women have in society? Women do not seek to be superior and be better than men. But, the prevailing mindset attributes whatever regarded important in the public arena to men while women are associated with less important things. Women's right to quality education was the most worrisome from 19th to 20th century; however, it witnessed an opposite direction at the turn of the 20th century. The stereotypical image of women's behavior that considers them too emotional and lacks the management ability, this leads to the role of mothers is to teach their daughters how to be perfect servants to their husbands. This idea is not the same in all countries that are strictly reigned by the patriarchal structure, which they construct their beliefs based on biological differences and as a result women are underrepresented and treated in an inferior way to men. In patriachal societies, biological differences between men and women are exaggarted in order to make men always dominant and women always subordinate. Characterized by power, dominance, hierarchy, and competition, patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women (Sultana, A. 2012).

Thus, this ideology creates a great gap in the development of women's contribution to political or social arenas. The marginalization of women has extended for a long time and causes massive economic and social effects, thus the strength and conditions of such marginalization different through countries and civilizations. Additionally, the call for women's rights is also different from one country to another. To fight for their rights, a woman needs to find a voice and a proper way to represent themselves in a society. Women all over the world fight for their rights in equality and recognition in society. In Nigerian society, however, women have to act together with men to fight for their equal rights and end discrimination based on gender, race and class. Despite living in a modern world, women in Nigeria still face many obstacles:

> "According to the 2006 Nigerian population census figure, women constituted 49% of the total population … Women constitute half of Nigeria's population. They are essential and largely unacknowledged contribution to economic life and play a crucial role in all spheres of society. However, the restrictive practices and constraints have not allowed them to take advantage of their numbers and position in order to significantly influence the decision-making processes. As a result, the potential of half of the Nigerian population remains unexplored and the scope of labour, energy, and human resources available for national development is restricted. (Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2015).

Nigerian women have been marginalized in the formal political systems owing to traditional beliefs and practices. Nigeria is one of many other African countries and it follows a repulsive social standard with strict rules on political and economic participation which includes only men, and controls women's freedom and denies their existence in public. This control is one kind of oppression practiced against women. Thus, this chapter aims to analyze Chimamna Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006) and the difficulties the female characters face to be in an equal status with their male counterparts. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to illustrate how the female protagonists Olanna and Kainine overcome the barriers of their society and taking command of their own lives. It will also show the ability of the protagonist to break the constructed idea of the place of women through education, having a social participation and fight in war for survival.

In Nigerian society, men hold the power and have the privilege in all aspects of life over women, and this leads to a huge gender gap in not only social life but also it excludes women from political participation. Men's dominant practices in almost all African countries inhibit the presence of women in decision making and prevent women from receiving education and voicing their demands for equal rights with men. Men outnumber women in high-ranking positions and present themselves as the source of authority and power, and this indeed requires the elimination of all the discriminatory practices against women. To mention politics, for example, Nigerian political system do not have any preserve data about their women and few women are candidates in the elections because male control everything from elections, politics, economy, and trade

to even final decisions at home, so we conclude that Nigerian women have a very restricted approach to decision-making operation. Women are also in serious need of access to financial resources so that they can have the similar opportunities with men in order to compete in elections (Okafor and Akokuwebe, 2015). The idea of women's exclusion from public fields also lies under the discussion of folktales in Kabaji's research (2005), who asserts that men and women everywhere have assigned roles in society. Men are physically and mentally strong and they hold the power in the social and the political realm while women are incapable of making decisions; they only fill the category of wives and by extension mothers.

Considerably, strict rules of most countries do not value the women working inside their homes and carrying out their duties and commitments. The valuation comes when these strict rules change to a more liberated ones, giving women more space, freedom and most importantly respect as an individual, not as fellow members in society. Dillon (1992) shares a similar concern of male domination in her article "Toward a Feminist Conception of Self-Respect" when she quotes Ferguson's words saying, "the truism that women's sense of self-worth, and consequently our personal power, has been weakened by a male dominant society."(52). So, this means that women's work should be well appreciated as much as men's. Whatever they accomplish, women's contribution must be prominent and noteworthy far from impeding their liberation and removing them from public life. First, the feminist hypothesis requires a good understanding of the idea of sex injustice that puts them in an inferior status unless they take a decisive step. To put it another way, women activists in all societies should strive for their privileges in all aspects of life such as their rights in the election, law regulation, gender impartiality, and independence.

The feminist campaigns in the west achieve its goals more than any other countries such as Africa, where women find difficulty in asserting themselves and having the courage to make their voices heard. Although women activists in African countries work towards organizing campaigns to end the discrimination and create opportunities for women. Martin (2016) in her article highlights Funmilayo Ransome Kuti's feminist campaigns in her speech as follows:

> "How beautiful would it be if our women have the same opportunity with men…As there is no country that can rise above her womenfolk, I am therefore appealing to the parents in this little article to give their daughters equal opportunity with their sins. I am also appealing to the men to please rally round and cooperate with women to redeem them from their present status. I am also saying to the women that it is never too late to mend." (p.56)

Feminism in African countries is characterized by goals that serve women and men and call for equality between the two. This might lead to eradicating the misogyny of the patriarchal beliefs and create stability in society.

Women's marginalization in economy, social and political fields is a phenomenon, depending on the prosperity of countries. In Nigeria, for example, in spite of the adoption of the United Nation Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979, which states the idea of full equality and eradication of all forms of discrimination against women, the situation for women is still unchanged and unimproved in all spheres of life. It is known that the women's activist campaigns in the west fight for sex injustice and the rights for women to get them to enter the work force as much as possible side by side with men with equal rights. And after the failed adoption of the treaty by the UN, the similar approach of the west through women activist campaigns is now in play in African countries to seek equal rights both in gender and race, and it is doubled in activity. The degree of discrimination in the west, namely triple countries, compared to African countries has a different level of understanding of women liberation.

Even though the feminist movements, from very early on, have aimed to bring equality between all women and men, white women activists have not somewhat focused on issues that serve black women liberation. Their major goal is to achieve gender equality ignoring the race, sexuality and class factors to include women of color in their fight against male oppression. Thus, the problems faced by black women were not unfortunately brought to light by the women activists in Britain and America. Self-assertion could be given as an example for one of these problems black women experience. As Kolawole (1997) purports, "Patriarchy, tradition, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and gender imperialism, all combine to act against the African

woman's self-assertion" (Kolawole, 1997, p.25). She means that these bigger issues have a large impact on women's attainment of self-actualization, and this limits their freedom: they are treated unfairly, classified as lower-class citizens, and by extension, excluded from social, economic and political participation. Women in African societies are silenced and oppressed due to many other types of suppression as well.

The article "African Feminism: Toward a New Politics of Representation" written by Mikell (1995) elucidates the rejection of many women writers to call themselves a feminist. For example, the writer and novelist Buchi Emecheta gives a speech about her refusal of the label feminism in 1994 saying, "I have never called myself a feminist. Now if you choose to call me a feminist, that is your business; but I don't subscribe to the feminist idea that all men are brutal and repressive and we must reject them. Some of these men are my brothers and fathers and sons. Am I to reject them too?" (As cited in Mikell, 1995, p. 406). Women's movements fight for equality and equity not to have a superior status over men, also their needs of having recognition in society do not mean that they ignore the role of men in the development of society rather they seek for removing the notion of the superiority and inferiority between men and women. Thus, the emerging of women's movements in African countries is not an integral part of the aims and goals of other western movements, in their endeavor to find a space of freedom in a world controlled by men. Although this might be true that all women want to achieve equality and freedom from the tyranny of men, the needs of African women and their struggles are different from the demands of western women activists, and they reject specification in their struggle.

Notably, women in African countries, especially in Nigerian society, are alienated from almost all aspects of life and prevented from their rights. The suffering of women intensified when colonial power started to control the lives of women and set their patriarchal policies. The position of women changed to its worst levels when the European assumptions of women imposed on Nigerian society and plan for making women subordinate to men by confining them home doing domestic chores. Henceforth, African women reject many of the imposed traditions on them and start their activities to call for women's freedom in the 1990s.

By the same token, Buchi Emecheta in her novel, *Destination Biafra*, pictures the suffering of Nigerian women during the war effectively and shows how women got affected by colonization through her two strong characters (Debbie and Babs), and Adams (2001) quotes her words in her article saying, "[I]n the distant past in that part of Africa women were treated almost as men's equals, but with the arrival of colonialism, their frail claim to equality had been taken away. Now, with the coming of independence, young women like these [Debbie and Babs] were determined to play their part in the new nation" (p.294). Thus, in the discussion of African women and how they are portrayed in the eyes of their society and other countries, they are clearly oppressed; first by male domination and second by the colonial power. Like the depiction of Emechata's characters and many other women writers, they reveal women's struggles and how the war and the European colonialization affect them deeply. In this vein, literary works of women writers give a voice for other women in so many communities where there are silences and women are obliged to obey male strict rules:

> "In the literary world, which has also been dominated by men, female authors of African literature have struggled to gain audience over the years. They are increasingly airing their concerns as women, and disproving the misconceptions created by some male writers about them. Many female writers present versions of a woman who longs to be fulfilled in an unfair system that perceives women as "appendages" to men. A few of these writers have won awards, including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Yvonne Vera and Marjorie Macgoyes." (Makokha, 2014, p.111).

The novel of Chimamanda Ngozi, Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, contains strong, powerful and well-educated characters, to oppose many of the stemmed tradition in the mind of Nigerian people about women's place in society. Patriarchy is seen through the scene of Odenigbo's mother's attitude in her traditional views about educated women and she prefers uneducated woman to marry Odenigbo to remain in a secondary place. Whereas, some other characters appear struggling to oppose patriarchal beliefs. Olanna and Kainene are the best examples in Adichie's novel who refuse to obey the rules and the limited life of their society and other forms of subjugation through asserting themselves in participating in public life. In the same way,

those strong characters give other African women the proper place that they deserve in their communities, and by extension help eradicate the problems confront them in gaining their freedom and dignity.

3.2. How Female Identity is Constructed to Fight the Patriarchy

In the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie displays the female characters with qualities that can object firmly and take decisions on their own. When analyzing the characteristics of Olanna Ozobia, one of the main characters in the book, she rejects living like her rich parents and chooses to get married. They want to force her to work in Lagos and have an affair with Chief Okonji, the finance minister since he is rich and have huge budgetary status, but he is roughly rejected by Olanna. Similarly, Olanna's twin sister, Kainene, focuses on establishing her own character and life. Both sisters are highly educated and are fully aware of their rights and have a target in life to be independent and work in their own fields. For the purpose of making a close investigation of Olanna and Kainene's characters, this chapter will analyze their attitude and how they are portrayed to oppose patriarchy and social tradition. Thus, their struggle to construct their identity by opposing male dominancy is observed through their strong personalities that Adichie brings into life. She does this by showing the African women's willingness to change the traditional rules of society and break the stereotypical image of Nigerian women.

Olanna and her family live in Lagos in a big house. Her father, Chief Ozobia, is a wealthy Nigerian businessman who seeks to expand his wealth through making agreements with important personalities in government. Nigerian families have traditional rules for their girls and follow certain customs in marriage. For example, Olanna and Kainene's parents try to choose their spouses and want their husbands to be rich. However, Olanna is depicted in the novel as an independent and stubborn daughter who refuses to be obedient to the rules of her society and denies all the traditions that allow her father to choose the husband. She wants to be responsible for her decisions and prefers modern marriage. Instead of fulfilling her parents' wish, she likes to work at Nsukka and live with Odenigbo, a senior teacher in the College of Nigeria. She ignores her family when they tell her that, "Odenigbo was crazy and wrong for her, one of those hot-headed university people who talked and talked until everybody had a

headache and nobody understood what had been said" (Adichie, 2006, p.32). Olanna's parents' only concern is not about how much cash comes into his pocket; it is not significant to them if Odenigbo holds a PhD or speaks fluent English. They only care about his money and nothing else.

Mr. and Mrs. Ozobia only think about making money and act accordingly. They respect those who have to work and make more money. Previously, Olanna has rejected to sleep with Chief Okonjo, the man who asked her father to marry in exchange of a big business contract. Her family want to ask her about the Chief's love offer, but she declines it in any event when he tells her: "…I can appoint you to a board, any board you want, and I will furnish a flat for you wherever you want" (Adichie, 2006, p.33). Also, despite the fact that her mother hopes to tempt her into the indecent relationship with the "Chiefs…the latest lace from Europe" (Adichie, 2006, p.34). Olanna ignores chief's expensive cloth under the pretext that it is not suitable to wear it at Nsukka University.

In this regard, we can see the picture of men and women in a man-centric culture in the attitude of a wealthy businessman; using his money as a snare to accomplish his desires. Mr. Okonjo tries first to seduce Olanna's father with a big contract and exploits his greediness for money to gain his consent to be close to Olanna. Her father endorsement makes no difference in Olanna's way to free herself from the submission of the father authority. She wants to stand on her feet and escape from these traditions. Ultimately, she is capable of dispersing all these demands and has full knowledge of her abilities and realize her rights to have an independent life like men. Olanna believes in herself as a woman, and she is fully aware of her rights. She is also not like a ball that men can move from one hand to another to accomplish their selfish desires. Therefore, Olanna dares to say 'no' to the social customs with a strong will to decide her fate. Olanna's character in the novel faces difficulties as any other Nigerian-African women fighting for their rights and gender equality and this is the core goal of African activists. According to Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi as quoted by Kivai (2010), "Black women are disadvantaged in several ways; as blacks, they are the victims of white patriarchal culture; as women, they are victimized by black men; and as black women, they are also victimized on racial sexual and class grounds by white women" (p. 19).

Thus, Olanna's experience in the novel is a part of what most African women live through a hard life. Adichie gives Olanna a voice to empower other women in her country and when Olanna forcefully opposes her father and Mr. Okonjo and refuses to be the puppet in their hands. In this case, Olanna's sense of self makes her cross the boundaries of the patriarchal realm. So, Adichie shapes the character of Olanna as smart and educated women. Furthermore, she presents Olanna as a woman with capabilities to stand against the oppression and shed light on the struggle of women in their opposition to social convention. The novel also has another determined and very independent character: Kainene, Olanna's twin sister. She makes her own choices freely and is prepared to defend herself without hesitation or trepidation. So, we witness this when Kainene confronts Major Madu's friend Udodi, and directly says, "My choice of lovers is none of your business" (Adichie, 2006, p.79). When Major Udodi suspects Olanna's intimate relationship with the British writer Richard for fearing that Richard may exploit and leave her. Major Udodi does not seem to understand what Kainene may be up to with Richard. Udodi has this idea that white men in Nigeria usually try to gain benefits from wealthy women and leave them eventually. Adichie's Kainene character is clever and courageous to face any kinds of abuse that may put her in an inferior status. Like her sister Olanna, she also appears to be capable of standing against the trauma of war in her country and refuses the request of her mother to have refuge in London. Kainene, through her effort, contributes to the Biafran war and works there. She is a role model representing an independent woman figure. And in the war, people depend on her to provide for them shelter and food.

Briefly, Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* provides a visible picture of Nigerian women in their quest and struggle to establish a unique and independent life for them. Through depicting strong and dynamic characters in her novel, Olanna and Kainene use their intelligence to resist, fight and oppose all the limitations of the patriarchal domain. Furthermore, these two characters show remarkable performance under exceptional harsh conditions, and thus overcome the difficulties of Biafra war. Thus, both sisters work ceaselessly in times of war to save their family and provide shelter to poor people. The depiction of Olanna and Kainene in this novel gives a clear example of how women in war play a significant role for ending suffering and enduring to keep their families alive even if it costs to sacrifice their lives.

3.3. Women as Sexual Tools in Adichie's Novel

Analyzing how the male characters are depicted in the novel is equally as important as the female characters in Adichie's novel. Throughout the novel, male characters live as individuals, they have the authority and they hold the power in many events in the novel. Specifically, at the beginning of the novel, male controls home, sets marriage rules and he is the one that talks about the politics. Besides, men utilize their power on women and exploit them sexually and through the trauma of war, they take advantage of lower-class women to satisfy their desires. Ugwu, the young male character of the novel, plays the role of a houseboy in Odenigbo's house, the sexual thoughts control his mind and he always imagines the body of a young girl named Nnesinachi from his village of Opi. Also later, he also imagines making love with Chinyere, a neighbor's girl. Women are seen as sexual tools in Ugwu' eyes when he participates in a gang that rapes a waitress in a bar through the time of war. Moreover, Anulika, Ugwu's sister, also falls victim to rape by soldiers at war. These minor characters that Adichie depicts in the novel are to exemplify that the tragedy of war and the exploitation of women take several forms, and the effects of these tragedies on each character are not identical.

In juxtaposing the lower-class characters with the wealthy ones, it gives an insight on how money and power may have a great influence to exploit and control others' lives. Rich male characters like Chief Ozobia's betrayal is so clear in the novel that while his wife is on a short trip to London, he has a mistress. Chief Ozobia's wife tells her daughter Olanna about his husband's scandalous act and says, "He has bought her a house in Ikeja...My friend lives on the same street" (Adichie, 2006, p.216). Mrs. Ozobia further tells Olanna that he regularly visits her while she is not a valued and respected woman, "A Yoruba goat from the bush with two children from two different men. I hear she is old and ugly" (Adichie, 2006, p.216). Chief Ozobia here exemplifies not only how men behave towards their wives but also how easily they betray their wives by finding another woman to satisfy their desires. More to mention, Chief Ozobia does not care much about his wife appeared in front of her neighbors, and his act bothers her since they are well-known family and by this, he even lets his friends know about his betrayal. His daughter, Olanna, unveils her father's real attitude, saying;

> "It is disrespectful that you have a relationship with this woman and that you have bought her a house where my mother's friends live…. You go there from work and your driver packs outside and you don't seem to care that people see you. It's a slap to my mother's face…. I am not going to tell you what to do about it, but you have to do something. My mother isn't happy." (Adichie, 2006, p.217).

Here, Adichie creates such a character that a young lady like Olanna has a reasonable and rational characteristic in her discussion with her father. This shows her strong character as a woman living in a man-controlled society in her ability to stand up against her father. Through Olanna's words to her father, we understand that this act itself is a challenge for gaining women's right to be respected by men in the same way that men want to be respected by women. It is equally important to shed light on the acts of men and understand what the real cause that pushes them for betrayal is. Chief Ozobia's deeds stem from his sense of control and authority that he thinks he can have a sexual relationship with any women. Indeed, his ridicules act as a mirror to his exploitation of both women and his daughter that he uses as a tool to achieve his aims.

Another thing about Chief Ozobia is that although he is a rich businessman and the source of his richness is unknown, his education is questioned as it is pointed out in the novel, "Chief Ozobia owns half of Lagos but there is something terribly nouveau riche about him. He doesn't have much of a formal education, and neither has his wife…. That's what makes him obvious" (Adichie, 2006, p.58). His lack of education with big wealth increases the rumors about him, thereby contributing to his fame and making him a well-known person. Another man we see in the novel is Odeniggbo and his high degree of education makes no difference when it comes down to his sexual immorality Odeniggbo is sincerely in love with Olanna, the educated woman who graduated from London College. They live together and plan to get married, too. However, when Olanna leaves for London on a short trip for three weeks, he betrays her with his mother's servant, Amala, an illiterate shy girl whose mother brings her from a village to get her to sleep with Odenigbo to bring him a baby.

Significantly, the novel shows that the degree of education is not an important issue for men. Moreover, it obvious that they shift their focus to see women as a sexual tool when the time comes for satisfying their desires. Their choices of women whether

they are big, ugly or uneducated like Chief Ozobia's or Odenigbo's choice does not matter much to men. They get what they want from women. In any way, there is no comparison between Amala and Olanna in terms of education, intelligence, but they belong to a different social class. Even so, why does Odenigbo get attracted to Amala and sleep with her? His attitude is contradictory to his love to Olanna. Actually, Aunty Ifeka clarifies his infidelity when she says to Olanna, "Odenigbo has done what all men do and has inserted his penis in the first hole he could find when you were away. Does that mean somebody died?" (Adichie, 2006, p.225). She further tells her "you must never behave as if your life belongs to a man…your life belongs to you and you alone" (Adichie, 2006, p.225).

Aunty Ifeka presents to Olanna the real nature of men and tells her not to let their acts affect and make her feel weak so that "she could be a woman taking charge of her own life" (Adichie, 2006, p.226). Olanna, then, realizes her strength and becomes aware that Odenigbo's infidelity will not depress her or stop her from taking revenge. She makes herself a sex object by sleeping with her sister's lover Richard, for she believes that her pain will be relieved. Returning to the opinion of Aunty Ifeka about men's sexual desires for any women they find, the idea repeats itself when Olanna doubts Odenbigo's betrayal with Alice, who moves to live in Umuahia due to trauma of war. The first time Olanna sees her, "she was small-boned, petite, and Olanna felt gawkily over-grown just looking at her; there was something childlike about her light-skinned, almost translucent complexion and tiny hands" (Adichie, 2006, p.329).

Alice's childlike attitude would not make Olanna fear that Odengibo would have a relationship with her until one-day Ugwu sees her sitting with Odenigbo in the veranda. Later, a nighbour to Olanna in Umuahia Mama Oji tells Olanna, "You should be careful with that Alice… She is the kind of woman who will steal somebody's husband… Every time you go to Orlu she will come out and sit with your husband" (Adichie, 2006, p.377). Olanna cannot believe her because she seems silent, does not talk much, and rarely socializes with her neighbors. And, plus, she does not even remember seeing her talk to Odenigbo. Olanna worries about the truth though. Olanna sees Odingebo with Alice when she cries about her hometown and the people who got killed, "Odenigbo comes out of the room, goes over to Alice, pickes her up and holds her, and she stays still and begins to weep, her head resting on his shoulder…Olanna

watches them. There is a familiar melding to the curve of Odenigbo's arms around Alice. He holds her with the ease of someone who must have held her before" (Adichie, 2006, p.384). Olanna's suspicion grows about Odenigbo's sexual relationship with Alice. And as a result, he fails to maintain marriage obligation with Olanna. We notice that Odenigbo's acts are shameful and they offend Olanna. He practices his sexual desires with Olanna's friend on their matrimonial bed. Odenigbo, by these demonstrations, indorses that he depicts himself like a creature that can't control his sexual inclinations; along these lines, he neglects to spare his conjugal commitments .

Above all that, this is not very surprising because in such patriarchal society, men control everything and can cover their arrogancies easily and don't have to give an account of themselves. Although Olanna is elegant, educated, beautiful, and capable of handling any problems that face her family, she still suffers from betrayal of her husband. Adichie intends to describe women as subjects of betrayal and men as creatures finding any chance for satisfying their sexual desires. Adichie displays male characters as weak individuals, but they behave like beasts at the time of sexuality, lacking control over themselves. This can be seen in Richard's weakness in his sexual connection with Olanna and he is easily allured by Olanna. Richard's genuine love for Kainene and the fact that he is afraid that Kainene may be involved in a sexual relationship with Madu, as a result his jealousy can be seen in the novel:

> "He wondered why he could simply not ask if she found Madu attractive and if she had ever been involved with him or, worse yet, was still involved with him. He was afraid. He moved toward her and put his arms around her and held her tightly, wanting to feel the beat of her heart. It was the first time in his life he felt as if he could belong somewhere" (Adichie, 2006, p.81).

His feelings toward Kainene make the situation worse for he fails for his sexual greediness. Richard adores Kainene but at the same time, he fears whether or not Madu having illegal associations with Kainene.

Together with Olanna and Kainene, Igbo women have been through many obstacles that affect their personal lives before, and especially during the war. Therefore, it is also important to alter our attention to other female characters from different social backgrounds with different circumstances. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, male characters use

rape to practice power over weak women. This issue can be illustrated in many events that happen throughout the novel. In the Biafran war, the soldiers take advantage of the disorder of the country and designate themselves as the controlling class. To make it clear, the soldiers including Ugwu practice rape to a waitress in a bar:

> "The bar girl was lying on her back on the floor, her wrapper bunched up at her waist, her shoulders held down by a soldier, her legs wide, wide ajar. She was sobbing, "Please, please, *biko.*" Her blouse was still on. Between her legs, High-Tech was moving… On the floor, the girl was still. Ugwu pulled his trousers down, surprised at the swiftness of his erection." (Adichie, 2006, pp. 365-366).

Besides, these soldiers exploit such women because they consider women working in a bar as worthless and they can oppress them as much as they could while their duty as soldiers should be to protect them. In the light of oppressing ladies in the Biafran war, crime is committed by white men against Biafran women as a means of control and it is regarded as the colonial power of the Nigerian country. This is reflected in what Okeoma says about his white commander, "he throws girls on their backs in the open where the men can see him and does them, all the time holding his bag of money in one hand" (Adichie, 2006, p. 324). Rape in times of war has affected many weak women who cannot defend themselves in Nigeria and African countries as a whole, so the waitress is the victim of sexual exploitation, too.

Similarly, another woman is depicted in the novel who suffers from sexual abuse, but this time it comes from a religious man whose faith is used as a cover to hide his sexual desires. To give an example, a religious man, the Father Marcel, uses his position to exploit young girls in exchange for food: "He fucks most of them before he gives them the crayfish that I slave to get here" (Adichie, 2006, p.378). Religious men are supposed to protect, pray and work as a safeguard when people need them, but they take advantage of their positions and rape starving girls before they give them the supplies that Kainene brings to her refugee camp. Kainene gets enraged when she finds out that Father Jude is part of this heinous crime and says, "How could you stay here and let him spread the legs of starving girls? How will you account for this to your God? You both are leaving now, right now. I will take this to Ojukwu myself if I have to!" (Adichie, 2006, p.398). Here the religious fathers symbolize the greediness and sordidness for men searching for relief for their sexual desires. Another instance also

shows men's exploitation of women during the war. The army soldiers use rape to inflect their power over weak women, such as the rape of Ugwu's sister, Anulika. "They forced themselves on her. Five of them…. They said the first one that climbed on top of her, she bit him on the arm and drew blood. They nearly beat her to death. One of her eyes has refused to open well since" (Adichie, 2006, p.419). This compulsory rape exemplifies the cruelty and the violence of men's actions. The rape of women through the times of war and unstable political situations is used as a political power, as Kivai (2014) examines in Adichie's novel, he states:

> "Rape is an expression of power and authority. It is a form of violence and most of the perpetrators of the crime are men. Men desire to rape women in order to assert their authority over them. Rape can even be a symptom of inequality and the desire on the part of those who wield power to assert it on the powerless. It is an action rooted in masculine behaviour that serves to perpetuate patriarchal order. The basic argument here is that in Adichie's novels rape has a deeper political significance than just men forcing themselves on women sexually. The several episodes of rape identified by Adichie serve to communicate the plunder, misuse and destruction characteristic of the ruling class. It is the men who are depicted as powerful and they rape women who are seemingly powerless". (p.87).

Thus, in *Half of a Yellow Sun* rape symbolizes one of the aspects of patriarchal ideas in which men practice their authority over powerless women. Adichie uses rape to exemplify the inequality of the male-dominated societies. Male figures whether they are ordinary, politicians or religious leaders, follow the rules of practicing power and authority and imposing themselves on women sexually. On one hand, *Half of a Yellow Sun* explores how women are treated in a society where men control and oppress them. On the other hand, Adichie presents strong protagonists, Olanna and Kainene, who reject many aspects of traditional women figure and live their own lives as individuals. Adichie drives her female characters to stand on their feet and be on a similar level with men rather as tools for their desires. At the same time, Adichie puts women in a place of self-containment that they do not need men for survival and they are capable of being independent and not victims for the strict traditions.

3.4. The Role of Women through The Biafran War

Adichie's brilliant novel sets scenes similar to that of Nigerian civil war which lasted nearly for three years between 1967 and 1970. Biafra is the result of the secession of the eastern side of Nigeria from the rest of the country which is then claimed as an independent territory. Through this war, the Biafrans struggled to be alive and most of the people were killed or fled out of the country. "All of Biafra's links to the outside world were blocked by the federal troops that received support from Britain and Russia, resulting in shortage of food, thus millions of Biafrans (a majority being women and children) died out of starvation and diseases like Kwashiorkor. Pregnant women were also raped and killed" (Makokha, 2014, p. 113). In the light of portraying the war in *Half of a Yellow Sun* Novel, Adichie sheds a light on the life of women through the suffering and enduring they are exposed to.

Adichie explores women's contribution during the war and writes about how the traumatic events of the war affect middle-class Igbo women by questioning women's place and their active role in the war. "She discusses Igbo women's roles in this novel because male Nigerian novelists keep silent about women's contribution in this war… in men's fictional narratives, women's active participation is either silenced or female characters are associated with stereotypical roles" (Capo-Chichi and Bodjrenou, 2016, p. 151). Adichie presents African women through her female characters despite their different classes, living conditions and education levels. Even if they have differences, they have the courage and the ability to eradicate the patriarchal order and face difficulties, and struggle to establish their own identity. However, there is an absent role for women's efforts during the Biafran war that men ignore and most men writers depict women's role through secondary duties and present them as weak and lack of ability to do other work than household chores. Writing about the war means writing the history of a country and it involves the major as well as the minor incidents and their effects on its citizens. As the young writer Iroh quoted by Willfried F. Feuser urges other writers utilizing the events of war in writing the history of Nigeria, he writes,

> "To stop writing about [the war] would be to stop writing about the history of this nation. You can never write enough about that tragic thing called war. we express sentiments now because we remember it so closely, but I believe the greater work about the war is yet to come — an unbiased, total

> assessment of the whole tragedy—and it will be necessary." (Feuser, 150).

Thus, Iroh states above for the need of putting the conflict of war to the forefront and writing about Nigerian people instead who struggle for more than thirty years. Hawley points out that the writers were trying to draw the world's attention to an ongoing injustice that had to be attended to and stopped now (2008, p. 17). Many writers attempt to imply the effect of Biafran war and the violence fall upon Nigerian people, but they fail to include women's contribution and the injustices they face through this war. Adichie "…in *Half of a Yellow Sun* highlights the negative impacts of the war on Nigerian Igbo women through some female characters. During this civil war, women are subjected to different forms of violence…" (Capo-Chichi and Bodjrenou, 2016, p.152). The novel highlights women's role and their active participation for fighting for their recognition against men.

As far as it can be seen in the novel, all female characters suffer and struggle in one way or another, but Olanna and Kainene face the trauma of war bravely due to the proper education they receive and their self-awareness allows them to make a change in others' lives and endure through the war. For other characters such as Ugwu's sister, Anulika, the waitress, and Amala, most of them are from lower social class; they are poor and uneducated. Therefore, they cannot stand against the oppression and are subjected to a lot of persecution and starvation, and eventually are more sexually exploited. Indeed, rape is used as a tool by men to express power to the degree that these women cannot defend themselves. One of them is Anulika raped by Nigerian soldiers who take advantage of the war and use women to satisfy their instincts. Another one is the waitress. She works in a bar where the Biafran soldiers come and exploit her sexually by imposing their state of power. They consider her worthless and weak, and she cannot even resist them. The starving girl, on the other hand, is raped by a religious man and is silenced and incapable of resisting due to her need for food. It is clearly seen in these examples that the sexual exploitation that women endure through the war has a great impact on their lives.

During the Biafran war, men and women have been assigned roles as Biafran-Igbo men hold power and have the capabilities to fight. They defend their country

against the Nigerian soldiers while the women are expected to provide food for their families. The participation of the Igbo women in the war as mentioned in the book, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, is important in terms of showing women's active role during the conflict. Thus, the role of Olanna and Kainene as the main characters of the novel is analyzed by focusing primarily on the circumstances they face. Adichie's depiction of educated and independent women who participate in the war provides a clear picture to show the role of females in making decisions and having responsibilities to secure their families.

The African women lack the opportunity to be treated equally with men, but with Adichie's novel, women are given a voice and the freedom to have control over their own lives. Olanna and Kainene, therefore, are well schooled and aware of their rights and viewed as progressive elements in the very troublesome times. Kainene, a professional businesswoman with her creative ideas, takes the lead to manage her father's companies while Olanna, the beautiful and cheerful, prioritizes her education and her partner. Therefore, Adichie challenges the status quo of women's place in the Biafran war as stated:

> "She reinvents the experiences of Igbo people's roles and more particularly those of women from all social classes. By roles, I mean not only women's positive contributions but also their self-sacrifice. Adichie's representation of the female characters is outstanding as they transcend the traditional stereotypical roles." (Capo-Chichi and Bodjrenou, 2016, p.152).

Kainene, Olanna, Mrs Muokelu are among many others who are forced by either personal experience or idealism, to become active participants in the fight for freedom in Biafra. As an illustration, the narrator gives priority to women's situation in the war rather than on issues that show men as the only affected by the trauma of war. Women in this war suffer and endure almost as same as men and maybe even more. They undergo starvation and lose their children due to lack of deficiency in nourishment, as declared by Norris (Reporter, Sunday Times) quoted in Makokha's report:

> "I have seen things in Biafra this week which no man should have to see. Sights to scorch the mind and sicken the conscience. I have seen children roasted alive, young girls torn into two by shrapnel, pregnant women eviscerated, and old men blown to

> fragments. I have seen these things and I have seen their cause: highflying Russian Ilyushin jets operated by Federal Nigeria, dropping their bombs on civilian centers throughout Biafra." (Makokha, 2014, p. 113)

In regard to evolving the truth about the real life of women through the war, the novel highlights the primary as well as the secondary issues that women suffer from. As the subject of this research is about the lives of the two protagonists- Olanna and Kainene, it attempts to show how these female characters deal with war and manage to take part in the war beside men. Both Olanna and Kainene strive to provide food for their families. Kainene is the breadwinner for many of starving poor people. She builds a refugee camp and brings them food and other supplies to the best of her ability. Kainene establishes herself in a position occupied by men and makes the refugee camp a source of living for many of the war victims, as she puts:

> "A van delivered bags of *garri* to the house, and Kainene asked Harrison not to touch them because they were for the refugee camp. She was the new food supplier. I'll distribute the food to the refugees myself… We can start a farm at the camp. We'll grow our own protein soya beans, and akidi… There's a man from Enugu who has a fantastic talent for making baskets and lamps. I'll have him teach others. We can create income here. We can make a difference! And I'll ask the Red Cross to send us a doctor every week" (p.319).

Her genuine strategy to build the refugee camp and flourish it by all means helps other people and the victims of war stay alive. It is important to realize of her capability to manage a shelter for starving people, make a farm to make a source for food and bring a doctor to heal and take care of the sick people. This skillfulness comes from her experience as a businesswoman at her father's factory where she worked as a manager. Kainene, a daughter of a wealthy man, uses her intelligence as an educated women to help the needy and make a great sacrifice like the scene at the end of the novel where she brings food for the army at the border and disappears quickly .Similarly, during the civil war, Olanna, the strong Igbo woman, stands strong against the turmoil of the war. Olanna has both the determination to fight the harsh conditions of the war and the ability to make her household survive the war bravely instead of running away and leaving her nation. The twin sisters fight for their family as well as for Biafra in the hope that the

war will end, and thus rejects their mother's offer to flee abroad as the conversation between Olanna and her mother shows:

> "Your father and I have finalized our plans… We have paid somebody who will take us to Cameroon and get us on a flight from there to London. We will use our Nigerian passports; the Cameroonians will not give us trouble. It was not easy but it is done. We paid for four places… Your father has gone to Port Harcourt to tell Kainene…Olanna felt pity at the plea in her mother's eyes. Her mother knew she would not run away to England with them, and that Kainene would not either. But it was so like her to try, to make this doomed, grasping, well-meaning effort." (p.188)

Female characters of Adichie's novel are smart, powerful and independent. They take the responsibility of making their own decisions and establishing their unique place in this world. Thus, the passage above shows their firm decisions in life that they are ready to face their fate in their own country. Olanna constantly searches for food and medicine during the war to help her family and others. Olanna's endeavor to make education accessible and continuous is worthy to note since she persists to establish a class for the children with the hope that after the war there will be sedulity for children to go to school. As Olanna says, "All the schools in Umuahia have become refugee camps or army training camps…I'm going to organize classes here in the yard… you too, Ugwu. You will teach a class" (pp.286-287). As a result, instead of practicing her special field of study and teaching sociology at a university, Olanna becomes a teacher for primary school students. This approach of Olanna's is best reflected in Emecheta's book *Second Class Citizen* that states "education is our savior from poverty and diseases" (as cited in Zanou Capo-Chichi and Bodjrenou, 2016). Olanna develops her character by using her teaching skills to educate the children to build a better future for the country.

In the final analysis, *Half of a Yellow Sun* strikes the reader starting from the very beginning to the life of ordinary people and how they live before and through the war rather than focusing only on the political events and strategies of the Biafran war. The novel discusses many issues ranging from the life of poor and middle class as well as wealthy figures to how they control others' lives, and how the trauma of war and its political events affect citizens, but the main thing that Adichie focus on is the

contribution of female characters in the war that many writers ignore. Adichie describes her female characters as strong, independent, and self-confident. Their ability to hold on to their own opinions enable them to face so many difficulties and also decide what they want to do in their lives regardless of any authorities. Additionally, Adichie presents Olanna and Kainene as successful women with good education backgrounds and who strongly refuse the traditions of their society of the marriage concept; they both hold their own decisions in marriage. The African women in the novel also struggle to survive and they play the role of breadwinners in time of war and protect their families from starvation as well. So, throughout the novel, the strength of the female characters as well as the efforts for eradicating the patriarchal order in their society are two of the central issues that Adichie tackles in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Conclusion

Comparison between Hosseini and Adichie's Novels

A history of any society is determined by the laws, traditions, political and social changes, and the people, in turn, are affected by all these that shape their lives. Thus, the history of society plays a big role to create the behavior and attitude of its citizens. For example, an unstable political and economic system that enforces its new laws with some changes will ultimately influence social structure. This means these changes have a direct impact on the life of individuals. To put it specifically, the culture has a variety of races, social classes, urban and rural areas, educated and uneducated population, and they are all affected by the forces imposed on them. Some people with a higher authority do not get affected much like the poor who are expected to bow to the rules and restrictions of the law makers. Another thing that proves how the political system changes the society, looking on the distinction between men and women that occurred if the government tend to alter its system to more so-called religious thoughts and gives men the authority to control women. Human beings all suffer, get abused and their rights are violated especially during war and constant conflict. However, the most vulnerable majority during the conflicts is women who are subjected to the trauma and consequences of war the worst. This is due to the notion that a woman cannot defend herself or appear as strong as men in terms of making decisions and establishing an independent life for herself. Women are always seen as the weaker party, they bear untold agony and alienation due to lack of simple rights.

Literature is important in depicting the trouble of societies affected by wars and changes in political and social conditions. Works of authors and writers can portray the real events and stories of these societies. Similarly, the discussion and analysis of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* in the previous chapters also aim to give a realistic portrayal of the real-life stories, while this chapter compares the two novels and aims to state the struggle of the protagonists in their daily lives routine. However the two contemporary writers Khaled Hosseini

and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie give a clear view to the world precisely about the situation of women, they preserve the history of their native country and its people by weaving the events in a piece of work. Thus, the focus of these writers is about women's struggles to gain freedom and have the courage to face difficulties. Even though the Afghan novelist Khaled Hosseini and the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie live in a different culture, they feel the urge to authenticate the suffering of the women in their homeland.

Hosseini discusses a real-life situation and wants to give a voice to the silenced group in Afghanistan, and he examines the life of women through his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The deterioration inside Afghanistan, interventions of the outside forces, and the conflicts between the tribes cause loss of law in the government. Also, the novel paints a tragic picture of how women's rights are violated and how women suffer physical and sexual abuse when a country is still governed by a patriarchy. The two main characters of Hosseini's novel experience inhumane treatment under masculine authority. Mariam and Laila live in a strict patriarchal setup where women should obey the rules and endure whatever imposed on them. Both of them are victimized and oppressed in a male-dominated society. Being born as a woman in Afghanistan means to struggle for freedom and find an opportunity to be recognized in society. Thus, Mariam and Laila are examples of the plight of women facing life with all its bitterness and toughness.

On the other hand, Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* presents the hardships of women in Nigeria and how her strong characters prove that they can overcome the difficulties they face during the war. She also shows that these women sacrifice their lives and adjust themselves to any situation in order to protect their families and other poor people. The two characters of *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Olanna and Kainene are kinds of women who make a foothold for themselves in a society that has a variety of sects and a minority of educated people. Olanna and Kainene take equal roles with men and appear as determined, assertive, strong and ensure that women can also take a decision for survival when the situation oblige them to do so.

In making a distinction between these two novels, it is also necessary to refer to how the authors intentionally and unintentionally show women's gradual transformation of their identities: Firstly, through a society with static stereotypes; secondly, through breaking and opposing these social stereotypes. Thus, all the characters of the two novels fight in their ways in a male chauvinist society. The first novel's character Mariam, the unwanted child, suffers throughout her life. She only learns how to be submissive and obedient, and therefore loses her identity and becomes unaware of her rights. This leads to an unhappy life when she marries Rasheed who dominates her life with his violent behavior. Later in the novel she decides to outrage against this oppression and ends his tyrannical life. While Laila enjoys a free life with her family that believes in equality and education for men as well as women, her life changes when she marries Rasheed. The viciousness of Rasheed makes her life the same as Mariam, facing the cruelty of marriage life under both the rules of patriarchal society and Rasheed. In the second novel, Olanna and Kainene face all the strict rules of society bravely and become independent women. Their ability to face every hardship enables them to work at an equal level with men. These women do not lose hope even in the worst times of war and offer real support to their male counterparts to stand strong against the trauma of wars.

It is a widespread notion that family is the source of social values on which society is built up. The family plays an essential role in raising children with good values and teaches them to be psychologically, socially and cognitively strong. Moreover, family's role is to have an influence over their children and teach them how to face challenges courageously, by providing them with enough level of education and teaching them moral values to be an accepted member in the social realm. But what happens if a child lives in a restricted society and does not get enough guidance and self-confidence to face harsh treatment from the family and alienation from society. It is the case of Hosseini's characters in his novel, where Mariam lacks her simple rights in bringing up within the family and having social acceptance. Mariam grows up in a so-called family, with just her mother Nana, from whom she receives harsh treatment due to her mother's worsening psychology. Nana is not a good mother; she always accuses Mariam of trivial things as if Mariam is the cause of their ostracization from the society. Mariam does not have a family

that supports her or makes her live her childhood like any other children. She is prevented from getting an education, socializing with others, controlling her own life and taking a decision.

From the beginning of the novel, Mariam's life is built on her mother's faults. She does not understand the shifting mood of her mother or why she calls her a *Harami.* "This is my reward for everything I've endured. An heirloom-breaking, clumsy little harami" (Hosseini, p. 4). Mariam is depicted as the reason of shame and displeasure by her mother. While Mariam has no guilt in their current state, she remains silent when she knows what the word Harami means "…a harami [is] an unwanted thing; that she, Mariam, [is] an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people [have], things such as love, family, home, acceptance" (p. 4). After that, she begins to realize the reality and her place both within the family and the society. Mariam and her mother are abandoned by her father Jalil with whom her mother makes fornication, and because of this reason the society with patriarchal visions do not recognize her as an accepted member in the social cannon. All these facts and her father alienate them out of his big house and his three wives do not stop her sense of belonging and live with a family. She dreams to live with her father specifically and she thinks her father is honest in his promises that he will take her to his house like his other children and loves her. On one side, Nana learns to obey and be a traditional woman, and on the other hand, Jalil's rejection of her makes her feel desperate till she finds her childhood ending as a wife to an old man. Mariam's life again is controlled by others, her childhood is taken from her. She wishes to be loved by her family, but suddenly she gets married to Rasheed, the tyranny husband who turns her life into a submissive servant. In fact, this is the life in Afghanistan, women living in Afghan patriarchal society must tolerate discrimination, injustice, exploitation and inhumane treatment.

Laila has a similar fate. Although she is not restricted like Mariam, she grows up in a loving family. Her father urges her to have an education. Also, she enjoys a life of freedom. She goes to school, has friends, expresses her opinion and gives decisions about her own life and even has a lover, Tariq. But due to the deterioration in Afghanistan and the death of her parents, she finds herself alone

facing her desperate life like Mariam and marries to Rasheed. The loss of her family weakens Laila. All of her strength vanishes when she accepts Rasheed's proposal because she loses both of her parents who are the source of her courage and support in life. She has no other choice except getting married to Rasheed even though she is pregnant from her lover Tariq, which is regarded a crime in such a strict society.

Different from Hosseini's novel where women are depicted as weak and obedient, Adichie's novel presents strong protagonists, Olanna and Kainenne. Adichie creates independent characters and a different view of life for each of them. Both characters do not believe in traditional restriction of the society. Although they grow up in a wealthy family, they want to find their own unique identities and be independent individuals. Also, they strive in life because of class hierarchy. They want to be take their own decisions without the instruction and the tradition of their parents and society. They are good examples of strong women figure, who are not to be silenced and be obedient but face any obstacles bravely. Their behavior and actions throughout the war prove that they are strong women facing the worst times of war and sacrifice their lives to secure their families. In this regard, the characters of *Half of a Yellow Sun* cross the boundaries and succeed in painting strong women figures.

There is a measure of difference in the way women are portrayed in both Hosseini and Adichie's novels. Hosseini's protagonists represent women who have no voice and rights in society, but the protagonists of Adichie are a symbol of women who resist the restriction of patriarchal society. Through the events of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, one can see that women play a significant role to fight gender bias and free themselves from the chains that bind their lives. This cannot be achieved unless women have an inner strength to overcome the difficulties they face and struggle against the oppression. Thus, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Olanna and Kainnene live a comfortable life and they do not suffer like Mariam and Laila in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, instead, they are focused on how to be more independent and work on constructing their unique identities. Besides, both Olanna and Kainene are educated and are daughters of a wealthy family. They are determined and responsible for their own decisions. They are used to attend parties and high-class gatherings with their parents whom they hope that

their daughter will marry one of the rich businessmen, but these efforts fail when each of the daughters decides to leave and be independent. This shows that Olanna and Kainene prefer to be away from Lagos' liberal lifestyle where most modern people live and instead choose to establish their own lives far from the city.

On the other hand, the troublesome lives of Mariam and Laila are undeniably difficult compared to the lives of Adichie's characters. Afghan society tends to narrow the circle of women's freedom, unlike the Nigerian society where women can achieve their dreams. Mariam is caged by society's restriction and cannot find her true self. Mariam, as a traditional person, accepts the label assigned to her: she is harami, weak, and is never socially accepted. While the events in the life of Laila take place differently, her life is somehow similar to Olanna and Kainene's. She is portrayed as an educated and clever woman having self-awareness of her rights. Although she has the same fate like Mariam, she believes that fate can be changed as she is an optimist for a bright future for herself and her children.

Adichie, therefore, depicts in the novel how life in Nigeria could be different if the women have self-control and awareness over their own lives. The author also shows that women, especially once they get their freedom, they can indeed perform in various roles and use their experiences, knowledge and capabilities to construct a more equal society with men. Whereas, Hosseini's depiction of Afghan women and their quest to find a proper and dignified place in society has a troublesome history. His female characters suffer from the patriarchal system that narrows the freedom of Afghan women and makes them voiceless and dependent.

Through the analysis and the investigation of the characters of both novels, it is observed that they all have similar degree of interest in getting educated although their approach differs slightly from one character to another. Mariam in *A thousand Splendid Suns* is different from Laila who gets a little chance to enter a school. Mariam is prevented from this opportunity because of her mother's rejection to devote her life to be a traditional woman. Mariam's mother, Nana, does not see the need for education for women and believes the only right place for a woman is her home doing chores. On the contrary, Laila's parents make her believe

in herself and think that the need for education is essential to prove that she is not any less than a male. Mariam, however, accepts her fate as an inferior dependent woman because she is uneducated and not able to dare to talk and defend herself like the educated Laila who demands a place for women in society and forthrightly says, "They can't make half the population stay home and do nothing…This isn't some village. This is *Kabul.* Women here used to practice law and medicine; they held office in the government" (p. 271-272). Accordingly, the difference between the educated and uneducated women is clear from Laila's point of view: through education only women can offer something to their society and prove themselves as individuals. While Mariam lacks the knowledge and awareness of her place in society, she learns nothing from life but just to be obedient to male superiority.

In Adichie's novel, Olanna and Kainnene receive proper education. In the mixed culture of Nigeria, it is uncommon for a girl to finish school and has a high level of education due to the rooted patriarchal beliefs that support the idea that women's place is in her home. On the contrary, both Kainene and Olanna have their rights to education and can manage their lives on their own. This is obvious in Odenigbo's mother's words, who is a very traditional woman living in a village without awareness of any progress happening in the country, "…And on top of it, her parents sent her to university. Why? Too much schooling ruins a woman; everyone knows that. It gives a woman a big head and she will start to insult her husband. What kind of wife will that be?" (Adichie, 2006, p.97). The vested ideas of patriarchal society makes Odingbo's mother hate Olanna's way of life. She belongs to a high social class whereas Mama lives in a lower social class and regards Olanna as a threat to Odenigbo's life. This is reflected well in Odenigbo's words when he says, '"Nkem, my mother's entire life is in Abba. Do you know what a small bush village that is? Of course she will feel threatened by an educated woman living with her son" (Adichie, 2006, p.101). As seen in the quote, according to the mindset of a traditional woman like Mama, women should be inferior to men and establish their entire life to domestic sphere. As Makokha argues:

> "The older generation of women in patriarchal Nigeria was made to believe that a woman should never be at the same level as a man, rather, she should always stoop low and accept everything a

> man said, whether wrong or right. This was not the case with highly schooled girls who were well informed of their rights and capabilities in the society. By breaking these boundaries and studying to higher levels like men, the women of the older generation branded them 'ruined'. They preferred their sons to marry unschooled girls who would be submissive." (Makokha, 2014, p. 113)

Mama's hatred of educated women allows her to make a plan in making her son sleep with Amala's poor servant in order to give birth a boy, this plan culminates in Amala's pregnancy with a baby girl whom both Mama and Amala reject to keep. This exemplifies that older women care only for getting their son married to a submissive woman. Adichie's portrayal of these two characters are good and explicit examples of both traditional and modern women. Olanna, on one side, lives with Odenigbo without marriage, having sex and tries to bring a baby but they cannot due to Olanna's infertility problems. On the other side, Odenigbo's mother wants a woman just like herself, who follows the rules of patriarchy to be obedient to their husbands and gives birth to a baby boy to be accepted in society. To Odenigbo, education is not only a need to be independent but also a need for building an independent country as he states the importance of education in a conversation with Ugwu, "Education is a priority! How can we resist exploitation if we don't have the tools to understand exploitation?" (Adichie, 2006, p.11). Also, the university professor Odenigbo does not agree with his mother's traditional ideas about educated women. He likes the cleverness of Olanna and thinks that she is educated enough to be at the same level with him, working as a lecturer at Nsukka University, so he never thinks of his superiority in front of her.

Olanna's twin sister, Kainene, is another example for modern educated woman figure. She is a clever woman who is able to manage her own life and her father's business despite the fact that she is a woman in society where females are regarded as inferior and not capable of doing men's work. Kainene's father thinks that "Kainene is not just like a son, she is like two'' (Adichie, 2006, p.11). And this shows the thinking of the contemporary modern people. He is a wealthy

businessman and has two daughters and he is proud of them. Kainene's motivation to work in her father's companies comes from the fact that she wants to prove herself through education degree she receives by becoming an independent successful woman. Thus, Adichie presents strong women figure as those seeking autonomy to enable them to go beyond the strict rules of patriarchy and compete with men in various jobs.

The concept of marriage is discussed differently in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, marriage is considered as one of the strict rules imposed on women, where females are born to find their lives planned according to the rules of family and society. Girls, as depicted in the novel, has no rights over their lives. They cannot choose or refuse the spouse and they are obliged to agree on their parents' decisions. These rules still last for many decades even after women gain some rights because of older generation's fixated traditions and beliefs. Andrews (2012) indicates that

> "…women are regularly mutilated when they run away from intolerant domestic situations involving abusive husbands or in-law. Any women suspected to adultery maybe stoned to death, assaulted, or sent to prison on trumped up charges… In 2010, the Taliban stoned to death a couple who chose to marry, and eloped—against the wishes of their parents. In August 2011, a similar incident occurred. Women have been stoned to death for traveling with men who were not their relatives, or for not being properly dressed." (p.157)

As shown in the quote above, society creates a strong system based on inequality. Also, the inner conflicts and the interference of western countries in Afghanistan have a great effect on women's lives since women are used as tools to empower men's authority. Marriage is considered as one of the sensitive issues in Afghanistan and has a set of rules women should follow. Hosseini, in his novel, pictures how women are forced to accept their destiny and follow the rules imposed on them. Mariam as a young girl living in a remote village is a traditional woman following the rules of society. While Laila lives in Kabul, the modern city of Afghanistan, she also faces the same fate and obliged to follow these strict rules. In a country where women are seen weak and silent, polygamy is considered as usual

practice. Mariam and Laila share the same husband. Mariam suffers throughout her life both from her mother and brutal husband and her life takes her in a direction where she is expected to be submissive to her husband and give birth to children. But due to her seven miscarriages, Rasheed decides to marry Laila and he treats her as the queen of the house hoping that she will give birth to a son. As soon as she gives birth to a girl instead of a boy, he starts ignoring Laila in the same way as he does to Mariam. His tyranny over both Laila and Mariam continues even though Laila brings him a boy. This brutality even intensifies because of more strict rules imposed against women and the deterioration of the political circumstances within the country. In addition, Laila is aware of her rights and does not accept the oppression and bad treatment like Mariam who sacrifices all her life to please Rasheed.

Rasheed's aggressive behavior forces Mariam and Laila to wear the burqa as a symbol of men's dominance over women, and at the same time it is an obstacle on the way to gaining their freedom. In the traditional culture Mariam lives, women do not have freedom in decision taking. They cannot choose who they marry with, and because of this the arranged marriage is a wide common phenomenon. So, as in the case of Mariam, her father and his wives decide to marry her off to a man she knows nothing about. On the contrary, arranged marriage in a more modern society like Kabul where Laila lives is out of the ordinary. But later, after the deterioration of the political system, Laila experiences the same oppression and suppression and becomes silent and obedient after she agrees to marry Rasheed. She is already pregnant from her lover Tariq and wants to have an acceptable status for her child within the society. This shows that Laila experiences some kind of freedom in her life not like Mariam before marriage but after marriage. Eventually, this freedom is taken from her because of Rasheed's violent behavior. The concept of marriage to Laila is more than of the prevailing idea that its goal to procreate only and women should marry to be submissive to their husbands. She wants to live a life full of opportunities that she can achieve her dreams as an independent woman and choose her spouse instead of being forced into marriage. Laila's behavior toward Rasheed is evident as a rebellious woman. She marries him although she is pregnant. She defends herself when he tries to beat her. This illustrate her courage and

determination to overcome the suppression. Laila's wishes and dreams are very similar to what Olanna and Kainene achieve in their lives; getting an education and living an independent life without obeying the strict rules of the society.

The protagonists of *Half of a Yellow Sun* entertain unlimited freedom, Olanna and Kainene live their lives as free individuals. They both have a control over their lives in making decisions and are fully aware of their rights. Furthermore, Olanna and Kainene's parents are one of the wealthy modern families in Nigeria, they do not mind their daughters having relationships with men without marriage. Adichie provides an example of the capability of women to choose or refuse and decide who they want to marry with. For example, Olanna refuses her lover Odingbo's hand in marriage. "Each time he suggested they get married, she said no. They were too happy, precariously so, and she wanted to guard that bond; she feared that marriage would flatten it to a prosaic partnership" (Adichie, 2006, p.52). This explicitly shows women as decision makers. If they do not want to get married, they can refuse and no one can oblige them to accept. She only accepts Odenigbo's proposal when she finds out that she is not dependent on him and she can control her own life. She does not care much about braking social traditions to shape her unique identity. Likewise, Kainene does not consider marriage as her purpose in life. She decides to live far from her parents with her lover Richard, but at the same time runs her father's business. Richard does not propose to her many times like Odenigbo did to Olanna, but they still live happily and are loyal to each other. Marriage for Olanna and Kainene is like a bondage that prevents them from limiting their freedom in the family and society.

Marriage in both novels has different principles and traditions, as depicted in the characters of Hosseini and Adichie's novels. Women's needs and demands are also different from one character to another. Even so, both novels aim to portray how women can achieve freedom and overcome many difficulties to be independent and free themselves from the social restrictions of marriage rules. In a country that witnesses war and political shifts, people surely get affected by large, and this leads to a change in the rules that its citizens follow. In Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the deterioration of Afghanistan political system leads to the emergence of tribal groups that turn Afghanistan into

a battlefield that lasts nearly for thirty years. These events affect all Afghans but the ones that suffer the most are mainly women. Mariam and Laila experience tough conditions under their brutal husband. From her childhood to married life, Mariam is treated badly and alienated from normal life. Living in a village with her mother, she faces a life full of bitterness and oppression from the society. Similarly, Laila's suffering begins when she marries Rasheed since she is pregnant for Tariq's child.

More to mention, the life of Afghan women as pictured by Hosseini is greatly influenced by the outside forces and the rapid changes in the government. Mariam and Laila are examples of Afghan women who are forced into to do things against their wills. All their rights are taken away from them and they struggle against the outside forces and the restrictions at home. The limitations imposed by the unforgiving society prevents them from executing their simple rights and having freedom. The constant oppression and alienation from society make women weaker and not able to express their dreams, hopes and ambitions. As a result, Afghan women lose their identity, which is the aim of a patriarchal society to control women's life. In this novel, the lives of the characters are linked with the changing rules of society as it works to deconstruct female identity in order not to have equal status with men. Thus, in a society that deals with gender discrimination as a common phenomenon, men play the role to determine women's life and fate because the system authorizes them to subordinate women. The stories of Mariam and Laila illustrate the real life of many Afghan women, who are used as tools to empower the roles of men and restrict the lives of women in the public sphere. Also, these women are forced to accept polygamy and the unfair treatment of their husbands to turn their lives to be submissive, be in an inferior status, and endure all kinds of violence. Accordingly, Rasheed's merciless behavior with strict rules of patriarchy is practiced on Mariam and Laila. Hosseini writes his novel in a way that tackles the most heartbreaking stories of women in Afghanistan and delivers a powerful message for the readers about how women get to be denied from their opportunities to live a normal life.

Identically, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, presents young women's struggles during the tumultuous history of her homeland Nigeria. Through this novel, Adichie writes the experiences of women through war

and conflicts in political and social systems. She delivers the courage of women in their quest to define themselves to move forward and not affected by the troubled history. Thus, women in *Half of a Yellow Sun* appear as strong characters and are aware of their rights and needs and they are not less worthy than men either. It discusses the way how Adichie's characters oppose patriarchy in the various social-political contexts that attempt to alienate them from the public avenue. The nature of African women in a way or another is not different from Afghan women. They both devote their lives to house chores and marriage at a young age. However, Adichie portrays her women characters as those who can make a change to their society in a time of war and also be in a position of decision taker to safeguard their family and other people. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, both Olanna and Kainene break the traditional stereotypes of Nigerian culture. They do not view the marriage as a priority, instead, they reject the idea of depending on a man all their lives.

More to mention, they appear as independent, strong and career focused to be self-sufficient. Olanna's action from the very beginning to the end is an example of a woman who does not deter easily. Once, Olanna rejects to be a prostitute to help with her father's promotion. The wealthy politician father uses his beautiful daughter to get benefits from one of the ministers, Chief Okonji, who is charmed by Olanna. He expects a present to have a relationship with Olanna in return for a favor for her father. "I want all of you to meet some expatriates. They are looking for land and I can arrange for them to buy from your father at five or six times the price" (Adichie, 2006, p.34). Through Olanna's exchange with Kainene, one understands that the excessive freedom makes her father use his daughter's beauty as a tool to have a better deal with the minister. "Daddy literally pulled me away from the veranda, so we could leave you alone with the good cabinet minister,"…"Will he give Daddy the contract then?" (Adichie, 2006, p.35). Olanna seems to be on a quest for setting herself free from the traditional norms and disassociating herself from her parent's expectation to marry a wealthy man in order to have financial support. Olanna's notion of marriage means that she will lose her independence, and as a result will be subjected to the construction of marriage which prevents her from controlling her own life and ending her career.

Additionally, Olanna's ability to oppose the restriction of social tradition is not only due to her strong character or wealth, but because she wants to construct her own identity and become self-reliant and capable of facing all the consequences in her life. She faces the hardship of the Nigerian-Biafran war as much as men do. She proves that war affects men as well as women, but women can fight for survival, too. Unlike the women in Hosseini's novel where they appear as victims of the tumultuous war of Afghanistan, the depiction of Olanna and her twin sister Kainene in Adichie's novel are signs of women who struggle for equal status and stand up for their rights against an oppressive society. Similarly, as Kainene works in her father's business, the trauma of war intensifies, but she still insists on staying to help the victims of war.

Thus, the characters of Hosseini's novel become the victims of violence, prohibited from appearing in public where women are treated and abused badly because of war and political disorder. It is easier to inflict pain on them and make women endure the consequences of war and the inner conflicts silently. For this reason, women find it difficult to assert themselves and fight the marginalization of the dominant group. On the contrary, Adichie's characters find a way to reject the traditions and strict rules by empowering themselves and crossing the borders by being assertive in society and educating themselves. Focusing on their role in war, Adichie's female characters strive to survive through the war and overcome the difficulties. Their self-confidence and abilities guide them to save their families and provide food for them. Every character of both novels suffers at a varying degree, but they don't stay silent and keep fighting to the best of their abilities. For Olanna and Kainene, their weapon is education to bear through the war and survive its suffering. Also, most importantly, their strength and confidence enable them to control their own lives and not obey the restrictions of the society. In the case of Mariam and Laila, the rules of patriarchy and the strict social tradition, together with the corrupt government system, which obliged them to obey and be silent for a long time have played a big role to take a decisive step to free themselves from the tyranny of their husbands.

Bibliography

Adams, C. F. (1876). *Letters of John & Abigail Adams During The revolution.* New York: Hurd and Houghton

Adams, A. (2001). It's a woman's war: Engendering conflict in Buchi Emecheta's "Destination Biafra." *Callaloo, 24*(1), 287-300. www.jstor.org/stable/3300501..

Adichie, C. N. (2006). *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Anchor Books.

Ahmed, A. (2017). Literature and Its Influence on Human Life. Rajikiya Engineering College, Chandpur, Bijnor pp.129-134.

Arenfeldt, P., & Golley, N. A.-H. (2012). *Mapping Arab Women's Movements: A Century of Transformations from Within.* Cairo: The American University in Cairo.

Andrews, P. (2012). *From Cape Town to Kabul: Rethinking Strategies for Pursuing Women's Human Rights*. Ashgate Publishing Co.

Ayub, F., Kouvo, S., & Sooka, Y. (2009). Addressing Gender-specific Violations in Afghanistan.

Bakşi Yalçın, O. (2018). In the eye of the beholder: Mattie Silver in Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*. *Ankara University, The Journal of the Faculty of Languages and History-Geography.* 58.1 June, 1081-1100.

Bakşi Yalçın, O. (2020) The Silent Discontent in Shirley Jackson: *The Lottery and Other Stories. Silence and Silencing in the American Context.* Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.

BBC News. (2012). Afghan unit to hunt abused bride Sahar Gul's husband. Retrieved 7 February 2020, from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16388825.

Bhasin, K. (2003). *Understandin Gender.* New Delhi: Women Unlimited.

Brodsky, A. (2003). *With All Our Strength: The Revolutionary Association Of The Women Of Afghanistan.* Great Britain: Routledge.

Bowden, P., & Mummery, J. (2009). *Understanding Feminism.* london and New York: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.

Bressler, C. E. (2011). *Liteary Criticism* . United State: Pearson Education.

Charlton, L. (1983, 3 16). Dame Rebecca West Dies in London. *The New York Times*. Retrieved 8 14, 2019

Cochrane, K. (. (2013, 12 10). "The Fourth Wave of Feminism: Meet the Rebel Women". *The Guardian*. Retrieved 8 29, 2019, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/10/fourth-wave-feminism-rebel-women

Dharmani, D. D. (2018). Women as Nation in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. *Language in India*, 209-217.

Dillon, R. (1992). Toward a feminist conception of self-respect. *Hypatia*, *7*(1), 52-69. www.jstor.org/stable/3810133.

Editors, H. (2020, March 9). *A&E Television Networks*. Retrieved from HISTORY: https://www.history.com/topics/first-ladies/abigail-adams

Ermelino, L. (2007). Can Hosseini Do It Again?. Retrieved 17 December 2019, fromhttps://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/bytopic/authors/interviews/article/12863.

Essays, UK. (November 2018). Gender and Status in Literature English Literature Essay. Retrieved from https://www.ukessays.com/essays/english-literature/gender-and-status-in-literature-english-literature-essay.php?vref=1

Faludi, S. (1991). *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women.* United States: Three Rivers Press.

Feuser, W. (1986). Anomy and beyond: Nigeria's civil war in literature. *Presence Africaine,* (137/138), nouvelle serie, 113-151. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24351085.

Freedman, J. (2001). *Feminism.* Great Britain: Open University Press.

Friedan, B. (1997). *The Feminine Mystique.* New York London: W. W. NORTON & COMPANY.

Gamble, S. (. (2001). *The Routledge companion to feminism and postfeminism.* London: Routledge.

Gender Equality. (2020). Retrieved 18 March 2020, from https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues- depth/gender-equality/

Gray, M., & Boddy, J. (2010). Making Sense of the Waves: Wipeout or Still Riding High? *Affilia*, 4. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109910384069

Gross, T. (2005, August 11). *An Afghan story: Khaled Hosseini and 'Kite Runner'* [Radio Broadcast]. NPR. https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4795618?storyId=4795618.

Hannam, j. (2007). *feminism.* United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.

Hawley, J. C. (2008). Biafra as heritage and symbol: Adichie, Mbachu, and Iweala. *Research in African Literatures, 39*(2), pp. 15-26.

Hosseini, K. (2008). *A Thousand Splendid Suns.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Hawley, J. C.(2008). Biafra as heritage and symbol: Adichie, Mbachu, and Iweala. *Research in African Literatures*, 39(2), 15-26.

Joseph, S. (2018). Glocal identity replaces stereotypes: A critical examination of Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Meena Kandasamy's *The Gypsy Goddess,* Navajyoti. *International Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Research, 2*(2).

Kabaji, E. S. (2005). *The Construction of gender through the narrative process of the African folktale: A case study of the Maragoli folktale*. [Doctoral Dissertation University of South Africa]. http://hdl.handle.net/10500/1798.

Khan, R. W., & Faran, F. (2016, July- December). Hegemonic Masculinity, Mutedness and Silence of the Feminine Voice inKhalid Hosseini's Novel "A Thousand Splendid Suns. *TAKATOO, 8*(16), 10-24.

Kivai, G. M., (2010), The female voice and the future of gender relationships in the Nigerian nation in Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus and Half of a Yellow Sun. [Master's thesis, Kenyatta University] .http://irlibrary.ku.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/123456789/1556/kivai%20mboya.pdf? Sequence=3: 10/10/14.

Kolawole, M. E. M. (1997). *Womanism and African consciousness*. Africa World Press.

Madsen, D. L. (2000). *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice.* London: Pluto Press.

Makokha, G. A., (2014).Portrayal of the African woman in *Half of a Yellow Sun. Journal Research in Peace, Gender and Development (JRPGD), 4*(6), 111-120.

Martin, M. (2016). More power to your great selfe: Nigerian women's activism and the Pan-African transnationalist construction of black feminism. *Phylon, 53*(2),54-78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/phylon1960.53.2.54.

Mertus, J. A. (2000). *War's Offensive on Women: The Humanitarian Challenge in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.* United States of America: Kumarian Press.

Mikell, G. (1995). African feminism: Toward a new politics of representation. Feminist Studies, 21(2), 405-424.https://doi.org/10.2307/3178274.

Mill, J. S. (1995). *On Liberty with The Subjection of Women and Chapters on Socialism* . Great Britain: Cambridge University Press.

Napikoski, Linda. (2019, December 12). Oppression and Women's History. Retrieved from https://www.thoughtco.com/oppression-womens-history-definition-3528977.

Napikoski, Linda. (2019, March 13). Goals of the Feminist Movement. Retrieved fromhttps://www.thoughtco.com/goals-of-the-feminist-movement-3528961.

Offenhauer, P. 2005. Women in Islamic Societies: A Selected Review of Social Scientific Literature. Report prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library

of Congress, Washington DC. Retrieved from http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf files/Women_Islamic_Societies.pdf

Offen, K. (1988). *Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach* (Vol. Vol. 14). The University of Chicago Press.

Ojinmah, U. (2012). No humanity in war: Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. *Journal of Nigeria Studies, 1*(2).

Okafor, E. E.,& Akokuwebe, M. E. (2015). Women and leadership in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *Developing Country Studies, 5*(4), 1-10.

Palmerlee, A. (2020). The Situation of Women in Afghanistan. Retrieved 12 February 2020, from https://2001-2009.state.gov/g/wi/9118.htm.

Pepelar, P. (2008). What is Freedom? Perceptions of Freedom of Women in Two Novels from Afghanistan: A Thousand Splendids Suns and Behind the Burqa. Retrieved 5 January 2020, from http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:126942/FULLTEXT01.

Rampton, M. (2015). Four Waves of Feminism. *Pacific University oregon*. Retrieved 8 29, 2019, from https://www.pacificu.edu/about/media/four-waves-feminism

Roshan, K. M. (2014). Representation of History in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun . Asian Journal of Humanity, Art and Literature, 1*(3), pp.150-154.

Rostami-Povey, E. (2007). *Afghan women Identity and invasion.* New York: Zed Books Ltd.

Rushfan, (2014). 10 Extreme Examples of Gender Inequality. Listverse. Retrieved 20 December 2019, from https://listverse.com/2008/11/20/10-extreme-examples-of-gender- inequality/.

Schneir, M. (1994). *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings.* New York: Vintage Books.

Silima, N. (2013). Subjugation: A study of the women characters in Khalid Hosseini's and Arundhati Roy's novels. *Academic Journals*, 456-461.

Smith, B. (1980). Racism and Women's Studies. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies, Vol. 5, No. 1*, 48-49. doi:10.2307/3346304

Sultana, A. (2012). Patriarchy and women's subordination: A theoretical analysis. *Arts Faculty Journal, 4,* 1-18. https://doi.org/10.3329/afj.v4i0.12929.

Tauchert, A. (2002). *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Accent of the Feminine.* New York: PALGRAVE.

Tong, R. (2009). *Feminist Thought a More Comprehensive Introduction.* United States: Westview Press.

Thompson, H. (8 Aug. 2009). A Thousand Splendid Suns: The plight of Afghan women only partially depicted. *World Socialist Web Site.* ICFI, Retrieved 13 February 2020, from https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2009/08/thou-a08.html.

Vyomakesisri, T. (2017, November 9). Presentation of Women in Literature from Past to Present. *Journal Of Humanities And Social Science, 22*(11), 18-20. doi: 10.9790/0837-2211091820

Walters, M. (2005). *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction.* New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Walker, R. (2007, (February 28). "Becoming the Third Wave" . *HEATHENGRRL'S BLOG*. Retrieved 8 29, 2019

Walker, R. (2011, October 27). "Anita Hill Woke Us Up". *Huffington Post*. Retrieved 8 29, 2019, from https://www.huffpost.com/entry/anita-hill_b_1031311

Yadav, M. S., & Yadav, M. K. (2018). Aspects of Feminist Writing: A Presentation of Common Issues. *JELTL, 3(1)*, 57-68.

Yahi, N. (2014). *The Rise of Taliban and the women's status in Khaled Hosseini's novel A Thousand Splendid Suns,* [Unpublished Master's thesis,, Abderrahmane Mira University of Bejaia].

Youngerman, S. W. (2007). *A Brief History of Afghanistan.* New York: Infobase publishing .

Zanou Capo-Chichi, L. C. & Bodjrenou, F.(2016). Women's roles during Biafran war in *Half of a Yellow Sun* Adichie (2006). *Littérature, Langues Et Linguistique 4*(1),151-166.