Creative Saplings, Vol. 03, No. 12, Dec. 2024
ISSN-0974-536X, https://creativesaplings.in/
Email: editor.creativesaplings22@gmail.com

Commodifying Scars: A Critical Take on Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Rhiddhi Saha *
Assistant Professor,
Department of Communicative English,
Asutosh College Kolkata. West Bengal
&
Niloy Mukherjee,
Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
Jogesh Chandra Chaudhuri College
Kolkata, West Bengal.

ABSTRACT

In the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini aims to unveil the Afghan woman and display her lifelong struggle—within the inner circle of home and the larger society—to the global readership. For Hosseini, who prides in being the 'writer and the Afghan' and is also the 'elected' representative of Afghanistan for the Occidental world, the subject of the 'inner lives' of two struggling Afghan women, Mariam and Laila, seemed appealing. He considers it his primary responsibility to represent these women by drawing a meticulous picture of the women restricted within the oppressive reigns of Mujaheedins and Talibans. However, Hosseini's representation of the hopes, sorrows and disappointments of the Afghan woman is problematically essentialist and hardly innocent. Through the narrative, the role of the Afghan woman gets defined within a limited genre of femininity using which the author upholds and prizes the face of women who are constantly suffering and enduring. His writing exemplifies how suffering is often manufactured, marketed and sold as a commodity to evoke ethical, affective responses. In an attempt to represent the pain of the victim to the dominant audience, Hosseini promotes a scar culture that ends up creating a less authentic victim who is perfectly in sync with the expectations of victimhood of the audience. Sympathy is aroused for a victim whom the audience wants to see in the slot of a victim - in this case, a non-Western doubly-Otherised Afghan woman – whose plight would fan the audience's need for self-validation as the superior Self in comparison to the victimized inferior Other.

Keywords: *A Thousand Splendid Suns, Afghanistan, Khaled Hosseini, Western doubly-Otherised Afghan, Kabul.*

* Author: Rhiddhi Saha
Email: rhiddhi.saha@asutoshcollege.in
Received 06 Dec. 2024; Accepted 15 Dec. 2024. Available online: 25 Dec. 2024.
Published by SAFE. (Society for Academic Facilitation and Extension)

Creative Saplings, Vol. 03, No. 12, Dec. 2024
ISSN-0974-536X, https://creativesaplings.in/
Email: editor.creativesaplings22@gmail.com

Life and Works of Khaled Hosseini

The Afghan-American writer Khaled Hosseini was born in 1965 to Pashtun parents in Kabul, Afghanistan. The Hosseini family was in Kabul when the Afghan monarchy was overthrown in 1973 and a long era of political instability ensued. In 1976, the Hosseinis were relocated to Paris by the Foreign Ministry. When they wanted to return to Kabul in 1980, Afghanistan had already witnessed a communist coup and the invasion of the Soviet Army. The Hosseinis sought and were granted political asylum in the United States. In September, 1980, the Hosseini family moved to San Jose, California. Khaled Hosseini was only 15 years old, and could hardly speak in English. Having lost their ancestral home and standing, his family subsisted for a time on welfare, and father and son went to work at the flea market. Though Hosseini initially struggled with English, John Steinbeck's Depression-era novel The Grapes of Wrath rekindled his love for literature, and he began writing short stories in English. In March 2001, Hosseini began writing his first novel, The Kite Runner, which is often considered an autobiographical account. Published in 2003 by Riverhead Books, it went on to become a bestseller. His second novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, published in 2007 and considered the Richard and Judy Best Read of the Year in 2008, is the story of two Afghan women Mariam and Laila whose lives are exemplary tales of resilience and determination. The novel has been published in 60 countries and is set to be adapted on screen by producer Scott Rudin and Columbia Pictures who have acquired its rights. His third novel And the Mountains Echoed, published in 2013, is built on the relationship between Abdullah and his young sister Pari and their parent's decision to sell her to a childless couple in Kabul. He also penned a short story Sea Prayer in the form of an illustrated book. Hosseini's books have been published in over seventy countries and sold more than 40 million copies worldwide. Khaled Hosseini was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency in 2006. Khaled Hosseini, who was declared the most famous Afghan in the world by Time Magazine, lives in Northern California with his wife and two children. This article is a critical reading of the commodification of scars in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Commodifying Suffering

Khaled Hosseini attempts to represent the suffering of the Afghan community through his writings. However, Scarry notes that suffering "is a uniquely private, unshareable experience" (qtd. in Nair 148). Pramod K. Nair, in his article "Scar Cultures: Media, Spectacles, Suffering",

Creative Saplings, Vol. 03, No. 12, Dec. 2024
ISSN-0974-536X, https://creativesaplings.in/
Email: editor.creativesaplings22@gmail.com

proposes that "discourses of suffering deploy… a trauma-aesthetic that consists of individualization–personalization and the making of a 'barbaric space'" (Nair 147). He opines that suffering is often manufactured, marketed and sold as a commodity to evoke ethical, affective responses. Nair establishes that :

> scar culture's emotionally meaningful discourses of suffering, through certain representational modes, enable the creation of a moral imagination that generates an affective sociality, social responsibility and political response in contemporary public culture. These affective responses enable the making of new identities for victims, identities more in consonance with international laws than rooted in their ethnic or national locations. (Nair 148)

Representing suffering makes the suffering Other appear right before us, eliciting our ethical responses to the suffering.

This emotional response necessarily depends on the nature, magnitude and location of the event, but also prevalent social perceptions of risk, vulnerability, extent of damage and commonly accepted notions about the victims. (Hoffman and Oliver-Smith qtd. in Nair 149).

Thus, in an attempt to represent the pain of the victim to the dominant audience, scar culture ends up creating a less authentic victim who is perfectly in sync with the expectations of victimhood of the audience. Sympathy is aroused for a victim whom the audience wants to see in the slot of a victim - for example, a non-Western Other – whose plight would fan the audience's need for self-validation as the superior Self in comparison to the victimized inferior Other. The consumption of such suffering leads to tele-trauma: the transportation of distant suffering of Others into our real homes (Nair 149). The evocation of trauma is maximum when it is individualised and personalized, that is, the audience is given a human reference point – a victim, more specifically, a face – to connect to. Feldman uses the term "trauma-aesthetic" to refer to the rhetoric of suffering that enables the effect of affect (Nair 151). The space where the narrative of suffering unfolds is called the "barbaric space", one that is inhabited by those who cannot narrate their pains or speak for themselves. It mediates between the safe space of our homes where we consume the suffering packaged for us (through various media) and the unsafe space inhabited by the victim of suffering. Nair suggests that in this barbaric space created by the media, "those who cannot speak, who are consigned by their suffering to spaces beyond speech and self-representation, … are given names, faces and recreated as individualized sufferers" (Nair 152). The uniqueness of an individual or group's suffering is articulated, through scar culture, using the universal grammar of pain, to solicit sympathy.

Creative Saplings, Vol. 03, No. 12, Dec. 2024
ISSN-0974-536X, https://creativesaplings.in/
Email: editor.creativesaplings22@gmail.com

Since the audience is separated from the victim by space, they can decide to react to the suffering in tune with their own legacy.

Trauma Aesthetics in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

In his second novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini mentions, as part of the postscript, that the novel is his modest tribute towards the women of Afghanistan embracing their 'courage, endurance and resilience.' (Hosseini, A Thousand Splendid 412) Through the portrayal of the two prominent women characters of Mariam and Laila in the narrative, Hosseini aims to unveil the Afghan woman and display her lifelong struggle—within the inner circle of home and the larger society—to the global readership. For Hosseini, who prides in being the 'writer and the Afghan' and is also the 'elected' representative of Afghanistan for the Occidental world, the subject of the 'inner lives' of two struggling Afghan women seemed appealing. He considers it his primary responsibility to represent these women by drawing a meticulous picture of the women restricted within the oppressive reigns of Mujaheedins and Talibans. In the same postscript, Hosseini describes that when he returned to Kabul in 2003, he came across a veiled woman on the streets who was followed by 'four, five, six, seven' children of hers. Hosseini writes:

> I remember thinking, who is that person inside? What has she seen? What has she endured? What makes her happy? What gives her sorrow? What are her hopes, her longings, her disappointments? *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is in some ways my attempt at imagining answers to those questions. (Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* 411-12)

However, Hosseini's representation of the hopes, sorrows and disappointments of the Afghan woman is problematically essentialist and hardly innocent. Through the narrative, the role of the Afghan woman gets defined within a limited genre of femininity using which the author upholds and prizes the face of women who are constantly suffering and enduring. Hosseini's women are cast into moulds of victimhood that aid the progress of the narrative and the fanning of dominant stereotypes. His mention of the veil right in the postscript points to an obsession with the veil, a characteristic feature which often permeates the Occidental understanding of the Islamic Oriental woman. Hosseini urges his readers to reflect on their deficient knowledge and awareness of the veiled woman and claims to unveil her as well as the land she inhabits on the basis of his ethnic Afghan roots. However, the innocence of such a portrayal is questionable. Though the veil has been rationalised as a symbol of oppression of the brown woman by the brown man in the Oriental discourse, a symbol that the west identifies with a lack of agency,

Creative Saplings, Vol. 03, No. 12, Dec. 2024
ISSN-0974-536X, https://creativesaplings.in/
Email: editor.creativesaplings22@gmail.com

oppression, poverty, hunger and illiteracy, many Islamic feminist scholars have repeatedly shown the other connotations that the veil holds, especially that of being the Orient's resistance to the West's voyeuristic gaze, a resistance to the Western epistemic violence of producing absolute knowledge about the Orient. The veil, also popularly known as the burqa or chaderi in Islamic circles, functions as an opaque layering around the woman, helping her to see without being seen. With her body invisible and eyes open, the veiled woman prevents the surveillance by the western eye. Due to the invisibility that the veil provides to the exotic Muslim woman, the act of unveiling symbolizes the ultimate act of Western penetration, an Western intervention in the Orient. Therefore, Hosseini's act of unveiling the Afghan woman allows the Western reader-cum-tourist, who is hungry for a feeling of difference between the Orient and the Occident, to be satiated and hence enjoy a sense of superiority over the inferior Orient. Thus such a portrayal fans the Oriental discourse and creates epistemic knowledge which is presented to be the Absolute devoid of any scope of refutation. By placing the two characters of Mariam and Laila within the purview of the veil, Hosseini re-affirms the re-Orientalist assertion that equates the veil to oppression and suffering. While the veil has often been used to contain the powerfulness of women sexuality, to resist foreign gaze, and as a means of struggle (as in Fanon's Algeria), Hosseini's women want to cling on to the veil to hide their powerlessness, giving in to the Orientalist trope that the women in veil are sufferers. While describing the discomfort as well as the assurance felt by Mariam of getting into a veil for the first time, Hosseini describes:

> Mariam had never before worn a burqa...padded headpiece felt heavy on her skull, and it was strange seeing the world through a mesh screen. She...kept stepping on the hem and stumbling. The loss of peripheral vision was unnerving, and she did not like the suffocating way the pleated cloth kept pressing against her mouth… And the burqa, she learned to her surprise, was also comforting. It was like a one-way window… She no longer worried that people knew, with a single glance, all the shameful secrets of her past. (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 71-72)

Later in the novel, Laila uses the veil in a similar way to hide her powerlessness. In public, she prefers the veil because it functions as a means of saving her from the embarrassment of her past life. Hosseini describes:

> Her eyes were still adjusting to the limited, gridlike visibility of the burqa, her feet still stumbling over the hem. She walked in perpetual fear of tripping and falling, of breaking an ankle stepping into a pothole. Still, she found some comfort in the anonymity that the burqa provided. She wouldn't be recognised this way if she ran into an old acquaintance of hers. She wouldn't have to watch the surprise in her eyes, or the pity or the glee, at how far she had fallen, at how her lofty aspirations had been dashed. (*A Thousand Splendid Suns* 225-26)

Creative Saplings, Vol. 03, No. 12, Dec. 2024
ISSN-0974-536X, https://creativesaplings.in/
Email: editor.creativesaplings22@gmail.com

Both these descriptions depict the discomfort of Mariam and Laila at being forced to wear the burqa and the cumbersome, clumsy nature of the clothing. The only reason they cling on to it is patriarchal enforcement and a strong desire to hide their shame and desolation. Hosseini's women do not recognize any of the empowering or subversive connotations of the veil which, in turn, is reduced to a static marker of powerlessness in accordance with the view propagated by the Orientalist discourse. Having placed the characters of Mariam and Laila within the veil, Hosseini portrays them as the de-humanized product and property of the patriarch Rasheed on whom he has an unhindered sexual and physical license.

While Hosseini's women cling to the veil only as a mark of suffering and inferiority instead of empowerment, the episodes within the narrative frame of the novel do not provide them enough scope to change their inferior position. They are maintained within the subservient margins characterised by their compliance and are seen to retort only on being fatally threatened. Hosseini's depiction reaffirms the Orientalist trope of the silent, enduring woman who lacks the agency to secure her own means of emancipation and for whom the victory is coloured by the previous suffering and endurance meted out to her. In fact, the character of Mariam is stretched to such limits in reaffirming the image of the Oriental woman that she is seen hesitating before she inflicts the final fatal blow on Rasheed. Before she murders Rasheed, for one moment, she observes Rasheed's features soften and considers letting him go. But soon his brutal face tightens and Mariam realizes his murderous instincts. Hosseini describes: "Had Mariam been certain that he would be satisfied with shooting only her, that there was a chance he would spare Laila, she might have dropped the shovel. But in Rasheed's eyes she saw murder for them both." (Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* 340)

Mariam's hesitancy stems from her clinging to the role of a dutiful wife. Even after spending an entire lifetime of suffering and humiliation, the female character is still shown to be the one who attempts to uphold the sanctity of the marriage. Standing on the brink of extinction, Mariam is shown to exhibit superhuman tendencies of the complying Oriental woman who agrees to let her husband have her life (and thereby serves the purpose of being the sacrificial lamb satiating the demands of the Afghan male aggression) in order to save the innocent life of Laila.

In the novel, the narration depicts the Afghan women within the 'inner' circle of the household. Yet again conforming to the Orientalist discourse, the author places the women characters

Creative Saplings, Vol. 03, No. 12, Dec. 2024
ISSN-0974-536X, https://creativesaplings.in/
Email: editor.creativesaplings22@gmail.com

within the four walls of the house, thereby providing a myopic view of the sexist oppression that they face at the hand of their husband Rasheed within the household. In one instance, describing the restriction of Mariam within the four walls, Hosseini writes:

> Seasons had come and gone; presidents in Kabul had been inaugurated and murdered; an empire has been defeated; old wars had ended and new ones had broken out. But Mariam had hardly noticed, hardly cared. She had passed these years in a distant corner of her mind. A dry, barren field, out beyond wish and lament, beyond dream and disillusionment. (Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* 249)

Such a marginalised depiction of the women characters serves the dual purpose of conforming to the Orientalist as well as the specifically American discourse. Since these oppressed women characters are not shown to venture out from their households, the author does not need to depict their interaction with the larger society dictated by the Mujahideens. As a result, the tyrannical Mujahideen regime does not find a wholesome depiction within the narrative, which keeps it in good stead amongst the American audience. Later in the novel, when Mariam and Laila are seen to emerge out of their household in order to evade the oppressive grip of Rasheed, the political scenario of Afghanistan has already changed—the Mujaheddins have been replaced by the Talibans at the helm. With the Talibans being vilified, neither the author's nor the targeted audience's position gets endangered and thus helps the book in its claim of being another best-seller.

Hosseini's depiction of the bestial, savage nature of Afghanistan can be found in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The repeated construction of such an image of the Oriental land solidifies the image of Afghanistan being the uncivilised place—a trope with which the Oriental discourse distances the Occident from the Orient and projects the Orient's inferiority in its claim of being the superior. The repeated stereotyping of the Afghan land in each of the novels by Hosseini—who claims to be the native informant of Afghanistan—functions in shaping and limiting the imagination of the global readership. The convinced reader fails to imagine the possibility of the existence of a separate Afghanistan different in flavours and colours from the one portrayed by Hosseini. In order to garner the affective sympathy of the western readership, Hosseini yet again provides detailed descriptions to create a different, disturbing niche for the Afghan land. He creates a surreal description of Laila's house being destroyed by Taliban forces. The helplessness of the little girl in the face of such carnage elicits the affective sympathy of the reader pushing him to intervene to help the girl. Hosseini describes:

Creative Saplings, Vol. 03, No. 12, Dec. 2024
ISSN-0974-536X, https://creativesaplings.in/
Email: editor.creativesaplings22@gmail.com

> She looked up to the sky. Shielded her eyes with one hand. Then a giant roar. Behind her, a flash of white. The ground lurched beneath her feet. Something hot and powerful slammed into her from behind. It knocked her out of her sandals. Lifted her up. And now she was flying, twisting and rotating in the air, seeing sky, then earth, then sky, then earth. A big burning chunk of wood whipped by. So did a thousand shards of glass, and it seemed to Laila that she could see each individual one flying around her, flipping slowly end over end, the sunlight catching in each… Then Laila struck the wall. Crashed to the ground. On her face and arms a shower of dirt and pebbles and glass… Laila fades away to the dark… It hurts. It hurts to breathe. It hurts everywhere… Back to darkness… Her chest hurts. Her arms and legs hurt. (Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* 188-89)

Later in the novel, Mariam and Laila are found being reprimanded by their husband Rasheed for trying to flee from his household. Hosseini yet again proves to be the master storyteller in describing every action of Rasheed's aggression down to the most minute details. So efficient is his narration that after reading the description, the reader gains the aesthetic feeling of having lived it.

Rasheed grabbed Laila by the elbow and pushed her up the steps...Laila didn't see the punch coming. One moment she was talking and the next she was on all fours, wide-eyed and red-faced, trying to draw a breath. It was as if a car had hit her at full speed, in the tender place of the between the lower tip of the breastbone and the belly button. She realized she had dropped Aziza, that Aziza was screaming. She tried to breathe again and could only make a husky, choking sound. Dribble hung from her mouth. Then she was being dragged by the hair… Hair was ripped from Laila's scalp, and her eyes watered with pain… She saw his foot kick open the door to Mariam's room, saw Aziza flung onto the bed… she felt the toe of his shoe connect with her left buttock. She howled with pain as he slammed the door shut… She saw Rasheed leading Mariam across the yard by the nape of her neck. Mariam was barefoot and doubled over. There was blood on his hands, blood on Mariam's face, her hair, down her neck and back. Her shirt had been ripped down the front. (Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* 261-63)

The torture does not stop there but accentuates and the women are confined to dark rooms for days without food and water. Hosseini further describes:

> Laila dragged a dry tongue over her lips… Aziza kept crying, and Laila noticed with alarm that when she wiped her cheeks her hands came back dry... Soon Aziza stopped crawling around. She slipped in and out of sleep… When she woke up, she checked on Aziza, felt the parched cracks of her lips...they would die here, of that Laila was sure now, but what she really dreaded was that she would outlast Aziza, who was young and brittle… Aziza would die in this heat, and Laila would have to lie beside her stiffening little body and wait for her own death… (Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* 261-65)

In a separate instance, Hosseini yet again engages himself in another vivid description of Rasheed physically abusing his wives. Rasheed gets infuriated on the pretext of Laila meeting

Creative Saplings, Vol. 03, No. 12, Dec. 2024
ISSN-0974-536X, https://creativesaplings.in/
Email: editor.creativesaplings22@gmail.com

Tariq—a boy with whom Laila was known to have romantic inclinations during her adolescence and gets into a fit of anger chastising Laila for her 'guilt'. Hosseini writes:

> Mariam saw his feet pounding the steps...saw his belt, the perforated end tightly wrapped around his knuckles. The fake brass buckle dragged behind him… Without saying a word, he swung the belt at Laila...Laila touched her fingers to her temple, looked at the blood, looked at Rashid with astonishment...Rasheed swung the belt again… He caught her, threw her up against the wall, and struck her with the belt again, and again the buckle slamming against her chest, her shoulder, her raised arms, her fingers, drawing blood wherever it struck… (Hosseini, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* 337-38)

The ghastly depiction of the continuity of events is unnerving and disturbing. The inhumane nature of Rasheed towards his wives and his indifference towards the miseries of a newborn posits him as a villain with a larger-than-life presence. The magnitude of his villainy being reciprocated by the docile, subservient women along with the vivid description of blood, gore and violence meted out to the already victimized characters further fans the element of affective sympathy amongst the readers. Moreover, the unnerving brutality ingrained in the plot—the presence of women abusers and indifferent fathers, and the insecurity of human life—contrasts the established images of the orderly, civilised Occidental world. The illustration of the bloody nature of an Oriental household disagreement is in stark contrast to the popular ideas of civilised peace-making among the western population. In positing the Orient as this inferior savage and brutal, Hosseini once again manages to fan the Western readers' feeling of superiority and generate affective sympathy for the inferior doubly Otherised Oriental Afghan woman. By tinkering the trauma-aesthetics of his Western readers, Hosseini strengthens their faith in the inherent Otherness and inferiority of the Middle East and seeks their ethical responses. Hosseini almost attempts to push them and justify any attempt of theirs towards a western intervention marked by the intent of rescuing the inferior brown-skinned woman from her persistent state of wretchedness.

Conclusion

Khaled Hosseini's claim to his worldwide readership rests on his ability to tell stories that move the readers—Hosseini sketches characters that resonate with the audience on a humanitarian basis and elicit sympathy for themselves from a conscientious reader. However, the authenticity of this representation carved out to elicit sympathy is suspect, especially in his depiction of women. Hosseini's female characters are repeatedly presented as pitiable and devoid of any strain of progressive activities. However, in reality, the women of the Middle-East have repeatedly responded to the calls of emancipation at the turn of the previous century.

In the first half of the twentieth century, there were episodic occurrences of women activism claiming their right to universal suffrage and protesting against the demolishing of the constitutional, democratic forms of government. Morgan Shuster's book The Strangling of Persia accounts for the social activism that was undertaken by the women community to urge the Persian nation to uphold their liberty against Russian aggression (184-204). Women participation in political events during 1905-1911 had been a regular occurrence. Even during the oppressive reigns of the Mujahideen and the Taliban, women were seen to create small-scale initiatives, albeit undercover, to continue with their efforts for the emancipation of other women in the society. Writers like Elaheh Rostami Povey, Julie A Mertus, Jennifer Heath and Ashraf Zahedi, in their books, provide real-life accounts of women in Afghanistan and confirm the progressive activities that took place in Afghanistan in strict defiance of the Talib and Mujahideen mandates. Such instances of progress, defiance and self-sustenance on the part of the Afghan women are hardly reflected in the women characters of Hosseini. The women writers from the Middle-East represent the feminine figure as a complex entity capable of ensuring her self-emancipation (Lughod 406; Ahmed 546). Such a notion of the Middle-Eastern woman is in stark contrast to the one conjured by Hosseini in his fiction and the popular idea held by the European intelligentsia. Soraya Altorki, an anthropologist, points out that all the dedication and hard work of the women from the Middle-East are undermined by the powerful and the dominant patriarchal discourses that refuse to acknowledge the emancipatory potential of women and the Western media sensitization that constructs the figure of the Islamic Oriental feminine as the unemancipated being (cited in Lughod 415). Thus Hosseini's novels hardly contribute towards the true representation of the female characters. While he is successful in sensitizing the suffering and oppression that the Afghan women had to go through in the Taliban and the Mujahideen period, his portrayal of women fails to showcase the grit and determination which made the women stand undaunted against these tyrannical, patriarchal, oppressive regimes while helping other women of the community combat the patriarchal suppression. Thus, as has been pointed out by Mohanty, Hosseini's representation of women merely adds to the diverse representational discourse (scientific, literary, juridical, linguistic, cinematic) where the feminine figure is inaccurately constructed as the cultural and ideological composite Other.

Not only is Hosseini's characterisation within the narrative strategic, his novels impart further pieces of evidence towards the consolidation of the image of the 'Islamic Other.' Sue Kenny

observes, "...it is maleness and youth that dominate the imagery of the Islamic Other as dangerous and femaleness that dominates the imagery of the Islamic Other as vulnerable." (101) This again reinforces America's rationalisation for intervening in internal affairs of the Middle East to free the 'brown woman' from the oppression of the 'brown man' by selling the scar aesthetics as an exotic commodity to foreign eyes.

Works Cited:

Ahmed, Leila. "The Veil Debate—Again." Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives, edited by Carole McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim, 4th ed., Routledge, 2016, pp. 546–65.

Hosseini, Khaled. A Thousand Splendid Suns. Bloomsbury, 2013.

Kenny, Sue. "Risk Society and the Islamic Other." Islam and Political Violence: Muslim Diaspora and Radicalism in the West, edited by Shahram Akbarzadeh and Fethi Mansouri, Tauris Academic Studies, 2007, pp. 87–106.

Lughod, Lila Abu. "Orientalism and Middle East Feminist Studies." Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives, edited by Carole McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim, 4th ed., Routledge, 2016, pp. 406–20.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse." Feminist Review, vol. 30, 1988, pp. 61–88. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/1395054.

Nayar, Pramod K. "Scar Cultures: Media, Spectacle, Suffering." Journal of Creative Communications, vol. 4, no. 3, 2011, pp. 147–62. ResearchGate, https://doi.org/10.1177/097325861000400301.

Shuster, W. Morgan. The Strangling of Persia. The Century Co., 1912. Internet Archive, https://archive.org/details/stranglingofper00shusuoft .