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The Inheritance of Shame under Patriarchy: Transmission in Mother-Daughter Relationship in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

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Abstract: Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* offers a profound portrayal of the existential predicament faced by Afghan women under patriarchy. By presenting the destinies of mother-daughter relationship between Nana and Mariam, the novel reveals the intergenerational transmission mechanism of shame within mother-daughter relationships. Drawing upon Eve Sedgwick's theory of shame and Gilles Deleuze's affect theory, this thesis employs meticulous textual analysis to demonstrate that *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is not only a critique of patriarchy's overt violence but also a revelation of how it employs shame as a mechanism for intergenerational transmission. Through the covert medium of the family, macro-level social oppression is transformed into micro-level disciplinary practices within the mother-daughter relationship.

Keywords: *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Shame, Affect.

1. Introduction

Khaled Hosseini (1965-), born in Kabul, Afghanistan, is a prominent Afghan-American novelist whose literary works provide critical insights into Afghanistan's sociopolitical turmoil and diasporic experiences. His Afghan Trilogy-*The Kite Runner* (2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), and *And the Mountains Echoed* (2013)-all set against the backdrop of Afghanistan, vividly portray the lives of ordinary Afghans amidst war. Among them, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, with its unique female perspective, profoundly reveals the tragic experiences and tenacious struggles of Afghan women under the rule of the Taliban. In this work, Hosseini not only presents the suffering of Afghan women but, more importantly, portrays the humanistic brilliance and resistance they display in the face of desperate circumstances[1-4].

The novel traces the intertwined lives of two Afghan women, Mariam and Laila, as they suffer oppression under Taliban rule. Mariam, an illegitimate child, experiences a painful process of growing up. Her mother, Nana, commits suicide on her fifteenth birthday, and her absent father, who has only visited sporadically, seems like a stranger. Forced into marriage with Rasheed, a middle-aged shoemaker in Kabul, she endures years of domestic violence amidst Afghanistan's political turmoil. Eighteen years later, the war continues unabated, and Laila-a young woman who has lost both parents and her lover-is compelled to marry the same abusive husband. Initially,[5] Mariam has long endured her own pain and directs her resentment towards Laila, believing that she poses a threat to her already precarious position in the family. The relationship between these two women is filled with tension. However, as circumstances develop, their relationship undergoes a profound transformation. Laila gives birth to her daughter Aziza, whom Mariam comes to love as her own child. Through shared hardship and mutual reliance, they forge an unbreakable bond, ultimately uniting against their oppressive fate. After killing Rasheed, Mariam chose to surrender herself, using her own life to give Laila a new life.

As one of Hosseini's most important literary works, This work quickly became a research focus in academic circles after its publication. Although existing research on Hosseini and his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is fruitful, it exhibits two notable limitations. Firstly, there is insufficient attention to the protagonists' affect[6-8], particularly the mechanism of shame as a core affect, which remains under-explored. Secondly, there is a lack of systematic, dedicated study on the mother-daughter relationship between Nana and Mariam, whose significance as a key pathway for shame transmission is frequently overlooked. Consequently, this study aims to fill these dual gaps. This research, therefore, employs the lens of shame and affect theory specifically to investigate how shame is transmitted from Nana to Mariam, arguing that shame is central to understanding the formation and transformation of the characters' fates.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the intergenerational transmission of shame under patriarchy in Khaled Hosseini's novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, integrating Eve Sedgwick's theory of shame with Gilles Deleuze's Affect Theory. This thesis will unfold its argumentation through mother-daughter relationship. It explores in depth the mechanism and impact of the transmission of shame in the mother-daughter relationship between Nana and Mariam, examining how Nana internalizes the shame imposed by social oppression into self-deprecation and transmits this to Mariam and the influence on Mariam[9-10].

2. The Transmission of Shame: Mother-Daughter Interactions

This section traces how Nana in her role as an accomplice to patriarchy, through daily interactions with Mariam, "infects" and inscribes the shame she has endured into Mariam's cognition and bodily sensations, thereby completing the intergenerational transmission of shame. Drawing upon Sedgwick's theory of shame's contagiousness and Deleuze's focus on affect as bodily practice, this section dissects the specific, subtle techniques of transmission.

As Sedgwick emphasizes, shame is far from an isolated personal experience, but rather a cycle that is continuously transmitted and reinforced within social relationships. The shame experienced by Nana is a social affect. This affect is

systematically imposed within her life through two interrelated levels: the macro-level of patriarchal structures and the micro-level of familial and community interactions. For Nana, internalization is a process moving from the external to the internal, where the external gaze becomes an internalized fear, external norms transform into a philosophy of fatalism, and external power structures become internalized behavioral scripts. She assimilates these logics into the very core of herself, thereby completing the tragic formation of her identity. This laid the solid psychological foundation for her subsequent role as an accomplice to shame, transmitting this internalized shame to Mariam.

2.1. Transmission Trough language: Ideological Inscription

Nana's words constitute the most direct and destructive medium through which shame is transmitted. By employing systematic negative labelling, pessimistic prophecies of fate, and emotional entrapment strategies, she persistently shapes and solidifies Mariam's self-perception at both the symbolic and affective levels, continually reinforcing an identity generated by shame. This process not only demonstrates how language functions as an intermediary for transmitting shame, but also reveals the micro-operational mechanisms through which the affect is shaped and solidified by discursive practices. Deleuze posits that territorialization refers to the process by which social mechanisms suppress the flow of desire through power structures. Nana's shaping of Mariam is fundamentally a territorialization process, an externally imposed suppression and standardization of desire. In fact, Nana is not merely employing language but performing a micro-political operation through it, transforming the shame embedded in macro-social structures into affective realities within frequently occurring interactions.

Firstly, the act of naming constitutes a form of verbal violence, centred on the repetitive use of the term "harami". Harami is the Afghan state's designation for an illegitimate child, and each utterance serves to reaffirm and reinforce this identity of shame. Nana's curse, "You are a clumsy little harami. This is my reward for everything I've endured. An heirloom-breaking, clumsy little harami" (Hosseini, 2007:4) is not merely an affective outburst but an exercise of power. It defines Mariam as a clumsy, trouble-breeding source who shatters heirlooms, and directly links her to Nana's own suffering, thereby reinforcing the intergenerational transmission of shame. This violence first achieves its contagiousness described by Sedgwick through sensory pathways, the word harami, with its repulsive tone and feelings, being received by Mariam's body as a force of negation. Mariam perceives from Nana's manner of speaking "that it was an ugly, loathsome word, like the scurrying cockroaches Nana was always cursing and sweeping out of the kolba" (Hosseini, 2007:4), imbuing the term with repulsive affective intensity from its very pronunciation.

Ultimately, through repeated exposure, Mariam comes to understand "that a harami was an unwanted thing; that she, Mariam, was an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people possessed-things such as love, family, home, acceptance" (Hosseini, 2007:5). Through repeated verbal performance, the external social stigma is transformed from a mere label into the constitutive core of her selfhood, actively generating a precarious identity grounded in defect and illegitimacy. She is not only illegitimate in identity but also deemed unwanted in value, thereby permanently excluded from fundamental human needs such as love, family, and belonging.

Secondly, Nana persistently tells pessimistic prophecies of fate, in order to preventively block the possibilities of Mariam's life. This also typifies the operation of shame's contagion across generations. According to Sedgwick's theory, the most unique potential of shame lies in its ability to be transmitted to individuals predisposed to it, even when a situation seems entirely unrelated to them. Nana precisely exploits this mechanism, instilling the suffering and stigma she herself endured into her daughter as a form of preemptive shame. Such discourse is not merely an objective description of reality, but a discursive practice whose function lies in shaping affective expectations and guiding bodily responses. It aims to pre-direct Mariam's desires and life possibilities onto a path composed of suffering and endurance. Nana emphasizes, "This is what it means to be a woman in this world" (Hosseini, 2007:9). This generalized assertion defines female identity as an unalterable, tragic fate.

Simultaneously, she elaborates on the importance of endurance for women, "It's our lot in life, Mariam. Women like us. We endure. It's all we have" (Hosseini, 2007:28). These overlapping statements aim to direct Mariam into a life framework predestined for failure and suffering, depriving her of the openness and variability that life ought to possess. Through this discursive practice, Nana is effectively performing the regulation of affect, causing Mariam to psychologically accept and become enslaved to the fate of the oppressed before she has truly entered the world. This prophecy not only confined Mariam's imaginings of the future but also shaped her fundamental attitude towards the world and her affective tendency. Consequently, whenever confronted with any new possibility, she would unconsciously retreat into the comfort zone of shame and fear.

Most destructively, Nana embeds the transmission mechanism of shame within a distorted form of intimacy. She blocks any desire Mariam has—whether the desire to go to school or the thought of visiting her father. And this obstruction of desire is closely linked to shame, facilitating the transmission of shame. She does not directly refuse Mariam, but rather prevents her through words that appear to express affection. When others try to persuade Nana to send Mariam to school, her response is not gratitude but a resolute rejection of the outside world's value. She declares, "There is nothing out there for her. Nothing but rejection and heartache" (Hosseini, 2007:41). This move aimed to cut Mariam off from positive connections with the outside world. Simultaneously, when Mariam desires to go to her father's home, Nana emphasizes her role as Mariam's one and only support, stating, "I'm the only one who loves you. I'm all you have in this world, Mariam, and when I'm gone you'll have nothing" (Hosseini, 2007:41).

This coercive binding of love with isolation culminates in affective blackmail when Mariam attempts to leave, "Don't leave me, Mariam jo. Please stay. I'll die if you go" (Hosseini, 2007:41). These words, including the seemingly tender "You know I love you, Mariam jo" (Hosseini, 2007:41), collectively construct a closed logic loop. The outside world equates to rejection and heartache, while the mother and mud hut remain the sole sources of love and security. The consequence is that Mariam must accept the accompanying shame and confinement if she seeks her mother's love and protection. To flee this shame would mean betraying her sole reliance for affection. This logic profoundly obstructs

Mariam's efforts to break free from control and establish an independent identity.

2.2. Transmission Through the Body: Affective Inscription

Transcending the realm of language, the transmission of shame is more deeply rooted in non-verbal, embodied, and frequently everyday practices. As emphasized in the Sedgwick's theory of shame and Deleuze's theory of affect, Nana's expressions, gestures, silences can be seen as a series of forces acting upon a body, collectively constituting a potent force field of affect. Within this field, shame directly shapes and disciplines Mariam's physical sensations, responses of affect, and behavioral patterns through micro-level, sustained bodily interactions, thereby achieving its deeper transmission and internalization.

According to Sedgwick's theory, the face should be regarded as a key text for analyzing the transmission of shame. The emblematic expressions of shame, such as averting one's gaze, lowering one's head, and blushing, are not merely manifestations of internal affect but also potent communicative signals directed towards others. Consequently, our analysis must focus on two levels, firstly how Nana outputs shame through facial expressions, and secondly how Mariam receives this signal through her immediate facial and bodily reactions and responds to it, thereby revealing the silent circulation and internalization of shame between mother and daughter.

When Mariam accidentally breaks the china, Nana's face becomes the key interface, as defined by Sedgwick, through which shame is conveyed. The physiological reactions of her "face flushing red and her upper lip shivering," combined with her "eyes, both the lazy one and the good, settled on Mariam in a flat, unblinking way", together construct an affective pressure that transcends ordinary gaze. (Hosseini, 2007:4). This gaze disrupts the appropriate affective resonance between mother and daughter, placing Mariam in a position of isolated scrutiny. In response, Mariam "feared the jinn would enter her mother's body" (Hosseini, 2007:4). What she fears is not the act of breaking the china itself, but the affective rupture and negation implied by Nana's facial expression. To avoid triggering this disaster, Mariam begins a lifelong practice of self-monitoring and self-restriction. In this instant, shame is transmitted through the non-verbal channels of the face, transforming from an external expression into an internal, embodied psychological reality, thereby completing its intergenerational transmission.

Another crucial function of Nana's facial expressions lies in the persistent imprinting of social shame upon Mariam's sense of identity. Within this, the different kind of "smile", as a form of non-verbal communication, assumes a complex disciplinary role. After Jalil leaves, Nana's action is "snickering and saying" (Hosseini, 2007:8). This "snickering" not an expression of pleasure, but rather a twisted transmission of the structural shame she endures under the weight of patriarchal structures and class divisions. This is a non-verbal act full of mockery and satirical force, a vehicle for conveying social shame. The snickering itself carries complex subtext. It contains both a satire of the patriarchal world that dismisses them with the ice cream story, and a mockery that twists their own powerlessness within this order and projects it onto someone weaker Mariam. It requires no subsequent words, and the facial form and situational context alone constitute the affect of shame that infects Mariam.

In another scene, when Mariam imitates Nana in humiliating Jalil's legitimate sons, Nana's expression is "laughed so hard, her rotting front tooth in full display" (Hosseini, 2007:21). This hysterical laughter, coupled with the exposed, decayed teeth, forms a highly concentrated, terrifying scene of affective turmoil. This laughter, as a distorted form of acknowledgement, not only fails to establish a healthy connection but instead transmits Nana's own internalized affect of shame, stemming from her marginalized social position, directly to Mariam through this non-verbal expression.

Moreover, the disciplinary efficacy of Nana's facial affect is particularly profound within the deliberately maintained ambiguity of her emotions. This ambiguity is not mere obscurity of meaning, but rather a passive yet highly effective strategy of control. When telling the story of Mariam's birth, "Nana always gave a slow, burdened smile here, one of lingering recrimination or reluctant forgiveness, Mariam could never tell" (Hosseini, 2007:16). This burdened smile, between accusation and forgiveness, derives its power precisely from its refusal to offer a clear signal. According to Sedgwick's theory, shame is closely linked to interrupted processes of identification. This ambiguity of smile obstructs any possibility of establishing a stable identity. For Mariam, she is unable to get clear feedback from her mother's expression. She does not know whether she should feel forgiven or continue to endure blame. This persistent uncertainty robs her of security, trapping her in a perpetual state of anxious interpretation and vigilance. She must constantly examine her words and actions, striving to discover the "correct" way to earn her mother's approval or at least avoid her disapproval. In this process, her attention shifts entirely from the external world to monitoring her own affect and her mother's.

Thus, this very ambiguity becomes an efficient mechanism. Nana need not exert control through explicit directives, but merely by maintaining this vagueness, she compels Mariam to engage in self-censorship and self-discipline. Ultimately, the persistent anxiety engendered by this ambiguity itself becomes the most fertile breeding ground for shame. Mariam internalizes the sense that "Mariam, was an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people had" (Hosseini, 2007:5) as a core self-perception, thereby completing the transmission and engraving of social shame from mother to daughter.

When Mariam "thought about going outside and looking for her, but she dreaded the confrontation, the aggrieved looks." (Hosseini, 2007:43), this marks the completion of the process of transmitting shame. According to Sedgwick's theory, shame interrupts the desire for connection and redirects the subject's behavioral pathways. At this time, Nana's facial expressions have completed their transformation from external stimuli to internal mechanisms. Those expressions of anger and resentment no longer have to be physically displayed, for they have become a pre-emptive affective anticipation, deeply embedded within Mariam's perceptual framework. This internalization means Mariam's behavior no longer relies on external supervision, but is pre-emptively regulated by an internal sense of shame. She begins to actively avoid situations that might provoke her mother's specific expressions, using self-restraint to prevent the recurrence of that shame.

This transformation vividly illustrates the complete transmission pathway of social shame through non-verbal

facial expressions, progressing from Nana as the bearer of social shame, to her conveying this shame to Mariam via subtle facial expressions, ultimately forming an internalized mechanism of self-discipline within Mariam. In this process, macro-level social norms, through the most micro-level facial affective communication, not only shape the individual's psychological structure but also directly regulate their specific behavior. This achieves the intergenerational transmission and bodily inscription of shame from society to the individual, from the external to the internal, and from mother to daughter.

Sedgwick's focus on the face reveals shame's most concentrated staging within the interpersonal interface. However, the flow of affect never remains confined to face. To further interrogate how shame operates as a bodily force circulating within the interactive field, we may introduce Deleuze's theory of affect as a complementary analytical framework. In Deleuze's philosophy, affect represents encounters and flux between bodies that either amplify or diminish their existential force. Nana's body itself constitutes a field occupied by the affect of shame, continuously sending out waves of its power. Consequently, the transmission of shame requires not only an examination of the face but also an exploration of bodily actions.

For example, when Mariam broke the china, Nana "grabbed Mariam by the wrists, pulled her close" (Hosseini, 2007:5). This exemplifies the transmission of shame through the body. As a form of affect, shame circulates between bodies, and the physical coercion here serves as a direct modality for inscribing abstract norms onto the body. This action instantly deprives Mariam's body of its capacity for movement, fixing her in a state of forced attention. Blending violence with a twisted intimacy, its affective effect is to inscribe a command upon Mariam's body, that her clumsiness must be rigorously controlled and disciplined. Shame, in this moment, is directly experienced as a physical confinement through the grip upon her wrist.

Moreover, while instilling her worldview upon Mariam, "She lifted Mariam's chin with a finger" (Hosseini, 2007:9). This seemingly gentle gesture is actually intended to prevent Mariam from lowering her head or averting her gaze. This slight manipulation of the body establishes an immediate power dynamic. Nana is the initiator and controller of the action, while Mariam is placed in a position of passive response and obligatory compliance. Here, the transmission of shame is achieved through this most direct form of deprivation of bodily autonomy. According to shame theory, averting or lowering one's gaze is a fundamental self-protective mechanism for a subject experiencing shame. Through this gesture, Nana systematically denies this physiological possibility for self-protection, forcing Mariam to remain in a state of exposure to the shame she feels. This prevents the shame from being discharged, thereby amplifying and deeply internalizing it.

Besides, After Mariam expressed her longing for her father's love, "Nana paced around the kolba, clenching and unclenching her fists" (Hosseini, 2007:40). This sequence of bodily movements constitutes a non-directive affective performance. Unlike direct grasping or touching, they transform Nana's inner shame, anxiety and sense of loss of control into a persistent, undulating visual impact that cannot be ignored, directly affecting Mariam's senses. Mariam not only visually receives the distress signals transmitted by her mother, but is also cognitively compelled to associate this suffering with her own desires. Consequently, without uttering a word, Nana completes the transmission of shame through this bodily performance. Mariam thus learns that her legitimate yearning for paternal affection could become a destructive force tearing apart her mother's world. The rupture of desire promotes the transmission of shame.

From the forced closeness, to the disciplinary touch, to the pervasive bodily anxiety, these actions collectively form an affective system. Mariam not only reads shame from her mother's face, but learns and internalizes it through her entire body, through the confinement of her wrists, the pressure on her chin, and the pervasive tension in Nana's body. Thus, shame transforms from a social norm, transmitted through Nana's body, into the fundamental way Mariam perceives the world and responds to it.

2.3. Transmission through Isolation: Spatial Inscription

After analysing the transmission pathways of language and the body, this section will demonstrate that the intergenerational transmission of shame is also achieved through a spatial inscription. The kolba (mud hut) where Nana lives is not merely a physical shelter but an architecture of isolation and shame constructed for Mariam. As a meticulously maintained closed system, it materializes the exclusion of external society. Through its spatial layout and daily practices, it continuously inscribes shame into Mariam's self-perception.

Firstly, the geographical location of the kolba itself serves as a symbol of shame. As discussed in the previous section, its marginal, isolated position is not an accident but rather Nana's passive spatial resistance against social shame. This location transforms the social exclusion embodied by the "Harami" into a visible spatial fact, silently declaring Mariam's identity and belonging. More crucially, Nana actively maintains this state of isolation. By portraying the outside world as a realm full of danger and betrayal, she constructs the kolba as an absolute boundary that appears safe but is actually confined. This boundary not only isolates the external society but also firmly attaches Mariam to the identity of an excluded person.

Furthermore, this closed space constitutes a self-reinforcing circuit where shame is transmitted inwardly. Within the kolba, isolated from external affects, Nana continuously exposes Mariam to a highly concentrated flow of resentment, fear, and distrust that she herself has endured. Her despairing narrative of unreliable men and an inescapable fate forms a singular, closed discourse within this confined space. Mariam thus not only hears about her "Harami" identity but inhabits it. She ceases to be merely a passive recipient of this label, instead internalizing it as an unquestionable inner reality. Socially imposed shame thereby completes its process of internalization, becoming the fundamental principle governing her behavioural patterns. Therefore, the kolba functions as an architecture of shame, its mechanism operating by transforming societal structural exclusion into an inescapable individual fate through spatial confinement and affective transmission. By controlling Mariam's spatial environment, Nana successfully accomplishes this transmission of shame.

In summary, the intergenerational transmission of shame between Nana and Mariam is achieved through a finely collaborative system of verbal and non-verbal affective communication, operating within the architecture of the

isolated kolba. Facial expressions and bodily gestures do not operate in isolation but collectively form a continuous affective spectrum. Shame successfully escapes rational scrutiny by means of these most microscopic and primal channels of communication. Ultimately, this system forms a complete disciplinary loop within Mariam. Nana's external affective expressions are received by Mariam, transformed into internal, embodied affective experiences, and finally externalized as self-disciplining behaviours. Thus, social shame ceases to be an abstract external norm. Through the repeated inscription of non-verbal affect, it becomes an intrinsic component of Mariam's perception and behavioural patterns, completing its entire process of reproduction from society to the individual, from external to internal.

3. The Impact of Shame: Women's Self-Deprecation

The preceding analysis has clearly traced the trajectory of shame flowing from Nana to Mariam, dissecting its social origins and transmission mechanisms. However, the completion of transmission is not the endpoint, but rather the starting point where its effects begin to take hold. According to Sedgwick's core argument, shame also shapes identity. It begins as an externally imposed social affect, moulding Mariam's self-perception and generating a corresponding set of survival behaviors. This section therefore traces this pivotal shift, aiming to reveal how shame is internalized by Mariam as a core framework for understanding both the world and herself, systematically shaping the strategies she adopts for survival.

3.1. The Internal World: The Distortion of Self-Perception

To fully comprehend the pervasive impact of shame upon Mariam, our analysis must first delve into her most private inner world. For externally imposed shame to exert its enduring and profoundly toxic influence, the crucial factor lies in its internalization, whereby the sense of shame transforms from a tool of social discipline into an internalized rule governing an individual's self-examination and self-judgement. As Sedgwick contends, shame both disrupts and constitutes identification, rendering it profoundly significant for an individual's self-perception. The shame stemming from patriarchal society disrupts Mariam's possibility of identifying with healthy identities such as being a cherished daughter or a valuable individual. It subsequently constructs an identity centered on the label of "Harami" and a sense of unworthiness. This internal identity formation is the fundamental prerequisite for understanding all her external behavioral patterns.

Firstly, Mariam's complete internalization of her "Harami" identity constitutes one of the most profound effects of shame, namely the distortion of her foundational self-perception. According to Sedgwick's theory, shame creates new identities by disrupting recognition. This process is clearly evident in Mariam's case. The external social label of "Harami" is imposed upon her through Nana's contemptuous manner and non-verbal affect- "not so much saying it as spitting it at her" (Hosseini, 2007:5). This manner of conveying the word makes Mariam keenly aware of the full harshness behind it, ultimately accepting a cruel truth "that she, Mariam, was an illegitimate person who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people had" (Hosseini, 2007:5) both cognitively and affectively.

The successful internalization of shame interrupts her natural yearning for love and belonging, instead forging an isolated identity rooted in illegitimacy. This fabricated identity exhibits remarkable persistence, its traumatic core remaining firmly entrenched even into adulthood. Although Mariam is thirty years old, "but that word, harami, still had sting. Hearing it still made her feel like she was a pest, a cockroach" (Hosseini, 2007:332). It is evident that the internalized identity of "Harami" for so many years has undergone a complete transformation from a mere social classification into the ultimate lens through which she examines herself and judges her worth, profoundly defining her relationship with both her own self and the world.

Furthermore, this internalized sense of shame profoundly shapes Mariam's affective responses and moral logic, one of its most significant effects of which is the emergence of her self-blaming mechanism generated by shame. This mechanism forces her to continually attribute the injustices and traumas imposed by the outside world to the faults within her own existence. After being ignored by her father and forced to sleep rough, her sense of shame transcends mere sorrow and anger, taking on a more complex form. She thought, "she was ashamed of how she had dismissed her mother's stricken looks, her puffy eyes. Nana, who had warned her, who had been right all along" (Hosseini, 2007:53).

Thereafter, she even attributes her mother's suicide and her own suffering to her betrayal of Nana. This shame-driven logic of blame reaches its peak following her miscarriage. She interprets the loss of her child as "an undeserved blessing", reasoning that she "might as well have slipped that noose around her mother's neck herself". From this, she draws a cruel conclusion, declaring that "Treacherous daughters did not deserve to be mothers, and this was just punishment" (Hosseini, 2007:140-141). Here, the internalized sense of shame utterly interrupts the self-compassion she ought to receive as a grieving mother, instead forging an identity as a guilty and punished figure. This identity compels her to transform the cruelty of external fate into a persistent negation of her own moral worth, thereby rendering shame not merely an affect but an internalized power for self-judgement and self-punishment.

Ultimately, Mariam's distorted self-perception completes the crucial transition from individual shame to the internalization of social gender discipline. What she inherits is far more than Nana's personal resentment but a set of ideologies that naturalize and sanctify female suffering. This is revealed in her profound recollection of Nana's words,

She remembered Nana saying once that each snowflake was a sigh heaved by an aggrieved woman somewhere in the world. That all the sighs drifted up the sky, gathered into clouds, then broke into tiny pieces that fell silently on the people below. As a reminder of how women like us suffer, she'd said. How quietly we endure all that falls upon us. (Hosseini, 2007:138)

Nana takes her own traumatic experiences and condenses them into a suffocating cognitive framework concerning female destiny. She portrays women's suffering as a universal, silent, and cyclical natural phenomenon like snowflakes, imposing upon Mariam a pessimistic paradigm for understanding the world in which women's pain is pervasive, muted, and inescapable. Mariam's profound memory of this explains how she has internalized and accepted this fate, choosing to confront suffering in silence.

In summary, the most profound impact of shame upon Mariam lays in the systematic reshaping of her self-perception. She becomes a negative identity based on the traumatic core of "Harami", filled with self-blame and gender fatalism. This internalized identity leads her to believe her own inferiority and suffering are inherent and deserved. Thus, shame completes its crucial transformation from external discipline into an internal shackle. This cage of internalized cognition not only defines who she is but inevitably externalizes itself into a series of concrete survival strategies and behavioral patterns.

3.2. The External Manifestation: Behavioral Patterns of Internalized Shame

When shame becomes deeply internalized and shapes one's self-perception, it ceases to be merely an internal sensation. Instead, it manifests in the external world through specific behavioral patterns. These actions constitute the outward practices of distorted self-perception, which are strategies developed by the subject to survive within an oppressive structure. Mariam's behavior primarily manifests in three typical patterns, endurance, social withdrawal from a sense of stigma, and dependent adaptation to instruments of oppression.

First, strategic endurance constitutes Mariam's most fundamental behavioral pattern, rooted in her internalization of Nana's transmission of the inherent fate of women and the fear of violence. This endurance is not mere passivity, but rather a desperate choice made after recognizing one's own powerlessness to change the situation. As in Mariam's inner monologue within the work, "But after four years of marriage, Mariam saw clearly how much a woman could tolerate when she was afraid. And Mariam was afraid. She lived in fear of his shifting moods, his volatile temperament…" (Hosseini, 2007:148-149).

This inner monologue profoundly reveals that her endurance stems from internalized shame under violent threat. The notion that women are born to endure, transmitted by Nana, has already stripped Mariam of the psychological foundation for resistance. It has convinced her that her suffering is an inevitable consequence of her identity, rather than an external injustice. Thus, when her husband's violence is inflicted upon her, external fear and internal shame jointly break down her will to resist. Her endurance is the only choice she can make, because the internalized shame has psychologically blocked all paths to resistance. She is living out the script for survival that internalized shame has already laid out for her. Therefore, endurance becomes her daily behavioral pattern.

Furthermore, the internalization of this stigmatized identity as "Harami" systematically reshapes Mariam's public behavioral patterns, resulting in her persistent social withdrawal. This withdrawal is not a consequence of an introverted personality, but rather a deliberate strategy of self-isolation born of her fear that her disgraceful past might be scrutinized by others. When internalized shame dominates her perceptions, the external social sphere no longer represents a potential source of connection and support, but instead becomes a field of judgement and threat. By actively marginalizing herself from public life, Mariam attempts to manage and control the overwhelming anxiety triggered by shame, thereby avoiding the imagined social death from becoming a reality.

Whilst queuing in front of the tandoor, Mariam "caught sideways glances shot at her, heard whispers. Her hands began to sweat. She imagined they all knew that she'd been born a harami, a source of shame to her father and his family" (Hosseini, 2007:100). The physical reactions here, such as sweating hands, are typical physiological responses triggered by feelings of shame, marking anxiety and discomfort. Her perception has become distorted, and she imagines a group of omniscient and malevolent spectators not based on facts, but on a deep-seated sense of shame within her. This process of projecting internal shame onto the external environment causes her to objectify herself as a symbol of disgrace, perpetually scrutinized and condemned in the eyes of others.

Ultimately, internalized shame drives Mariam towards a complex, dependency-based adaptation to oppressive instruments. The burqa, as a direct tool of patriarchal discipline over women's bodies and visibility, initially signifies bodily confinement and the obliteration of individuality. However, through her wearing of it, Mariam undertakes a crucial internal reconfiguration of its function. Thus, oppressive structures do not merely impose control from the outside but are actively internalized by the subject and transformed into a technique for self-regulation of affect. By embracing tangible, physical confinement, she gains temporary relief from the intangible but even more torturous psychological torment.

"It was like a one-way window. Inside it, she was an observer, buffered from the scrutinizing eyes of strangers. She no longer worried that people knew, with a single glance, all the shameful secrets of her past" (Hosseini, 2007:109). When the external social space becomes threatening due to internalized shame, as exemplified by Mariam's anxiety while queuing, the burqa as a physical constraint is instead transformed by her into a controllable visual shield. Through it, Mariam transforms herself from a passive, possibly humiliated object of gaze into an active, anonymous subject of observation. She does not eliminate shame, but through this tool, successfully manages the anxiety of being scrutinized that shame provokes.

In summary, this section's analysis clearly demonstrates the impact of shame upon Mariam. From Nana to Mariam, shame not only undergoes an affective transmission but is internalized by Mariam as the core of her self-perception, systematically externalized into a series of behavioral patterns. Her endurance, social withdrawal, and dependent adaptation to instruments of oppression collectively form a seemingly impenetrable cycle of shame. Within this cycle, she is both victim and performer of the patriarchal norms, thereby achieving the intergenerational transmission of shame.

4. Conclusion

This thesis traces the social origins and transmission mechanisms through which shame is passed from Nana to Mariam, delving into its profound impact. Analysis reveals that mother-daughter interactions serve as a covert but efficient way for patriarchy to perpetuate its norms. The mother-daughter relationship between Nana and Mariam reveals the complete chain of shame transmission under patriarchy. The analysis of it demonstrates that Nana has thoroughly internalized the social shame she herself endured, systematically passing it on to Mariam through daily interactions involving verbal punishment, physical discipline, and spatial confinement. This process not only transforms macro-level social oppression into micro-level domestic politics but ultimately engraves shame profoundly into

Mariam's identity, shaping her self-deprecating cognition and submissive behavioral patterns. It is thus evident that the family constitutes the pivotal field where shame achieves its social reproduction.

Under the discipline of patriarchy, a role of complicity is shaped within the family, typified by Nana who has thoroughly internalized social shame. As a mother, she is supposed to embody the core functions of empathy and protection. However, the transformation of her role directly leads to the absence of healthy affects within the primary attachment bond. Shame replaces care, becoming the dominant element in intergenerational interactions, thereby severely impeding Mariam's process of constructing an independent and complete subjectivity. Thus, the deep-seated mechanisms of patriarchal oppression manifest not only through external violent control but also through the distortion of intimate relationships, leveraging women themselves to perpetuate the logic of oppression across generations. Many women's existence is shackled by the dual constraints of internalized shame and external discipline.

However, Hosseini's narrative does not stop at revealing the cycle of oppression. The symbolic mother-daughter bond forged between Mariam and Laila successfully breaks the vicious cycle of shame being passed down through generations. This successful transcendence not only imbues the novel with a power of redemption, but also constitutes a critical avenue for subsequent research that merits in-depth investigation.

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