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Literacy Narrative Prompt - A Thousand Splendid Suns

Growing up reading and writing was simply just another duty that we had to complete, but over the course of years I eventually became accustomed to it. From the basic writing techniques taught in first grade to preparing for state exams in middle school, my reading and writing comprehension skills had developed vastly. At the time being it all just seemed routinary and it had carried on up until I guess you can say now, the present.

When I was younger I would always have a hard time putting my thoughts and ideas on to paper but eventually with enough practice and effort, the thoughts and ideas began to flow more naturally. During my highschool years was when I began to understand the significance of reading and writing. Of course we had basic book reports and papers just as we did in elementary school but now it felt more engaging in a sense. We would take part in group discussions and socratic seminars allowing us to share our thought and viewpoints on the different materials we would read and go over both in class and at home for homework. This had created an aura that was more captivating and further interested me into not just writing for the assignment but to put my own conjecture out there and to share.

One of the novels that I heavily enjoyed and opened up my horizon in regards to reading was “A Thousand Splendid Suns” by Khaled Hosseini. This novel carries a unique plot about a young girl named Mariam and the struggles she had faced growing up in a developing country at the time, Afghanistan. After reading about the different endeavors and hardships Mariam goes through one can easily develop a very sympathetic connection. From the start of the novel Mariam is immediately labeled a “harami” which in translation would be modern slang for “bastard”. Nonetheless a series of unfortunate events continue to occur from her mother committing suicide, getting an arranged marriage to a stranger more than twice her age and ofcourse living under oppression from the afghan government. The concept of tragedy and misfortune highly revolves around the theme of this novel leaving nothing but sympathy from the readers.

Moreover as an individual of a Southern Asian descent and Islamic religion origin , I myself can make a connection to certain struggles that the protagonist Mariam falls upon. This in turn helped me as a reader to develop some form of empathy. Although I myself am a male and do not have the same restrictions that are placed on women, many of my close family members such as my mother and even my sisters do face today. For instance just as in the novel, women including Mariam were not permitted education after a certain extent unless they came from a very wealthy family. My mother was also put in the same position back when she was still living in her mother country, Bangladesh. She was only capable of continuing her education up until primary school which is only equivalent to elementary in the US. In addition just like Mariam, my mom had to have an arranged marriage not only because of the religious aspect but also because it was necessary being that women were perceived to need a man to survive.

Likewise another predicament that continues to impact my two sisters just as in Mariam in Afghanistan is this suppression and set back due to cultural expectations/limitations. In the text it mentions how the locals would always criticize the women who would stand out and or act out the social norm. For instance my eldest sister was forced into wearing a hijab (islamic garment to cover hair for women) throughout her whole childhood and soon enough once she decided to stop the judgment amongst neighbors and family members began. (Continue explanation of how my sisters are treated differently).

In conclusion, the novel “A Thousand Splendid Suns” by Khaled Hosseini had further strengthen and brought out a new form of interest for me in both reading and writing. I was able to connect to the protagonist allowing me to understand and relate to the context in a deeper level.

Works Cited

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