

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 13. Issue 2. 2026 (April-June)

ISSN
INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

Colonial Legacies and Cultural Resilience: Exploring Hybridity and Mimicry in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Mamta Rani

Independent Researcher, Charkhi Dadri, Haryana, India

Email: brainmamta0001@gmail.com

[doi: 10.33329/ijelr.13.2.269](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.13.2.269)



Article information

Article Received:28/05/2026
Article Accepted:24/06/2026
Published online:29/06/2026

Abstract

This paper examines *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini through a postcolonial lens, specifically utilizing Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and mimicry to explore the effects of imperialism, war, and cultural identity on Afghan society. Through an analysis of the characters' navigation between traditional Afghan values and the imposition of Western influences, the paper investigates how the novel critiques colonial and imperial interventions while highlighting the complexities of resistance and adaptation. The paper argues that the characters, particularly Mariam and Laila, embody the hybridization of Afghan identity, as they are caught between the inherited patriarchy of Afghan culture and the disruptive forces of Western modernization and imperialist wars. Kabul, as both a geographical and symbolic space, is analyzed as a hybrid city, torn between the remnants of its rich historical heritage and the destruction wrought by foreign intervention. By adopting Western ideals, such as education and personal agency, Laila exemplifies Bhabha's notion of mimicry, wherein Western modernity is both resisted and incorporated into Afghan society as a form of survival and critique. The novel's portrayal of Afghanistan as a site of continuous cultural adaptation and resistance against oppressive forces underscores the fluid nature of identity formation under imperialism. Ultimately, this paper highlights how Hosseini's work contributes to postcolonial discourse by deconstructing stereotypical Western portrayals of Afghan society and offering a nuanced representation of Afghanistan's cultural hybridity in the face of enduring imperialist legacies.

Keywords: Afghan identity, Cultural resistance, Hybridity, Imperialism, Mimicry.

Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a poignant portrayal of the struggles of Afghan women in a war-torn society, woven with the complexities of Afghanistan's socio-political upheavals. Spanning over several decades, the novel captures key historical periods in Afghanistan's history, from the Soviet invasion to the rise of the Taliban and the aftermath of the U.S. intervention. Against the

backdrop of these historical events, the lives of two women — Mariam and Laila — intersect, revealing the ways in which personal suffering intertwines with national trauma. Through their stories, Hosseini critiques not only the patriarchal society but also the destructive forces of imperialism and colonization that have shaped Afghanistan's tumultuous journey.

Postcolonial theory, which examines the lingering effects of colonization on former colonies, serves as a crucial framework for understanding the novel's exploration of Afghanistan's struggle for cultural identity amidst imperialist interventions. As Edward Said's *Orientalism* argues, Western discourse has historically portrayed the East as exotic, backward, and in need of Western intervention. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* challenges these stereotypes by providing a nuanced portrayal of Afghan culture and resilience, positioning Afghanistan not as a monolithic victim but as a society that is continuously negotiating its identity in the face of external pressures. In this context, the postcolonial lens is crucial to understanding the novel's depiction of cultural hybridity and the complexities of Afghan identity.

Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of "hybridity" and "mimicry" offer further insights into the novel's critique of Western imperialism. According to Bhabha, hybridity is the product of cultural intermixing, resulting in a disrupted binary between the colonizer and the colonized. In this hybrid space, cultural identity is constantly negotiated and redefined. Bhabha's notion of "mimicry" refers to the way colonized people adopt elements of colonial culture, often in a way that both mirrors and subtly subverts the original. Bhabha explains that mimicry is "a form of resistance that creates an ambivalence and an anxiety in the colonial authority" (Bhabha 122), where the colonized subject both imitates and critiques the colonizer's culture.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Afghanistan itself becomes a site of cultural hybridity. The country is caught between its traditional cultural values and the modernizing influences introduced through imperialism and war. Laila, who is deeply influenced by her progressive father's educational values, represents a form of hybridity as she navigates the shifting cultural landscapes of Kabul. Her resistance to the traditional roles expected of Afghan women is shaped by both her education and the oppressive social structures she inhabits. Furthermore, characters like Mariam, despite being more traditionally bound, also embody hybridity through their evolving identities as they are forced to adapt to changing circumstances. As Bhabha notes, hybridity is a "third space" of cultural negotiation, where identities are neither fixed nor purely authentic but are continually being constructed (Bhabha 211).

Through the use of mimicry, the novel also critiques Western hegemony. Laila's pursuit of education and her participation in the broader, globalized world serve as examples of how Afghan characters adapt Western ideals, but often with an awareness of the oppressive forces that accompany them. For instance, Laila's engagement with education, despite the cultural taboo in her society, represents an act of mimicry that simultaneously challenges and critiques the dominant Western ideologies of progress and modernity. As she navigates the turbulent political landscape, her actions reflect a complex dance of resistance and adaptation, mirroring Bhabha's assertion that mimicry "is never a mere repetition of the original" (Bhabha 125). Laila's ability to adapt to foreign influences while still maintaining a distinct Afghan identity reveals the ambivalence inherent in colonial encounters and the hybrid identities that emerge from them.

Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* takes place during pivotal historical moments in Afghanistan, marking the profound impact of colonization, war, and foreign intervention on Afghan society. These events, including the Soviet invasion, the Mujahideen conflict, the rise of the Taliban, and the eventual U.S. intervention, are not only central to the novel's plot but also shape the lives of its characters, Mariam and Laila, in significant ways. The Soviet invasion in the 1980s, followed by the Mujahideen's rise and the internal conflicts that ensued, set the stage for the novel's depiction of a fractured society. Afghanistan's history becomes one of continuous political upheaval, contributing to

an environment where individual lives are governed by the chaos of war and the shifting allegiances of foreign powers. The rise of the Taliban in the 1990s and the eventual U.S. intervention in the early 2000s further exacerbate this socio-political instability, leaving the characters grappling with both the internal and external forces that reshape their world.

Through the lens of postcolonial theory and Homi Bhabha's concepts of hybridity, these historical events not only shape the socio-political landscape of Afghanistan but also foster a cultural hybridity within Afghan society. Kabul, the city where much of the novel's action unfolds, is depicted as a geographical and social hybrid space, where traditional Afghan values and the modernizing influences of foreign powers collide. Kabul is presented as both a beautiful and scarred city, symbolizing the tension between preservation and destruction. Hosseini captures this hybridity when he writes, "Kabul had once been a city of gardens, of fountains and apple trees, of dusty streets with crooked lanes, narrow alleys where old men sat and sipped tea," before describing how the same city was ravaged by decades of conflict, transforming into a symbol of both resilience and loss (Hosseini 173). This duality mirrors the hybrid nature of Afghan society—caught between its rich cultural heritage and the relentless upheaval caused by imperialism and internal strife.

The hybridity of Kabul also extends to its people, who navigate a world shaped by both their cultural traditions and the disruptive forces of modern warfare and Western influence. As Bhabha suggests, "Hybridity is the sign of the problematic interaction of cultural identities" (Bhabha 211). Afghanistan, with its diverse history of colonization and foreign intervention, becomes a site of cultural negotiation. In the novel, characters like Laila, who embraces the educational values of her father, represent a hybrid identity—one that blends progressive, Western ideals with the traditional cultural values of her Afghan heritage. Her education in a society torn apart by war becomes an act of resistance against the patriarchal system, showing how hybrid identities form in the face of both local and foreign domination. Similarly, Mariam, though more rooted in tradition, navigates her own complex identity as she faces the relentless demands of an oppressive society and the external pressures of war.

Hosseini's portrayal of Afghanistan is an essential counterpoint to the stereotypical Western depictions of the country as a place of violence and despair. Instead of reducing Afghanistan to a mere battleground of political forces, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* humanizes the country's struggles, presenting it as a land of both beauty and devastation. Hosseini refuses to depict Afghanistan solely as a victim of imperialism; instead, he paints a picture of a nation that is at once scarred by external forces and resilient in its attempts to preserve cultural identity. Through the intimate portrayal of his characters, Hosseini emphasizes the deep contradictions within Afghan society, which are brought to the surface by the hybridity of its people and the profound impacts of foreign intervention. This humanization aligns with Bhabha's argument that hybridity challenges binary notions of colonizer and colonized, showing instead how cultures are continually transformed through interaction and resistance.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini vividly illustrates the tension between tradition and modernity, particularly through characters like Laila's father, Hakim, and the contrasting roles of Mariam and Laila. Hakim's progressive stance on education exemplifies an internal hybrid struggle between the traditional values of Afghan society and the influence of modernity. As an advocate for Laila's education, Hakim believes in the power of knowledge to transform her life, yet he is still constrained by the social expectations of his time. He instructs Laila, "I want you to have the freedom to be whoever you want to be. To be able to stand up and say, 'I am something'" (Hosseini 38). Hakim's support of education represents a hybrid understanding of what it means to be a woman in Afghanistan: he values both the preservation of Afghan culture and the progressive ideals offered by Western influence, but he is also aware of the cultural restrictions that surround his daughter. Despite Hakim's modern outlook, Laila is still constrained by the rigid gender roles of Afghan society, demonstrating the tension between tradition and the forward-looking hopes of modernity. As Gayatri Spivak argues in *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, "The subaltern cannot speak." This statement underscores

the silencing of marginalized voices under patriarchal and imperialist structures, a concept that Laila's experience embodies as she seeks education, independence, and agency within a culture that restricts female autonomy (Spivak 308).

The hybrid identities of both Laila and Mariam are central to the novel's critique of oppressive societal structures. Laila, who initially represents the new wave of progressive Afghan youth, confronts the tension between modern education and the patriarchal oppression that seeks to suppress her autonomy. As Bhabha argues, hybridity involves the "intermingling of the cultural and the ideological," and characters like Laila are caught in a continuous negotiation between Western ideals and Afghan traditions (Bhabha 211). Laila's decision to pursue an education despite the gender restrictions imposed by society symbolizes her resistance to patriarchal domination. Her desire to act as an independent individual in a traditional society demonstrates how modernity's ideals, particularly education, act as both resistance and a form of empowerment in the face of a repressive social order. As Hosseini writes, "She was no longer the girl who had seen her mother's life...in the midst of so much pain and loss, Laila had found the will to survive" (Hosseini 285). This transformation marks a point where Laila's hybrid identity—rooted in her traditional Afghan values but open to new ways of thinking—gives her the strength to resist patriarchal forces and live beyond the constraints of her prescribed role. Similarly, bell hooks discusses how the "oppressed" can break free from societal constraints through the agency of education, emphasizing that "education is the practice of freedom" (hooks 13).

Mariam, who embodies the traditional, more subjugated role in Afghan society, also engages in acts of resistance, although her path to agency is more complex. Early in the novel, Mariam's acceptance of her fate seems to reflect the internalized patriarchy that Bhabha describes as a form of mimicry, where the colonized subject (in this case, a woman within a patriarchal society) mirrors the values imposed upon them. However, as the narrative unfolds, Mariam's actions reveal how even within oppressive structures, resistance is possible. The relationship between Mariam and Laila represents a transcendence of both social and cultural binaries, as they come together to fight against the patriarchal and imperial forces that shape their lives. The strength of their bond is rooted in both women's hybrid identities—Mariam's experience as a woman in a patriarchal world and Laila's adaptation of modern, progressive ideals. Together, they resist Rasheed's patriarchal violence, demonstrating the power of collective resistance that transcends individual identity. This unity also symbolically bridges the gap between tradition and modernity, illustrating that true agency can only be achieved when both elements are negotiated. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues in *Feminism Without Borders*, "Women in the third world are always already hybrid, always negotiating both oppressive and liberatory forces, and therefore their resistance must be understood as both local and global" (Mohanty 57). Mariam and Laila embody this hybrid resistance—local in their struggle against patriarchal domination, yet global in their alignment with broader feminist ideals.

As Bhabha suggests, the resistance that emerges from hybrid identities often transcends established categories, challenging fixed notions of cultural purity (Bhabha 211). Mariam and Laila's resistance is not merely a rejection of patriarchal norms; it is a blending of traditional Afghan values of family and sacrifice with modern ideals of individual agency and equality. Their shared experience of suffering, yet ultimate defiance against the patriarchal violence imposed by Rasheed, becomes a powerful symbol of hybridity—a fusion of old and new, tradition and modernity. When Laila reflects on their collective struggle, she realizes, "In the end, they were like two strands of a rope, twisted together. Without the other, neither could be whole" (Hosseini 369). This metaphor of unity in resistance captures the essence of hybridity, where two different cultural forces—one rooted in traditional Afghan roles and the other shaped by modern aspirations—combine to form a more potent force for change.

In sum, Laila and Mariam's actions and relationship exemplify the hybridity that emerges from the blending of tradition and modernity. They resist patriarchal forces not only as individuals but as a collective, transcending the binary of male versus female agency. Through their resistance and adaptation, the novel shows how hybrid identities can subvert and transform repressive social systems, offering a more nuanced understanding of Afghan culture in the face of imperialism, war, and patriarchy. This hybridity becomes a form of empowerment, allowing both characters to reclaim agency over their lives, even in the most oppressive circumstances. As Arundhati Roy notes, "The only thing that is real is the struggle" (Roy 212), and in the case of Mariam and Laila, their struggle becomes a testament to the enduring power of hybrid identities in resisting and transcending both patriarchal and imperial oppression.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the characters' relationship to Western ideals and the presence of Western intervention in Afghanistan are central to understanding the dynamics of mimicry and resistance. The character of Laila, in particular, embodies the negotiation between Eastern tradition and Western influences, reflecting Homi K. Bhabha's notion of "mimicry" as both a form of adaptation and a subtle critique of colonial power. Laila's pursuit of education, encouraged by her father, Hakim, is an example of this hybrid adaptation to Western ideals. Hakim, a progressive thinker, believes that education will empower Laila to change her fate, symbolizing a break from the limitations imposed by Afghan patriarchy. He states, "I want you to have the freedom to be whoever you want to be. To be able to stand up and say, 'I am something'" (Hosseini 38). This emphasis on education mirrors the Western idea that intellectual empowerment leads to autonomy and liberation. In this sense, Laila's decision to embrace education can be seen as a form of mimicry—a conscious adoption of a Western ideal—employed as a tool for resistance against both Afghan patriarchal norms and external imperialist interventions.

However, this adoption is not without complexity. As Bhabha suggests, mimicry is never a perfect imitation but instead an "almost the same, but not quite" distortion of the dominant culture. Laila's embrace of education, while seemingly an adoption of Western ideals, also functions as a critique of the societal structures both within Afghanistan and those imposed by Western imperialism. By seeking education in a society where girls are often kept out of school, Laila challenges the patriarchal values that have long dictated women's roles. Simultaneously, she critiques the Western-style education system that was implemented during the era of foreign intervention in Afghanistan. Western education, while offering opportunities for empowerment, also becomes a symbol of the external imperialism that shaped Afghan society during the 20th century, highlighting the ambivalence of foreign involvement in Afghanistan.

Bhabha's concept of mimicry also addresses the tension between the Westernized ideals of development and the unintended consequences of their implementation. While Laila's education empowers her, it is important to acknowledge that the presence of Western influence in the novel is ambivalent. Western intervention, in the form of aid or military presence, is depicted both as a source of empowerment and as a force that perpetuates new forms of domination. This dual role is evident when the U.S. military's intervention in Afghanistan is portrayed as both a liberating force and a destructive one. The novel does not simply present Western aid as a benevolent influence; instead, it critiques the uneven power dynamics that such intervention creates. In the novel, Western forces—whether in the form of foreign aid or military occupation—often exacerbate the violence and instability in Afghanistan, reflecting the ambivalence of such interventions. As Laila contemplates her future in a country torn apart by foreign involvement, she remarks, "I'm afraid of the idea of a world where everything is being handed to us, and we've no say in it" (Hosseini 352). This statement captures the duality of Western intervention: it offers assistance, but at the cost of Afghan sovereignty, fostering a sense of dependency that undermines local resilience.

At the same time, Laila's use of Western ideals, particularly education, also symbolizes a form of local resilience that enables her to challenge both the local patriarchal system and the colonial legacy of imperialism. As Bhabha explains, mimicry "emerges as a representation of a difference that is itself a form of resistance," because it highlights the distortions and imbalances inherent in the colonial or imperial project (Bhabha 121). Laila's education, rather than simply being a passive adoption of Western values, becomes a form of resistance. By engaging with Western ideals, Laila is able to question and subvert both the patriarchal systems in her own society and the imperialist structures imposed by the West. The ambivalence of Western intervention in Afghanistan—at once offering both aid and dominance—reflects this dual nature of mimicry, where adoption of the colonizer's tools and methods becomes a way to critique the very system they serve to maintain.

Furthermore, the relationship between Laila and Mariam further underscores the way in which local agency and hybrid identity can both resist and adapt to imperialism. While Laila represents the forward-looking potential of Afghan society, influenced by the West through her education, Mariam embodies the more traditional aspects of Afghan life. Together, their solidarity forms a powerful critique of both local patriarchal oppression and the broader imperialist influences that have shaped Afghanistan's history. Their collaboration represents not just a personal resistance to their abusive circumstances, but also a collective rejection of the binaries between Eastern and Western identities. In this way, the novel suggests that the blending of Western ideals and Afghan traditions is not simply a process of mimicry but a creative and transformative negotiation between past and present, tradition and modernity.

Bhabha's theory of mimicry, in conjunction with the novel's portrayal of Western intervention, offers a nuanced understanding of how Laila's education both empowers and critiques. As Laila navigates her way through the complexities of her hybrid identity, she uses education not just to escape her patriarchal circumstances but to confront the external power dynamics that continue to shape Afghanistan's political and social landscape. As Edward Said argues in *Orientalism*, "The Orient was almost a European invention," a distorted image of the East created by Western powers to justify colonial intervention (Said 203). In this sense, Laila's education can be seen as both a form of empowerment and a critique of the Western construction of Afghan culture, which often disregarded its complexity and history in favor of a simplified narrative of need and intervention.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the symbolism of hybridity and mimicry pervades the novel's portrayal of Afghanistan's physical and cultural landscapes, which are continually shaped by the forces of war, imperialism, and resistance. The Afghan landscape, particularly Kabul, emerges as a central symbol of hybridity—an intersection of resilience and devastation. Kabul, once a vibrant, beautiful city, is transformed by years of conflict and foreign intervention, reflecting the ways in which cultural and geographical spaces can become hybrid sites of blending and contradiction. Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which involves the "intermingling of the cultural and the ideological," resonates deeply with the city's transformation into a space where traditional Afghan values coexist with the harsh realities of war and foreign influence (Bhabha 211). As Hosseini writes, Kabul is "a place where the sound of violence was more familiar than the sound of laughter" (Hosseini 321), yet it is also depicted as a site of ongoing resilience and cultural preservation. In this sense, Kabul becomes a hybrid space—its history of beauty and cultural richness is in constant tension with the ongoing destruction and imperialist interventions. The blending of these contrasting forces reflects the hybridity that defines Afghan identity, torn between the preservation of tradition and the forces that seek to remake it.

The destruction of Kabul, particularly during the Soviet invasion and later under the Taliban regime, symbolizes the violence inflicted upon Afghan identity. However, amidst this devastation, the city remains a site of resistance and resilience. Kabul's hybridity emerges not only in its physical landscape but also in the cultural landscape, as its people, particularly the women, strive to maintain their sense of self despite the chaos. The resilience of Kabul, which refuses to be entirely erased by war,

mirrors the resistance of characters like Mariam and Laila, who navigate the tensions between tradition and modernity, survival and surrender. As Bhabha argues, “The construction of identity takes place through the repetition of difference,” suggesting that even amidst overwhelming violence, identity is continuously being reshaped and reasserted (Bhabha 211). Kabul, then, becomes a metaphor for the hybrid process of survival and adaptation, where old and new, Afghan and foreign, clash yet create something new and transformative.

Laila’s focus on education further exemplifies the hybrid process of adaptation and resistance. Her pursuit of education becomes an act of both mimicry and hybridity, where she adopts Western ideals of empowerment through knowledge while striving to preserve her Afghan identity. Laila’s education symbolizes an act of mimicry in that it reflects Western values of individualism and personal agency, values that are often at odds with traditional Afghan gender roles. Yet, her commitment to education is not a simple adoption of Western ideals. It is, as Bhabha suggests, a form of “mimicry that turns back upon itself, generating an ambivalence that disrupts the cultural authority of the colonizer” (Bhabha 122). Laila’s education, though framed in Western terms, becomes a hybrid act—she internalizes these values, yet uses them to challenge the patriarchal systems and gendered norms within Afghan society. Education, then, represents a space where Western influences are both adopted and critiqued, where they become tools of local empowerment rather than instruments of colonial dominance. In Laila’s case, education symbolizes both a form of personal liberation and a critique of the oppressive structures imposed by both local and foreign powers.

The symbolic significance of education as both mimicry and hybridity can also be seen in the way Laila uses her knowledge to assert her agency. As Hosseini writes, “She wanted to be part of the world beyond her father’s walls, beyond the limits of the house she had been born into” (Hosseini 51). Laila’s desire to expand her world through education is rooted in both the influence of Western ideals and the Afghan desire for self-improvement. Her education is an act of mimicry in the sense that it reflects Western notions of the “empowered woman,” yet it is also a local response to the gendered violence that permeates Afghan society. Laila’s education, then, is a negotiation between the external force of Western values and the internal desire to preserve Afghan cultural identity. This complex interaction between tradition and modernity, local and foreign, illustrates how Bhabha’s ideas of mimicry and hybridity can offer a lens for understanding the evolution of Afghan identity in a world shaped by imperialism and conflict.

Theoretical implications of Bhabha’s ideas of hybridity and mimicry are deeply relevant to the portrayal of fluid and evolving identities in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Bhabha contends that identities are never fixed but always in the process of becoming, shaped by both resistance and adaptation. He writes, “The question of identity is always a question of negotiation, of being and becoming” (Bhabha 222). This notion of identity as fluid and negotiated aligns with the experiences of characters like Mariam and Laila, who navigate multiple cultural influences—Afghan tradition, Western ideals, and the forces of war and imperialism—to form their hybrid identities. As both characters confront patriarchy and foreign intervention, they embody the evolving nature of identity, which is shaped by both personal and political struggles. Mariam, for example, initially accepts her fate as a victim of male domination and societal expectations, but through her relationship with Laila, she transforms into a figure of resistance. This transformation represents the negotiation of her identity, as she moves from passivity to agency, reflecting the ongoing process of becoming that Bhabha identifies as central to hybridity.

In the case of Laila, her identity is marked by both her embrace of education—an emblem of Western ideals—and her commitment to the preservation of her Afghan heritage. Laila’s decision to teach her children to read and write is not only a symbol of her resistance against patriarchal structures but also a way to preserve Afghan identity amidst the overwhelming presence of foreign influences. As Laila reflects, “She would teach them everything she knew...and she would teach them to be proud

of who they were" (Hosseini 379). Laila's education is thus not only an act of mimicry of Western ideals but also a reaffirmation of her Afghan roots, underscoring the novel's broader theme of hybridity, where tradition and modernity, local and global, coexist and shape identity in a constantly evolving process.

Ultimately, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* uses the symbols of Kabul, education, and personal transformation to explore the fluidity of Afghan identity, shaped by the forces of war, imperialism, and resistance. Through Bhabha's framework of hybridity and mimicry, the novel illustrates how identities are always in flux—shaped by both external and internal forces, resisting domination while adapting to changing circumstances. The novel's portrayal of Kabul, with its dual presence of resilience and devastation, and of characters like Mariam and Laila, who embody both Afghan traditions and Western ideals, exemplifies the ongoing negotiation of identity in a world marked by conflict and transformation.

Conclusion:

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Khaled Hosseini critiques the profound effects of imperialism and war on Afghan society through the concepts of hybridity and mimicry, as introduced by postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha. The novel portrays Afghanistan as a site of cultural intermingling, where traditional values are disrupted and reshaped by the forces of foreign intervention and internal conflict. Through characters like Laila and Mariam, Hosseini illustrates how Afghan society becomes a hybrid space where resistance and adaptation converge. Laila's adoption of Western ideals, particularly in the form of education, is an act of mimicry—an external adaptation that also critiques the patriarchal and imperialist structures shaping her world. At the same time, the characters' resistance and resilience highlight Afghanistan's ability to retain its cultural identity and complexity, even amidst the devastation wrought by war and imperialism.

Hosseini humanizes Afghanistan's struggles by depicting its people as multifaceted, caught between the pressures of tradition, modernity, and foreign intervention. Rather than adhering to stereotypical Western portrayals of Afghanistan as solely a place of violence and oppression, the novel emphasizes the richness of Afghan culture, the complexities of its identity, and the enduring strength of its people. The use of postcolonial theory, especially Bhabha's ideas on hybridity and mimicry, offers a powerful framework for understanding how Afghanistan's socio-political upheavals shape individual lives and collective identities.

Ultimately, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* contributes significantly to postcolonial discourse by presenting Afghanistan not as a passive victim of imperialism but as a site of hybridity and resilience. Through the negotiation of cultural differences, both internal and external, the novel demonstrates how identity is continuously in flux, shaped by forces of resistance, adaptation, and survival. Hosseini's portrayal of Afghanistan as a hybrid space of cultural complexity and resilience provides a nuanced reflection on the impacts of imperialism, offering a compelling counter-narrative to simplistic portrayals of the region in Western discourse.

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