

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS

#### 1.1 The Portrait of Main Characters as Victims

This chapter analyzes the depiction of women struggle as seen through both of main characters in this novel, they are Mariam Jo as the illegitimate child of rich man named Jalil and Nana (a former housekeeper in Jalil's house) and Laila as the second main character, a young girl and smart a daughter of Fariba and Hakim. Moreover this analysis also digs up the reason why main characters being victims throughout several oppression that they accept from their childhood until they grow up become adult. By firstly examining on their characters, it will gain profound knowledge about the character and characterization of both main characters clearly. After having fundamental background of them, then studying their characterization more intensely to reveal their way of struggle. Inside this analysis process, it uses feminism theory to support the analysis in order to expose the motive that leads main characters in getting oppression and as the victim of gender discrimination, also the Taliban laws affective as the main impact.

##### 1.1.1 Portrait of Mariam Jo's Character

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* is the novel that depicting of two Afghan women as main character, Mariam Jo and Laila. This part will explain about the first main character, Mariam Jo. She is one of female characters who tells to the reader about she does, speaks and thinks from her childhood instead Laila. For instance, other characters only appear when they have deal with Mariam thus she automatically

becomes the main character because she appears and dominates on the whole story (Nurgiyantoro 176).

Furthermore Mariam depicted as main character, she also becomes the protagonist. Mariam becomes the central person that must command involvement on the part of the reader and readers give empathy totally to her. She also becomes a dynamic character, it is a person who changes over time, usually as a result of resolving a central conflict or facing a major crisis (<http://learn.lexicon.net>). Most dynamic characters tend to be central rather than peripheral characters, because resolving the conflict is the major role of central characters. Therefore, Mariam also belongs to protagonist character that readers can really feel her hard struggle to getting happiness in her life.

Mariam is one of two female characters. Mariam was born in 1959, she grows up Kolba outside Herat, a small city in Afghanistan. Her appearance starts in the beginning story as the little Mariam.

Mariam was five years old the first time she heard the word *harami* (Hosseini 5).

This story tells of first main character's life from her childhood, exactly on age five years old. Mariam has been a victim since birth, since she is an illegitimate child, she also is outcasted by everyone including her father Jalil. She grows up by her mother, Nana. Nana is chased away by Jalil's family when she is pregnant of Mariam because Jalil refuses to acknowledge Mariam as his real daughter. Nana also frequently refers to Mariam as a *harami*, when Mariam gets wrong and does mistakes, it is uttered by her mother when Mariam still five years old. She always remembers what her mother said.





















She forced to married with widowed named Rasheed, it is surely has contradiction with Qur'an that marriage must be the agreement of both of woman and man to be bridegroom. Mariam starts become Rasheed puppet that must be obey what he said like when he asks Mariam wear *burqa* (kinds of cloth to covered all of the woman body in Afghanistan). *Burqa* is not comfortable for the woman, this dressed is really hot and also is really hard to see what is in front when they are using it.

Eventually *burqa* is a sign of oppression and male domination. Mariam is getting abusive from her husband because of the several miscarriages that happened to her. He changes become a cruel, abusive man and because her several miscarriage, he thinks that Mariam cannot caring their child when she pregnant. The suffering of Mariam can be accounted to the belief system that Rasheed, a Pashtun practices in the face of his ethnic group ideology. It is always seen that the man has taken all the decisions of her life.

Depicted in one of hadiths said that the primary duty of a wife is thus to obey her husband in all that is lawful. However, if he invites to what is unlawful and displeasing to Allah, she should not obey him. The Prophet said, "There is no submission in matters involving disobeying or displeasing Allah. Submission to the husband is obligatory only in what is good and reasonable. A woman should not obey her husband if he orders her to do something sinful (Fatima, 198). It means command to obey husband in everything except in what is unlawful and displeasing to Allah. Therefore, if a husband invites his wife to commit an unlawful act, she should abstain from doing. The oppression





started getting abusive from Rasheed when she uttered a daughter not a son like Rasheed wants.

Rasheed and Mariam nurse her back to health. Laila is devastated and her idealism and independence are challenged when she decides to marry Rasheed in order to give her unborn child by Tariq a father. Soon, she also becomes a victim to Rasheed's violent ways and is willing to accept the limitations she once would have openly mocked. She extends her love to Mariam and takes comfort in having a friend and a mother figure.

However, she is astute enough to make attempts to free herself and Mariam from the clutches of Rasheed. She also begins to understand the sacrifices that are necessary to be a good mother by following Mariam's example.

But somehow, over these last months, Laila and Aziza--a harami like herself, as it turned out--had become extensions of her, and now, without them, the life Mariam had tolerated for so long suddenly seemed intolerable (256).

Rasheed said this to Mariam and Laila when the morning of September 27 the Taliban goes to Kabul shooting and whistling and they pass in front of Rasheed's house and then they start to talk about the Taliban. The meaning of this quote is that Rasheed shows that he is agree with the Taliban because they are not corrupted by soviets and he thinks that they are going to bring peace to Afghanistan. The significance is that Rasheed is agree with the Taliban because he is a traditional men of Afghanistan, he believes in all the thinks that the Taliban say but is not right, when the Taliban take away the woman









These are words of advice given to Mariam by her mother, Nana. Nana is a bitter woman who prepares her daughter to expect nothing but abuse from men, rejected by her fiancé, impregnated by Jalil, and abandoned by her father however women must endure from much injustice in patriarchal system. It can be pointed that, in Afghanistan have different ways that a few years ago, if a man makes a mistake he can easily put the blame on the woman. That is what Nana was trying to tell Mariam, to be careful. There is nothing women can do to escape this, if a man does something wrong, it is automatically the women's fault, and there is nothing that she can do about it. As events derail her optimism, Mariam soon begins to believe her mother was right when she said her only potential is to endure. Burdened grief and guilt after her mother's suicide, Mariam is betrayed by her father, who marries her off to a widowed and older man in order to conceal his own shame.

Mariam's story of resilience as she seeks to endure her difficult life and the abuse from her controlling husband, in the process, she struggles with concepts such as justice, worth and the role of women. Before she can overcome obstacles, she must confront her lifelong fear and guilt. Fifteen years later when she is succumbing to despair and resentment, she finds hope and a second chance in an unlikely person, her husband's second wife Laila. Mariam on the other hand, has an inner strength that's as hard and unyielding as a block of limestone. The combination of the two is something fierce. Mariam has not been confident in herself since she was a child. As an illegitimate child, she was an outsider and the







is in Laila's own heart, where she shines with the bursting radiance of a thousand splendid suns (366).

Conditions in Kabul improve because of the U.S invasion and Laila insists that her family move back home so they can help rebuild their city. Laila visits Mariam's old home and is able to relate to Mariam's talk about her Kolba, she comes to terms with her grief over Mariam's execution. This quote comes at the very end of the novel and reveals how much Mariam has affected Laila's life and how even though she is gone, Laila will never forget her. She and Tariq were talking about what to name their child and Laila already has a name for the child if it's a girl will give her name Mariam. She means that she wants to continue Mariam's memory on and on for a long time so she is never forgotten. This is significant because Laila got so close to Mariam that she cannot let her go and has to remember her. Laila fulfills her father's hope for her at the end of the novel, when she leads a project to rebuild an orphanage in Kabul. She chooses to dedicate her life to help the forgotten children of Afghanistan, the young girls and boys who never received the same encouragement and love that she did when she was their age. Laila has become a teacher, like her father and she will spread her determination and intelligence to the people who need it the most. Laila and Tariq build a new life in Kabul. Laila becomes a school teacher, a respectable woman in Afghanistan as her father dreams, during her childhood days. She works in the orphanage where Aziza once lived. And when Laila becomes pregnant, she decides that if she has a girl, she'll name her Mariam.

Both Laila and Mariam exhibit characters that are unique in their own way, Laila strong with her spirit ready to confront the male domination whereas Mariam weak submissive yielding to life's situations. Both women must face Rasheed, an older brutal man, as he reigns over their lives. The two women start of at odds with each other but come to realize the only way they will be able to remain sane in their unstable lives is if they can come together, creating a deep friendship tied to their shared pain.

Mariam and Laila represent the heroes within the analysis of the novel as well, they are not continuously perceived as acting heroically. At some point during the analysis of the novel, passivity of Mariam and Laila is so pervasive that their being heroin is vanished. In contrast, the users never hesitated to label Mariam and Laila as heroes. From their viewpoint, the heroic action of Mariam and Laila is reflected in both their acceptance of and their resistance to the adversity. They are perceived as heroes either for their self-sacrifice, which is manifest in their resistance to domination or for their survival, which is evident in their acceptance of domination.