

**Tribhuvan University**

**Subjection of an Individual: Reading Khaled Hosseini's**

*A Thousand Splendid Suns*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in English**

**By**

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**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled “Subjection of an Individual: Reading Khaled Hosseini’s *A Thousand Splendid Suns*” submitted to Central Department of English, T.U. Kirtipur, by Shankar Prasad Khanal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Shankar Prasad Khanal has completed his thesis entitled “Subjection of an Individual: Reading Khaled Hosseini’s *A Thousand Splendid Suns*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from August 2009 to February 2010. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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## **Abstract**

Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* shows how individuals are subjugated in the trap of different power personas. In the novel, Afghanistan itself seems a victim of power. In Afghanistan, Soviet Union stands as power persona and it creates different kind of discourse in the name of communism to rule over the natives. Later on Taliban comes by overthrowing the communist regime and starts to rule over the nation by using Islam religion as a powerful means to create discourse and to remain in power. But after the attack in Twin Tower in New York, American desire to rule over Afghanistan overflows and Afghanistan once again becomes victim of American discourse. In this way, establishment of discourse and power seeking tendency of West is a key theme of this novel. The action and will of the power persona clarify it. The Foucauldian Reading critically analyzes the tendency of European and Taliban to rule upon Afghanistan by creating different discourses like-discourse of religion, modernity, patriarchy as well as ethnicity, and they make Afghanistan as their play ground to fulfill their interests.

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Shankar Prasad Khanal

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## **I. Discourse in *A Thousand Splendid Suns***

Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, depicts the subjection of individuals as the victims of discourses created by different power personas within the Afghan society. First of all, Soviet Union stands as power persona and rules over Afghanistan in the name of communism. Later Taliban by overthrowing the communism starts its own rule and creates its own discourse to rule over the country. And at last America comes as a power persona blaming Taliban as preserver of terrorist. Discourse of patriarchy and religion also play a great role to rule over the innocent native Afghan people.

Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1965. His father was a diplomat with the Afghan foreign ministry and his mother taught Farsi and history at a high school in Kabul. In 1976, the Afghan foreign ministry relocated Hosseini's family to Paris. They were ready to return Kabul in 1980, but by then Afghanistan had already witnessed a bloody communist coup and the invasion of Soviet Army. Hosseini sought and were granted political Asylum in United States. In September of 1980, his family moved to California. Hosseini graduated in 1984 and enrolled at Santa Clara University where he earned a bachelor's degree in biology in 1988.

The following year, he entered the University of California, Santiago, school of medicine, where he earned his MD in 1993. He completed his residency in internal medicine at Cedars Sinai medical center in Los Angeles in 1996. He practiced medicine until a year and half after the release of *The Kite Runner*. He is currently a good-will envoy for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR). His memory of peaceful pre-Soviet era of Afghanistan is remembered in this way: "I have very fond memories of my childhood in Afghanistan" (254).

His first novel, *The Kite Runner* reveals the story of a young boy, Amir juggling to establish a closer rapport with his father and coping with memories of haunting childhood events. Its main theme includes the ethnic tensions between the Hazara and the Pashtun in Afghanistan, and the immigrant experiences of Amir and his father in US.

*The Kite Runner* seriously reveals the representation of contemporary Afghan history; Russian invasion in Afghanistan and their hegemony for decade and the rise of Taliban brings war, hunger, uncertainty of life, land mine, and refugee problem in Afghanistan. Russian soldiers destroy the village, mine, school and natural resources. On the other hand, Taliban also prohibit the culture, that is, kite flying ritual. They destroy not only ethnic groups like Hazara but also destroy cultural heritage, that is, Buddha in Bamiyan. Indirect domination of America to support the Taliban against Russian in cold war period, and ethnic, religious and cultural differences among them create problems in Afghanistan. Moreover, *The Kite Runner* offers the present ethnic and religious conflicts in today's Afghanistan. The political landscape suddenly changes when twin towers had fallen in New York City in nine eleven. America suddenly invaded Afghanistan and captured the then government by creating discourse of terrorism to hegemonize Afghan people. Khaled Hosseini in the novel counters this discourse.

Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* dwells upon the story of two women of Afghanistan, Marian and Laila whose lives become entwined. This Afghan-American author follows his debut (*The Kite Runner*, 2003) with a fine risk-taking novel about two victimized but courageous Afghan women Mariam and Laila. In 1987, the story switches to a neighbor, nine-year-old Laila, and her playmate Tariq and her parents. It is the 8<sup>th</sup> year of soviet occupation – misfortune for the nation, but



buoyancy for women, who are granted unprecedented freedom. Kabul's true suffering begins in 1992. The Soviets have gone, and rival warlords are tearing the city apart. Before, he leaves for Pakistan, Tariq and Laila make love; soon after, her parents are killed by a rocket. The story lines merge when Rasheed and Mariam shelter the solitary Laila. Rasheed has his own agenda which is none other than male chauvinistic thinking; the fourteen-years-old Laila becomes his second wife over Mariam's objection.

When we go through the critical discussion of the novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* in light of Foucauldian discourse; we should come closer to the Foucault's notion about discourse. As Foucault says discourse is an instrument of power and power is a running horse whose rein is in the power holder. Hereby in the text Taliban stands as power persona, creates discourses and rules over the indigenous Afghan people because it holds clutch of power on the one hand and Rasheed on the other hand stands as power persona creates discourse and rules over the innocent women and girls and uses them as his commodity, means for sexual pleasure and his own property.

Rasheed despite the objections of Mariam makes Laila his next wife to quench his corporeal pleasure and gives her an heir. But to his disgust Laila has the daughter, Aziza, in time he will realize Tariq is the father. Rasheed grows increasingly hostile even frenzied. Relief comes when Laila gives birth to a boy but it is short lived and transitory. He compels her to wear burqa. Wife to virgin was compulsory so that after sex between Rasheed and Laila she cuts her finger and marks the sheet with her own blood. So he will think that she was a virgin.

The heart of the novel is the gradual bonding between the girl-mother and the much older women. But in Taliban control, women must stay home. Rasheed

loses his business, they have no food; Aziza is sent to an orphanage. The dramatic final section includes a murder. Despite all the pains and heart breaking situation the novel is never depressing; Hosseini quarrels through each grim development seeking illumination.

Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* reveals the heart breaking but hopeful story of two Afghan women along with the other individual characters who are badly suffered by the discourse within their own culture, society and country and the discourse by Taliban rule. Mariam and Laila are in poignant situation and they are brought jarringly together by tragic sweep of war. They are living with fear, violence, atrocity and anguish. Because of the male chauvinism which is deeply prevailed in Afghan society. They are treated as goods and chattel. Their position in Afghan society is none other than commodity where male used them as object. Rasheed makes Laila to his next wife, although, Mariam his previous wife shows many objections not to do so. Rasheed beats them brutally as if they are his subjects.

In the novel we can notice that in September 1996, the Taliban rolls into Kabul to take over from the Mujahedeen. The citizens are courteously optimistic because they think of the Taliban as pious men as opposed to the chaotic, corrupt Mujahedeen who are going rich of heroin production and killing everyone in sight. But in the name of establishment of peace and progress, it created a kind of discourse and started to devastate Afghanistan. Taliban dynamited the huge Buddha in Bamiyan, which was probably the greatest historical artifact in Afghanistan. Taliban closed off the hospital to women. They have to go to a sub standard facility filled with disparate women. The place is unsanitary, stinking and chaotic. Afghani people have to accept whatever the Taliban soldiers do because one day when Rasheed takes Laila and Mariam and Aziza out for a walk in the streets, they witnessed a Taliban soldier

screaming through a loudspeaker at the crowd. Behind him, two men who have been tortured to death hang from the traffic lights. They are Nijibullah, the last president and his brother. Every individual is also subjugated. The religious penalties that would be exacted upon the impious, including, cutting off someone's hands for stealing and cutting off a woman's finger if she wears nail polish. Women are also supposed to wear the burqa at all times if a man asks. If they have committed adultery, they will be stoned to death. There was no care about the death of Afghani people because Laila's parents were killed by a rocket and her friend also.

In this way, every individual is subjected from different ways or discourses created by different groups like male, Soviet Union, Taliban, religion etc.

Since the publication of this novel many critics have been able to draw attention on *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini. Critics have interpreted the novel from different perspectives and stand points. How the women in Afghan society are facing the same problem in their lives either they are from the different culture or family background. Kristine Huntley says:

Hosseini's follow-up to his best selling debut, *The Kite Runner* (2003) views the plight of Afghanistan during the last half-century through the eyes of women. Mariam is the illegitimate daughter of a maid and a businessman who is given away in marriage at 15 to Rasheed, a man three times her age; their union is not a loving one. Laila is born to educated, liberal parents in Kabul the night the communists take over Afghanistan. Adored by his father but neglected in favour of her older brothers by her mother, Laila finds her true love early in Tariq, a thoughtful, chivalrous boy who lost a leg in an explosion. But when tensions between the communist and Mujahideen make the city unsafe,

Tariq and his family flee to Pakistan. A devastating tragedy brings Laila to the house of Rasheed and Mariam, where she is forced to make a horrific choice to secure her future. (336)

Here, Huntley reveals the plightful situation of women in Afghanistan during the last half-century, when communists take over Afghanistan. Russia lashed the missile, and direct victim of it is the family of Tariq whom Laila loves a lot. Because of that invading, Tariq becomes wounded. Then Laila has to take the shelter to Rasheed's house for her survival but Rasheed makes her wife, although there is tremendous split between their ages.

Tale of rivalry, danger, sacrifice and love in a war-torn country and a small neighborhood is the main goal of the novel. Joyce Kessel says:

Hosseini's brilliant sophomore novel is powerfully bittersweet as he places two haunting protagonists inside the perilous history of the city of Kabul, Afghanistan. Marian, the elder, and Laila provide, a distinctly female view of over thirty years of apparent change and suffering in a war-torn country and a small neighborhood. Their individual stories collide and intersect in a protagonist's tale of rivalry, danger, sacrifice and love. This program is masterfully performed by Atossa Leoni as she transports the listener into an inblinking world. (227)

Here the critic powerfully portrays the bitter sweet state of two hunting protagonists inside the city of Kabul, Afghanistan over thirty years of apparent change and suffering and war turn country. Thus, this novel according to Kessel is a tale of rivalry, danger, sacrifice and love.

Hosseini's moving story shows the women from different upbringings whose fates are determined by the events of political turmoil. Atossa Leoni says:

Following his best – selling debut, *The Kite Runner* (2003), Hosseini returns to Afghanistan with another moving tale told through the experiences of two women whose fates are determined by events far beyond their control. Mariam and Laila, separated by a generation as well as vastly different upbringings, become unlikely, friends and family when political turmoil – the Russian occupation and its aftermath- produces deadly repercussions in Kabul. Both suffer personal tragedy and abuse, yet these resilient women demonstrate strength in the face of suffering. (116)

Both protagonists, Mariam and Laila are from two different or separate cults by generation and vastly different upbringing and family but the sorry thing is that they have same fate when there is political turmoil, the Russian occupation. Both suffer personal tragedy and abuse.

Hosseini's novel includes the issue of class, religion, education, race, sexual roles, sacrifice and lives of characters in descriptive way. Hoffert Babara says:

This book covers the issue of class, religion, work, education, sexual roles and raising children. All are highlighted by the tumult of Afghanistan's story. This is a very descriptive, well written story; you can feel and sense the character's lives. The first half was a little slow and it is clear that this will be a "blue journey." The sacrifices of these two women give the reader a slideshow of the harshness of their lives. Part three is the peak of the story. This is where the two women's

relationship truly meshed. The fourth part sees Afghanistan opening to modernity and less traumatic. A very good and poignant reading. (58)

Here, Barbara clarifies the different parts of the book and the issues raised by the book like religious issue, political issue, educational issue, and sexual role on the society, lives of Afghanistan people.

Lives of women are under control of males. They have no right to choose their male partners and were cloth according to their will. Another critic K. Thatcher says:

Mariam is bastard. Her mother was a housekeeper for a rich businessman in Herat, Afghanistan, until he impregnated and banished her. Her father then married off the fifteen years old to Rasheed, 40s, shoemaker in Kabul, hundreds of mile away. Rasheed is deeply conventional who insists that Mariam wear a burqa, though many women are going uncovered. (187)

Here, Thatcher shows the male brutality upon the female in Afghan society. Females have to suffer a lot being a female. They have no right to choose their male partner. They have to marry according to their parent's desire, as Mariam who becomes obliged to accept the forty's, Rasheed as her husband. Therefore, they have no right to create their own fate. Rasheed is a deeply conventional, who insists that Mariam wear a burqa.

In nutshell, this research critically analyzes that how the power persona Rasheed lives by creating discourse of patriarchy, and Russia with colonial discourse. They understand these discourses as strategies and aims to extend their control forcibly over the native Afghanistan and innocent native women. They create several discourses time and again to exploit and remain in power. The control of power persona is not just political or cultural but economic and religious also.

For the purpose of analyzing the research issue mentioned above the research work is divided into four chapters: the first chapter is introductory which partially reflects the whole thesis and its issue; the second chapter is about theoretical tool. The Foucauldian discourse in relation to colonialism which the researcher is using as methodology to analyze the text; the third is the analysis of the text in the light of ideas developed in time of setting up theoretical modality in chapter two and the fourth chapter concludes the thesis by restating the issue and what the researcher has discussed in the research.

## **II. Discourse as an Instrument of Power**

Discourse is not simply a body of words and sentences, but the very structure in which the social world is constructed and controlled as an object of knowledge. What is more Michel Foucault argued is it is in discourse that power, knowledge and truths are joined together. The study of discourse is thus inseparable from the study of institutional power, discipline and domination.

There is no single meaning of the word discourse, even if one takes in a technical sense. Discourses are simply a dialogue between speakers. In Foucault's view, various social practices and institutions for examples, those of education and political ritual and the law are constituted by and situated within forms of discourse. A discourse, on this view is a means of both producing and organizing meaning within a social context. Language is thus a key notion within this view, for it is language which embodies discourses. As such, a discourse constitutes a discursive formation; i.e. discourses are conceived of a signifying ways of systematically organizing human experience there by constituting modes of knowledge. On Foucault's account, it follows that the realm of discourse can have a repressive function. Accompanying this notion of discourse is the contention that such concept as subjectivity cannot be understood as they have generally been within the politician tradition.

Thus, a discourse is a system of statement within which and by which the world can be known. Foucault's notion of discourse is firmly bounded area of knowledge. For him, the word is not simply to be talked about, rather it is discourse itself within which the world comes into being. It is that complex of signs and practices that organizes social existence and social reproduction, which determines how experiences and identities are categorized. It depends on whom does it serve.



Discourse is one of the most frequently used terms from Foucault's work. It refers to all the utterances whether spoken or written that signify something at underlying level including the generation of meaning. It is a way of presenting something in straight sense; it is talking and communicating using signs to designate things. In this concern Michel Foucault uses the term as, "discourse to refer to the general domain of all statement, sometimes as an individual group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that account for a number of statements which have been made which have meaning and which have some effects" (53).

In broad sense, discourse can help us to interpret many slices of our social and political system that we never even considered before. It also helps to illuminate part of the ordinary world that is controlled by the support of society. Foucault advances the principles of discourse in relation to power structure acting in a society by stating that discourses are deeply rooted in social organization. So, discourse and power cannot be separated. Foucault clarifies discourse as a result of power or discourse stands as an instrument and an effect of power. As Foucault views:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also hindrances, a stumbling, block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (54)

Discourse is a major point in society that affects how we can speak act and interpret things and it all depends on power holder. So, discourse serves the power holders.

Foucault states, “Posing for discourse the question of power means basically to ask whom does discourse serve? It is not so much a matter of analyzing discourse into its unsaid, its implicit and meaning because discourses are transparent, they need no interpretation” (1137).

Each society has its regime of truth or disciplines, that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true. The mechanism and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements. It is worked through the institution and whatever it supports can be the truth and whatever it rejects, can't be the truth. So, each society has some disciplines which are controlled by power holder.

Discipline can also function as power and by the help of this; power holder creates a kind of discourse. Foucault states:

“Discipline” is a type of power, a modality for its exercise comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, level of application, targets, it is a physics or as anatomy of power, and technology. And it may be taken over either by specialized institutions that use it as an essential instruments for a particular end or by pre-existing authorities that find in it a reinforcing and reorganizing their internal mechanism of power or by apparatuses that have made discipline their principle of internal functioning or finally by state apparatuses whose major, if not exclusive function is to assure that discipline reigns over society as a whole. (206)

Discourse is not merely a sign but is a set of practices that constitutes the objects in which it is speaking of most importantly. It is a system of constraints or exclusion which sets boundaries for what can and cannot be said or done in our everyday lives. The experts who have the power define the discipline in our daily lives. And it

determines for us what is proper and improper through the eyes of the experts. This knowledge helps create the truth. So, power works through language which can be written or spoken. Norman Fairclough talks about the power of language. For him utterance is a type of discourse which becomes truth due to the power because it is spoken by power holders; as he states, “power in discourse is concerned with discourse as a place where relations of power are actually exercised and enabled. I discuss power in face to face spoken discourse”(43). People are governed, their tastes formed their ideas suggested their minds are molded largely by a system which is controlled by some powerful institutions. Those powerful institutions govern us by their qualities and their position in the social structure and every act of our lives whether in the sphere of religion, ethical thinking, we are eliminated by a small number of persons who understand the mental process and social patterns of the masses. Foucault says:

In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of producers whose role is towards off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality. (57)

Different technologies also stand as discourse. Technical means can manipulate the public mind and create public acceptance for the particular ideas.

Raymond William views technology as:

It is often said that television has altered our world. In the same way, people often seek of a new world, a new society, new phase of history, being created brought about by this or that new technology the steam engine, the automobile etc. most of us know what is generally applied when such things are said. But this may be the

central difficulty; that we have got so used to statements of this general kind, in our most ordinary discussions that we can fail to realize their specific meaning. (1)

Hence, discourse is a term widely used in a variety of disciplines: critical theory, sociology, linguistics, philosophy and many others. Foucault has used widely the term discourse in his discussions of power, knowledge and truth. Discourse, for him, is the practice that systematically forms the objects of which they speak and effects of truth are produced within discourse which in themselves are neither true nor false.

Whatever a power persona utters, it becomes acceptable due to power. So, discourse is a means of power and supports the power holder.

Peter Hulme defines 'colonial discourse' which regulates all colonial relations between European colonizer and non-European as colonized in all places; and at all times Stephen Slemon writes Peter Hulme vision as: "Colonial Discourse as an ensemble of linguistically based practices unified by their common development in the management of colonial relations" (14). Columbus misheard the word 'Carib' as 'Canibal' when he first reached in America and this discursively manufactured mishearing precipitates the noun 'Canibal' into European language.

When European came in non-Europe, they saw people unlike them. They did not find their way of wearing, and talking and called the natives strange. It is colonial discourse to scale the people according to their own interpretation. They saw their babbling sound and called them 'Barbaric' and the word came into dictionary. So, it is the European tendency to rule upon non- European by creating such type of discourse. Stephen Slemon states:

Columbus' understanding is productive of a specifically colonial discourse that regulates not only how Europe understands it's other but

also, foundationally how European 'Sovereign' subjects understand themselves. (14)

Colonial discourse is thus, a system of statements that can be made about colonies and colonial people about colonizing power and about the relationship between these two. It is the system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within which act of colonization takes place. Although it is generated within the society and the cultures of the colonizers, it becomes that discourse within which the colonized may also come to see themselves. At the very least, it creates a deep conflict in the consciousness of the colonized because of its clash with other knowledge about the world. Rules of inclusion and exclusion operate on the assumption of the superiority of the colonizer's culture, history, language, art, political structures social conventions and the assertion of the need for the colonized to be 'raised up' through colonial contact. Bill Ashcroft states:

Discourse as Foucault theories it is a system of statements within which the world can be known. It is the system by which dominant groups in society constitute the field of truth of imposing specific knowledge, discipline and values upon dominated groups. As a social formation it works to constitute reality not only for the subjects it appears to represent but also for the subjects who form the community on which it depends. Consequently, colonial discourse is the complex of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within colonial relationship. (42)

Colonial discourse tends to exclude, of course, statements about the exploitation of the resources of the colonized the political status accruing to colonizing powers, the imports of domestic politics of the development of an empire, all of which may be

compelling reasons for maintaining colonialism. Rather it conceals these benefits in statements about the inferiority of the colonized, the primitive nature of other races, the barbaric depravity of colonized societies, and therefore the duty of imperial power to reproduce itself in the colonial society, and to advance the civilization of the colony through trade, administration, culture and moral improvement. Statements that contradict the discourse cannot be made either without incurring punishment as without making the individuals who make those statements appear eccentric and abnormal. Benita Perry a post colonial critic quotes Bhabha's notion as:

Though native's strange questions it is possible to see, with historical hindsight, what they resisted in questioning the presence of the English as religious mediation and as cultural and linguistics medium. To the extent to which discourse is a form of defensive warfare, then mimicry marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility signs of spectacular resistance. When the words of the master sign of the nature then the words of the master become the sign of hybridity the warlike sign of the native then we may not only read between the lines, but even seek to change the often coercive reality that they so lucidly contain.(72)

Colonial power tricks by establishing discourse to trap the people and people are fallen into a trap and they are obliged to believe though they have different opinions, but they cannot do anything against it because colonial power is stronger than the natives and whatever the power holders say becomes the truth. Leela Gandhi quotes Bill Ashcroft's view as:

Natives have so often fallen into the trap of essentialism set for them by imperial discourse . . . the result is the positioning of the indigenous

people as the ultimately marginalized, a concept which reinscribes the binarism of centre/ margin and prevents their engagement with the subtle process of imperialism. (136)

Colonial discourse also involves representation. The political purpose of representation is to expose the falsity of this mode of presenting the colonial subject as the Other to the self of dominant culture. Representation of 'Other/ Strange' is a discourse formed by west about the non-west. It is created and made by the west to govern the non-western. In this regard, Edward Said says about orientalism and representation as: "it is the style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction made between the orient and occident" (2). Social construct of 'Self and Other' provides the fundamental building blocks for the uneven relation among their citizenry. Bill Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin View about Gayatri Spivak's concept on 'Other' as:

This term was coined by Gayatri Spivak for the process by which imperial discourse creates its other where as the other corresponds to the focus of desire or power (the mother or father -or empire) in relation to which the subject is produced, the other is the excluded or 'mastered' subjected created by the discourse of power. Othering describes the variously ways in which colonial discourse produces its subjects. In Spivak's explanation, Othering is a dialectical process because the colonizing others are established at the same time as it's colonized others is produced as subjects. (171)

Under colonization, construction of the colonized other establishes certain structure of domination through which the colonizer triumphed. Similarly, counter-colonial challenges frequently involve subordinated groups reclaiming, pre colonial identities

or revalorizing identities made under the force of colonialism. The process by which notions of the self and other are defined, articulated and negotiated are a crucial part of what might be thought of as the cultural dimension of colonization and post-colonialism; M. H. Abrahams presents:

Discourse has become the focal term among critics who oppose the destructive concept of general text functions independently of particular historical condition. Instead they conceive of discourse as social parlance or language in use and consider it to be both the product and manifestation not of a timeless linguistic system but of particular social condition. Class structures and power relationship that alter in the course of history.(262)

Foucault claims that the figure who until then had been considered to be a theorist could not be seen any more as a subject and as a result of this the intellectual was not seen, to be seen any more as the 'representative consciousness' of society. The theorist has ceased to be a subject, a presenting representative consciousness but not the actual representation of the objects. There is no longer any representation; there is only action, theory's action, the action of practice in the relationship of networks Said agrees with Foucault's view of discourse in this way:

I have found it useful here to employ Michel Foucault's notion of discourse as described by him in the *Archaeology of Knowledge and Discipline and Punish* to identify Orientalism. My intention is that without understanding Orientals as discourse one cannot possibly understand enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage and even produce the orient politically,



sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-enlightenment period. (335)

It was in this context and in relation to his criticism of traditional western epistemology that Foucault started to connect more firmly the role that the intellectual and culture play in the frame of the power relations that construct the subject. The role of the intellectual has been diversified together with the multiple forces in which Foucauldian power relations act within the social network. Discourse is a system of flexibility of acts by which influential groups in society construct the field of truth through the means of certain knowledge, values and discipline upon marginalized ones. Excluding Other's idea and perspectives, discourse highlights over the targeted aims by producing the objects of knowledge in intellectual way. Edward said claims: "the relation between occident and orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying of a complex homogeny . . ." (337). He says that cultural discourse and exchange within a culture which is commonly circulated are not truth but only the representations.

Truth and identities are not fixed entities because both of them are temporary stabilization of essence influenced by discursive constructions. So, identities are the outcome of discourse. Hegemony and discourse both are essential elements of cultural studies. Hegemony is a trend of constructing, maintaining and reconstructing other culture. The understanding and consent can be obtained through influential practices of hegemonic discourse.

Colonial discourse is the complex structure of signs and practices that maintains social existence within colonial tie. The link between knowledge and power is very significant. In *Key Concept in Postcolonial Studies* Aschroft Griffiths, and Tiffin elaborate Foucault's view about discourse and representation as:

Discourse is important, therefore, because it joins power and knowledge together. Those who have power have control of what is known and the way it is known as those who have such knowledge have power over those who do not. This link between knowledge and power is particularly important in the relationship between colonizers and colonized. (72)

Quoting the perspective of Cromer, Said puts forwards: “[. . .] once again knowledge of subject, races of Orientals is what makes their management easy and profitable. Knowledge gives power, and power requires more knowledge and so in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control” (368).

Discourse is the means of power holder. Sometime power holder uses his old formula ‘Divide and Rule’ and sometimes he persuades the people as if he is the messenger of god. He tries to hegemonize the native people. Hegemony is associated with acceptance of colonial imposition through idea, message or teaching. In this reference Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffen state:

Fundamentally hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince Other class that their interests are the interests of all. Domination is thus exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion but by more subtly and inclusive power over the economy and over state apparatus, such as education, media and industrial products by the ruling class’ interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted. (116)

Thus, discourse is an instrument of power and power is also generated through discourse because there is an inseparable tie between them. Discourse is used by the power personal to throw the dust into the eyes of the colonized.

To control others, one must have control over things that they desire or need. For example, an employer usually wields considerable power over his workers because he has control over wages, working conditions, hiring and firing. The workers, however, hold some reciprocal power. Power operates both relationally and reciprocally. Michel Foucault views power as:

Power is often conceptualized as the capacity of power agents to realize their will over powerless people, and the ability to force them to do things which they do not wish to do. Power is also often seen as a possession. Something which is held onto by those in power and which those who are powerless try to wrest from their control. (35)

The power is generated in society by producing the discourse and by constructing the truths. It is accepted in society and that acceptance is the outcome of our constructed truths. So, power is the ability to influence the behavior of others in order to further particular desire and purpose. Power is acted out from the positive and negative aspects. The absolute power is acted out to control or to rule.

Power forces us to re-conceptualize not only power itself but also the role that individuals play in power relations – whether they are simply subjected to oppression or whether they actively play a role in the form of their relations with others and with institutions. Foucault says:

I am not referring to power with a capital dominating and imposing its rationality upon the totality of the social body. In fact, there are power relations they are multiple; they have different forms, they can be in

play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration.

(35)

Discourse becomes the truth, when it comes within power or when it supports power. For example the religious people think, they are close to god and can communicate with god, now set themselves apart from the rest of the community. They are powerful because they have access to power. They form a class and whatever they say becomes the truth because they have power and it is the power of religion. Foucault states:

“Truth” is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. It is linked in a circular relation with system of power that produces and sustains in, and to effect of power which it induces and which extended it- a regime of truth. (132)

Likewise, there are many types of power: religious power, power of science and technology, economic power and many more. Each type of power has its own time and degree of activeness. But the fundamental goal of these power users is to rule the people. In every period of history, the way power is exercised and the means employed in its exercise make a difference both to those who use power to those against whom it is used. Noam Chomsky says that the imperial countries are immune because if anyone tries to resist, they establish another kind of discourse supported with power to control over the powerless. He states: “if you look through hundred of years of history, the imperial countries have been basically immune. There are plenty atrocities, but they are somewhere else” (4). Lord Acton’s famous dictum, “All power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely”, reflects the basic trends of power.

Institutional power which is legally authorized creates discourse to manipulate power over the powerless. Power holder always tries to show by establishing discourse that he is right and others are wrong. He gives his own way of interpretation and doesn't care for others. Noam Chomsky puts George Bush' view, when America was attacked by Al-Kayada. Bush established discourse by ignoring the reality to show America is always right and raises the voice of opportunity and equality. The lust for power, and not just power itself corrupts gifted men and turns into tyrants who cannot abide dissent or even questioning. Wole Soyinka States:

Well, the first thing is that truth and powers from me an antithesis, an antagonism, which will hardly ever be resolved. I can define in fact, can simply by the history of human society, the evolution of human society, as a contest between power and freedom, power is domination, control and therefore a very selective form of truth which is lie.(6)

Here, Soyinka tries to say that colonial discourse is a system of statements that can be made about colonies and colonial peoples, about colonial powers and about the relationship between these two. It is the system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within the acts of colonization. Colonizer always creates discourse to manipulate his power.

### **Discourse as Strategy for Ruling and Survival**

A discourse has a variety of meanings. Most usually, discourse has been taken to mean the exercise of force or control over individuals or particular social group by other individuals or groups to rule and to survive. Sara Mill also talks about a discourse as strategy for ruling and survival as:

Discourse is not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for

the complex and unstable process whereby discourses can be both an instrument and effect of power, but also a hindrance a stumbling blocks, a point of resistance and a starting point if an opposing strategy. It works as a ruling and survival. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (54)

Discourse in this view, is something extrinsic to the constitution of both individuals and society. Foucault claims that discourse is not only constitutive of social reality and of such social forms as subjectivity. Foucault remarks that the constitution of discourse has internal as well as external mechanisms which keep certain discourse in exercise.

The Bible can be considered as a discourse because religious people try to convert the other into Christians to rule and to survive. If they are successful to convert they can colonize the other hegemonic ally and there is less chance of rebelling.

Another internal regulator of discourse is modernity because it's modernity through which the colonizer can colonize the other. In the name of fashion and technology the west always tries to remain in power and wants to keep its superiority.

The postcolonial critics Bill Ashcroft, Helen Tiffin and Gareth Griffiths also assert that modernity is a style of discourse which is used by the Europe. They view: "discourse is greatly implicated by ideas of the centrality of Europe, and thus in assumptions that has become characteristics of modernity: assumptions about history, language, literature and technologies" (42). They view that in the name of consumption the Europe sends their products not only to spread their business but also to compel other to accept their culture. They again state: "in post colonial societies it

is by no means the bourgeoisie alone who have gained access to popular cultural media such as television of consumable such as Coca-cola” (52).

Discourse tends to exclude, of course, statements about the exploitation of the resources of the colonized, the political status accruing to colonizing powers, the importance to domestic politics of the development of an empire, all of which may be compelling reasons for maintaining colonial ties. Rather it conceals these benefits in statements about the inferiority of the colonized, the primitive nature of other races, the barbaric depravity of colonized societies and therefore, the duty of the imperial power to reproduce itself in the colonial society, and to advance the civilization of the colony through religion, Modernity (fashion, trade, technology), administration, culture and moral improvement only to manipulate their power over the non-Europeans. So, discourse is crated to rule and to survive by the power holder.

### **III. Representation of Contemporary Afghan History in Hosseini's**

#### ***A Thousand Splendid Suns***

In the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* Khaled Hosseini explores the contemporary history in the background of Afghanistan. The text paints an eye opening picture of what Afghanistan was and what it has become. It describes vividly how the combination of war devastates a country and people. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* also illuminates the fact that most Afghan refugees are just the peace loving, law abiding people who are in America, Pakistan and other countries because their beloved homeland has been rendered uninhabitable. Furthermore, the religious and ethnic consciousness shapes the individual mind resulting heart aching domination.

It talks a great extend about the Russian invasion in Afghanistan and Taliban era in which, study of Afghanistan would be incomplete without studying of hunger, fear, war, landmines, refugees, atrocities and so on.

In the novel Soviet Union, Taliban and indirectly America stand as power persona, who are clever, resourceful, quick-witted, amoral and vicious who play tricks to deceive, cheat and connive in order to outdo and take advantage of the native Afghanistan and innocent women. When we go through the novel different things stand for power. They create discourse and establish a kind of truth, that truth always supports power.

In the beginning of the novel: Jalil stands for power, he marriages whom he likes and there is no objection from women because they think it is obvious for a male to marry more than a single wife. The first chapter of the novel shows this: “Jalil had three wives and nine children, nine legitimate children, all of whom were strangers to Mariam” (5). This line clearly shows that there was no law about those who have multiple marriages. Nana had almost married once, when she was fifteen and Mariam



married with Rasheed when she was fifteen whereas Rasheed was forty. All the members of the family and relatives undoubtedly accept it because it was obvious and cultural acceptance prevailed in the society: There has been traditionally a patriarchal tribal culture where men have decided the fates of women. This is a kind of discourse of patriarchy.

Jalil remembers the past political situation of Afghanistan and clarifies to his daughter Mariam. He brought clippings from Herat's newspapers, *Itifaq-I Islam* and read from them to her:

King Zahir Shah, who had ruled from Kabul for forty years, had been overthrown in a bloodless coup. " His cousin Daoud Khan did it while the king was in Italy getting medical treatment. Anyway, Afghanistan is no longer a monarchy, Mariam. You see, it's a republic now, and Daoud Khan is the president." (23)

Here, we can clearly see that how Daoud Khan plays tricks to deceive, cheat and take advantage of rule by creating negative rumors about monarchy and discourse about republic to come to power. King Zahir Shah had been overthrown in a bloodless coup. But it is only the struggle for power and Political tussle.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, towards the beginning of the novel, religion imposes its power over the native Afghan people. Mullah Faizullah takes Koran as means of discourse to manipulate power over the victims. It is the western tendency to rule over the other and to maintain this. In the text, Koran comes as a representative of western empire in the appearance of religious person and Mullah Faizullah, a strong supporter of it. Faizullah states:

You go on and cry, Mariam jo. Go on. There is no shame in it. But, remember my girl, what the Koran says, 'Blessed is he in whose hand

is the kingdom, and he who has power over all thing, who creates death and life that. He may credit you.’ The Koran speaks the truth, my girl. Behind every trail and every sorry that he makes us shoulder, god has a reason. (24)

Theology as a discourse during the colonial era as a direct result of the transnational dynamic that brought religious difference into ever increasing contact. This theological thinking did a priori, that is to respond to other religion and culture, constructed out of Muslim systematic frame work and simply applied to the problem of other.

Western technology stands as one of the techniques to remain in power. Europeans have colonized the non-west not only by guns and artilleries but also by the modern technologies. Now the whole world is captured by the hand of technology which is powered by the west. No one can avoid these technologies and the Europe. West comes with these technologies to manipulate the power over the non-west. Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick, the critic of technology state: “Technology is a primary matter of techniques, and its employment presupposes some notion of purpose or design with regard to the manner in which materials are subsequently used” (404).

Discourse is created and perpetuated by those who have the power and means of communication. In Afghani cinema hall western films are playing and these are given a special importance because they have no modern technologies and they are habituated to follow the western technologies as their guide lines. “In Jalil’s cinema hall there is also an American film playing and he wants to show it to his daughter as a birthday gift because it was a special kind of film” (25).

Thus, it clarifies that at present the European agents come with the discourse of modernity on non-west. Now the western empire does not come but sends modern technologies and these technical means to control over the people and to create public acceptance for a particular idea.

Rasheed, though an Afghani civilian, admires the material progress and value system and establishes a concept that foreign diplomats, rich businessman and members of the royal family are superior to other. One day Rasheed with his wife Mariam walked on to a place called Kcheh- Morgha Chicken Street. It was a narrow, crowded bazaar in a neighborhood that Rasheed said was one of Kabul's wealthier ones. He states: "Around here is where foreign diplomats live, rich businessmen, members of the royal family- that sort of people. Not like you and me" (73).

These above lines show the picture of superiority and inferiority, created by the so-called superiors. A kind of discourse is constructed and it is also accepted by the poor native Afghan people as a truth.

Khaled Hosseini presents the existing social evils. Particularly, it presents the heart breaking picture of marginalized. The religious tussle between Shi'a and Sunni is also clarified in the novel: "History isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religious. In the end, I was Pashtun and he was a Hazara, I was a Sunni and he was Shi'a and nothing was ever going to change that" (22).

Khaled Hosseini vividly describes Afghanistan, both Russian invasion and the rule of the Taliban. All the means of communication are always captured by the power holders and they spread the rumor in their own favor and make common people to believe that they are true and others are wrong. These lines proved this:

Abdul Qadar reported that earlier in the day the rebel fourth Armed Division had seized the airport and key intersections in the city. Kabul

radio, the ministries of communication and the interior, and the foreign ministry building had also been captured. Kabul is in the hand of people now, he said proudly. Rebel Migs had attacked the presidential palace. Tanks had broken into the premises, and a fierce battle was underway there. Daoud's loyalist forces were all but defeated, Abdul Qadar said in a reassuring tone. (100)

All over the nation it was said that:

A revolutionary council of the armed forces has been established, and our *Watan* will now be known as the "Democratic republic of Afghanistan." Abdul Qadar said "The era of aristocracy, nepotism, and inequality is over, fellow *Hamwatans*- we have ended decades of tyranny. Power is now in the hands of the mass and freedom loving people. A glorious new era in the history of our country is a foot. A new Afghanistan is born. We assure you that you have nothing to fear fellow Afghans. (100)

Now, another type of power arises and communist regime stands as power persona and it is concerning Afghan people to make the foundation of the colonization. It uses very polite and rhetorical language to shut the voice of the rebellions. It applies all the discourses but when these all fails it adopts violence in the name of peace and order.

Now, in Afghanistan, Soviet Union was in process to trap the Afghan people and its culture within the discourse. People of different professions are raising their voice to support soviet. Teacher Shanzai states:

That is why our Soviet comrades came here in 1979. To lend their neighbor a hand. To help us defeat these brutes who want country to be

a backward, primitive nation. And you must lend your own hand, children. You must report anyone who has known about these rebels. It's your duty. You must listen, and then report even if it's your parents, your uncles or aunts. Because none of them loves you much as your country does, your country comes first, remember I will be proud of you and so will your country. (111)

Here, we can clearly see the discourse created by Russians, and according to their discourse, only the government is right and whatever it does is for the nation's wellbeing, and remaining all who speak against the government are the rebellions:

On the wall behind Khala Rangmaal's desk was a map of the Soviet Union, a map of Afghanistan, and framed photo of the latest communist president, Najibullah, who had once been the head of the dreaded KHAD, the Afghan secret police. There were other photos too, mainly of young Soviet soldiers shaking hands with peasants, planting apple saplings, building homes always smiling genially. (112)

It is true that colonizers are very clever, resourceful and tricky. In the above lines too we can get the same technique applied by Soviet Union for the colonization. Soviet Union stands as a colonial agent in the disguised appearance. This disguised appearance is necessary to rule or to remain in power.

Hosseini presents this novel with the deeply troubled history of Afghanistan over the past thirty years. He depicts western public accompanied with media images of war-torn Afghanistan, firstly during the Soviet occupation and then under the Taliban. During the Russian invasion people were compelled to accept as truth, whatever the followers of Soviet rule provides the natives. The following lines clarify

it: “And certainly no one, *no one*, dared repeat in her presence the rising rumors that, after eight years of fighting, the Soviets were losing this war” (112).

Soviet Union and Taliban both are inspiring the people to become according to their own will but Afghan people have not got anything except poverty, crisis, fear, uncertainty of life.

Every individual was so badly affected that there was no chance for education; educated people also have not got the honorable job. They had to do whatever they got for their living because it was compulsion. As it shows:

Babi worked at Silo, Kabul’s gigantic bread factory, where he labored amid the heat and the humming chimney stoking the massive ovens and mill grains all day, though he was university educated man. He’d been a high school teacher before the communists fired him. This was shortly after the coup of 1978, about a year and half before the Soviet had invaded. (114)

It is one of the strategies of colonizers not to let the colonized people to come in decisive position because they might be the danger or obstruction on the way of colonizer’s will to rule or remain in power for a long period. They are only exploiting labor of the natives.

Another burning example about the miserable and suppressed situation of Afghan people under the domination of communist ideology of Russia is seen in the following interest of natives: “When Afghanistan was free from the Soviets and the boys returned home, they would need brides and so one by one, the women paraded the neighborhood girls who might or might not be suitable for Ahmad and Noor” (119).

Soviet Union uses any means to take advantage of his opponents ignoring and sometimes losing human sensibility. They can be so cruel that they can behave like animal. One day when Laila was observing the photos, crumbled newspaper and pamphlet that Ahmad had managed to collect from insurgent group, a resistance organization's headquarter in Pakistan. One photo showed a man in a long white coat handling a Lollipop to a legless little boy. The caption below the photo reads:

“Children are the intended victims of Soviet land mine campaign. The article went on to say that the Soviet also liked to hide explosives inside brightly colored toys. If a child picked it up, the toy exploded, tore off fingers or an entire hand. The father could not join the Jihad then; he'd have to stay home and care for his child.” In another article, a young Mujahid says that: The soviet had dropped gas on his village that burned peoples stern and blinded them. (121)

Ethnicity has become a discourse that the largest group in Afghanistan uses. Tariq and his parents were Pashtuns; they spoke Farsi when Laila was around for her benefit even though Laila more or less understood their native Pashto having learnt it in school. Babi said that there were tensions between their people-the Tajiks, who were a minority and Tariq's people, the Pashtuns, who were the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan. Babi states: “Tajiks have always felt slighted; Pastun kings ruled this country for almost two hundred and fifty years, Laila and Tariq for all of nine months, back in 1929” (128). Here, we can see the discourse of hegemony upon the ethnic group of Tajik created by the Pastuns. Hosseini further describes the struggle between the Pashtuns and Tajiks. Tajiks had tried to rise against the Pastuns but the Pastuns had quelled them with unspeakable violence. Pastuns had always suppressed the Tajiks, killed them, driven them from their land, burned their houses and sold their

women. The reason of suppression was that Pashtuns were Sunni Muslims, while Tajiks were Shi'a. But, Babi thinks that it was not good to struggle in the name of ethnicity. So he further states:

To me, its nonsense and very dangerous nonsense at that -all this talk of I'm Tajik and you are Pastun and he is Haara and she is Uzbek. We are all Afghans, and that's all that should matter. But when one group rules over the others for so long...There is contempt. Rivalry. There is. There always have been (128).

This description of the picture mirrors the life of the Pastuns who are considered to be the royal clan in Afghanistan, superior to other ethnic groups like Hazara, Uzbeks and Kuchis but what it brings in return, contempt, rivalry, enmity, fear etc, nothing else.

This novel explores the internal wish of Afghan people who are always under the discourse. They seem hopeful and they have a dream to see their beloved country free from all sorts of tyranny and one day this dream will come true. Mammy convinces Laila about it:

I want to see my sons dream come true. I want to see the day the Soviets go home disgraced, the day the Mujahideen come to Kabul in victory. I want to be there when it happens, when Afghanistan is free, so the boys see it to be there when it happens, when Afghanistan is free, so the boys see it too. They'll see it through my eyes. (142)

From ages, Afghan people have been trained to accept the rule of others or domination of others because they are always leading their lives under the discourse created by others but they are not getting any gain and achievements. Once, when Babi, Laila and Tariq were on trip, they saw the carcasses of burned out Soviet tanks



and wrecked helicopters, destruction of Shahr-e-zohak valley. In course of the trip, driver clearly gives the situation of Afghan from ages:

And that my young friend, is the story of our country, one invader after another the driver said, flicking cigarette ash out the window.

Macedonians, Sassanians, Arabs, Mongols. Now, the Soviets. But we are like those walls up there. Battered, and nothing pretty to look at, but still standing. Isn't that the truth, badar? (144)

Afghan people are feeling as orphans within their own country, they have no guardian and always should be ready to accept the rule of others, domination of others and whatever the colonizers create as truth by the help of their power which becomes truth for the colonized ones.

In Afghanistan there are two groups who are mobilized for the betterment of two different sides as puppets. The Najibullah is working as a puppet of Soviet Union whereas Mujahideen for Talibans. When Soviet was slowly going to lose its power and Taliban was going to take over the nation, there was a kind of happiness for the betterment in the houses of those families who have lost their sons, husbands and brothers to fight against the Russian communism. The following lines show it:

They signed a treaty!" he said. "In Geneva, its official! They are leaving. Within nine months, there won't be any more Soviets in Afghanistan. But indirectly it wants to keep continue its domination by using its puppet, Najibullah. (151)

Mammy states:-"But the communist regime is staying,"she said. "Najibullah is the Soviet's puppet president. He's not going anywhere .No, the war will go on. This is not the end" (151).

In Afghanistan there was always manipulation of power through different mediums. When the communist regime was over, it is time of Mujahideen to rule over Afghanistan. They had already convinced the Afghan people that they are very close to them and they will help them to take revenge against Russian cruelty and brutality for the sovereignty of Afghanistan, so, the people who have lost their sons, husbands or brothers are cheering up in favor of Mujahideen. Following extract shows it:

The Jihad was over. The various communist regimes that had held power since the night Laila was born were all defeated. Mammy's heroes, Ahmad's and Noor's brothers-in war, had won. And now after more than a decade of sacrificing everything of leaving behind their families to live in mountains and fight for Afghanistan's sovereignty, the Mujahideen were coming to Kabul in flesh, blood and battle-weary bone. (157)

Mujahideen manipulate power through religion and the hidden purpose behind it is to complete their mission of colonization through Muslim religion. If there is religious colonization, there is no chance of revolt. These lines show it:

Afghanistan was now called the Islamic state of Afghanistan. An Islamic Jihad council formed in Peshawar by several of Mujahideen factions would oversee things for two months, led by Sibghatullah Mojadidi: this would be followed then by a leadership council led by Rabbani, who would take over for four months. During those six months a *loya jirga* would be held, a grand council of leaders and elders, who would form an interim government to hold power for two years, leading up to democratic elections. (162)

Here, Mujahideen seem, due to this weapon of religion, to make the people slave and whatever they say becomes the truth. They are trying to rule over Afghanistan for long period by declaring people about their future plan and they make the people believe that they are excellent in their planning.

Furthermore, Hosseini shows that exploitation of Afghan women sexually through the Russian soldiers at the time of war:

They found three bodies in a house in Karteh-Seh last week; he said.

Did you hear? Sisters. All three raped. Their throats slashed. Someone had bitten the rings off their fingers. You could tell, they had teeth marks. (172)

In Afghanistan, during the time of war there was no shame to look at the Russian officers and it was not a great matter to give their daughters and sisters for Russian soldier's sexual satisfaction. In the name of war Russian soldiers have created a discourse to exploit the native Afghan women and innocent poor people sexually and physically.

In the name of ethnicity, there is always struggle between Pastuns and Hazaras to establish their own discourse and rule over Afghanistan. Pastuns create discourse of hegemony upon the ethnic group Hazara and there is fighting between these two groups in the name of religious existence. In the novel it has been clarified in this way:

In June of that year, 1992, Laila heard that Pashtun militiamen were attacking Hazara households, breaking in and shooting entire families, execution style, and that Hazaras were retaliating by abducting Pashtun civilian, raping Pashtun girls, shelling Pashtun neighbourhood,

sometimes burned beyond recognition. Often they'd been shot in head, had had their eyes gouged out, their tongues cut out. (173)

Khaled Hosseini presents the existing social evils and shocking inhuman behavior by human on the basis of religious and ethnic consciousness. Particularly, it presents the heart breaking picture of marginalized Hazara. The religious tussle or tussle of ethnicity between Hazara and Pashtun which has been prevailing in Afghanistan for ages.

Discourse is an instrument of power and its power follows from our casual acceptance of the reality with which we are presented. It is not only communicating approach but a measuring rod of power. It can be changed according to its socio-economic and political content.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, towards the beginning of the novel, Soviet Union imposes its power of communism over the native Afghans, and America as a democratic power is trying to impose its power by overthrowing Russia in the name of making Afghanistan free and sovereign democratic country. Rasheed states:

If you ask me, the Americans armed the wrong man in Hekmatyar. All the guns the CIA handed him in the eighties to fight the Soviets. The Soviets are gone, but he still has the guns, and now he's turning them in innocent people like your parents. And he calls this Jihad. What a Farce! What does Jihad have to do with killing women and children? Better the CIA had armed commander Massoud. (206)

Discourse of patriarchy has been prevailing in Afghan society for ages. Multiple marriage is common and it is accepted as truth by the women because males are so called superior because they have power whereas females are inferior

because they have no agency. If a man can provide food, cloths and shelter then he can keep as many wives as he likes. Rasheed states:

Don't be so dramatic. It's a common thing and you know it. I have friends who have two, three, four wives. Your own father had three. Besides, what I'm doing now most men I know would have done long ago. You know it's true. (209)

Women to be virgin was compulsory and this culture was created by so called superior males to rule over the inferior females and at the time of their first sex; sign of blood was only the measuring rod of virginity. This extract clarifies it:

Later; when she was sure that he was asleep, Laila quietly reached beneath the mattress for the knife she had hidden there earlier. With it she punctured the pad her index finger. Then she lifted the blanket and let her finger bleed on the sheets where they had lain together. (214)

Not only this, women are not allowed to go out without the company of their husbands or other male partner and when they are out together they must wear Burqa.If they need something urgently they couldn't go alone. Rasheed states:

All I ask in return, well, it is a simple thing. I ask that you avoid leaving this house without my company. That's all. Simple, no? If I am away and you need something urgently, I mean absolutely need it and it can't wait for me, then you send Mariam and she will go out and get it for you . . . oh, I also ask that when you are out together that you wear a Burqa. For your own protection, naturally. It is best. So many lewd men in this town now. Such vile intentions, so eager to dishonor even a married woman. So. That's all (217).

Discourse is always the result of power and within this network of discourse different characters should be ready to trick or cheat the others to remain in power. By the help of that discourse colonizers create a deep conflict in the consciousness of the colonized ones. Following lines show it:

Sayyaf was fighting the Hazaras, he said. The Hazaras were fighting Massoud. And he's fighting Hekmatyar of course, who has the support of the Pakistanis. Mortal enemies, those two, Massoud and Hekmatyar. Sayyaf, he's siding with Massoud. And Hekmatyar supports the Hazars for now. (224)

War between Russia and the Talibans create poverty, economic crisis, fear and uncertainty of life in Afghanistan. Khaled Hosseini tries to show the social reality of Afghanistan during the period of war and how people are compelled to live against their will. How Afghanistan has become a battlefield of two power holders and how the native Afghans are victimized without crime. Through the following lines he tries to present the situation of Afghanistan during war period and hardships of its people:

The streets became littered with bodies, glass and crumpled chunks of metal. There were looting, murder, and increasingly rape which was used to intimidate civilians and reward militiaman. Mariam heard of women who were killing themselves out of fear of being raped, and of men who, in the name of honor, would kill their wives or daughters if they'd been raped by the militia. (247)

Not only this, they force young boys to join. Here is a clear picture of cruelty and brutality of power. Rasheed states:

"They're forcing young boys to join," he said. The Mujahideen are. In plain daylight, at gunpoint. They drag boys right off the streets. And

when soldiers from a rival militia capture these boys, they torture them. I heard they electrocute them-it's what I heard-that they crush their balls with pliers.They make the boys lead them to their homes, then they break in, kill their fathers, rape their sisters and mothers.

(248)

Discourse is created and perpetuated by those who have the power and means of communication. After the end of the communist rule, Mujahideen practice to establish their authority to control over the people and create public acceptance for a particular idea. The following extract says:

Since the Mujahideen take over in April 1992, Afghanistan's name had been changed to the Islamic State of Afghanistan.The supreme court under Rabbani was filled now with hardliner Mullahs who did away with the communist-era decrees that empowered women and instead passed rulings based on Shari'a, strict Islamic laws that ordered women to cover, forbade their travel without a male relative, punished adultery with stoning. (253)

Time and again discourse of religion or Koran is working as a power persona and leading Afghan people.Mariam states: "The Koran says Allah is the east and the west, therefore where you turn there is Allah's purpose" (256).

The power is generated in society by producing the discourse and by constructing the truths. The absolute power is acted out to control or to rule. In this conceptualization, power is practiced as negative force. Taliban as a power holder starts to produce discourses, different type of discourses to capture the nation from all sides, religiously, by gender, culturally, by ethnicity and by the means of modern technology. In different parts of Afghanistan, like in Khair Khana, in Shar-e Nau, in

Karteh-Parwan, in Wazir AlebarKhan and Taimani, red Toyota trucks weaved through the streets. Armed beared men in black turbans sat in their beds from each truck, loud speaker blared announcements, first in Farsi, then Pashto. The same message played from loudspeakers perched atop mosques, on the radio and was also written in flyers, tossed into the streets. The message was: “Our watan is now known as the Islamic Empire of Afghanistan these are the laws that we will enforce and you will obey” (270).

People are compelled to obey the so called law of the ruler. In the name of religion they announced some messages which were as the laws of states and whoever lives in the country should follow the Muslim religious aspects. The message Says: “All citizens must pray five times a day. If it is prayer time and you caught doing something other, you will be beaten” (270). It is their trick to make control over the native people through religion. So, there are other messages delivered by them: “All men will grow their beards. The correct length is at least one clenched first beneath the chin. If you do not abide by this you will be beaten.” Another message is: “All boys will wear turbans. Boys in grade one through six will wear black turbans, higher grades will wear white. All boys will wear Islamic clothes. Shirt collars will be buttoned” (270).

This is a tricky way to fulfill the mission. They want to engage all level citizens, like young and adults in the name of religion and to rule over them for ages. So, they have made laws especially to ban the young and adult to come out for revolt. Culturally also Taliban wants to dominate the natives and establish their own culture as a result it will make them easy to rule over the nation Many things are forbidden to do in Islamic rule of Afghanistan, like; “Singing is forbidden. Dancing is forbidden. Playing cards, playing chess, gambling and kite flying are forbidden” (270).



Flying kite was the cultural identity of native Afghans and every winter the people of Afghanistan enjoy flying kite but when the Taliban ruled upon Afghanistan all these cultural identities are banned and those cultures which are beneficial for the ruler are practiced. Here the writer Khaled Hosseini describes how the Taliban are terrorizing Afghanistan and creating a discourse of hegemony through the help of so called interim government and law. People in Kabul are afraid of leaving their houses because of frequent shootings and bombings. Moreover, the message delivered by the interim Taliban government collapsed all the individual rights and freedom. The message further says:

Writing books, watching films, and painting pictures are forbidden.

If you keep parakeets, you will be beaten. Your birds will be killed.

If you steal, your hand will be cut off at the wrist. If you steal again, your foot will be cut off. (270)

It is a strategic game of power holder to create fear within the people and make them always to follow their way. Taliban always wants to suppress them and rule them for ages. Theology emerged as a discourse during the Taliban rule as a direct result of transnational dynamic that brought religious difference into ever increasing contact. So, the Taliban rule was filled up with same religious concept that Muslim is the only religion and the others are valueless. The message states:

If you are not Muslim, don't worship where you can be seen by Muslims. If you do, you will be beaten and imprisoned. If you are caught trying to convert a Muslim to your faith, you will be executed.

(270)

Talibans motivate people towards religion to exploit them. Native people are fully formed within the boundaries of a religious framework. All women of Afghanistan

were bounded with the discourse of patriarchy. They had no female agency; they were made inferior towards so called superior males. Their rights of speaking, clothing, moving, laughing and decorating them were forbidden. Education also was not for females. The following statements made by Taliban clarify it:

Attention women:

You will stay inside your homes at all times. It is not proper for women to wander aimlessly about the streets; you will be beaten and sent home.

You will not, under any circumstance, show your face .You will cover with burqa when outside. If you do not, you will be severely beaten.

You will not wear charming clothes.

You will not speak unless spoken to.

You will not make eye contact with men.

You will not laugh at public. If you do, you will be beaten. (271)

Talibans were misusing their power and making Afghan people their slaves by creating such types of discourses. Taliban rule did not bother much to those people who had also the same concept of domination. Rasheed was one of them who was also supporting them and when Laila expresses her disagreement towards Taliban calling savage then responding her Rasheed says:

“You think?” he said. Compared to what? The Soveit killed a million people. Do you know how many people the Mujahiden killed in Kabul alone those last four years? Fifty thousand. Fifty thousand! It is so insensible by comparison to chop the hands off a few thieves? Eye for an eye, tooth for an tooth. It’s in Koran. Besides, tell me this: If someone killed Aziza, wouldn’t you want the chance to avenge? (275)

Western culture was entering into the mainstream culture of Afghanistan by the help of film. Among different modern technologies film was one. Titanic film played a vital role in shaping perception. In the text, film works as a discourse in the sense that it not only teaches western elite culture but also tempts for materiality. In the text, Mariam and Aziza are insisting to be Jack and Rose. Mariam says:

“Fine you be Jack,” she relented.” you die young and I get to live to a ripe old age. “Yes, but I die a hero,” said Aziza. “While you, Rose, you spent your entire, miserable life longing for me.” Then, straddling Mariam’s chest, she’d announce, now, we must kiss. (296)

Not only this, *Titanic* fever was gripping Kabul. People were smuggling pirated copies of the film from Pakistan. Soon, in the cities of Afghanistan *Titanic* film was spreading its giant shape. These lines prove it:

*Titanic* carpets, and Titanic cloth, from bolts arranged in wheelbarrows. There was Titanic deodorant, Titanic toothpaste, Titanic perfume, Titanic pakora, even burqas. A particularly persistent beggar began calling himself “Titanic Beggar.”(296)

In this way a Titanic city was born there. Love for western culture was developing as hobby of the natives.

It is obvious that in such colonial country there are two groups: oppressor and oppressed and there is also clear that relationship between them is like the relationship of servant and owner. In Afghanistan oppressed ones are dying with hunger. They have no food and clothes whereas oppressors are turning their back towards the starvation and enjoying with their luxurious life. In these lines we can see the starving situation:

They ate raw turnips sprinkled with salt. Limp leaves of lettuce and blackened bananas for dinner. Death from starvation suddenly became a distinct possibility. Some chose not to wait for it. Mariam heard of a neighborhood widow who had ground some dried bread laced it with rat poison, and feed it to all seven of her children. She had saved the biggest portion of herself. (299)

But contrary to it, oppressors are enjoying in the luxurious restaurant, cafes and five star hotels:

Mariam saw two men sitting on leather chairs, rifles and a coffee table between them, sipping black tea and from a table of syrup. Coated *Jelabi*, rings sprinkled with powdered sugar. She thought of Aziza, who loved *Jelabi*, and tore her gaze away. The doorman led them outside to a balcony. From his pocket, he produced a small black cordless phone and a scrap of paper with a number scribbled on it. He told Rasheed it was his supervisor's satellite phone. (301)

There is also another example of domination upon Afghanistan. Arab fundamentalists are also indirectly ruling over the nation and they are also worshiped as masters in Afghanistan. Rasheed says to Mariam: "Meet our real masters," Rasheed said in a low pitched voice. "Pakistani and Arab Islamists. The Taliban are puppets. These are the big players and Afghanistan is their playground" (301).

Khaled Hosseini describes how the Taliban is terrorizing Afghanistan and creating a discourse of hegemony. The Taliban have destroyed not only the village, natural resources, innocent people but also the cultural heritage. They destroyed giant Buddhas in Bamiyan:

Taliban had planted TNT in the crevices of the giant Buddhas in Bamiyan and blown them apart calling them objects of idolatry and sin. There was an outcry around the world, from the U.S. to China. Governments, historians, and archaeologists from all over the globe had written letters, pleaded with the Taliban not to demolish the two greatest historical artifacts in Afghanistan but the Taliban had gone ahead and detonated their explosives inside the two-thousand years old Buddhas. (306)

They cannot comment on western culture rather take it as an honor and prestige and the western patrons stay in west by holding the power over non-Europe. What the westerners say is ultimate truth for them and they follow it, it helps them to exist in power. A young Talib said:

God has made us differently, you women and us men. Our brains are different. You are not able to think like we can. Western doctors and their science have proven this. This is why we require only one male witness but two females ones. (355)

At the end of the novel murder of Ahmad Shah Massoud is the sign of another power entering into the Afghan land. One Sunday that September, Tariq comes with news about it and tells to Laila:

They say he gave an interview to a pair of journalists who claimed they were Belgians originally from Morocco. As they're talking, a bomb hidden in the video cameras goes off. Kills Massoud and one of the journalists. They shoot the other one as he tries to run. They're saying now the journalists were probably Al-Qaeda men. (371)

Massoud is known as a good man, who wants peace and to rebuild Afghanistan and he is also known as the lion of Panjshir. But in the path of oppressors he was an obstacle, so he was killed.

The political landscape had changed when the Twin Towers had fallen in New York City and the United States bombed Afghanistan and captured government of Taliban and ruled over the country. In this act the Taliban are compelled to escape from the American's eyes because America claimed that the Taliban protected Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan. America attacks Afghanistan to take revenge of the fallen Twin Towers and the destruction of the American people. Rasheed states:

Back home, bombs are falling once again, this time American bombs-  
Laila has been watching on the television as she changes sheets and vacuums. The American's have armed the warlords once more, and enlisted the help of the Northern Alliance to drive the Taliban and find Bin Laden. (374)

America blames that Taliban give shelter to Osama Bin Laden. Due to the American invasion in Afghanistan, Taliban were compelled to hide themselves with the fear of America. It is clear that America creates the discourse of hegemony by using the power. After the American invasion in Afghanistan, America forms the new government with the leadership of the Hamid Karzai. He rules over Afghanistan at present.

There is not a single power persona in the novel. The power persona creates different discourses, among these, discourses of communism by Soviet Union, discourse of patriarchy in which Rasheed stands as a representative, discourse of Islam religion created by Taliban and at last discourse of hegemony of United States. Sometimes in the name of communism, sometimes in the name of religion and

sometimes in the name of terrorism and patriarchy, the power personas convert the native Afghans according to their own will, and make them to believe what they do is true, sometime by trick and sometimes by force. First of all Soveit Union comes and exploits the natives and in the name of communism makes them refugee and slaves by exploiting their labor. Later Talibans come and using religion as a powerful means to convert all the Afghans into Islam by force or by creating religious discourse that Islam religion is only the ultimate solution for the sufferings, pains and pathos.

Likewise, there is discourse of modernity including science and technology. Westerners use televisions and films as discourse. The Afghans become addict and use the western products hegemonically. In the name of Titanic film, Titanic city is established there. Similarly ethnicity is used as means of discourse by creating conflict between Hazara and Pashtun. The power persona takes this conflict as an opportunity to exist in power so the slogan of ethnicity was working properly in their favor. They disguise their appearance and cheat the natives. They do not let them doubt on them and very carefully accomplish their mission of colonization. United State appears as an anti terrorist power and blaming Talibans that they have saved Osama Bin Laden and in the name of searching Laden it forms the new government with the leadership of the Hamid Karzai and he is colonizing Afghanistan at present.

Thus, in the name of communism, religion, modernity, ethnicity, terrorism and patriarchy, the power personas manipulate their power over the native people and hold the power in their hands. The oppressors celebrate cleverness and victories, laugh at the dull-wit of victims, but ever contemptible.

#### IV. Conclusion

The establishment of discourse and power seeking tendency of west is a key theme in Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The power personas in the play use not only western elite discourse but also local culture and tradition to suppress the natives. The Foucauldian Reading critically analyzes the tendency of the Europeans to rule upon the Afghanistan by creating discourse of religion, modernity, patriarchy as well as local culture. The representatives of western empire whether they are religious, such as Mullah Fazullah, or Taliban themselves who established discourse to rule the Afghan people. In the beginning Soviet Union, in the name of communism holds the grip of power. And to remain in power, it creates different discourses to rule and if anyone tries to rebel against it, it uses power to silence the voice of the rebellion.

Furthermore, the novel portrays a character Rasheed, as a dishonest, cunning, and vain hedonist. He uses his physical and economic power only to exploit females. He wants to use them as his commodities. For controlling them and holding power he sets different trappings and innocent Afghan women fall into that trap which is set for them by imperial power.

Not only this, after the end of Russian communism. Taliban appear as a power persona and Islamic fundamentalist. They raise the issue of religion as a powerful weapon to trap the innocent Afghan people and hold power for ages. They spread Islamic religious slogans. They use guns to erase out all the signs and symbols of previous ruler and coming dangers against them. They develop discourse of religion which is more powerful and more destructive. They are supported by Pakistani and Arab Islamist. Taliban are working as their puppets and Afghanistan is like a play ground of foreigners. Hereby, in the text, Pakistan and Arab Islamist



comes as indirect power persona and exploit the natives by converting them into Islam.

Likewise, Talibans not only use discourse of religion but also local culture. They banned the famous traditional culture of flying kite which carries their cultural identity. In every winter, people of Afghanistan enjoy flying kite but after the rise of Taliban, it is banned. Taliban issued an interim law which works as a discourse. This law keeps all the natives within the framework of Taliban rule. The law says: there is compulsory to grow beard for men. To wear turban is compulsory for boys. Dancing, singing, watching films and painting are forbidden. Wearing burqa was compulsory. To wander out of home without male partner, to use cosmetic, nail polish and charming clothes are forbidden for women. In this way they do not let the natives to lead their life according to their will.

Moreover, issue of ethnicity is also working as a powerful means to create discourse. Power persona creates conflict between two ethnic groups Hazara and Pashtun to remain in power. Different power personas come and use these ethnic groups according to their will.

Hence, the Foucauldian Reading analyzes, how the representatives of the western empire or power holders, whether they are ruler or puppets of the ruler, establish discourse to rule upon the non-Europe or non west. The system of discourse in regard to everything constantly changes within years, decades and centuries. And the power holders use the discourse to their benefit. The discourse is formative and action oriented. It is constructed to achieve particular social goals. After the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York, United State attacks Afghanistan blaming Talibans as preserver of terrorist leader, Osama Bin Laden. The hidden truth after the attack is to rule over Afghanistan.

In this way, Khaled Hosseini has presented mainly Rasheed as the representative of all power holders or western colonialism and Mariam and Laila as defenders of that colonialism. In course of ups and down in the history of Afghanistan, these characters are connected from one or the other way. At the end of the novel there is death of Rasheed which gives a strong message to all the power holders or colonizers.

Thus, this research work makes a study of Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* in term of Foucauldian Reading in relation to colonialism. The study discloses that how the colonial agents of the western empires establish discourse to rule and to exploit the native people. They create discourse of hegemony, modernity, religion, ethnicity, patriarchy as well as local culture to rule the Afghans.

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