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## FROM EMPOWERMENT TO SUPPRESSION: EXAMINING GENDER DYNAMICS THROUGH MATERIAL FEMINIST LENS IN A *THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS* BY KHALID HOSSEINI

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates Khaled Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) utilizing materialist feminism theory by Alaimo and Hekman (2008) with Nancy Fraser's Distribution justice theory. It aims to unfold how material developments or changes give rise to new gender roles within the narrative of this novel. Employing materialist feminism, the study sheds light on the oppression and subjugation of women in society, as depicted through the characters Mariam and Laila. According to the researcher's stance, this novel delves into the experiences of women in a country undergoing socio-political transformations. So, the societal impact of these new gender roles brought about by social change is examined in this article with a proposition that the material development of Afghanistan has reversed the role of women within its community due to the political transformation. For this purpose, the study has used an intricate interplay between gender and power within the novel, employing materialist feminism theory to elucidate the lives of its female characters and protagonists amidst the backdrop of political turmoil in Afghanistan. Its significance lies in understanding how social, political, and economic factors affect gender in underdeveloped countries due to its geopolitical reality. The study elucidates how material conditions shape the experiences of Mariam and Laila and underscores the impact of economic circumstances on gender-based oppression. By scrutinizing women's access to resources and opportunities, the research concludes that social, economic, and political factors contribute to gender-based inequalities. Ultimately, this study advocates for a comprehensive understanding of women's struggles and challenges, emphasizing the need for societal change to address gender-based issues.

*Keywords:* Feminism; Qualitative; Textual analysis; Empowerment; Suppression.

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### INTRODUCTION

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) is a novel by Khaled Hosseini that explores the lives of two Afghan female characters Mariam and Laila whose paths cross during the chaotic surroundings in the history of their country, including the soviet invasion, its departure, and the rule of Taliban (Efrilia & Setiawan, 2020). Mariam, who is an illegitimate daughter of Nana and Jalil, grows up in a small village with her unhappy mother. At the age of fifteen when her mother died, she was forced by her father to marry a guy named Rasheed who is quite older than Mariam and is violent, and lives in Kabul. On the other hand, Laila comes from a very different background, a wealthier and prosperous family. But her life took a tragic turn when her family was killed by bombing during the ongoing war in the country. She was left alone and pregnant with Tariq's child, who is her childhood friend and the love of her life.

When Mariam and Laila's lives were interconnected, they developed a sisterly bond and found comfort in each other's company in response to the violence that they both endured in order to stay under the roof of Rasheed. Both of them endured the unthinkable pain and suffering and protected each other in spite of the

bitter realities of their lives. The novel is a rollercoaster of emotions, from endurance to violence, seeking resilience and resistance, from love to sacrifices. The novel portrays the hardships and struggles that an Afghan woman has to go through in their society through the characters of Mariam and Laila.

Feminism according to the researcher's understanding is a social and political movement that examines the representation of women in literature by men and women advocating for the equal rights and empowerment of women (Barry, 2020, p. 92). According to the researcher, it contends that all genders should have equitable opportunities across economic, educational, and political spheres, challenging the patriarchal structures that oppress women within societies. Moreover, feminism encompasses a broad spectrum of movements striving for social justice, aiming to dismantle systemic inequalities and promote gender equality for all individuals. Additionally, it underscores the empowerment of women, who have historically been at the forefront of feminist movements advocating for gender equality and the eradication of discrimination. Feminism serves as a framework through which women can assert their rights and advocate for economic, political, or social changes. Feminism and literature share a complex relationship, with numerous literary works examining power structures that oppress women, societal expectations, and gender roles (Barry, 2020, p. 91). Feminist literature has evolved over time, reflecting the ongoing struggles of women against discrimination and oppression in various aspects of their lives (Showalter, 2001). Women continue to face marginalization across societies worldwide, stemming from patriarchal structures entrenched in culture or resulting from political shifts. Men often enjoy privileges while women are marginalized, constraining their independence and opportunities (Barry, 2020, p.91).

This study adopts the Materialist Feminism approach (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008), which falls under the broader umbrella of feminism. In literature, Materialist Feminism analyses how material conditions, economic systems, and societal structures shape women's lives and experiences, including their intersection with gender oppression (Alaimo, 2008). In essence, Material Feminism offers a perspective through which we can examine the material circumstances of women's lives and their interconnectedness with power dynamics and gender inequality (Alaimo, 2008). According to the researcher, Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2008) serves as a portrayal of Material Feminism through the life experiences of its protagonists, Mariam and Laila, illustrating the impact of a patriarchal society on shaping their livelihoods.

### **Background of the Study**

The inception of this research arises from an exploration into how specific events or circumstances influence the lives of the characters in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). It seeks to comprehend and interpret how material changes shape the experiences of the female characters in the novel, thereby advancing the theme of Material Feminism from the researcher's standpoint. The researcher aims to analyze Khaled Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) through the lens of Material Feminism. According to the researcher, Hosseini depicts the lives of women in Afghanistan, particularly through the characters of Mariam and Laila, amidst socio-political upheaval and transformation. The study endeavors to delve into the novel through the perspective of Material Feminism. The researcher has identified various aspects of Materialist Feminism within the narrative, such as economic challenges, forced marriages, Labor, and notably, oppressive societal norms resulting from shifts in power dynamics. This approach elucidates how societal factors and material developments contribute to gendered divisions of Labor, traditional gender stereotypes, and male dominated power structures, impacting the characters' roles as mothers, wives, and laborers in the novel. Additionally, the researcher seeks to uncover other factors like property rights and gender-based violence, which are intertwined with changes in governmental agencies, among other elements.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of the nuanced interplay between specific events or circumstances and their impact on the lives of characters within *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). By

delving into how material changes shape the experiences of female characters, the research advances the theme of Material Feminism, offering a fresh perspective on Khaled Hosseini's novel. Through the lens of Material Feminism, the study provides a deeper understanding of the portrayal of women in Afghanistan, particularly through the characters of Mariam and Laila, against the backdrop of socio-political upheaval and transformation.

So, this research contributes to the existing body of literature by shedding light on various aspects of Materialist Feminism evident within the narrative, including economic challenges, forced marriages, Labor, and oppressive societal norms. By elucidating how these factors intersect with shifts in power dynamics, the study reveals how societal structures and material developments contribute to gendered divisions of Labor, reinforce traditional gender stereotypes, and perpetuate male-dominated power structures.

Moreover, the exploration of other factors such as property rights and gender-based violence further enriches our understanding of the complexities within the novel. By uncovering these intricate layers, the study offers valuable insights into the dynamics of oppression and resilience experienced by female characters in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), ultimately contributing to a broader discourse on gender, power, and societal change.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature Review is a comprehensive survey of the works published in a particular field of study or line of research, usually over a specific period of time, in the form of an in-depth, critical bibliographic essay or list in which attention is drawn to the most significant works (Ali & malik, 2023). It may also be defined as the collected body of scholarly works related to a topic that summarizes and analyzes previous research related to a topic. It can also be scholarly books or articles in a research paper. Literature Review helps to gather ideas or information and to develop new research questions (Kennedy, 2007 p.139-147).

In the article "Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* A Saga of Afghanistan", Farhana Yeasmin states that the novel is a narrative of the pain and troubles of the people of Afghanistan who are suffering from various invasions and wars in their country. According to her study, the novel explains the incidents in history from the invasion of the Soviet to the rule of the Taliban. The novel also portrays the lives of two female characters Mariam and Laila, both of them face struggles throughout their lives and are hopeful to be independent. Moreover, she stated that they question gender roles that are already set in society, reconsider their human rights, try to adopt manly power and achieve strength greater than the strength of a thousand splendid suns. Her research articles analyzed the history of Afghanistan in social, political and cultural aspects (Yeasmin, 2020). She further adds that the novel shows the history, culture, and social life of Afghan society. The novel depicts the conditions under which the people of Afghan society face violence and degradation in their lives. The author further adds that the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a true portrayal of the epic of the lives of two characters who face oppression in a male-dominated society.

She goes on to say that these characters demonstrate the resilience of women by withstanding repressive actions (Yeasmin, 2020, p. 389). Their research demonstrates how the populace responds to events that transpire in their nation as a result of a power shift.

Furthermore, Women's resistance to suffering is examined via a post-colonial and feminist lens in a different article about the post-colonial study entitled as *Resistance, a Facet of Post-colonialism in Women Characters of Khaled Hosseini's A Thousand Splendid Suns*". According to them, the research is focused on the stance of how women resist the pain or suffering that are being subjected to them in their lifestyles due to gender oppression in their society and culture. They have selected the novel as it shows the struggles of Afghan women regardless of their position or their roles in society and how they seek importance as an individual. In their research, they analyzed two primary characters Mariam and Laila and wrote about the findings on factors such as women's resistance and conflicts (Gordan & Almutairi, 2013).

Through their study, we may get to know that how women have to fit into certain roles that society expects them and at the same time how they are looking for their personal identification. Moreover, they have analyzed the roles and image of Afghan women as shown in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Women in the novel are not the central focus in a society like Afghanistan instead they're too dependent on a male either father, brother, husband, or son.

Another article named as "Women as Nation in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*" by Dr. Deepti Dharmani, is a study through which the researcher has analyzed how Khaled Hosseini has shown women as a whole nation in the novel. She stated that how the political changes like the invasion of the Soviet, wars, then the rule of the Taliban and the invasion of America have influenced the lives of women in Afghanistan. The endurance and resistance of the whole nation can be seen through the novel. Furthermore, the novel reveals that how patriarchal society influences the identity of women. She argues that Hosseini has seen the suffering of women as the suffering of the nation and according to Warin and Hammarström (2018, p. 299) it "increases awareness of the intra-action of gender and sex in relation to exposures, and increasing political leverage in supporting health-enhancing environments."

In the selected novel the writer reveals the lives of two Afghan women and their survival in their country. The novel moves further with the perspective of two female characters and how they portray traditional and modern women. The whole story revolves around the struggles of women and how they resist the oppression enforced on them. She furthermore stated that when women do not collapse and resist the pain; the nation also doesn't (Dharmani, 2018, p. 212).

## **METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology can be perceived as the problem-solving application of the scientific method (Ali et al., 2021). It is a systematic, thorough and structured procedure that continues the scientific technique of analysis (Flick, 2015). This research is qualitative in nature which helps to understand people's views, experiences, attitudes, behavior, and interactions and produces data that is not numerical (Pathak et al., 2013). The researcher has applied a variety of techniques such as articles, journals and data which is not numerical. The researcher has selected the Material Feminist approach in order to analyze the text of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Hosseini (2007).

## **Theoretical Framework**

Material Feminism was introduced between the 1960s and 70s and was mainly coined by Christine Dolphy and Rosemary Hennessy. Christine Dolphy. There were three understandings of Materialist Feminism that developed over time but they all were different from each other. However, the common notion where all schools of thought agreed was that gender is not innate, but rather constructed by society across time as a material dominance connection (Naples, 2020). Here's a difference between Feminism and Material Feminism to explain it further:

The researcher has found the work of Nancy Fraser's work, particularly her perspective on the intersection of economic and social justice, is applicable to the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) by Khaled Hosseini. Nancy Fraser is an American critique, philosopher, and feminist particularly known for her work Recognition and Redistribution. The novel portrays the struggles of women in Afghanistan, highlighting their economic and social marginalization under an oppressive society by the change in the system of government. Nancy's analysis provides us a lens through which we can see that how the women in the novel seek not only recognition but also material improvements in their lives, illustrating the exchange of material and social aspects. Robey has started his article on Nancy Fraser's critique of Distributive Justice theories with a question about how well the theories of distributive justice handle the issues of recognition, means how the fair distribution of resources, benefits and burdens in a society handles or accommodates the identity, culture or status of individuals or a group and give them the social and moral acknowledgment they deserve (Robeyns, 2003, p.1).

The researcher has taken help from the book *Material Feminisms* edited by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, the purpose of their book is to focus on Material aspects of the human body and natural world in feminist theory and practice. As the materiality of human bodies and nature has been a controversial topic in feminist theory. Feminists have concentrated on the role of language in shaping the social reality, which reveals that how communicative strategies shape the societal status of women. This focus has led the feminists to deconstruct the concepts of defining and degrading women. Thus, the perspective offers new ways to understand gender, revealing how it interconnects within the cultural system. Jacques Derrida and Luce Irigaray have thoroughly analyzed, particularly in “*Speculum of the Other Woman*”, and exposed the harmful logic where women are portrayed as subordinate, inferior and nearly invisible. So, the influence of postmodern thought in feminist theory, especially the linguistic turn is evident (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008).

While Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman’s “*Material Feminisms*” and Nancy Fraser’s distribution theory are distinct theoretical frameworks within feminist thought (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008), there are connections that can be drawn between the two. Both perspectives contribute to feminist discourse by adding issues related to power, justice and inequality from different angles. The resilience demonstrated by the characters in the novel in the face of adversity aligns with material feminism’s exploration of resilience as a tangible force in navigating societal constraints. Fraser’s distribution theory contributes by emphasizing how resilience becomes a crucial factor in confronting and adapting to gender-based inequalities, portraying the strength of women in challenging circumstances.

### **Analysis of *A Thousand Splendid Suns***

Analyzing *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) through the combined frameworks of Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman’s *Material Feminisms*, along with Nancy Fraser’s distribution theory, offers a comprehensive understanding of the exploration of gender inequalities and injustices in the novel. As discussed earlier in framework that what Materialistic Feminism is and how it unveils the way of oppression of women. There are several features in the novel that help us to analyze *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) as a Materialist Feminist novel. Materialist Feminism focuses on economic aspects that connect with gender discrimination. It deals with the material factors that shape the lives and experiences of women in a patriarchal society. Materialist feminism and the novel criticize patriarchal structures that limit women's freedom of choice.

This is a journey of women in Afghanistan from empowerment to suppression; this journey is depicted in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini. Khaled Hosseini has portrayed the picture of Afghanistan during the ongoing political turmoil and power dynamics from the departure of Soviet Union and the invasion of Taliban. When Soviet Union took control, everyone including women had equal opportunities but soon after Taliban took control of the country, the Afghan people particularly women struggled for basic human needs and rights. According to the researcher, Materialist feminism and the novel both argue against the neglecting of women's labor and support its recognition and redistribution throughout society. Nancy Fraser’s distribution theory also argues for the recognition of the group of people that undergoes inequality and unequal distribution of resources. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and materialist feminism share common themes criticize patriarchal structures, highlight resistance against gender inequality, and focus on economic exploitation and reproductive labor. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), the female protagonists, Mariam and Laila, experience educational deprivation due to socioeconomic constraints imposed by their patriarchal society and certain political changes.

The patriarchal control over resource allocation reinforces gender inequalities, as women in society are denied opportunities for intellectual and personal growth. Power imbalances leads to resource disparities that further limit the access to education for women.

After the ongoing war in the country Laila's father who wanted to get Laila an education and play a part in the country's prosperity, got scared. "The streets grew so dangerous that Babi did the thing what was unimaginable. He made Laila to withdraw her studies" (Hosseini, 2007, p.159-161).

The other character Aziza, an illegitimate daughter of Laila and her lover Tariq She was born at war time, the Taliban had taken the control and the social values were at bad conditions.

Her education was badly affected by Taliban's. In Aziza's early life women rights were completely dismissed. Taliban wanted to impose their own traditional values and they compelled control on Afghan women by giving men power over women in their lives. To control women completely they banned education:

"Girls are not allowed to go to school. All schools that are for girls will be closed right now" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 278).

The economic struggles faced by Mariam and Laila provide a lens into Material Feminism's exploration of economic structures. Fraser's distribution theory complements this by revealing how societal decisions contribute to unequal distribution of economic resources, which further intensifies gender-based disparities in opportunities and financial stability. Susan Hekman and Stacy Alaimo's Material Feminisms shows us that how material conditions and their experiences and how they divide with the social and economic factors. Both the characters experience economic disadvantages due to their gender, face limited opportunities for education and financial independence. We may see in the novel that both the characters go through certain barriers that hinder their economic mobility and perpetuate gender inequality. They are denied access to quality education, which limits their ability to acquire skills. Mariam wanted to go to school but her mother asks her to acquire only one skill: tahamul, endurance. That is why she lacked her self-confidence and she endured what Rasheed and everyone in the society did to her. She was unable to stand for herself, just like her mother who accepted everything as it was written in her fate and they can't change anything.

The gender based opportunities are not only traditional but are also implied by change of power or due to the government. The shift in power may result in a shortage of resources for women. We may find in the novel when the power was in hand of Taliban, they imposed such rules that showed they were taking away the independence and rights of women that they deserve for their betterment and their own development. In the novel the rules Taliban imposed are:

"You will remain in your houses at all times. It is not suitable for ladies to walk idly with in the streets. If you walk outdoors, you must be accompanied by a Mahram, or male relative. You aren't going to show your face under any circumstances. When you go outside, you must cover yourself with a burka; else, you will face harsh punishment. Makeup is prohibited. Jewelry is prohibited. You will avoid glances with males. You won't laugh in public. If you do, you'll be beaten down. You will not apply nail paints; else, your finger would be cut off. Girls aren't allowed to attend school. All girls' schools will close immediately. Women are not permitted to work" (Hosseini, 2007, p.271).

The basic necessities in the novel are also gender based, such as hospitals. In the novel all the hospitals that were treating women were now closed for them. They were no more allowed to work in hospital and also get treatment. Once Laila was about to deliver a baby in hospital there were no resources, the doctor told them:

Do you believe that's how I want it? She said; "What action do you wish me to take? I don't get what I need from them. Not only do I lack an X-ray, but I also lack air, suction, and even basic antibiotics. NGOs are turned away by the Taliban when they offer money. Alternately, they direct the funds to businesses that serve men" (Hosseini, 2007, p.283).

Moreover, we may see that how a political uncertainty causes the unequal distribution of opportunities and how it affects a social group, especially women, also the gender based impacts.

Nancy Fraser's theory also explains that how resources and power is distributed in a society and how this distribution is affected during the time of political uncertainty. This affects the existing power structures and how resources are allocated in a society. During this period of time certain gendered groups face marginalization and violence while others are benefited. In the novel when the power was in hands of Taliban, they made certain changes. They announced in loud speakers and also handed fliers to announce the change, which they made for the women particularly regarding their behavior and clothing. They distributed the fliers in which they had written about the beatings, violence and the punishments people would face if they go against Taliban law. The fliers stated that women were not allowed to go outside of the house without any male Mahram if they do, they would be beaten severely. Women weren't allowed to wear jewelry.

They weren't allowed to wear cosmetics. They were denied access to go to schools or workplaces. Rasheed was happy for the arrival of Taliban. Because he wanted the same as Taliban, he was in favor of complete control over women and wanted to enjoy the freedoms he once had. In the novel the soviet invasion and the rule of Taliban caused a great change in the power structure. It had a great impact on the lives of people, women in particular. They were subjugated and faced oppressive gendered norms. "It was no longer the case that women could enjoy the freedom and possibilities they had between 1978 and 1992; Laila was still able to remember Babi mentioning the time period of communist control. In Afghanistan, being a woman is advantageous" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 253).

Furthermore, the application of theories on the novel explains that how resources and power is distributed in a society and how this distribution is affected during the time of political uncertainty. This affects the existing power structures and how resources are allocated in a society. During this period of time certain gendered groups face marginalization and violence while the others are benefited. Taliban set strict rule for women; they were more likely to treat women as nothing but an object, who don't have any particular choice or freedom. Moreover, women weren't allowed to go to hospitals and there were no hospitals for women. We may see in the novel when Laila goes for her labor with her second child, Taliban weren't allowing anyone to enter the hospital as it was not allowed for women. Laila had to undergo a c-section without any anesthesia in a crowded hospital.

By applying Material Feminism, we can gain a deeper understanding on how the political changes may have an impact on the lives of characters particularly women, in terms of access to basic needs, rights and their safety. Women may face experiences based on gender, physical violence and limited access to basic needs of survival. For instance, we can see in the novel how women face violence and domestic abuse under the strict law by Taliban. War also disturbs the material conditions of women, which further cause inadequate supply of basic needs and limits their access to education, healthcare and other necessities. Furthermore, in the novel Khaled Hosseini has shown that how gender is affected in a war-torn country. War has different effects on women than men. Women were forced to quit schools and workplaces and sit at home while on the other hand men took the responsibility of protection and provider. For instance, Laila always enjoyed the freedom she got from her father but when the Taliban took over the control she was dropped out from the school due to the war and the bombings. Moreover, the change of power and the war also had an impact on Mariam's life. She faced oppression and violence from Rasheed because she wasn't able to give him a child and after the rule of Taliban, the violence and punishments were increased in the name of male superiority. Mariam received severe beatings from Rasheed. There were certain incidents where Rasheed got furious and took advantage of Mariam's helplessness. Because he knew there is no one in the world for Mariam. Her mother died and her father left her and there she is left on Rasheed's mercy.

“It was painful to tolerate him speaking in this manner towards her, to deal with his mockery, and abuse, and to walk by her as if she was nothing other than a cat pet in his house. Mariam noticed how much a woman could take when she was terrified in her four-year marriage” (Hosseini, 2007, p.97).

Furthermore, Rasheed takes Mariam out for a walk and he asks her to wear a burka.

Mariam wasn't familiar with it and she felt uncomfortable but she said nothing. The burka shows us the controlling power of men over women; it shows the will of Rasheed. Mariam felt as it was suffocating and it was hard to breathe but she didn't say anything. This shows the inferiority and the patriarchal structure that a woman like Mariam has to go through. Rasheed told Mariam:

“In my hometown, the face of a woman is solely her husband's concern. I would like you to keep it in mind” (Hosseini, 2007, p.65).

Adding more to it we may see that how the environment and society have an impact due to war and power dynamics which further causes women to go through different challenges. The female characters of the novel depict the interconnectedness of reproductive rights and environmental equality, with the Material Feminism framework. For instance, in the novel when Laila was taken to the hospital for labor. There were already so many people waiting outside to be seen or heard. The guard of the hospital told them that

“This hospital is no longer available for women” (Hosseini 2007, p.284).

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the *novel A Thousand Splendid Suns (2007)* has been significantly understood in terms of the multifaceted dimensions of power, resistance, and oppression through the application of Susan Hekman and Stacy Alaimo's Material Feminism and Nancy Fraser's Distribution Theory. The researcher discovered the injustices and inequalities that female characters like Mariam and Laila encounter, as well as how the interplay of economics, power, and society shapes their experiences, by using these theories as a lens. Additionally, the researcher has found that the life experiences of the female characters of the novel represent how power dynamics and environmental influences affect gendered bodies through the lens of Material Feminism. The use of these theories not only reveals the difficulties faced by characters but also elaborates on the many dimensions of oppression as well as political, social class, and gender aspects.

The researcher discovered gender inequality and societal change impacting characters' lives in addition to their experiences and problems through the application of these ideas. *The novel A Thousand Splendid Suns (2007)* depicts the oppression and gender inequality faced by women in Afghanistan through the use of material feminism and distributive justice theory. This research unleashes the oppression that is interconnected with other factors causing suppression, injustices denial of basic human rights in Afghanistan as portrayed by Hosseini (2007). The plot reveals the themes of challenges, resiliency, and influence of the patriarchal system on the lives of the female protagonists, Mariam and Laila along with gender inequality, new gender roles under the Taliban's regime, and woman confinement.

Finally, this research shows how gender norms and power structures are established and impact the lives of the characters, altering their self-perception or social interactions because of a new political order. Their access to fundamental healthcare and educational rights was severely impacted by the ongoing war and political upheaval which makes it a material feminist novel because it is all due to material changes around the lives of Mariam and Laila especially and women of Afghanistan generally.

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