STYLISTICS ANALYSIS OF KHALED HOSSEINI' NOVEL

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Abstract: This paper aims to analyze Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* from the perspective of stylistic analysis. The analysis is made under the aspects of technique of works and figurative language. In terms of figurative language, it is found that it deploys simile, symbolism, foreshadowing, situational irony, repetition, alliteration, personification, metaphor, parallelism, allusion, imagery, and irony. The findings provide benefit for the reader, apprehend the structure and style of Khaled Hosseini' works, his themes, views and treatment of social life.

Keywords: Khaled Hosseini, Stylistics Analysis, Biography, Novel, Figurative Language.

INTRODUCTION

Stylistics is the study and interpretation of texts from a linguistic perspective. As a discipline it links literary criticism and linguistics, but has no autonomous domain of its own. The preferred object of stylistic studies is literature, but not exclusively "high literature" but also other forms of written texts such as text from the domains of advertising, pop culture, politics or religion. Stylistics also attempts to establish principles capable of explaining the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language, such as socialization, the production and reception of meaning, critical discourse analysis and literary criticism.

Other features of stylistics include the use of dialogue, including regional accents and people's dialects, descriptive language, the use of grammar, such as the active voice or passive voice, the distribution of sentence lengths, the use of particular language registers, etc. In addition, stylistics is a distinctive term that may be used to determine the connections between the form and effects within a particular variety of language. Therefore, stylistics looks at what is 'going on' within the language; what the linguistic associations are that the style of language reveals.

This paper eventually is going to involve in stylistics feature analysis of Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. This paper will be contained several section. The first will be discussed about the theoretical review in analyzing the novel. Next section will be occupied with the biography of the authors and the summary of the novel. In the end of body, there will be the analysis essay of the novel based on the theoretical review that has been discussed before.

BIOGRAPHY OF KHALED HOSSEINI AND NOVEL'S SUMMARY¹

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns* Hosseini returns to Afghanistan and once more offers his readers a love story. As in *The Kite Runner*, the relationships are complicated and diverse. There is first and foremost the love between two women, supporting each other in their marriage to the same man. There is also a more traditional love story—a childhood romance that at first seems hopeless and then becomes reality. All of this is set in the midst of war and famine over three decades in both the cities and countryside of Afghanistan. The two women are quite different from one another and were raised in completely different words, although within the same country. They nonetheless forge a strong bond of family and friendship.

Later, the author biography and the summary of the novel will be elaborated in the following subsection.

¹ Source : Stuhr (2009)

BIOGRAPHY OF KHALED HOSSEINI

Khaled Hosseini was born in 1965 in Kabul, Afghanistan, where his father worked for the Afghan Foreign Ministry. In 1970, Hosseini's family moved to Iran, where his father worked for the Afghan embassy for three years, before returning to Afghanistan. In 1976, the family moved to Paris, France, where they remained during the coup of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan in 1978 and subsequent Soviet invasion. They sought political asylum in the United States in 1980, relocating to San Jose, California.

Hosseini graduated high school in San Jose and went on to study biology at Santa Clara University. He then entered the medical school at University of California at Davis, earning his M.D. in 1993. He began writing his first novel in 2001, while also practicing medicine.

As a child, Hosseini read mostly Persian poetry, as well as many Persian translations of Western literature. His memory of childhood in pre-Soviet Afghanistan is a fond one, and he often borrows from these early memories in his writing.

His first novel, *The Kite Runner*, was published in 2003, and has since become an international best-seller, with more than 10 million copies sold worldwide. *The Kite Runner* was adapted into a film of the same name in 2007. His second book, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, was published in 2007. The previous year, Hosseini was named goodwill envoy to the United Nations Refugee Agency.

THE SUMMARY

Mariam is five years old when the novel opens. She is waiting for her father Jalil to arrive for his weekly visit. Mariam is Jalil's illegitimate daughter. Her mother, Nana, was a servant in Jalil's household when she became pregnant. The family was outraged and Nana and Mariam were thrown out of the house. Nana's life is bitter. She has been discarded by Jalil and disowned by her father; Nana's mother died when she was two. She resents Mariam's devotion to Jalil and is cynical about his kindnesses to her. Nana is very harsh with Mariam and tells her that she is an unwanted thing, a *harami*. Jalil may come only once a week, but he is kind and gentle and brings Mariam gifts. Nana warns Mariam not to have faith in her father or men in general. She tells her, "Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman" (Hosseini, 2009: 7). This sentence comes back to haunt Mariam throughout the novel.

Mariam and her mother live on the outskirts of her mother's village of Gul Daman. They receive few visitors because Nana prefers to be left on her own. One of their regular visitors is Mullah Faizullah. He teaches Mariam to read and write, to read and recite the Koran, and to say her prayers. He is attentive and good to her. Mariam asks him to ask her mother if she can go to school. She has just heard that her father's other daughters have begun school. When her mother hears about Mariam's wish she responds harshly and tells Mariam that it is not her place to attend school. Nana tells her that she has only one skill to learn, and that is to endure (Hosseini, 2009: 17).

Mariam's week is spent in anticipation of Jalil's arrival. She imagines what it would be like to live in Herat with Jalil experiencing the excitement of the big city, caring for Jalil and attending to his needs. When he visits on her birthday, Jalil tells Mariam that she can ask for anything. She asks him to take her to his cinema. They negotiate on this point for some time until Jalil agrees to meet her the next day at noon. He does not come, and Mariam decides to walk to Herat to find him. She does this against her mother's will. When Mariam arrives, she is enchanted with the bustle, the flowers and trees, the abundance on the

streets. Everything is fantastic and lovely. A kindly taxi driver takes her to Jalil Khan's house. When she arrives, Mariam is not admitted in. She is told that Jalil Khan is away. The family chauffeur urges her to go home and offers to drive her, but she refuses and spends the night on the doorstep. In the morning, the chauffeur insists on taking her home and picks her up and puts her in the car, but not before Mariam catches a glimpse of Jalil Khan in the window. When she arrives back at her home, or *kolba*, Mariam discovers that her mother has committed suicide.

After the funeral, Jalil Khan takes Mariam back to his house. She is given a guestroom. Although she is not encouraged to come out of the room, she also chooses not to. She receives visits from Bibi jo, a family friend, and Mullah Faizullah. Their genuine care and kindness for her contrast starkly with Jalil's more cautious attention. Mullah Faizullah tries to comfort Mariam who is disconsolate. He tells Mariam that she need not feel responsible for her mother's death. At the end of the week, Mariam is told by one of Jalil's wives that she must go downstairs. Jalil and his wives are waiting for Mariam at the large imposing dining room table. At this meeting, she finds out that the wives have found her a As forewarned, the *nikka* takes place the next day. The mullah rushes through the ceremony so that Rasheed and Mariam can make the bus to Kabul. Looking in the mirror, part of the traditional ceremony, Mariam sees her own face and the face of her husband for the first time. Mariam must answer for herself that she will accept Rasheed, and, although she hesitates, she does answer affirmatively. At the bus, Mariam lets Jalil know that she is finished with him and that she never wants to see him again, suitor. His name is Rasheed and he is a Pashtun who lives in Kabul; he is forty-five and he is a shoemaker. Mariam is horrified, but when she begs her father to stop this from happening, the wives tell her that he has already given his consent. Mariam realizes that they not only want to marry her off to get her out of the house, but they also want her as far away as possible, because she is a symbol of shame to them. When Afsoon, one of the wives, walks Mariam back to her room, she also locks her in. Mariam has lost her freedom and has no say or power to determine the course that her life will take. Mariam will be engaged the next day, and she will leave on the bus for Kabul that same afternoon.

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The first year of Mariam's life with Rasheed passes with its difficulties and rewards. Rasheed has moments of kindness and regard, but is also possessive and ill tempered. He requires Mariam to wear a *burqa*. It is heavy, awkward, and stifling, but she feels protected and shielded by it. She sees it as a one-way window from which she can view the world, but through which the world cannot see or judge her. She finds Rasheed's desire to keep her away from other men as a sign of his regard and she feels both treasured and significant. During this first year she experiences her first restaurant, her first ice cream, sex with her husband, and she becomes pregnant. Mariam feels so much happiness when he realizes that she is pregnant. She immediately imagines the blessings of motherhood. Rasheed is also pleased, but also determined to have a boy. Sadly, Mariam has a miscarriage, and with this miscarriage goes her happiness and Rasheed's regard. After four years of marriage, Mariam learns that Rasheed's moods and tempers are to be feared. She has suffered six more

miscarriages and, with each one, Rasheed becomes more distant and abusive. It is 1978, and Mariam is nineteen. The Communists take over the presidential palace in Kabul and massacre President Daoud and his family. Down the street from Mariam and Rasheed, a woman named Fariba has given birth to a new baby, a daughter who she and her husband name Laila.

In part two, the story jumps to 1987. Laila is nine years old and she has become fast friends with the boy next door, Tariq. Laila's mother spends much of her time in bed, brokenhearted over the absence of her sons who are fighting in Panjshir with the Mujahideen. In her grief, Fariba has little time or thought for Laila. When Laila's brothers are killed, a messenger comes to inform the family. Laila's mother deteriorates further and now rarely gets out of bed. The household tasks, as well as the care for her mother, fall to Laila. Laila's father, Babi, as she calls him, is a teacher, but he is fired by the Soviets and now works in the local bakery. He is quite loving to Laila and concerned for her education and her future. He points out how much better it has been for women under the Soviet rule. They have legislated a higher marriage age and require women to attend school. In fact, he points out, two-thirds of the students at Kabul University are women. But, the new laws providing equal opportunity to women have also angered those in the rural areas who are bound by their traditions and resent having the Soviets tell them how to treat their women.

Babi takes Laila and Tariq on a day-long trip to Bamiyan to expose them to the heritage and rich culture of their country. On their way, they pass the varied Afghanistan landscape of mountains and deserts. They pass wheat fields, Koochi nomads, and burnt-out Soviet tanks. Laila realizes that the war has been going on around her while Kabul seems to be mostly at peace. When they arrive in Bamiyan, Babi points out Shahre-Zohak, or the Red City, built nine hundred years earlier and destroyed by Genghis Khan, evidence of the continuous plight of Afghanistan as a country that has suffered many invasions. He takes them to the two Buddhas, two thousand-year-old statues that served as a home to up to five thousand Buddhist monks and as a sanctuary to travelers. They see the rich Bamiyan countryside, fertile and prosperous, from the height of the Buddhas. As they look out over the countryside, Babi tells Laila that he dreams of moving to America, someplace near the sea, to open an Afghan restaurant that can be a center for the Afghan community in exile and to send Laila to school. They know that Laila's mother will never leave Afghanistan, and Laila worries about leaving Tariq. It is not long after this trip, in April 1988, that Babi comes home announcing that the Soviets have signed a treaty and will be leaving Afghanistan over the next nine months.

In 1989, the last of the Soviets leave and Kabul celebrates and looks forward to the new Islamic State of Afghanistan. The victorious Mujahideen is made up of factions of Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Pashtuns with Arab connections. The plans are for a shared government gradually leading to democratic elections. Laila's mother is revived and she plans a big party, but just as the party disintegrates into fighting over politics and ethnic loyalties, so does the new government of Afghanistan. Soon, the bombs are falling on Kabul, and instead of being outside the fighting, Kabul is the center of the conflict. Meanwhile, Laila and Tariq, now fourteen and sixteen, have fallen in love and their actions threaten to cross the lines of accepted behavior. Laila is warned by her mother to be careful. When the fighting in Kabul begins, however, Laila's mother returns to her bed and no longer pays close attention to Laila.

As the year progresses, Kabul is in a state of chaos. The various warring parties commit atrocities against each other and the civilian population, and bombs fall on Kabul.

Laila stops attending school and is taught by her father instead. She spends more time with Tariq until the day he tells her that his family is leaving for Peshawar. He wants her to go with him and tells her that he wants to marry her. Although Laila wants to go with him she cannot abandon her father. As more and more of their neighbors leave Kabul, and militia men and other strangers move into the abandoned homes, Laila's father finally convinces his wife that they should leave as well. But as they are in the process of packing up the house, it is hit by a shell. Laila is blown away from the house and falls unconscious after slamming against a wall. Both of her parents are killed in the blast.

Rasheed rescues Laila from the rubble of her house and she is nursed by Mariam. Shortly after she is able to leave her bed and participate in day-to-day life, a visitor comes to tell Laila that Tariq has died, the victim of a bomb blast. Before many days have passed, it becomes clear to Mariam that Rasheed intends to marry Laila. Mariam is devastated, but when Rasheed asks her to ask Laila for him, she does, and Laila says yes. Laila has become aware that she is pregnant with Tariq's child and she knows marriage is the only option for her at this time. This baby, along with the few books that Rasheed grabbed from the rubble of her house, will be all she has to link her to Tariq and her past.

Mariam keeps her distance from Laila whose marriage to Rasheed is the latest in a long string of humiliations for her. Mariam begins to soften toward her, however, when Laila's baby turns out to be a girl and Laila loses favor with Rasheed. Mariam begins to pay attention to the new baby and soon bonds with her and then with Laila. Laila plans an escape and systematically steals money from Rasheed. However, the latest regime in Afghanistan is hard on women. They are not allowed to travel alone or to be out on the streets unaccompanied by a male family member. When Laila, Mariam, and Aziza (Laila's daughter) attempt to escape, they find a man they believe will help them. However, he takes their money and turns them in to the police. They are returned to their home and Rasheed punishes them by locking Laila and Aziza into a room without fresh air, food, or water. Aziza nearly dies from dehydration before Rasheed lets them out again.

As the Taliban come to power, Laila is again pregnant. By the time she needs to go to the hospital, only one hospital in Kabul will take women. It is horribly understaffed and lacking any of the necessary medicines or equipment. Laila must have a cesarean section, and she must have it without anesthetics or antibiotics. She and the new baby, Zalmi, a boy and the apple of his father's eye, are lucky to survive the ordeal.

A severe drought begins in 1998 and continues into 2000. The family is living on very little, but when Rasheed's shop burns down, starvation becomes a real possibility. Mariam decides to call her father for the first time since she left on her wedding day more than two decades ago, but when she locates someone who knows her father, she discovers that he has been dead for thirteen years. After selling everything and still having no food to feed her children, Laila is forced to take Aziza to an orphanage. This is the same orphanage with the same director as the character in *The Kite Runner*. Zaman's glasses are still broken from the beating he received from Farid.

Because the Taliban do not allow women out without a male relative, Laila must depend on Rasheed to accompany her to the orphanage to visit Aziza. When he decides he cannot do this anymore, Laila must figure out how to do this on her own. It is difficult and dangerous, and she experiences questions and beatings. After one trip to the orphanage, Laila returns home to find Tariq waiting outside the house. Laila is amazed and overjoyed to see Tariq. Mariam and Zalmi go upstairs, leaving Laila to talk with Tariq. Zalmi is jealous of his mother's distraction and tells his father about the visitor. Rasheed goes into a

murderous rage, and as his hands are around Laila's neck, her body and face begin showing signs of lifelessness. Mariam gets a shovel from the shed and beats Rasheed over the head. She kills him. Mariam tries to comfort Laila, telling her that she will think of a way to take care of this new crisis. The next morning, Mariam has made her decision. She tells Laila to "Think like a mother, Laila jo. Think like a mother. I am" (Hosseini, 2009: 319). Mariam has decided to sacrifice herself for the well-being of Laila and the children; they have been her loving family. She sends Laila off to visit Aziza, and, by the time Laila is back, Mariam has disappeared.

Mariam goes to the Walayat Women's Prison. Hosseini describes the conditions of the prison: the women wear their burqas because of the lack of privacy and the unwanted stares of the prison guards. They are given no food and are dependent on food being brought in from outside. Although Mariam is in prison for murder, the other women are primarily in prison for trying to run away. They look up to Mariam and help her with food. Mariam is tried with no legal counsel, no public hearing, no cross-examination, and no possibility of appeal. Her hearing is fifteen minutes long. Mariam is taken to Ghazi Stadium. The Talib guard offers her some comfort, telling her that it is not shameful to be afraid, but Mariam does not break down at the moment of execution. She imagines the pleasant moments of her life, the moments during which she experienced love and beauty. Hosseini writes that "One last time, Mariam did as she was told" (Hosseini, 2009: 329).

The last section of the novel focuses on Laila, Tariq, and the children. They go to Murree, a tourist site in Pakistan where Tariq had been living and working before coming back to Kabul to find Laila. Aziza is finally with a father who loves her, but Zalmi has difficulty adjusting and misses Rasheed. They all work together for the hotel until, after September 11, 2001, and the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, Laila begins to feel that they should return to Kabul to help with the reconstruction. Tariq agrees to return, and they stop in Herat to visit Mariam's birthplace and to see whether anyone there remembers her.

Back in Kabul, both children are in school. Laila and Tariq work with Zaman at the orphanage. Laila teaches and Tariq helps with repairs and other reconstruction work. Laila is pregnant again, but all this happiness is overshadowed by the return of the warlords to Kabul and evidence that Afghanistan continues to be an unstable country.

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

1. Hosseini's Style, Technique and Works

Hosseini's books are not adventure novels, but the action rarely flags. We are introduced to the main character (Mariam) and one of the central conflicts (her perceived rejection by the world) in the opening pages, and Hosseini rarely stops for sensory details or historical background. But that is not to say that Hosseini skimps on descriptions. He identifies salient points with such skill that he conjures up images and evokes character traits in a few powerful words, without slacking the pace of the plot. And rather than moving back and forth between narrative and description, he interweaves the two, so that the action only breaks off when Hosseini shifts the scene to heighten suspense.

Hosseini also builds suspense through foreshadowing. In fact, he often goes beyond foreshadowing to giving away future plot developments—a technique that heightens tension, rather than relaxing it. *The Kite Runner* opens with the information that some event in an alley is going to form the future of the main character, though it is

many chapters before we discover the nature of the ill-fated occurrence. And when Mariam and Laila part at the climax of *Suns*, we learn that “Laila never saw Mariam again” (Hosseini, 2009: 320).

The expectation that the end whether Mariam’s sentence would actually be carried out or whether some last-minute stay would spare her; Hosseini’s foreshadowing sometimes seems intentionally misleading. After Laila receives news of Tariq’s death, we are told that with time, Laila’s memories of Tariq would fade, “Except every once in a long while, when Laila was a grown woman, ironing a shirt or pushing her children on a swing set, something, something trivial ... would set off a memory of that afternoon together” (Hosseini, 2009: 168). We are led to believe that Laila and Tariq will never be reunited—until Tariq turns up again, contrary to expectation.

Other instances of foreshadowing seem to be only half fulfilled. Pebbles appear several times in the opening chapters: Mariam’s mother pelts her half-brothers with them, Mariam plays with them and names them after her siblings and carries them around in her pocket. In a later, wrenching scene, Rasheed makes Laila chew a mouthful of pebbles and tells her that is what it is like to eat her rice. It should that these references must be leading up to something, and later, when Mariam was sentenced to death, It is thought, “Ah, this is it—death by stoning.” Mercifully, it appears this was not the case. It did leave me wondering, though, if reader would misread the clues or if perhaps the pebbles did point to death but Hosseini chose to throw in a twist—just to keep the reader guessing.

Similarly, when Laila and Mariam dig a hole in the yard to hide the TV from the Taliban, one immediately suspects that this is destined to become a grave. Laila even has a dream in which Aziza is lowered into the hole, alive (Hosseini, 2009: 268). And when the women kill Rasheed, it is believed, “Now they’re going to bury him in the hole”—which would have been a very practical thing to do. But instead they put him in the tool shed, and Mariam gives herself up to die for her crime, knowing that eventually someone will find the body and the women will be accused of the murder. Personally, It would have found it more satisfying in a literary sense if they had buried Rasheed in the hole, even if Mariam had still found it necessary to give herself up. On the other hand, as it stands, perhaps the narrative acknowledges that Mariam would have been unable to live at peace the rest of her life, both in the knowledge of having killed someone and with the possibility that she and Laila would forever be fugitives.

Hosseini is a master story teller. Even though It didn’t show the plot of *Suns* quite as compelling as that of *Kite Runner*, the above-mentioned stylistic devices helped keep my attention fixed on the progress of the narrative. Based on my knowledge of the region, it is sure that for most Afghans, shared oral stories, songs, and poetry are more common experiences than individual reading of books and periodicals. Persia, which includes Afghanistan, does have a rich literary tradition, however, and many texts pass in and out of oral and written form. Layla and Majnun, for example, began as an Arabic folk story, was recorded in verse by the Persian poet Nizami in the 12th century, and is still familiar to Iranians young and old today, even though many of them have not read it. It would be interesting to hear from someone familiar with both oral and written traditions in Afghanistan as to whether Hosseini’s works represent devices typical of both traditions.

2. Figurative Language

The figurative language present in Khaled Hosseini's novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, shows how the Afghan culture is extremely oppressive in forcing people to follow tradition. The characters in the novel are constantly pressured by the thought of obeying a traditional value that it often forces the characters to act in certain ways.

Figurative language is the use of words in an unusual or imaginative manner (Newman, 1837: 93). Often figurative language involves the use of a metaphor, a simile, personification, hyperbole, idiom, a euphemism, and pun. However, as the term figurative language also covers unusual or imaginative word constructions (and not just word meanings), it also includes alliteration, assonance, consonance, and onomatopoeia. Here is some figurative languages that have been taken from the novel:

▪ Simile

- 1) "Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always. You remember that, Mariam." (Hosseini, 2009: 7)

This simile is effective in which it paints a literal image of a compass, and how men in Afghanistan, in Nana's opinion have overpowered women. The harshness of the simile exemplifies Nana's detrimental character and the persuasive impact she has on her daughter.

- 2) "They had played it for so long it had become a bedtime ritual, like brushing teeth" (Hosseini, 2009: 110)

This simile describes Laila and Tariq's flashlight game in which it emphasizes the closeness of their relationship.

- 3) "Another groan. A hand emerged, 'like a submarine periscope breaking surface and dropped.'" (Hosseini, 2009: 122)

The use of this simile is descriptive in which it portrays Mammy's hand appearing from the other side of the couch, as it effectively describes the state in which she is essentially unresponsive and secluded from the outside world.

- 4) "But we're like those walls up there. Battered, and nothing to look at, but still standing." (Hosseini, 2009: 149)

This statement was said by the taxi driver on Laila, Babi, and Tariq, in which he is comparing that the people of Afghanistan are symbolic of courage, as the collective may not be "pretty to look at," but they still have dignity to be standing bravely. This statement is very effective in that it expresses the accomplishment of survival, which seems to be an important idea in this novel.

- 5) "Laila felt like she was no better than these pots and pans, something that could go neglected, then laid claim to, at will, whenever the mood struck." (Hosseini, 2009: 164)

This simile is effective with the further development of Laila's vulnerable feelings around her mother, in which she compares herself to an inanimate object, which is clearly an exaggeration, yet a purposeful association.

- 6) "Her legs felt heavy, as though weights had been tethered to them." (Hosseini, 2009: 206)

Abdul Sharif visits to deliver devastating news to Laila. This simile exemplifies Laila's feeling before he even stated the news, in which she had already realized the purpose of his visit. The metaphor emphasizes Laila's strong emotions towards the subject as she is physically affected by her knowledge of Tariq's death.

- 7) "Mariam sat watching the girl out of the corner of her eye as Rasheed's demands and judgments rained down on them like the rockets on Kabul." (Hosseini, 2009: 224)

Mariam compares Rasheed's demands to be as destructive as the war, and the comparison she uses effectively defines how abusive he really is.

- 8) "A woman who will be like a rock in a riverbed, enduring without complaint." (Hosseini, 2009: 401)

Laila's comparison of Mariam to a "rock in a riverbed" is valuable in that it mentally paints of image of literally what she is describing. This is an expression how similar Mariam's story is to an object that is literally unable to act upon impact.

▪ Symbolism

- 1) "She noticed that every time she breathed out, the surface fogged. And she disappeared from her father's table" (Hosseini, 2009: 50)

Mariam is observing her reflection in her father's coffee table. At this moment, he has decided that rather than taking in his abandoned daughter, he will give her away to a business acquaintance. Mariam's breath could be representative of life, specifically her life, while the coffee table is symbolic of Jalil's precious household. When Mariam breathes out, or imposes herself upon Jalil's life, she essentially disappears, as if she means nothing to him.

- 2) “On the bus ride home from the doctor, the strangest thing was happening to Mariam. Everywhere she looked, she saw bright colors: on the drab, gray concrete apartments, on the tin-roofed, open-fronted stores, in the muddy water flowing in the gutters. It was as though a rainbow had melted into her eyes.” (Hosseini, 2009: 87)

At this time in the novel, Mariam is finally encountering a happy and positive experience. Her pregnancy literally has her glowing to the point that she is seeing the world around her as a beautiful place. The bright colors are effective in representing the euphoria Mariam bathes in.

- 3) “Then there was blood and she was screaming.” (Hosseini, 2009: 90)

Blood, going without saying often represents death or misfortune. In Mariam’s dreadful moment in the bathhouse, the mention of blood automatically indicates that something very bad has happened. This is an effective way of telling the reader that Mariam has lost the baby without directly stating it.

- 4) “This was a game that she played privately from time to time when Nana wasn’t looking. She put four pebbles in the first column, for Khadija’s children, three for Afsoon’s and three in the third column for Nargi’s children.” (Hosseini, 2009: 29)

As a young girl, Mariam would play this game with pebbles in which each pebble would represent a member of Jalil’s family. This is Mariam’s way of making herself feel included in Jalil’s life, as she anticipates that one day maybe he and his family will accept her as one of them. However, later on, Rasheed forces Mariam to chew on pebbles as punishment for her unsatisfactory cooking, as she ends up breaking two of her molars. As the pebbles represent a misconception, Mariam’s belief that people who may be kind to her is eventually shattered as they truly ended up harming her.

- 5) “And when the rockets began to rain down on Kabul, people ran for cover. Mammy did too, literally. She changed into black again, went to her room, shut the curtains, and pulled the blanket over her head.” (Hosseini, 2009: 172)

Throughout this section Mammy’s change in clothing often represents political and emotional destruction the people of Afghanistan are experiencing. In this passage specifically, Mammy wears black and essentially shuts herself from the outer world, which can also be an expression of the withdrawal and avoidance

she undergoes as a result of war.

- 6) “It’s the whistling,” Laila said to Tariq, “the damn whistling, I hate more than anything.” (Hosseini, 2009: 173)

The “whistling” Laila describes is directly symbolic of the rockets that rain down on Kabul, yet it can also have a more artistic meaning. The noise made by the rockets could also represent the destruction to emotion people are experiencing as a result.

- 7) “She thought of Aziza’s stutter, and of what Aziza had said earlier about fractures and powerful collisions deep down and how sometimes all we see on the surface is a slight tremor.” (Hosseini, 2009: 326)

This quote puts Aziza’s statement into perspective, as her stutter represents a mask for her grief.

- 8) “I’m sorry” Laila says, marveling at how every Afghan story is marked by death and loss and unimaginable grief. And yet, she sees, people find a way to survive, to go on. Laila thinks of her own life and all that has happened to her, and she is astonished that she too has survived, that she is alive and sitting in this taxi listening to this man’s story.” (Hosseini, 2009: 350)

Laila’s conversation with the taxi driver puts into perspective the reality her people face. The story of Afghan’s is symbolic of what she describes: loss and imaginable grief. This passage is effective in that it illustrates how many have experienced pain in the same way she has, which is symbolic of a collective power.

- 9) “In it she finds three things: an envelope, a burlap sack, and a videocassette.” (Hosseini, 2009: 403)

The three things Laila finds in the tin box from Jalil to Mariam effectively represent their relationship. The envelope is a symbol of the unspoken words, the burlap sack containing money is a gesture of apology, and the videocassette is the relationship Jalil wished he had with Mariam. The three objects represent Mariam and Jalil’s relationship in that it is apparent that it was never developed into something real.

- 10) “The orphanage playground has a row of apple saplings now along the east-facing wall. Laila is planning to plant some on the south wall as well as soon as it is rebuilt. There is a new swing set, new monkey bars, and a jungle gym.” (Hosseini, 2009: 411)

The passage describes Laila's efforts she has put into the orphanage are symbolic of her childhood, and how she was constantly reminded of friends and family that she will make a mark on the world. The orphanage fulfills this destiny.

- 11) "She slides in the key. It takes some rattling and shaking, but she opens the box." (Hosseini, 2009: 403)

After Laila has been overcome by curiosity, she opens the tin box that was a gift from Jalil to Mariam. The moment Laila opens the box symbolizes the moment of Mariam's past being temporarily brought to the present. This is a vital part of Laila's life as she learns more about her friend than she ever knew throughout their time together.

- 12) "One could not count the moons that shimmer on her roofs,
Or the thousand splendid suns that hid behind her walls."
(Hosseini, 2009: 392)

As Laila reflects upon her father's farewell ode to Kabul, one cannot help but notice the symbolism this powerful quote bears. This quote could be symbolic of how in tough times; it's difficult for people to see the light in the situation. The story *A Thousand Splendid Suns* encompasses the obstacles two women face, as one may imagine Laila would never be able to move on or forget her sad memories. However, Laila seems to have broken down the symbolic "walls" as she admits Mariam's memory shines within her with the intensity of a thousand splendid suns.

- Foreshadowing

- 1) "What's the matter with you?"
"You're bleeding, *hamshira!*" (Hosseini, 2009: 68)

Upon Mariam's first encounter with her neighbor, Fariba, Mariam is bombarded with questions regarding how many children she will have. Mariam quickly evacuates the conversation, and when doing so, she scrapes her knee badly. This is foreshadowing in which later on in the novel, Mariam has a miscarriage in a bathhouse. At this time, there is blood, which indicates the end of her temporary happiness.

- 2) "You see? This is what it means to be a woman in this world."
(Hosseini, 2009: 6)

Nana expresses bitterness towards Jalil and how he told his wives that Nana had forced herself on him. This quote that she states regarding her conditions foreshadows the way that Rasheed will

treat Mariam in the future.

- 3) “This was a game that she played privately from time to time when Nana wasn’t looking. She put four pebbles in the first column, for Khadija’s children, three for Afsoon’s and three in the third column for Nargi’s children.” (Hosseini, 2009: 29)

As a young girl, Mariam would play this game with pebbles in which each pebble would represent a member of Jalil’s family. This is Mariam’s way of making herself feel included in Jalil’s life, as she anticipates that one day maybe he and his family will accept her as one of them. However, later on, Rasheed forces Mariam to chew on pebbles as punishment for her unsatisfactory cooking, as she ends up breaking two of her molars. As the pebbles represent a misconception, Mariam’s belief that people who may be kind to her is eventually shattered as they truly ended up harming her.

- 4) “Outside, as she was climbing on the carrier pack of Babi’s bicycle, Laila spotted a car parked up the street, across from the house where the shoemaker, Rasheed, lived with his reclusive wife. It was a Benz, an unusual car in this neighborhood, blue with a thick white stripe bisecting the hood, the roof, and the trunk.” (Hosseini, 2009: 110)

The excessive use of description may appear to be insignificant; however, it is being used for a reason. The author is trying to bring the reader’s attention towards the story of Mariam and Rasheed, suggesting that at some point Laila may become a part of their lives.

- 5) “Laila was still shocked at how easily she’d come unhinged, but, the truth was, part of her had liked it, had liked how it felt to scream at Mariam, to curse at her to have a target at which to focus all her simmering anger, her grief. Laila wondered, with something like insight, if it wasn’t the same for Mariam” (Hosseini, 2009: 234)

This passage foreshadows how the two women will eventually discover their similarities, as with our knowledge of both Mariam’s and Laila’s past adversities, we can predict that these characters will eventually become close.

- 6) “And for the first time, it was not an adversary’s face Laila saw but a a face of grievances unspoken, burdens gone unprotected, a destiny submitted to and endured. If she stayed, would this be her own face, Laila wondered, twenty years from now?” (Hosseini,

2009: 249)

This excerpt does not only foreshadows Laila's future knowledge she is about to learn about Mariam, but also her intentions to leave the household, as she appears to be unsatisfied settling with her current lifestyle.

- Situational Irony

- 1) "He asked about Aziza's father, and Laila had the strange experience of telling a lie that was really the truth." (Hosseini, 2009: 317)

Laila's conversation with the orphanage director leads to an ironic moment in which she lies about the truth regarding Aziza's father. This is effective in that it interests the reader in the complications of Laila's life.

- 2) "May God grant you a long a prosperous life, my daughter." (Hosseini, 2009: 407)

This quote is an effective example of irony because Jalil's wish for Mariam does not come true, as his daughter dies at the hands of the Taliban.

- Repetition

- 1) "When Mariam thought of this baby, her heart swelled inside of her. It swelled and swelled until all the loss, all the grief, all the loneliness and self-abasement of her life washed away." (Hosseini, 2009: 89)

The repetition of the word "swelled" is used to emphasize Mariam's current happiness. This is effective because the fact that Mariam is so excited about becoming a mother makes her miscarriage all the more dramatic.

- Alliteration

- 1) "Treacherous daughters did not deserve to be mothers and this was just punishment." (Hosseini, 2009: 93)

The alliteration in this passage is relevant because it reinforces the fact that Mariam is very upset and plagued with guilt and grief that she is unable to deal with. The alliteration is written in such a way that Mariam's thoughts are expressed blatantly and without emotion. The way in which this is stated almost has a snide perception, as this is very fitting to Mariam's self-doubt and lack of confidence that is later intensified throughout the novel.

- Personification

- 1) "He described to her the green wheat fields of Herat, the orchards, the vines pregnant with plump grapes, the city's crowded, vaulted bazaars." (Hosseini, 2009: 5)

The use of personification to describe the grapes effectively paints an image of what they may look like. The use of the word "pregnant" also contributes to the image of pleasant weather in which pregnancy is often associated with spring.

- 2) "Kabul is waiting. Needing. This journey home is the right thing to do." (Hosseini, 2009: 392)

Kabul expressed in a way that it seems as if it is a human being with emotions. This effectively illustrates the connection Laila has to her home.

- Metaphor

- 1) "Mammy was now the curator of their lives' museum and she, Laila, a mere visitor. A receptacle for their myths. The parchment on which Mammy meant to ink their legends." (Hosseini, 2009: 142)

Three different metaphors are effectively communicated in this passage. The use of the image of a museum illustrates Laila's true feelings regarding her mother's worship of her deceased brothers. Through Mammy's actions, she has convinced Laila that Ahmad and Noor were heroes, and that Laila will never equivalently impress her. Laila therefore views herself as unimportant, and a "visitor" in the museum glorifying her brothers' accomplishments. The metaphors describing Laila as a receptacle as well as parchment paper is implying that Laila will never have stories that will live up to the magnitude of their greatness.

- Parallelism

- 1) "Mammy's heart was like a pallid beach where Laila's footprints would forever wash away beneath the waves of sorrow that swelled and crashed, swelled and crashed." (Hosseini, 2009: 144)

The use of this simile is very similar to the symbolism regarding Mariam's reflection disappearing from Jalil's coffee table. In this case, Laila is disappearing from Mammy's figurative life, as her footprints are making no permanent impression in her mother's mind.

- 2) "Tariq said that one of the men who shared his cell has a cousin

who'd been publicly flogged once for painting flamingos." (Hosseini, 2009: 330)

The use of parallelism is effective due to Tariq's unawareness of what Laila has been experiencing in his absence. The circumstance of being punished unjustly is a prominent component in Laila's life regarding abuse received from Rasheed and the Taliban, and the parallel plots regarding Tariq's story and Laila's life is worthy of note.

- Allusion

- 1) "It told the story of an old fisherman named Santiago who catches and enormous fish. But by the time he sails his boat to safety, there is nothing left of his prize fish; the sharks have torn it to pieces." (Hosseini, 2009: 152)

The story Babi reads underneath an acacia tree is "The Old Man and the Sea," by Earnest Hemmingway. This story alludes to the plot of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* itself, in which both stories are a battle against complications, implicating hope in situations of hopelessness, and the demonstration of the unbelievable capability of the human spirit.

- 2) "That summer, Titanic fever gripped Kabul." (Hosseini, 2009: 303)

The mention of the movie *Titanic* in the novel alludes to the similarities between the two plots. The story of Jack and Rose, and Laila and Tariq are comparable in that two people fall in love despite their differences. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* as well as *Titanic* illustrate the life and death the couple faces as their adversities draw them apart.

- Imagery

- 1) "But her mind was far away free and fleet hurdling like a speeding missile beyond Kabul, over craggy brown hills, and over deserts ragged with clumps of sage, past cannons of jagged red rock. And over snowcapped mountains." (Hosseini, 2009: 208)

While Abdul Sharif tells her about Tariq's death, Laila's reaction is portrayed with the use of imagery, as she appears to be not exactly present in their conversation. The description is used to illustrate Laila's mental absence as the devastating news has her feeling not only far away from her current location, but also far away from everything she has ever known.

- 2) "In silence, Laila looked at their reflection, at faces that had aged beyond their years, at the pouches and lines and sags that now

marked their once scrubbed, youthful faces.” (Hosseini, 2009: 376)

This imagery is effective in that it illustrates the time that has passed in the separation of Tariq and Laila, yet underneath their changed appearances they are the same people.

- 3) “Laila likes Muree’s cool, foggy mornings and its dazzling twilights, the dark brilliance of the sky at night; the green of the pines and the soft brown of the squirrels darting up and down the sturdy tree trunks; the sudden downpours that send shoppers in the Mall scrambling for awning cover.” (Hosseini, 2009: 377)

The imagery portrayed in this passage expresses a change in Laila’s life, as she appreciates her surroundings and notices the small details. This effectively shows Laila’s significant shift from disorder to serenity.

- Irony

- 1) “She was stunned that he’d used that word, in the face of all that the Mujahideen factions had done – the murders, the lootings, the rapes, the tortures, the executions, the bombings, the tens of thousands of rockets they had fired at each other, needless of all the innocent people who would die in the cross fire. Order. But she bit her tongue.” (Hosseini, 2009: 266)

Laila’s definition of the word “order” greatly contrasts with the opinion of the officer. As he is sending her, Mariam and Aziza back home to maintain this alleged “order,” Laila cannot help but to realize the irony of his words. This passage is effective in that it defines the brutality of the Mujahideen’s infliction on society and how corrupt Laila’s world has become.

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