

# Khaled Hosseini's Literary Creative Strategies in His Trilogy

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The Hosseini trilogy encompasses Khaled Hosseini's three distinguished novels: *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *And the Mountains Echoed*. As an Afghan-American novelist, Hosseini's works exemplify a significant achievement within the sphere of ethnic literature. However, there is a significant deficiency in comprehensive examinations concerning his artistic traits throughout these three works. Therefore, focusing on Hosseini's cultural identity as an ethnic writer, this paper purports to investigate the creative methodologies that emerge within his trilogy. The author posits that Hosseini employs at least three prominent creative strategies: An English writing framework with bilingual cultural elements, vivid depictions of wars through minor incidents, and soul-saving emotional narratives, all of which contribute substantially to the success of his trilogy while also providing meaningful insights for the development and advancement of ethnic writers.

**Keywords:** Khaled Hosseini, creative strategies, trilogy

## Introduction

Khaled Hosseini (1965- ) is a prominent Afghan-American author whose impact on Modern Ethnic Literature is truly significant. He has gained fame through his bestselling novels, particularly *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *And the Mountains Echoed*, collectively referred to as the "Hosseini Trilogy". These narratives have been translated into numerous languages, rapidly captivating a worldwide readership and garnering widespread acclaim. Nonetheless, what elements underpin the success of these literary works? What methodologies did Hosseini adopt to attain this level of acclaim? What lessons can be extracted from his literary strategies? These are the critical questions that this analysis aims to explore.

The trilogy has attracted considerable interest from various scholars around the world. Scholar Alla Ivanchikova asserts that Khaled Hosseini's *Kite Runner*, published in 2003—just 18 months after the September 11 terrorist attacks—remains the most highly regarded novel related to Afghanistan (Ivanchikova, 2017, p. 201). While, Chinese scholar Liu Jingyu (2017) posited that *And the Mountains Echoed* showcases a broader narrative scope, exhibiting a heightened level of stylistic sophistication and a diverse array of themes that are both complex and nuanced (p. 132). Furthermore, The New York Times has produced an exhaustive critique of the trilogy's artistic accomplishments, claiming that *And the Mountains Echoed* stands as Hosseini's most assured and emotionally resonant work, demonstrating greater fluidity and ambition than *The Kite Runner*, alongside a more

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complex narrative structure when compared to *A Thousand Splendid Suns*<sup>1</sup>. As an author of Afghan-American heritage, Hosseini's achievements seem to have revitalized the field of ethnic literature. Under his influence, the genre of immigrant literature—once popular but subsequently relegated to obscurity—has seemingly experienced a renaissance in the early 21st century. The trajectory of his career mirrors the evolving landscape and dynamic progression of immigrant literature within the North American literary framework (Pan, 2014, p. 166). Therefore, Hosseini's accomplishments not only symbolize his personal success, but also resonate as a broader triumph for a specific cohort of authors. Thus, analyzing Hosseini's trilogy as an integrated work can act as a catalyst for advancing and disseminating ethnic literature.

As previously articulated, Khaled Hosseini's trilogy has garnered significant attention from the academic community since its release. Nonetheless, a review of the existing literature reveals that current research primarily focuses on linear analyses of individual texts and isolated themes, such as psychological development, feminism, eco-criticism, and racism. Additionally, there is a noticeable disparity in the depth of inquiry conducted on the three works. Broadly speaking, *The Kite Runner* is the most extensively examined, followed by *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, while *And the Mountains Echoed* remains comparatively under-researched. Although the root of this disparity is undoubtedly linked to the order in which the three texts were published, the prevailing research landscape has unfortunately led to a situation whereby analyses of Hosseini's trilogy are still fragmented, impeding readers from fully grasping the overarching creative elements of his body of work. In light of this, the present study will adopt a comparative research framework centered on the trilogy, exploring the author's cultural identity as an ethnic writer, and investigating three principal dimensions: the author's narrative structures, thematic elements, and emotional perspectives. This inquiry purports to illuminate the distinct qualities of Hosseini's trilogy, revealing the underlying factors that contribute to his widespread acclaim and the implications of his success for the realm of ethnic literature.

### **An English Writing Framework With Bilingual Cultural Elements**

Language plays an essential role in the formation of identity. For authors and poets, cultivating a unique literary voice is indicative of the development of an autonomous literary identity (Li, 2010, p. 55). As an Afghan-American writer, Khaled Hosseini has chosen to abandon the official languages of Afghanistan (Dari and Pashto), in favor of English as the medium for his literary narratives. In fact, this phenomenon is not unique among ethnic writers. For instance, Chinese-American author Amy Tan and Russian-American writer Vladimir Nabokov also created their works in English and achieved significant success. However, what underlying logic might this trend suggest? Why do these authors opt to write in English instead of their native tongues?

The dynamic nature of personal experiences lays the foundation for literary expression in English. Khaled Hosseini, whose father held a diplomatic role, experienced multiple relocations during his upbringing, resulting in a highly itinerant lifestyle. His family journeyed through Afghanistan, Iran, France, and the United States, leading to a multifaceted connection with Afghanistan characterized by a continuous cycle of resettlement and displacement. Ultimately, he settled in the United States, acquiring Afghan identity alongside American citizenship. This nomadic existence has caused him to immerse himself in foreign cultures for a significantly longer duration than in his native land, endowing him with a superior command of the English language, which

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<sup>1</sup> The comment can be found in the back cover of Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013, Chinese Version), Kang Kai (Trans.), Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House.

he now utilizes with greater efficacy than his first language. Additionally, the pervasive impact of the English language serves as a crucial avenue for augmenting Hosseini's literary contributions. As a global lingua franca recognized by approximately one-third of the world's population, the scope and influence of English far surpass those of Afghanistan's official languages. Consequently, narratives concerning Afghanistan expressed in English can be disseminated and shared internationally with remarkable efficacy, aligning with the author's profound ambition to amplify the perspectives of everyday Afghan citizens and illuminate the richness of their lived experiences.

Hosseini's approach to English composition emphasizes a deep awareness of cultural identity from a uniquely personal standpoint. As an ethnic writer, he grapples with the complex issue of identity, summarized in the question, "Who am I?" Scholar Xiao Wei (2003) suggested that individuals from ethnic backgrounds often contend with the duality of cultural influences, where the lasting impact of their ancestral lineage complicates their capacity to navigate beyond established frameworks within diverse cultural environments. Consequently, when encountering these varied cultures, the deeply rooted values and traditions from their formative years inevitably emerge, instigating a cycle of estrangement, reflection, and cultural connection (p. 133). For Hosseini, his Afghan heritage represents the bedrock of his cultural identity, instilling within him specific Afghan characteristics that cultivate a lasting love for his homeland as an essential aspect of his national identity. Conversely, his extensive journey as an immigrant and subsequent assimilation into American society has sparked a dynamic interplay between Western culture and his maternal lineage, resulting in his enhanced perception and comprehension of cultural identity.

Navigating the intricacies of a dual identity poses a considerable challenge for authors, but how does Hosseini make it? This paper, through a close examination of Hosseini's literary creations, contends that he deliberately employs a dual-track methodology to confront these intrinsic conflicts. Linguistically, as previously highlighted, the persistent influence of American culture, in tandem with Hosseini's ethnic heritage, compels him to view his English writing as a fundamental creative framework. This framework is critical not only for seeking solace within Western society, but also for integrating into the dominant local culture. On the other hand, emotionally, Afghanistan symbolizes a nostalgic bond for Hosseini—a touching "old friend" that stirs a unique spectrum of memories tied to his lived experiences abroad. Consequently, the process of narrating Afghan stories in English serves as a vehicle for him to reflect on his formative years and convey his profound love for his homeland. As a result, Hosseini embraces a cross-cultural writing strategy, enriched by bilingual influences, wherein he utilizes one cultural language (English) to articulate another (Afghan culture), thus shaping his dual cultural identity as an Afghan-American author.

Hosseini's literary works pertaining to Afghanistan profoundly reflect his patriotic passion for his homeland. His unique method of writing in English does not undermine his cultural identity; rather, this way enriches and honors it with a sophisticated perspective. Huntington (1996) said that "The use of English for intercultural communication thus helps to maintain and, indeed, reinforces peoples' separate cultural identities. Precisely because people want to preserve their own culture they use English to communicate with peoples of other cultures" (p. 62). Hosseini's narratives, articulated in English, render a quintessential aspect of his literary oeuvre, allowing readers to not only immerse themselves in his storytelling, but also to connect with the profound essence of Afghanistan. He skillfully intertwines his personal experiences and insights with the broader narrative fabric of Kabul, akin to the precise art of kite flying—masterfully manipulating the cord and fine-tuning his position to craft deeply resonant works. Through his reflective and intricate prose, he offers a portrayal of Afghanistan that

transcends mere factual representation, evoking rich emotional responses and providing a perspective that stands in stark contrast to Edward Said's Orientalist interpretations. Instead, his depictions are imbued with authenticity and the warmth of the Afghan people. In Hosseini's representation, Afghanistan transcends the confines of conflict and poverty. It reveals a vibrant picture of humanity, articulating a diverse spectrum of human experiences that leave readers with enduring literary impressions and profound emotional connections.

### **Vivid Depictions of Wars Through Minor Incidents**

When discussing Afghanistan, one often conjures images of its chaotic history of conflict. In the works of Khaled Hosseini, war appears as a haunting presence, intricately woven into his stories and standing out as a key theme. Positioned strategically, Afghanistan has long been a battleground for various powers, earning the label "the Graveyard of Empires." This reputation often leads readers to associate the region with chaos and violence. However, how does one convey the deep literary theme of war effectively? The ancient Greek poet Homer also faced a similar challenge, pondering, "How can I picture it all? It would take a god to tell the tale" (McLoughli, 2009, p. 15). For Hosseini, the challenge rests in depicting the intricacies of war through his distinct narrative perspective.

Hosseini's portrayal of war stands apart from typical accounts. He avoids sweeping geopolitical analyses. Instead, he focuses on the lasting impacts of conflict on ordinary people's lives. By showcasing personal experiences and the effects of war on individual paths, he skillfully integrates the harsh realities of strife into daily life (Wang, 2021, p. 57). This nuanced approach to extracting deep significance from seemingly trivial moments in daily life is crucial in fostering the deep connection that readers develop with Hosseini's literature.

In Khaled Hosseini's debut novel *The Kite Runner*, the story spans several decades. Readers, aligned with the author's perspective, witness the collapse of the Afghan monarchy, the Soviet invasion, the civil wars of the early 21st century, the rise of the Taliban, and the repercussions of the September 11 attacks. These events profoundly affect the Afghan people. The persistent violence creates a profound sense of uncertainty for Amir's family and many others in the area. Hosseini adeptly employs distinct visual and auditory imagery to depict the devastating impacts of war on human life. "Our ears became accustomed to the whistle of falling shells, to the rumble of gunfire, our eyes familiar with the sight of men digging bodies out of piles of rubble. Kabul in those days, Amir jan, was as close as you could get to that proverbial hell on earth" (Hosseini, 2003, p. 229). As the reverberations of gunfire linger in the readers' consciousness, he further unveils a more disturbing image—the sight of a one-legged youth peddling his prosthetic limb:

"You know what they're doing? Haggl[ing] over the leg."

"He is selling his leg?"

Farid nodded. "You can get good money for it on the black market. Feed your kids for a couple of weeks." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 281)

This passage articulates a concise yet impactful message. Previously effective prosthetic leg now become useless due to the further harm to the lower limbs caused by bombings. The device may become commodified for those in desperate need, turning it into a means of survival. The market for second-hand prosthetics reflects the significant demand for these tools, leading to a sobering reality: Many individuals in Afghanistan have lost limbs due to relentless bombardments and thus depend on prosthetic solutions. Hosseini skillfully delivers a profound message through a short conversation, offering a stark critique and sharp commentary on the physical and psychological scars inflicted on the Afghan population as a consequence of warfare.

In contrast to *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* intricately explores the tumultuous political landscape and social discord in Afghanistan, adeptly navigating a diverse cast of characters and dual perspectives, methodically structured in chronological sequence to present a more holistic narrative (Shang & Liu, 2007, p. 10). The storyline revolves around the interconnected destinies of two women, Mariam and Laila, whose lives become irrevocably entwined amid the Afghan conflicts. The intricacies of their circumstances are further exacerbated by Rasheed, Mariam's husband, who takes Laila as his wife after rescuing her during the upheaval of war, thus forcing the trio to share a domestic environment. Rasheed's cruelty and dominance amplify the already oppressive conditions faced by the women, ultimately sparking a profound sense of defiance that drives them toward resolute resistance against him. In a crucial act of rebellion, Mariam ends Rasheed's life, thereby facilitating Laila's emancipation. This selfless action positions Mariam as the most illuminating figure in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, shedding light on Laila's future trajectory. Nonetheless, as Khaled Hosseini has emphasized in an interview, it is imperative to understand that the stories of these two women are inextricably linked to the historical context of Afghanistan, as their personal and intimate experiences are fundamentally interwoven with broader historical narratives (Shang & Liu, 2007, pp. 9-11).

Therefore, throughout the narrative, the author effectively highlights the profound impact of warfare on the daily lives of the Afghan people. Laila's family stands as a significant metaphor for the deep scars left by conflict, with the pervasive suffering palpable at every juncture. The consequences of war have already led to the deaths of Laila's parents and two brothers. She ultimately became a survivor and rescued by Rasheed from the devastation. However, to possess her, he deceived her into believing that her childhood friend, Tariq, had fallen victim to the violence, thereby forcing her into becoming his additional wife alongside Mariam. Under that condition, both women were subjected to his control and brutality. Moreover, beyond the psychological torment, the physical pain endured by Laila was harrowing. Due to the lack of medical resources brought about by the war, she undergone a cesarean section without anesthesia, epitomizing the extremes of human suffering. However, Laila's experience is not an isolated one; many others endure similar hardships. Her situation serves as a small crack that reveals a much larger black hole, ensnaring millions of individuals in its depths.

In a word, Hosseini avoids grandiose depictions of war scenes. Rather, he articulates the anguish caused by conflict through a series of seemingly minor incidents, thus allowing the emotional distress of the populace to emerge within the intricate details of his narrative, eliciting profound empathy and compassion from readers.

In the concluding volume of the trilogy, *And The Echoing Mountains*, one can still perceive the lingering implications of warfare. The author strategically utilizes Nabi as a pivotal character, intricately weaving the profound relationship between siblings Abdullah and Pari as the central narrative thread. This dynamic not only exposes additional stories and characters within the work, but also mirrors the lived experiences and emotional connections across generations in Afghanistan, influenced by socioeconomic hardship and strife. By meticulously illustrating the dislocation caused by warfare and the struggles associated with personal identity, the narrative presents a nuanced yet powerful critique of the consequences of armed conflict.

That this is the first time for them both in twenty years. But then he adds that they have come back to "reconnect", to "educate" themselves, "bear witness" to the aftermath for all these years of war and destruction. (Hosseini, 2013, p. 149)

The aforementioned quotation illuminates the harrowing circumstances confronted by countless individuals in Afghanistan. The nation, ravaged by enduring conflict, has emerged as a locale marked by "A thousand tragedies per square kilometer". In the pursuit of survival, numerous individuals find themselves compelled to

migrate to unfamiliar regions, endeavoring to establish a sense of identity amid external environments. Nonetheless, a pervasive sense of dislocation remains; akin to driftwood, they navigate the world unanchored, burdened by an ever-present longing to reconnect with Afghanistan, and more specifically, with its capital, Kabul. This scenario cultivates a profound sensation of "something or someone missing". Armed conflict breeds a landscape rife with hostility and aggression, which forces individuals to relinquish their rational capacities, precipitating abominable acts that strip human experience down to its most desolate state.

He thinks of the girl, Roshi, back at the hospital, curled up against the wall, her toes knotted, the infantile look on her face. The crack in the crown of her shaved head, the fist-sized mass of glistering brain tissue leaking from it, sitting on her head like the knot of a sikh's turban. (Hosseini, 2013, pp. 164-165)

Roshi's injuries symbolize the heavy weight of existence that people are inevitably forced to bear in times of conflict. She embodies not just her own struggles, but also the countless others caught in the chaos of warfare. This powerful storytelling approach draws the reader's empathy, evoking feelings of compassion and worry for the characters within the story, and ultimately fostering a deep disdain for the repercussions of war and a fervent longing for peace.

### **Soul-Saving Emotional Narratives**

The author communicates the profound emotional complexity and significance of their work through the sentiments articulated within it, enabling readers to be profoundly influenced by these emotions and formulate their own interpretations of the text. As a result, the emotional narrative functions as a distinctive conduit linking the text to the reader. In exploring the emotional dimensions of the narrative, Hosseini examines two key aspects: homosexuality and polygamy. Despite differing viewpoints, the central characters ultimately achieve spiritual redemption.

In *The Kite Runner*, Hosseini prophetically reveals Assef's homosexual identity in conjunction with his heinous act of raping Hassan. To secure the kite for his master, Hassan silently endures Assef's assaults. At the same time, Amir, having seen everything unfold, chooses not to intervene out of fear and his longing for the kite. Instead, he pretends not to know what happened and asks Hassan where he has been. The following is Hassan's reaction to Amir's question:

He began to say something and his voice cracked. He closed his mouth, opened it, and closed it again. Took a step back. Wiped his face. And that was as close as Hassan and I ever came to discussing what had happened in the alley. I thought he might burst in tears, but, to my relief, he didn't, and I pretend I hadn't seen the dark stain in the seat of his pants. Or those tiny drops that fell down between his legs and stained the snow black. (Hosseini, 2007, p. 86)

The juxtaposition of Hassan's unwavering loyalty against Amir's indifference and duplicity profoundly highlights Amir's cowardice, evoking significant empathy and compassion from the reader for Hassan, who becomes a victim of circumstance. In his endeavor to assist Amir in reclaiming the kite, Hassan exerts every ounce of his strength, even at the expense of enduring violence and degradation, epitomizing the pledge of "For you, a thousand times over!" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 2). Despite his physical vulnerabilities, Hassan demonstrated exceptional resilience in the face of significant adversity, risking his own safety to fulfill his master's dying wish of capturing the last kite. In stark contrast, Amir, who possessed the capacity to confront Hassan, opted to remain indifferent to the harsh realities faced by Hassan, who valiantly defended him. While Amir triumphed in the kite-flying contest, his inflated ego and shortcomings, coupled with his neglect of Hassan, ultimately manifested as

an unbearable psychological burden in his later years. This scenario set the stage for Amir's eventual bravery and confrontation with Assef, in defense of Hassan's son, while deeply shaping his understanding of Hassan's pivotal role in his personal development. It can be argued that Amir's growth is intricately connected to the redemption of Hassan's son, as he seeks not only to save the boy, but also to liberate himself from the guilt he harbored towards Hassan, along with the substantial emotional weight that came with it.

In *And The Mountains Echoed*, the author skillfully elucidates the latent homosexual undertones associated with the protagonist, Mr. Wahdati. The initial segments of the narrative artfully weave together elements of light and shadow, creating an enigmatic atmosphere that obscures Wahdati's peculiar behaviors. As the story unfolds, the author gradually reveals the complex layers of mystery surrounding him. Wahdati's dependency on Nabi transcends the conventional master-servant relationship. In addition to performing household chores, Nabi is entrusted with accompanying Wahdati on daily walks following breakfast, which implies that Wahdati's reliance extends beyond mere practicalities to encompass a deeper emotional connection. In addition, from Nabi's viewpoint, Wahdati appears as a figure lacking a legitimate occupation or significant passion; he appears to be "a man seemingly satisfied with living the rest of his days off the wealth of his inheritance...." (Hosseini, 2013, p. 85). Furthermore, Wahdati subverts societal conventions by marrying the fashionable Nila, who is characterized by a lack of honor or dignity, a penchant for provocatively short skirts, and an inclination to compose secular love poetry<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, their life post-marriage lacks the intimacy typically anticipated in a marital relationship. "Rarely did I see a tender look pass between the couple or hear an affectionate word uttered. They were two people occupying the same house whose paths rarely seemed to intersect at all" (Hosseini, 2013, p. 90). The audience remains enthralled by this intricate storyline until, following Wahdati's stroke, Nabi carefully arranges his possessions and reveals several boxes of his sketchbooks from the closet, thereby exposing the underlying reality.

I lifted the top sketchbook from the box and randomly opened it to a page. My knees nearly buckled. I went through the whole book. I put it down and picked up another, then another, and another, and another after that. The pages flipped before my eyes, each fanning my face with a little sigh, each bearing the same subject drawn in charcoal ....

It was you Nabi.

It was always you.

Didn't you know? (Hosseini, 2013, p. 124)

Wahdati's artwork embodies his deep affection for Nabi while probing into the complex motivations that underpin the unconventional behaviors exhibited by both Nabi and Nila. Homosexuality, albeit a delicate subject when juxtaposed with traditional literary topics, is skillfully examined by Hosseini through an intricate and nuanced narrative approach. This evocative storytelling, marked by a unique perspective, is instrumental in the protagonist's spiritual redemption within the narrative. Clearly, in both *The Kite Runner* and *And The Mountains Echoed*, Hosseini's emotionally charged storytelling, despite the contrasting viewpoints, serves as a crucial impetus for the ethical development of Amir and Nabi.

For Amir, the incident of sodomy signifies a crucial turning point in his relationship with Hassan, shifting from a positive to a negative dynamic. Following this event, propelled by his deep-seated guilt and anxiety, Amir consistently criticizes Hassan, ultimately leaving for America burdened by remorse. However, geographic distance does not alleviate Amir's guilt. Years later, he returns to Afghanistan, risking his own safety to rescue

<sup>2</sup> The nature of love espoused by Nila markedly contrasts with the spiritual yearnings articulated by poets like Rumi or Hafez, as it predominantly emphasizes physical attraction, a perspective considered conventional within secular paradigms.

Hassan's son, thereby liberating a vulnerable individual plagued by guilt for many years and attaining moral absolution. Similarly, Nabi navigates a parallel path of moral redemption in like circumstances. At the narrative's outset, under Nabi's influence, he facilitates the sale of his sister-in-law's daughter, Pari, to the Wahdati family, which leads to a prolonged estrangement from her parents and siblings. While Pari leads a life of privilege because of this choice, her sense of belonging dissipates the moment she is severed from her family, resulting in an irretrievable loss. As a result, Nabi has been burdened with a moral obligation towards Pari's family since the beginning of the narrative. During this journey, readers might experience feelings of dissatisfaction towards Nabi. However, Khaled Hosseini skillfully paves the way for Nabi to develop and achieve redemption through his relationship with Wahdati. Nabi's loyal companionship and unwavering assistance enable Wahdati to traverse life with a sense of serenity though he lost the self-care capability. Simultaneously, it allows Nabi the chance to amend his previous errors, promoting a purification and revitalization of his spirit.

Nabi's selfless behaviors toward Wahdati help to clarify the initial misunderstandings the readers may have regarding his character. As previously mentioned, the incident involving Pari complicates the readers' ability to foster positive emotions or empathy for him. Nonetheless, his devoted care for Wahdati following his medical emergency reveals the commendable qualities of compassion and dependability that are intrinsic to his character, thereby enriching his depiction. Moreover, through his actions, he seeks to address the guilt he feels concerning Pari. Following Wahdati's death, Nabi diligently maintains their shared residence, inadvertently transforming it into a crucial geographical site that assists Pari in rebuilding her identity. This home serves as a symbolic connection between Pari's past and present. She once forged treasured yet fleeting memories with Wahdati within its confines before being taken to France by Nila, which initiated her life marked by displacement in an unfamiliar setting. Despite cohabiting with "Mother" Nila, she often grapples with the internal turmoil that arises from her lack of clarity about her identity. The meticulously cared-for residence sustained by Nabi becomes an essential key for Pari, allowing her to recover her childhood recollections years down the line, thereby significantly contributing to her process of self-discovery. Furthermore, the tenant Marcus, who was referred by Nabi, adeptly facilitated the connection between Pari and her previously estranged relatives, and conveyed a letter from Nabi that unveiled Pari's true heritage. In the letter, Nabi acknowledged her mistakes and expressed deep remorse. Ultimately, after years of separation, Pari's family was reunited, and by reinstating her connections with her relatives, Pari rediscovered her long-neglected sense of identity.

Different from the previous narratives, in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the institution of polygamous marriage results in a heart-wrenching reality for the protagonist, Mariam. Unlike her mother, Nana, who resigns to her fate as an illegitimate wife, Mariam ultimately embodies resilience, freeing both herself and Laila from the stifling limitations of their marriages, thereby achieving independence and the elevation of their identities.

Initially, Nana embodies a casualty of the polygamous structure, while Mariam represents a victim of this dysfunctional familial framework. Mariam's father, Jalil, has three wives, and Nana is marginalized and regarded as "the other" by his other legitimate spouses. Despite their shared status as Jalil's wives, their relationships are marked by an obvious inequality. Firstly, Jalil's other wives bask in a prosperous lifestyle within an opulent residence in the city, while Nana is relegated to a dreary and deteriorating home on the outskirts. Jalil's occasional visits provide only fleeting insights into an alternate reality for Mariam, igniting a profound yearning for her father's presence. The rarity of these interactions casts a lasting pall over Mariam's life from a young age. Secondly, Nana's disdain toward Mariam highlights her inferior social position. From the very moment of her conception, Mariam is derogatorily branded as "Harami", a term in Afghan culture that signifies an illegitimate



child. This label embodies Nana's deep-seated resentment towards Mariam's very existence, serving as a perpetual reminder of Nana's own moral shortcomings. The term also highlights her reluctant recognition and acceptance of her marginalized identity.

Ultimately, Mariam's decision to escape from Nana marked a pivotal moment that devastated her mother's spirit. On the day of her daughter's disappearance, Nana chose to end her life, using her modest circumstances to emphasize the psychological and physical torment that women face within a patriarchal marriage system. The untimely death of her mother sent Mariam into an even more profound state of despair. Mariam was regarded by her father's legitimate wives as the "last vestige" of their husband's scandal, a constant reminder of their shame, leading them to believe that swiftly marrying her off would eradicate this dishonor. Consequently, while Mariam's half-siblings pursued their education, she was pressured into marriage by the influence of her father's legal wives. Thus, at the tender age of 15, Mariam was compelled to marry the 45-year-old cobbler "Rasheed" and relocated to Kabul, where she entered a nightmarish existence.

Mariam's predicament illustrates the victimization embedded within her marital situation, as her husband Rasheed epitomizes key characteristics of a polygamist. Following his divorce from his first wife, Rasheed entered into a new marriage with Mariam. Soon after, he took Laila as another wife, continuing his tradition of polygamy. As a result, Mariam is caught in a dual crisis: she endures Rasheed's violence and oppressive conduct, leading to repeated pregnancies and miscarriages due to his abuse, while simultaneously facing an unrecognized rivalry with Laila for her position in the household. Similarly, Laila is not exempt from this harsh reality; she too navigates comparable adversities as Mariam. The powerful warning from Mariam's mother, stating that "A man's heart is a wretched, wretched thing, Mariam. It isn't like a mother's womb. It won't bleed, it won't stretch to make room for you" (Hosseini, 2007, p. 30) effectively summarizes the emotional and physical torment that both women endure at the hands of Rasheed throughout their marriage. This statement highlights the big contrast between maternal love and the cruelty they face, emphasizing the deep scars left by their experiences.

However, the relationship between the two women underwent subtle transformations. Mariam's attitude toward Laila shifted from initial compassion to resentment, ultimately developing into a collaboration based on mutual support. This change was accelerated by the patriarchal oppression and harsh challenges imposed on them by Rasheed within their marriage. In the end, through her unwavering determination, resilience, and bravery, Mariam led Laila in a courageous rebellion against their oppressive circumstances, culminating in a fatal encounter with Rasheed. This pivotal act freed them from the shackles of their marriage, providing them with a chance to escape their suffering together. Despite the challenges, Mariam decided to embrace the consequences of her choices, ultimately providing Laila and her children with a bright future. In her pursuit of spiritual redemption, she decided to stay and face the legal consequences. In doing so, Mariam's virtuous spirit shone brightly once more, as she used her strength to alter their previously marginalized and suppressed lives within the confines of their marriage. She was prepared to sacrifice her own future in order to improve the lives of Laila and her children. Through the selfless act of protecting others, she discovered the true worth of her own life, transforming from a downtrodden, submissive individual into one of integrity and honor.

### Conclusion

In Hosseini's trilogy, the author develops a unique literary voice through an English writing framework that is enriched by bilingual influences, intricate representations of conflict, and deep narratives centered on spiritual redemption. He expertly crafts a complex tapestry of existence where the dichotomy of good and evil coexists,

offering readers an authentic insight into the everyday lives of the Afghan community. His stories poignantly reflect the harrowing experiences of ordinary people, characterized by grief and separation, while simultaneously striving to highlight the inherent goodness of humanity. As writer Chi Zijian (2014) aptly observed, "In reality, life is not a divine poem, but the laughter and tears of mortals" (p. 279). The author's distinct cultural heritage allows him to use English as a medium of expression, broadening the accessibility of his works to a global audience. Furthermore, his reflections on the wars and emotional landscapes tied to his native Afghanistan, rooted in bilingualism, demonstrate his profound appreciation for and connection to his cultural origins, showcasing essential elements of ethnic literature and offering valuable insights for ethnic authors seeking to expand their narrative horizons.

The linguistic framework that underpins literary narration plays a crucial role in the dissemination of ethnic literature. Taking Chinese literature as an example, the promotion and sharing of this literature abroad, especially within diaspora communities, relies heavily on linguistic framework, due to the differences in discourse structures between Eastern and Western cultures. In an increasingly globalized world, English has become the primary "global vernacular". To elevate the stories and viewpoints of Chinese authors, English acts as an essential medium. Wang Ning (2006), in his work *Cultural Translation and Classic Interpretation*, addresses the linguistic challenges, stating, "I maintain that the language we utilize merely facilitates the articulation of ideas. Employing Western languages to express Chinese thoughts and cultural notions could prove to be a more impactful avenue for influencing Western sensibilities" (p. 89). Therefore, the choice of linguistic framework is critical for the distribution of ethnic literature. Additionally, the dual identities of writers influence their unique emotional expressions. Ethnic authors often face distinctive identity challenges, resulting in a blend of cultural traits that can be understood as a dual-faceted experience. The way these cultural elements are interwoven profoundly impacts the emotional narratives created by ethnic writers.

Wang Gengwu has performed a thorough examination of the identity struggles encountered by diasporic Chinese authors, unveiling five distinct identity archetypes among Chinese expatriates: "the sojourner's psyche, the assimilator; the mediator, the nationalistic individual, and the individual whose lifestyle has been significantly altered" (as cited in Wang, 2006, p. 89). As a result, these complex identities have given rise to a cadre of authors operating in a liminal space, such as Tang Tingting, Amy Tan, and Huang Zhelun, who skillfully articulate Chinese stories in English. However, many unrecognized ethnic writers are diligently making significant contributions to this literary landscape. They adeptly navigate the nuances of cultural identities within their narratives, highlighting the interactions and tensions between varying cultures, which has become a central focus for them. Ultimately, a prevalent theme in ethnic literature revolves around the search for belonging. A key reason that Khaled Hosseini's narratives resonate with readers lies in his distinct perspective, which sets him apart from traditional Western authors. He crafts a genuine and impartial portrayal of Afghanistan, embedding profound emotion within his storytelling, which allows his homeland to showcase its true character in a global context while guiding readers toward an objective and comprehensive understanding of Afghanistan in tandem with the exoticism present in his tales. In essence, the deep portrayal of one's original homeland often characterizes ethnic literature. Nevertheless, it is a thought-provoking question how to display, write and publicize one's unique maternal culture, so that the ethnic literature works can not only express personal nostalgia, but also become an effective way to promote and maintain that culture.

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