

Compare the ways in which the writers of your two chosen text use narrative voice. You must relate your discussion to relevant contextual factors.

In both *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Tess d'Urbeville*, both Hardy and Hosseini present the roles of a women and the life of suffering in which they are expected to fulfill through narrative voice. Whilst Hardy narrates his views and justifies the actions of Tess, Hosseini displays his voice through the experiences of Mariam and Laila.

Both Hardy and Hosseini chose to use a limited omniscient narrator to reflect the silencing of women in the society's they depict in their novels, this is evident in the lack of thoughts expressed by the men in the novel displaying not only the ignorance of men but their views towards women. The use of dialogue of male characters in both *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Tess d'Urbeville* heightens their dominance in speech and expression and reiterates how men interject their traditional roles and patriarchy by having little importance in a woman's life but hold a huge impact over them, this is evident when Alec blames Tess's "innocent means – of my backsliding as they call it." Alec's false accusations on Tess and his ability to play 'the victim' illustrate the unequal society Tess lives in as men are able to dominate themselves physically and mentally over a women. Similarly in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam becomes the centre of Rasheed's harsh commentary and accusations as he victimises himself, proving to Mariam of her inferior status as an outcast as he belittles her through speech and male power this is emphasised when he states, "Is that the kind of man you take me for, after everything I've done for you?" Both Rasheed and Alec thrive in a male dominated society and taint and master those of whom are inferior to them, making them their puppets and using them for their own sexual gain. Rasheed, like Alec exploits the women in the story in order to fulfill their own sexual desires but continues to act as if the women are of no use to them and bring nothing into their lives. Now you know what you've given me in this marriage. Bad food, and nothing else."

Hardy injects his own authorial voice into the novel which make his views on the treatment of Tess explicit. Hosseini on the other hand, devotes total attention towards the feelings of Mariam and Laila and allows the reader to connect to their experience without mediation. In *Tess d'Urbeville*, this is emphasised through Hardy's comment on "Where was Tess's guardian angel?" Through this we can explore how Hardy justifies Tess's actions and victimises her through her lack of aid from her "guardian angels" positioning Hardy against the social conventions which deemed women as the perpetrator of crimes against women; such as rape were deemed as crimes instigated by women themselves. Whereas in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Hosseini displays his opinions and views via Mariam and Laila's experiences and hardships in life whereby the characters find out the meaning of enduring their suffering and express their experiences with other women outside the novel through their treatment from society, "How quietly we endure all that falls upon us." Hosseini, through this phrase, exposes the caged life women in Afghanistan experience, he critiques the Afghan expectation for women to suffer in silence where it is expected of women to silently endure the pain and lack of freedom they receive. The verb 'endure' highlights the assumption that women are meant to take in every acts man and society forces onto them, revealing their inferiority and discrimination for being the weaker sex.