

**The Double Colonization of Female Characters in Fatima Bhutto's The Shadow of the Crescent Moon**



**By**

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## Declaration

I declare that all material in this thesis is my own work, and that any material which is not my own has been duly acknowledged. Furthermore, I affirm that no portion of this work has previously been submitted or approved for the award of a degree by this or any other university.

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It is certified that the work presented in this thesis has been carried out and completed under my supervision.

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## Declaration

I, Abdul Qayoom, student of BS English (8th Semester) at Bahria University, Islamabad, hereby declare that the research work titled “The Double Colonization of Female Characters in Fatima Bhutto’s The Shadow of the Crescent Moon” is my original work. This thesis has been carried out by me under the supervision of Ms.Amina Siddique and has not been submitted, wholly or partially, for any other degree or diploma at any university or institution.

All sources of information and data used in this study have been duly acknowledged in the text and references. I take full responsibility for the authenticity and accuracy of the content presented in this thesis.

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## Abstract

Through an academic lens, this thesis study comprehends the dual colonization of the female character of Fatima Bhutto's *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*. The issue pertains to the complex structure of the oppression of women in postcolonial Pakistan, where women remain oppressed under the local patriarchal system coupled with the colonialism of the past, which still holds its potent influence within the militarization of the modern state. Other studies lean towards the political aspects of the novel, but none have used a postcolonial feminist lens in this complex critique of the novel. In this work, I used qualitative methods of text analysis to broaden the understanding of the novel using postcolonial feminist theorists, including Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Kirsten Holst Petersen. The study spent an inordinate amount of effort examining the characters of Mina and Samarra, whose opposite but complementary situations represent an extreme case of the complex female oppression and awful political system. Mina is a complex character whose silent grief is not a quitting issue, but a complex response and a testament of the psychological suffering from the political violence of the state. The Mir Ali area is described in this study like this: Mir Ali is described as a confinement area of a military camp where rooms in a military prison can be confined in controlling and dominant spaces of households. Bhutto's narrative explicitly addresses the philosophical double colonization where it is not just the two DE prior dominating systems where an element of distance can be observed but rather a type of domination system where the constituent systems are integrated to form a cohesive controlling authority. It can be argued that Dina's absence and Mina's memorial stand as politically significant proof of Samarra's defiance and silence a consequence of the amalgam of forces that seek to control and eliminate her. It is MS Bhutto who has openly articulated and documented in her text the pain and the suffering that constitute the strength of women's resilience, the exercise of agency within the postcolonial sphere, the innumerable instances of hegemonic intervention, the control of dominant structures, and the erasure of complex and multifaceted texts from literature that have been marginalized. The literary efforts of MS Bhutto, certainly, attest to the immense power literature has in dismantling the dominant structures, the control of hegemonic power, and the reclamation of texts from the dominion of history that has been rendered invisible.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

To have a good understanding of the South Asian Woman's experience, one must understand the very complex, long, and painful history of colonialism, religion, and patriarchy that has shaped and misunderstood the relationships between the genders that is so painful in South Asia. For a long time before formal colonialism, and in many parts of the Indian subcontinent, women were methodically imprisoned within very high, and, of the time, the very ordered and very patriarchal social structures that determined their social, economic, and household activities and even confined their lives' influence entirely to the domestic (home) sphere. With and after the arrival of the British colonial administration, these structures were neither eliminated, nor improved for the better, but were in fact, strengthened and in many instances, even made to be worse through the colonial structures' deliberate and primitive system parallel to local law, traditions, and customs. The colonial masters in their quest for efficient and inexpensive administrative control would in even the most primitive and barbaric way in a modern sense of the term, would uphold and even encourage the most conservative traditions of seclusion of women ( purdah ) and even primitive inheritance systems whereby women would not be allowed to inherit property, and, in so doing, would dominate and even enslave the native people of the uncivilized conquests and the surrounding colonial territories and engage in a slave alliance with the conquered primitive ethnocentric males. This quote highlights a distinct form of oppression women faced in South Asia. On one hand, there was, and still is, a very prominent, traditional, local form of patriarchy which dictates where women are allowed to go in society and the value they hold in life. On the other hand, there are ruling colonial powers who, although far away, exploit and strengthen these national and local frameworks to protect and expand their imperial rule. After the end of British colonial rule, South Asian countries, including Pakistan, inherited these two toxic forms of oppression. Feminist theorist Mohanty explains how the independence of these countries, while bringing women the 'modernity, progress, and freedom' of the post-colonial era, did not bring any tangible improvements for women. The newly formed post-colonial states, in their desire to form a solid national identity, continued to give primacy to the power of men, even in public policy, and left the patriarchal structures in society unchallenged.

In modern Pakistan, shaped by partition, struggles, and the current political tussles, the complexities of state and religion, traditions, and state of affairs, result in some inequities of a women's social standing. Islam and tribal traditions, for instance, the Pashtuns in Bhutto's novel, interpret Islam the of a Pashtun tribal constitution advocate oppression of women. Their legislative restrictions, and socially oppressive laws of Hudood Ordinances and cultural laws focused on women's control and honor violence, women's full potential and autonomy. Pakistan guarantees women equality, yet the military, conservative political alliances, and prominent socio-religious groups, reinforce the absolute and controlling the garden of women being the virtuous and cultural symbol, foundation of the nation -an ideal control. The idea of honor (izzat) centers on the idea that women must carry the honor of their family and community, and must not do anything that threatens or challenges male dominance and social order. In much of the social conditioning that women must endure, 'izzat' is a term that remains deeply engrained, and that much of the social order becomes a balance of 'izzat' and moving toward what post-colonial feminists have labelled 'double colonization', which cannot be addressed without recognition of the intertwining oppressions of patriarchy and imperialism (Petersen and Rutherford 9). Within the specific context of Pakistan, the social order around women becomes paradoxically the most complex of any region, and is lived through a social order of domestic violence, gendered legal systems, cultural violence, and social stigmas that limit, and ultimately, that prevent complete social systems of autonomy and selfhood. South Asian women's literature, and much of the South Asian women's literature, remains a vital context of the articulation of these oppressive systems.

Even back to the beginning writers like Bapsi Sidhwa and contemporary ones like Kamila Shamsie, alongside the great cornerstone nonfiction of Sara Suleri and the fierce life WRITING of Tehmina Durrani, the novel and life writing serves as the great discursive domain for the articulations of the boxed in voices of women, and the simple but great and complex everyday struggles surrounding women. With astonishing skill, Fatima Bhutto tackles and critiques the socio politically aware and socially engaged novel of this period in the life of the nation and identity, moving from strong to precarious of the interlocked triangulated formation of gender, nation, identity, and crisis. The novel takes place in the war stricken, tribal frontier town of Mir Ali, a fictionalized substitute for the regions in the brutal north western parts of Pakistan. The novel captures with extraordinary urgency and intersects the lives of the three brothers and the two women that are tied to them. With the political violence, state surveillance, religious extremism, and religious extremism, she discusses the

important domestic consequences of public unrest and how the private is affected by the global. She writes about these issues with an extreme lack of emotion, and with focus and polish. She then discusses how women's lives and agency and, for lack of a better word, subjectivities, are subjected to and influenced by the political state of the country

Bhutto has illustrated the Sisyphean struggles of a woman in a postcolonial and patriarchal society through the characters of Mina and Samarra. Mina embodies the inabilities of a woman suffering from the traumatic death of her child. The character becomes a true representative of a psychological phenomenon on a personal level since her all-absorbing grief contains the collective trauma and agony of a nation suffering internal wars and ideological struggles. The character reflects the socialization of women internalizing oppression and having to put on a mask of normalcy. Society, in this case, silences mourning and those who express anger. In contrast to Mina, Samarra is the character who has active and ideological opposition to patriarchal oppression. She is not only incontinent to the expectations of the society concerning passive, secluded women but also takes on a radical form of political action which challenges the male supremacy of her community, and takes on the oppressive state. Samarra is the character with spirit and active ideological opposition to patriarchal oppression. She does not comply with society's expectations of a passive, secluded woman but also politically acts in a radical way. With these two different realities, Bhutto Building a Rich and Engaging Spectrum of Women's Realities which is the result of a deep silent and the other of a sounding protest, is taught that the two realities, structures and relations, are the same and are not the same. The two interconnected narratives are a strong testimony to the burdens, symbolically and economically, of the histories, faiths, and nationalities, which women, without a voice and continuous agency, are deliberately and systematically excluded from. The setting of Mir Ali replicates and is a central, walled, active character to this drama of entrapment and symbolically, like a marrow, that reflects the irony of Pakistan's own walled civil character and contested identity. The town's vision of isolation. the enclosed, defensive, systemic, and surveillant social corrals evokes, and isolate and enclosed the women of the town . Within the walls of this Bengal is Ali's Mir a deeply layered, post-colonial, fractured, and uptight, nation-state, a bordered land in which threat of violence and control is exercised. Bhutto's entire narrative hinges on one morning. because of this the reader becomes increasingly exposed to the entire plot's level of crises. We get the impression that what the characters experience is more than just the dramatic depiction of a few individuals' lives. What they experience is a plot that decays from the normal challenges

that countless individuals living in conflict zones experience. Using a series of non-linear narratives, Bhutto invokes the reader's inner hope and despair, showcasing love, loss, betrayal, and the struggle against the NE international oppression of Pakistan. Unlike other nations within the international order, the oppression of women in Pakistan is political, and manifests itself in chronic conditions of poverty. Here bodies and choice and pregnancy becomes the focal points of oppression. Here, the Crescent Moon demonstrates itself as a political crisis in the writings of Bhutto. It represents the culmination of the often ignored private loss and oppression of women, and illustrates the deep connection to the political and ideological oppression faced collectively.

To understand Bhutto's representation of women, the theory of post-colonial feminism is important. Post-colonial feminism is a school of thought that began in the late twentieth century in response to the ethnocentric and universalizing approaches of mainstream Western feminism. Post-colonial feminism examines how the intersecting legacies of colonialism, racial domination, and contemporary imperialism shape the lives and identities of women in the so-called 'third world' countries. In response to post-structuralist theorists like Spivak and Minh-ha, Mohanty stresses the importance of recognizing that the term "woman" can mean different things. In "Under Western Eyes," Mohanty criticizes Western feminism for creating a purely theoretical 'Third World woman,' a monolithic figure, universal in her victimhood, and devoid of agency and a history (73). Such theoretical constructs, she argues, ignore the complexity of lives of postcolonial women and continue the violence of scholarly colonialism. To put it simply, Spivak has one of the hardest yet most popular questions, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" She digs deep into the idea of representation and if the most marginalized and oppressed people like the subaltern woman can ever explain themselves when they are part of a set of systems that are built to ignore, take, and shut them down (281). For Spivak, the subaltern woman who is twice oppressed because of her sex and her place in the colonial and post colonial world is the epitome of the stark absence of a voice. Trinh T. Minh-ha furthers this argument by specifically showing that representation, in the form of a language, culture, and a narrative, can also be used as tools of colonization, even when colonization has ended (45). Post-colonial feminism then provides a unique lens to use to examine the characters in Bhutto's novels, especially the females who can be seen as complex victims of double colonization. They are oppressed by the remaining essences of Western imperialism, and also the harsh and real local patriarchal laws that are in place. The idea of

double colonization, like so many other concepts, has been brought to us by Petersen and Rutherford, which fits the case of these characters perfectly (9).

Within the *Shadow of the Crescent Moon*, woman faces a cruel situation from a compound of systems. One of the systems is the "colonial state" military systems that govern these areas violently. The other is the "traditional tribal" systems with patriarchal systems that deny women their control, ambitions, and desires. One way that we see this is with Samarra with her visible and active defiance, and on the end of the other spectrum is Mina with her defiance through suffering and pain, witnessing violence and abuse that these men neglect and hide. Politically, from these Samarra and Mina are making a powerful statement against the patriarchal control of these systems. In and of itself, Mina's pain is a valuable act of sheer defiance against these control systems that has silent and violent patriarchal colonial violence. For post-colonial feminists, the most important concept is voice, which is the ability to take back one's self from self-expression and authority that is stolen from people who've been silenced. This ethical and political principle is beautifully illustrated in the narrative power of Bhutto, who gives her female characters profound interiority, emotional, and psychological depth. Mina and Samarra are not merely abstract signs of oppression or some archetype; they are fully fleshed, complex, psychologically rich, and flawed people. Their voices are fragmented, and their private fears and memories are the most tortured, providing the brutal outline of the ways the internal lives of women are shaped and scarred by the external socio-political realities of war, loss, and exile. Bhutto gives a public platform to such women to be able to voice their internal truths, which, in mind lessens the patriarchal and colonial tendency to speak for those women to the extent of not leaving any blank space for them to remain silent; thus, allowing them to articulate their own internal truths which, in turn, gives them a measure of narrative control or agency. Spivak's argument is that the utterance of the subaltern is, in and of itself, a significant act of resistance to those social structures that are determined to erase her, which defies the idea that the subaltern is, in her silence, passive (291).

Post-colonial feminism gives deep analytical thinking about the nation as a construct and criticism of feminism as a critically nationalistic and construct of the nation as post colonized,. Within many post colonized states like Pakistan, women are geopolitically and strategically placed as the metaphorical and symbolic custodians of the nation's honor, culture, traditions, and moral integrity. Their duty is to defend and preserve the authentic culture of the people against the socio-cultural West, which is seen as morally decadent and

corrupt. Ultimately, however, this symbolic upliftment of women in the discourses of nationalism mainly results in the proliferation of control over their bodies, decisions, and freedoms. This is what Bhutto brilliantly exposes in the *Shadow of the Crescent Moon*, where a woman's moral rectitude, conduct, and obedience to the codes of *izzat* become very pivotal in determining and sustaining the integrity and resistance of the community. Both Mina and Samarra are another. Samarra, in political radicalism, openly defies these expectations, and antagonistically, in their own ways, Marx this nationalist ideal. Mina and Samarra, in their own ways, antagonistically, in their own ways, pursue. Both Mina and Samarra defy the idealized nationalist construct of wounded womanhood, the passive and patriotic, and self-sacrificing womanhood. Bhutto highlights the society's irony by showing Mina and Samarra highlighting the social hypocrisy that relies on women as real agents which is self-contradictory. Also, the post-colonial feminist framework still looks at the role of memory, trauma, and mourning regarding women's experiences in warzones. As a political and social theorist, Bhutto understands memory as more than just an psychological phenomenon. Memory is also a living, suffering history of a nation and its generations. Such painful memories of history are disproportionately stored in the bodies and minds of women. Mina's inconsolable mourning illustrates Mina's mental suffering and trauma, and the mental suffering of women and mothers who have experienced violence, state-sponsored violence, and ideological wars. Mina's mental suffering and trauma silence political suffering in the deepest and most painful ways. Samarra, on the other hand, is an activist who embodies the political and social theorist's antithesis to silence. Unlike Mina, Samarra represents the trauma of the community through political action, demonstrating the political action that trauma and memory can inspire. That strength in theory really helps explain both the intricacies of the literary portrayals of women in Bhutto and the falling in of her work in the international sphere of discourse.

## 1.1 Research Problem

Women in postcolonial societies are still subject to systemic and multidimensional oppression at numerous and overlapping levels, which are highly influenced by the integrated and synergistic effects of a legacy of colonialism and strong traditional patriarchy. These two forces are strongly combined in the particular situation on Pakistan in a complicated network

of religious dogma, cultural traditions and political systems that still narrowly stipulate and restrict the lives and decisions of women and their basic rights. Although indigenous patriarchy strictly encloses women within the strict boundaries of the society and the house, the remnants of the colonial power structures are powerful and intact in the centralized, militarized state and legal apparatus, which actively perpetuates and modernizes the gender hierarchies in the modern institutions and national ideologies. This double colonization as it is also known, is an extremely restrictive feature in terms of women, their sense of independence and liberation, their construction of identity, as well as the systematic oppression of their personal and communal voice. The tragic and richly nuanced lives of the main female protagonists in the groundbreaking novel *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* by Fatima Bhutto make it shockingly evident that women are always trapped between these overlapping systems of subjugation as they have to bargain with their existence and act of resistance in a hopelessly limited terrain. The research value is then the critical examination and interpretation of the manner in which narrative artistry of Bhutto reflects the many-sided struggle of women against colonial/state and male oppression, and how these many-sided literary struggles are signs of refraction and commentary on the wider/larger condition of women in postcolonial Pakistan.

## **1.2 Research Statement**

This paper entails an extensive dealing with the process of the double colonization of women characters in the novel *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* written by Fatima Bhutto using the critical perspective of postcolonial feminist theory. It analytically explores the role of Bhutto narrative in making women subordinate in interpersonal patriarchal and imperial structures, and how her characters, in many different and unexpected ways, find spaces to resist, construct identities, and exercise agency in a society harshly characterized by vast gender inequality and unremitting political antagonism. The study aims to unveil how the literary work of Bhutto is a highly effective way of revealing how gender, power, and colonial history interrelate closely and determine the life experiences and the inner worlds of women in the geopolitical periphery.

## **1.3 Research Objective:**

This study aims at providing a thorough literary discussion of the novel *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* by Fatima Bhutto on the theoretical basis of postcolonial feminism with a special emphasis on the phenomenon of double colonization. This paper will discuss the ways in which the female characters especially Mina and Samarra negotiate and experience oppressing systems that intersect both in the indigenous patriarchy and the postcolonial security state. Through close textual analysis and reading several of the most prominent postcolonial feminist theorists like Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Kirsten Hols Petersen, the proposed study aims to shed light upon how women

in tribal Pakistan (through silence or active opposition) exercise their agency under the most severe political and gender restrictions. Finally, the study aims to advance the current discussion of gender, power, and resistance in postcolonial literature and provide a more in-depth insight into the challenges complicated women in the conflict-torn areas encounter.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

The work has much importance in the various fields of literary and cultural works. First of all, it adds value to the emerging and ever-expanding discipline of postcolonial feminist studies in the South Asian literature. Through the critical lens on *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* by Fatima Bhutto, it can be pointed out how the modern-day Pakistani fiction portrays women, not as the passive victims of the oppressive structure, but as complex, moral agents who resist in various types of resistance, despite their limited situation. The study reveals the essential nature of appreciating the experiences of women in postcolonial communities as multi-layered outcomes of historical events of colonization and the current conditions of patriarchal oppression that cannot be studied separately without taking into consideration each other. Moreover, the present work provides fresh and original interpretations of the role of women in the work of Bhutto because her characters undergo a complex theoretical approach that consciously tries to relate personal grief and intimate sorrow to the bigger national and political storylines, and thus fill a long-standing gap of analysis. The results of this study will go beyond being used as a way of adding to the literary criticism of the fiction of Bhutto, such results will also be used to add some relevance to interdisciplinary debates of the topics of gender, power, identity, and resistance in postcolonial settings around the world.

## 1.5 Research Questions

1. What does *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* by Fatima Bhutto depict in terms of how the two systems of indigenous patriarchy and the postcolonial security state, respectively, frequently colonialize their respective female characters?
2. How do the opposite reactions of Mina (passive submission) and Samarra (active resistance) make up a continuum of struggle against this dual colonization, and what does this continuum tell us about the form of agency in the situations of extreme oppression?

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Fatima Bhutto's *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* (2013) has been analysed within the young corpus of post-9/11 Pakistani fiction for its intersectional engagement with the issues of gender, ethnicity, power, and resistance. The novel's and the region's socio-political narrative of the Mira Ali region, an imaginary perpetually war-torn town, presents a microcosm of the author's gaze to understand and reflect the violent intertwining of global (colonial) militarism and, local extreme patriarchy and political, socio-economic, and structural instability, that determine the realities of the dwellers of this micro region, as men and as women. Scholars have placed the narrative within the framework of postcolonial feminism, an area that examines the construction, performance, and regulation of identities and the imposition of varying patriarchal orders. The idea of "double colonization" is at the very heart of this critical discourse, and I mean this in the very specific sense described by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin in their book *The Empire Writes Back*, where they explain that the colonized women are oppressed at once because of their being colonized as objects of a specific racial oppression, and as women, they are in the context of a patriarchal oppression (174). In the case of Bhutto, this particular aspect of the multidimensional oppression is shown in a very powerful way, particularly in the case of the female characters, Mina and Samarra, who are perpetually forced to tackle the opposition of the Cultural Traditions, the State, and the Individual Conscience. In the case of these characters in particular, the way that Bhutto embodies their struggles shows us that these struggles are not electoral, or private struggles concerning the individual alone, but are instead struggles which are emblematic of the violence, and the violence, the oppression and darkness of the vast, complex, and interwoven system of forces that keep postcolonial South Asia's women marginalized, and voiceless.

The article, "Mapping Violence against Women in Pakistan: A Galtungian Reading of Fatima Bhutto's *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*," will be the subject of review in this session. ASL and Hanafiah (2025) employ Galtung's models of direct, structural, and cultural violence to examine how Bhutto's novel uncovers the systems of violence, oppression, and inequalities within the Pakistan Northern Tribes, which are rampant and take on a normalized and hegemonic state. However, the authors, in their review, claim, and rightly so, that

violence, as in the novel, is redefined to be far beyond the physical to include aspects of social, psychological, and institutional violence. Consider the violence against Samarra as a state agent and the trauma violence against Mina, which is social and structural in that it is the social St. Ali's women's barriers to freedom, education, and financial self-sufficiency, that is, social and structural violence, simply condition violence. Besides, Galtung's cultural violence conceptualization, as in, conservative religion, patriarchy, and cultural order, justify and maintain such violence.

According to Asl and Hanafiah's analysis, there is some consistency in how these forms of violence function, particularly how they coalesce to depict the arc of double colonization: the women in question suffer the consequences of the overt political-military structures of the region and the splotchy, yet, potent, patriarchal orders that shape their social reality and social death (15). They also note, however, that Bhutto does not fall into the trap of simple victimology; she also demonstrates how her characters, although they are women, are not devoid of morality and subtle acts of defiance. Mina, the hospital medic, and Samarra, who overtly engages in civil disobedience, embody a strong counter to the stereotype of passive victimization. Their acts of defiance, performed under stringent social limitations, enable the authors to take the narrative away from one of suffering to an audacious critique of the oppression of women, and a testimony to women's staggering ability to withstand hardship in the face of gender subjugation. In their commendable work "Subverting the Trope of Agentic West and Passive Rest in The Shadow of the Crescent Moon," Rukhsana Qasmi and others (2025) articulate how Bhutto's work of novel challenges the Orientalist narrative around the Eastern women being presented as mute, passive, and victims in need of rescue by the Neo West. Drawing on the critique of Western feminist universalism articulated by Chandra Mohanty, the authors appreciate the protagonists of Bhutto's work as women with "situated agency," which Mohanty explains, is not abstract, 'imported' agency, but one which is located in the socio-political structures of a context and is demonstrated through culturally relevant acts of defiance (78).

Rukhsana and others explain how, through the characterization of Samarra and Mina, Bhutto problematizes the dualism of "the liberated Western woman versus the oppressed Eastern woman" in favor of a critique that underscores the complexity and multi-layered, paradox of empowerment available to women in a patriarchal, militarized society. Samarra, as the authors discuss, portrays a form of revolutionary violent feminism that is not

a reproduction of Western feminist ideology, but is a form of feminism that is pertinent to the socio political context and is a product of a lived experience of injustice and betrayal.

In the same way, deep mourning from Mina and her care work, which may be interpreted as passive withdrawal, is viewed by the authors as acts of silent protest and moral courage. As Qasmi et al. point out, Bhutto does not wish to romanticize the suffering of women or cast her women as mere symbols of endurance. Rather, she characterizes them as complex psychological characters who resist and claim their humanity in traditionally restrictive settings, thus agency and subordination are not uncomplicated in the lives of women, doubly colonized by patriarchy and state control.

This critical frame of gender along with ethnicity and race is further analysed by scholars such as Sadaf Iqbal and Sana Imtiaz (2025), and Irfan Ullah et al (2025), who look into how Bhutto's novel tackles and reverts ethnic stereotyping and neo-Orientalism regarding the representation of Pashtun identity. In the common narratives after 9/11, the Pashtun people have been represented in much global literature and in certain Western media propaganda as primitive, violent, and irrational. Bhutto's novel counters such literature by bringing to the fore the residents of Mir Ali who have been grossly dehumanized and who live under adverse conditions created and sustained by neglect of the political, social and economic circumstances.

Neo-Colonialism, Imtiaz, and Iqbal. (2025). Iqbal and Imtiaz explain how neo-colonialism and Nkrumah's theory sustains political control and continues military interventions in regions of interest from a critical point of view. (2025). Imtiaz and Iqbal extend Nkrumah's neo-colonialism theory to highlight the Pashtun women's plight of a double burden, and describe how, for geo-political reasons, she is stigmatized in global and national narratives, is perceived as a 'silent, dulled victim', and converging with the internal patriarchal structure of honor and purdah, is stigmatized herself (2025, 37). The Contradictory Character of Samarra and Mina. Out of These Two Bhutto Portrays A Negative Representation. Contrarily, the Pashtun women Samarra and Mina Are Not Victims. Bhutto Daisy Dead. Through political subjugation and transformative pity, she actively engages in confronting the internal and external oppression and Samarra retrieve in a profound political way. Consequently, Bhutto's Pashtun Cultural Woman becomes a representation of Bhutto's self-definition of cultural identity and spheres of power, as she goes from being a mere

passive figure of representation, as 'subaltern' women, to becoming a focal point of activism and political defiance.

One more productive line of research analyses Bhutto's work through the lens of Louis Althusser's works on Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). In their 2023 work titled "Repression and Resistance in Fatima Bhutto's *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*," Muhammad Farhan, Aamir Nawaz, and Anum Najam argue that the novel's portrayal of Pakistan's hegemonic control over the tribal frontier reflects the Pakistani State's exercise of hegemonic domination through a constellation of actors military, police and religiously sanctioned Intel and religiously sanctioned military, police as both a structural and ideological apparatus of control. In scholar's view, in the novel, Bhutto's Mir Ali, is a fearful model of a state apparatus that maintains control through state-sanctioned violence and its ideological partners, propaganda, and the oppression of dissent (55). In these conditions, the state's primary targets, the women, are also its shrewdest adversaries.

Mina's traumatic experience with state power loss of her child and Samarra's radical activism are manifestations of what Althusser terms the pivotal instance of interpolated subjects realizing their subjection and starting to resist it. By depicting women intentionally opposing the rule of the state and the patriarchy that supports it, Bhutto powerfully illustrates the double colonization of the psyche and the body of the woman that is simultaneously tamed by the domestic order and the order of the security state. Farhan et al. (2023) argue that Bhutto's alternative discourse in her novel encourages the previously mute frontier women of history to voice their challenge to militarism and historiography of the patriarchal system (58).

As a consequence of recent reconsiderations of feminist thought of political resistance, focus has been placed on Bhutto's unique political expression through narrative technique and how these two facets of her work function in tandem to create and express a particular form of political resistance. The current scholarship on Bhutto addresses the fact that her narrative technique, specifically the function of fragmentation, non-linearity, and the use of multiple distinct characters, serves to accurately reflect the fractured, complex, and ghostly presence of her characters who succumb to the traumas of their past while simultaneously underscoring the ambiguous nature of their fates. Subsequently, the technique of oscillation employed in such a manner serves to illustrate a sophisticated form of political commentary on the transmission of collective political trauma, through the trauma of characters as well as

the political trauma suffered in silence by women, who act as host and conduit of such trauma (Qasmi et al. 82). The act of storytelling that Bhutto performs creates a missing archive that reveals the interior lives of ghostly women who have been systemically erased from political, public, and popular narratives of their time. Employing Gayatri Spivak's intricate notion of the "subaltern voice," these scholars argue that Bhutto's form evokes a temporary site within which some women whose voices have, in the tradition of the subaltern, been silenced, overlooked, or misreported, can 'speak' and 'be heard' by the audience (Spivak, 287). Therefore, within the 'economy' of the novel, Mina's ritualized grieving and Samara's determined, albeit perilous, political choices constitute, in Bhutto's economy of the novel, a symbol of the process of decolonizing the narrative space in which the complexities of female experiences are articulated without a Western or masculine gaze mediating the narrative. In this sense, Bhutto redeems the act of literature as an ethical act of witnessing, as she allows these marginalized women prisoners to write their subjectivity and some agency, however limited, even when cast within the most dehumanizing and oppressive frameworks.

As illustrated by the essays that make up this collection, we must address the confluence of social-systemic and personal, emotional dominations that make up what directly double colonization means for the political and literary critiques of Bhutto. In describing the ways military patriarchy under sects violent mobility control and the exclusion political involvement in repressive militarized masculinity state power. Within the structures of double colonization that these essays address the means of producing political consciousness and the means of varying forms of revolt in the forms of double colonization within the structures is most directly the contrary and paradoxical methodology of double coloration positioning. Bhutto's revolt is adapted in the characters of assumed resistance as they travail these opposing social structures, Mina and Samarra, as the characters, as the essays, and as the collection demonstrates all of these character traits, as constituting structural and social isolation, in the forms of love and morality in inherent suffrage that is constitutive of structures of social control in resistance suffrage that is social control in internal sufferage social sufferage control in internal and external forms.

Through the combination of intimate stories and brilliant political analysis, Bhutto contextualizes the plight of her women within the framework of more serious criticism directed toward postcolonial states and the international systems of inequality and violence While existing studies present mixed but useful perspectives on Galtung's triad of violence, Mohanty decolonial feminism, and Althusser's critique of ideology, certain important areas

are still underdeveloped and present a rich opportunity for more research. For example, there are very few studies that attempt to systematically and comparatively explore and analyse the characters of Mina and Samarra together, to understand how the mechanisms of double colonization differ and how they might vary across differences in individual personality, class, and life experiences. The intersectional components of class, sect, and the interpretation of religion are all very important and crucial to fully grasping the world of the novel, but they have received very little sustained and focused scholarly inquiry to date. Also, the problematic and complex ethics of trauma representation, particularly the potential for the suffering of women to create a voyeuristic spectacle for a dominant Western literary audience, truly requires a much more close and nuanced inquiry. Future research may be able to elucidate how, as a writer with a particular political ancestry and a transnational reader, Bhutto negotiates the highly complex and ethically controversial boundary between the representation of violence and the representation of its aesthetic forms. Addressing these particular aspects will greatly inform how we understand the extent to which Bhutto's narrative strategies and ethics integrate with the continuing project of feminist resistance in postcolonial literature.

*The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* is a central text in the study of the intersections of feminist resistance, double colonization, and South Asian literature, owing to the ongoing scholarly discourse on the text. The intricate and contrasting narratives of Samarra and Mina put the author in a unique position to describe the intersections of culture, state oppression, and neo colonialism in the oppression, control, and silencing of women. Khaled also puts spotlight on, the multi-faceted control and silencing of women through their moral and political agency, shape, and active opposition. The author illustrates the complexities of arranged systems of oppression; resisting the temptation to binary structures of victimization and empowerment narratives...the author illustrates agency and empowerment as a process that systems of oppression arrange. The characters of Khaled do not eradicate the systems of oppression. However, they do assert their humanity and expose the systems of oppression's deep contradictions in the spaces that were designed to dehumanize them. The text is a celebration of agency, empowerment and identity alongside colonial, political, and patriarchal control. The text is a celebration of women's resilience and a testament to the intersecting systems of oppression Khaled has endured.

## 2.4 Gap Research

Despite a wealth of research on Pakistani English fiction and its thematic concerns with national identity, political instability, and religious violence, there is a lack of attention to the double colonization of women in the works of Fatima Bhutto. Most critiques of *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* attempt to examine the political instability, terrorism, and social chaos of Pakistan after the 9/11 events, but often ignore or under-theorize the national crises on the gendered front. Likewise, while feminist critiques of Pakistani literature examine women's oppression within the framework of patriarchy, they seem to overlook the nuanced and complex portrayal of women in the colonial and conflict-driven tribal areas which is the case of postcolonial feminist theory of Bhutto. This research seeks to address this limitation by examining Bhutto's women characters, who suffer the combined oppression of patriarchy and colonialism in the state, and by situating her work in the continuum of postcolonial feminist theory and its principal thinkers.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The approach to this research involves using a qualitative research design that employs a specific kind of textual analysis that is thorough and contextually and theoretically aware to study double colonization as reflected in the characters in Fatima Bhutto's *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*. One of the focal points of the research study is understanding multifaceted experiences and the role of identity via-a-vies power; phenomena that a quantitative approach will be unable to capture. To this end, a qualitative, interpretative framework will be the most effective. This approach fosters a critical and sympathetic engagement with the literary work, and not as a piece of literature, but as a primary resource and a significant cultural document that is rich in ideology and history and yet conveys social criticism. This methodology is thus constructed to take the researcher from close reading of the primary texts to addressing the research questions using theory, ensuring the analysis is attentive to the details of the plot and the language and style of the work, while juxtaposing them with contemporary debates in postcolonial and feminist theory. The aim is to uncover examples of how Bhutto's characterisation, narrative, and style shape patriarchal and imperial oppression into a specific and emotional form. This involves a three-part iterative process. First, a foundational qualitative text analysis will form the base of the inquiry. Second, the analysis will be focused using the strategic choice of key passages and character trajectories that most vividly exemplify the issue of interest. After that, the specific passages will be richly analysed through the post-colonial feminist theory, focusing on double colonization, voicing, subalternity, and agency. Thereafter, throughout the process, careful attention will be paid to Bhutto's literary and linguistic choices among which are the use of symbolism, imagery, and narrative structure, which, most of the time, are not just stylistic but are central to creating the political argument of the novel and representing the lived experiences of women under extreme systemic oppression.

The initial step in this methodology is the conducting of deep qualitative textual analysis. This involves the researcher focusing on the selected novel in a critical and immersive manner and aiming to detect patterns that may be weak and repetitive, form the

foundations of critical contradictions, and embody and symbolize various gendered, contested and geographical configurations of power and resistance. There are statistics that may be collected, and generalizations that may be made, however this method centers a deep and contextual account to be developed, and meaning to be drawn, to be elucidated from the characters' actions and dialogues, the silence and the world of the novel that the author has intricately woven. The text to be analysed, therefore, is not (only) plot. It is not (only) the sequence of events that are to be analysed. There are many elements that can make a text a semiotic unit, such as the unity of plot, the arrangement of the events, the structure of time, the narrative voice, the setting, and the the space that is beyond the setting, the landscape that can be termed a psychological one. For example, the novel's exceptional ability to compress time within a single Friday morning that is filled with a sense of doom is not a stylistic choice. It is a powerful narrative choice that is bound to create urgency and claustrophobia. It also reflects the confined, pressurized lives of the women characters who form the core of the narrative.

Also, the focus to Mir Ali setting with numerous checkpoints, curfews, surveillance, and control along the lines of the novel's themes of confinement, control, and the infiltration of politics into the personal sphere, will be viewed as an active, agential, and oppressive force rather than as an imposition to be simply ignored. As such, it will be the patriarchal and political structures that enclose Mina and Samarra. This methodology incorporates the text in such a way as to address the fundamental how in Bhutto's project; in what manner does she articulate the experience of double colonization? This is not merely an exposition of the events, but it poses a central question, aims for and achieves a profound inquiry into the narrative strategies that depict the characters in their distinct psychological and social situations. It is this profound and sustained interaction with the text that causes the research to assert that the personal tragedy of the characters and the political turmoil of the times is not simply juxtaposition; they are profoundly interwoven with and enhance the overall meaning of the statement. In pursuing this goal in such a manner that allows for the greatest scope of analysis, the methodology is focused on the deliberate extraction of certain passages, character arcs, and themes from the novel.

Due to the overall depth and richness that underlie any major literary text, one must make careful choices when attempting to offer hypothetically textually based proof for the key arguments of the study to be forge. One of the main focuses of this study must be the complete story arcs of the two main female characters, Mina and Samarra, as they epitomize

as a pair, two opposing but intricately connected reactions to the phenomenon of double colonization. In the case of Mina, the selection of a few lines might prove essential as they capture the nature of her intricate and elaborate inner world, as well as her corporeality: the lines that portray the essence of her loss and the wretchedness of her feelings about the death of her child, the profound solitude which she endured and continued to suffer from the household, her silence that was marked with tensions, and her overwhelming grief and wretchedness of the community. These chosen lines allow readers to see the way patriarchy's demand for female valiant, silent suffering, and easy death deepens the silence that causes internal suffering to be forever lost and unrecognized. In the case of Samarra, the selection of lines must strategically focus to portray her active, visible defiance: her politically subversive involvement, her non-compliance with the traditional patriarchy and the code of izzat, as well as her direct defiance of the structures of the state and her own family which are assumed to be and are truly male domains. The research also fosters an understanding of the two characters comparatively and how they illuminate the various manifestations of female agency, from quiet and passive, yet eternal, to irritable and dangerously rebellious, and how the two opposite ends of the spectrum, apparently divergent, remain dominated and driven by the same, all-encompassing suppression. Other symbolic moments and recurring motifs of central importance to the research, like the 'crescent moon', the 'communal' Friday prayer rituals, and the 'mirrored' imagery, 'shadow', 'window', and 'mirror', will also be analysed. Such literary features are not only descriptive and decorative, but also serve as the focal points where the highly concentrated central themes of the work coalesce, providing the critic with an understanding of the psychological and cultural ambivalence that the characters are trapped in. Particular excerpts of text will undergo serious examination by using postcolonial feminist theory with caution and attention to detail, since this theory provides the appropriate critical stance and vocabulary for this analysis. The theory built within the introductory chapter draws on these scholars' works most centrally and most extensively: Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Kirsten Holst Petersen.

Mohanty's critique of the one-dimensional construction of the 'Third World woman' is central to this analysis as it acts as a perennial cautionary note for the analysis of Mina and Samarra as little more than victims or ciphers. Rather, their lives and experiences will be analysed within the complete historical and cultural context of the women we are dealing with: the particular women who are situated within a tribe that is politically, socially, and economically marginalized within the larger context of Pakistan. This particular theoretical

position shapes the way the complexity and subtlety of their agency is to be understood; for example, Mina's silence is not to be seen as silence or as absence. Rather it is assumed that silence was a form of testimony and she had determined that her grief, or her grief that was deeply felt, was not to be taken by the family or the nation, was not to be taken and utilized. This work begins with a direct engagement with Spivak and the challenges posed by her question, (Can the Subaltern Speak?) To examine the characters' perpetual and conflicted struggle over the conflict of voice and self-representation. This work will assess the complex and, Mina and Samarra's silencing by structures of patriarchy and nationalism and, in contrast, the ways in which Bhutto, through narrative devices of considerable interiority, subjectivity, and focalization, attempts to create a space, though highly reticent, for the articulation of voice. Samarra's political activism is a direct, self-aware contestation of this silencing which will also lead the analysis into the contours of the voice which she is contested, mediated, and, in some ways, contained, by the systems she contends with. The primary principle of double colonization, as articulated by Petersen and Rutherford will be used as a heuristic device in all the selections. For example, Sikandar will be examined through the lens of Indigenous patriarchy for controlling Mina's grief and attempts to manage her psychological and emotional state to bring her back to a state of 'normalcy' and, in contrast, the state violence and fear which over arch Mir Ali's neo-colonial and colonial systems of power.

This theory provides a unique analytical lens through which to examine the intersectional oppressive systems denoted in the narrative. Essential to this analysis is a theoretically-rooted consideration of Bhutto's choices of words and forms. Part of what makes the novel's responsible representation of double colonization so unique is what is at stake in the narrative. Hence, this analysis will focus on the ways double colonization is depicted through specialization. One such significant spatial metaphor is the 'Crescent Moon', a primary symbol of Islam and, on some interpretations, a positive and unifying political Islam. However, its shadow in the context of the narrative's themes of surveillance, violence, and political shadowing may indicate the negative and divisive Islam wherein politics and patriarchal control of the faith emerge, overshadowing the lives of the characters and, perhaps, casting a silhouette of the shadow of faith. The town of Mir Ali, which is a product of colonial history, represents a multi-layered symbol of a postcolonial nation-state and a deeply patriarchal social formation at the same time. Its geography is confinement and division and this is how the social and ideological restrictions on women are. As well, this

analysis will look at how Bhutto employs certain linguistic and narrative strategies. The use of memory and flashback as a mechanism in the novel as it has a non-linear narrative that combines trauma with anxiety on the present is a stylistic feature that is very important. The fragmentation in this way reflects the characters, and especially Mina, whose psyche is traumatized, and whose present is paralyzed because it is violently overcome by the trauma. These characters are dislocated, and this is the trace of the fragmentation. The work is characterized by the dislocated state of the characters. She represents the subalterns in dominant discourses in the absence of the concept of trace. The fact that Mina is unable to grieve, in the absence of a clear and linear form of trace, she represents subaltern in a dominant discourse. The other characters especially Samarra is the one who is direct, confrontational, and politically charged which indicates that she had centre stage in the narratives of resistance. An example of an author employing an effective technique of the phrase “checkpoint” as a physical and symbolic toggle of control, and “window,” through which one can observe the world and alienate while keeping passivity, will be the focus of the analysis as one of the most foundational building blocks of the novel, which creates resignation, confinement, and paranoia as atmosphere. This reinforces the idea that the analysis of the literary technique reveals the location of the sustained critique of the double colonization concept’s control, which is not solely a matter of underlying themes of the novel, and the literary technique is woven into the language and structure of the text.

As per the aforementioned complexities, the culture chosen *Furore*, by Fatima Bhutto, allowed the research on the geopolitics of decolonized/postcolonial societies, over the tools of postcolonial feminist theory, to take on the described multidimensional and syncretic approach. This complexity further allowed the research to deviate from the previously chosen framework, especially from focusing on ethnic geopolitics to a region of literary study. Bhutto's novels required the researcher to switch the methodology and review captures of text, forming images therein and of geopolitics, per her writings. This multi-pronged approach, thus allowed the research to remove the bondage of rigidity of methodology, as most of the social sciences find themselves in, and approach the research with an open syncretic. As the complexity of cross ethnic, cross geographically, and cross politically described in these novels provides for multidimensional approach in literary studies. Over the years, it has been observed that these geopolitics of postcolonial studies, when applying Bhutto's novels, allow access to multidimensionality, hence the research, cross study’s methodology to complete such novels. Overall, the literature of the two novels, especially the

methodology, aims to pull an osmotic approach to a foundation which otherwise isolates/postcolonial feminist theory from cross studies. The goal is to create a unique, theoretically sophisticated, textually grounded literal critique that recognizes the importance and relevance of Bhutto's work on the complexities of contemporary Pakistani women struggles and the need to lend them a voice and dignify them.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4 RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research analysis and discussion is to use the postcolonial feminist lens to engage with the findings derived from the analysis of Fatima Bhutto, *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*, methodically and thoroughly. The research aimed to capture the complexity with which the text examines and presents the ‘double colonization’ of its female characters. This term speaks to the multiple and conjunct oppressions that the female protagonists and characters encounter as a result of the tribal patriarchal order, colonial and neo-colonial order, and its local manifestations in the military, bureaucratic, and administrative relations of the contemporary Pakistani state. Thus, the section will not simply retell the story, nor will it describe the characters in a generic sense. Rather, the section will prepare the readers to engage with and appreciate the architectural narrative of Bhutto with its multiple meanings, symbols, and political commentaries. We will analyse how the primary characters Mina and Samarra, as well as the women in *Mir Ali*, consolidate, contest, and revise their selfhood and agency within an interlocking system of oppression. An explanation of the character psychology, the politics of space, and the symbol of the narrative, the results of the findings, will be the focus of the discussion in the first part, which will then contextualize the findings in a review of the available literature in the field of postcolonial studies and South Asian literatures, and in which the positive intersections, differences, and contributions of the findings will be addressed. Thereafter, the discussion will focus on the findings and their implications on the future of postcolonial feminist theory. The primary concern then will be the findings’ social and practical implications outside of the discipline of literature. While maintaining academic integrity, the discussion will point out criticisms and limitations of the study including but not limited to methodology and theory. The overall analysis of the study will suggest ways the findings of the study contribute to the field. In consideration of our focused analysis, we aim to illustrate how Bhutto’s novel, rather than merely engaging the audience as a page turner, set among the backdrop of a distant war, is, in fact, a thoroughly engaging novel with a legitimate political import, as its substance is a literary interrogation of the gendered subjugation phenomenon, its historical formation, the global systems of its reproduction and maintenance in postcolonial contexts, and the paradoxical,

multidimensional, and enduring resistances that, counter to the common belief, arise from the subjugated, oppressed centers of the systems of oppression.

#### **4.4 Elaborating on Character, Space, and the Design of Oppression**

In our findings, the most impactful is how Bhutto articulates the theoretical construct of double colonization through the character experiences as a lived, enveloping, and inescapable reality. Bhutto's work demonstrates that is not simply the case of two linear, additive, or even sequential dimensions of oppression is at work. Rather, it is one oppressive system wherein distinct logics collapse into one another and reinforce one another in a way that the logics of state control and the logics of patriarchy operate, in particular, on women's lives. To grasp this fully, we need to pay attention to character, micro-architectures of space, and the language.

#### **4.5 Mina: The Archaeology of Silence and Body as Inscribed Site**

Mina's character development serves as a deep and intricate examination of the internalization of systemic violence. The living embodiment of national trauma, grief, and conflict, betrayal and a deep sense of loss, as all individual tragedies are transcended by the devastating loss of a child. She serves as a living and breathing embodiment of national psyche grief defeat. Grief, especially at such loss and tragedy, is deeply personal and political, yet, in her silence, it serves as a testimony and is therefore collective. As she continues to be characterized through the accumulation of sensory and somatic elements such as grief, the character of Mina is examined through a detailed analytical framework, and history is not simply the telling of tragedy in her characters. Bhutto does not simply tell us Mina is grieving. She shows us through the disintegration of domestic space. Her containment is domestically at the level of the feminine sphere of patriarchal control and the seclusion of women through purdah, yet this containment is eerily sustained and amplified by the violence of Mir Ali, a town and space besieged and strangled by the military of the state. This control of the narrative, the character of Mina, the town of Mir Ali, and the national military is a parallel of great power. It inverts the concept of home and nation, of domestic space and the national space as horizontal, of each the other, and of progressive. It shows that

each domestic space and national space constitute horizontal violence over women and the other, women imprisoned. Example set other walls in her house, which should signify safety, become a proxy of the borders and checkpoints outside. These walls serve as the domestic prison and barrier of the polyphonic territory of womanhood.

To her interaction with domesticity, a child's toy, and an unmade bed, she juxtaposes the irrational memory tied to the political discourse, the overwhelmingly masculine, and the forgotten casualties. Her silence is, perhaps, the most misunderstood. This line of argument, perhaps, should defend Mina's silence as an absence of voice and a submission to her oppressor. As a narrator observes, **“There was time of mourning, but it had passed. Now was the time for salience was language she had become fluent in”** In analysing socio-political contexts that silence the grieving and the protests, her unbridled and sustained despair encapsulates a profound silence that is an act of profound and radical resistance. Sir, the social and the patriarchal are both demanded and expected, the silence of recuperation, the stoic, resilient woman, she of profound loss, with everything intact, is to continue for the family and community. Such a refusal can best be understood as a particular type of 'negative agency,' expressed not through action, but through the refusal of expected behaviour. By holding onto her grief so tenaciously, near the obsessive, she compels those around her, and the reader as well, to contend with the political violence and its real-life consequences, as opposed to the violence being simply accepted or praised in the mainstream.

Her body and her tortured streams of consciousness give her the trauma of the nation and its history, and as a memory keeper, she struggles with the blood-soaked history that the mainstream, patriarchal, and nationalists fiercely erase, appropriate, or distort. Thus, she embodies the radical, ethical, and remembrance of resistance through her refusal to be comforted, and thus, the system that purposefully eliminates certain lives, and certain losses. Her body, in its stasis and sorrow, with its radical and also ethical resistance, became a narrative that challenged the mainstream history of erasure.

#### **4.6 Samarra: The Extremes of Expressive Agency and the Cost of Defiance**

Of all the characters in the text, Samarra is perhaps the most politically aware and externally manifest in her active opposition. To her, the protest is not merely political. She calculatedly

and holistically denies the restrictive roles of femininity and tradition. “*She would not be the women who waited. She would be the Women who acted.*” No longer is she the good daughter, the woman behind the walls of izzat, and the submissive challenger of the militarized state, the mukhtar. Samarra is perhaps, politically and militarily, the most courageous. But instead of portraying her as a straightforward, flawless character, Bukari illustrates the complexity and Samarra's double quagmire. The analysis of Samarra's character brings to light the most important, and perhaps the most underestimated, contradiction: her agency is neither progressive, nor linear, nor aspiring nor political. Samarra's agency was personal, and Bukari assumed the risk that might come from the loneliness, the state of perpetual danger, and the loneliness that such a public recline would cause to Samarra.

Samarra not only operates with state violence and the risk of torture and extrajudicial killing but also with social alienation and the disapproval of the community and the personal, familial misunderstandings of her closest relatives. By such means, her story continues to complicate the myth of the female revolutionary and the romantic traditions that need only highlight and isolate virtue, courage, and determination, omitting the loneliness, fear, moral toils, and the cost of a strong psyche. Her relationship with her brother, Aman Erum, is one area in which this complexity is fully brought to bear. Aman is the collaborator, one who, for his own safety and career progression, has taken the route of submission to the state. Their interactions are politically, ideologically, and psychologically jammed with conflict and pain, damaged rationality, and familial obligation. This pain in their family ties is a result of the political arena in which their conflicting positions are situated and the political arena in which their conflicting positions are situated is, as we know, the primary arena of conflict. Where she has the docility of the state to politically oppose the primary political conflict, conflict coextensive with her familial ties is, of course, of a different kind. In this way, Samarra's case is unique: she is forced to confront the political order in an acquisition of political rights, not merely in a political opposition as is the case with almost all the dissenting actors on the political stage. This finding, therefore, yes, shows that autonomy as an outcome of the flexibility of control embedded in a colonised context is bound to the existence of considerable complexity in the form of an agonising negotiation, rather than a clean escape from oppression. Samarra's case stands out in this respect only to the extent that, rather than distant engagement with the system, it confronted most violently. Resisting power equally rooted in vulnerability and agency is courage, which Bhutto analysis paradoxically. Thus unfolds Mina and Samarra, which brought about vacuums less about the binary of passive,

active, victim, heroine, and more about a complex continuum of reactions to disproportionate power. The continuum of internal, symbolic, confrontational, and practical defiance is Mina and Samarra, whereby both resisters culturally subverted the power that sought to erase and silence them. This dual resistance is grounded in power. It subverted our understanding of silent defiance and the politically strategic voids that defy authority to highlight the control in power within silence.

#### 4.7 Mir Ali: The Synopticon of Double Colonization

In addition, the site of the novel's action, the Mir Ali of fiction, is another primary character in the tragic story of double colonization. She writes, "*In Mir Ali even the air was a prisoner. it stayed close to the ground, afraid to rise.*" This is much more than just a background or a geographical marker. It is a site of physical, psychological, geographical, and symbolic configurations that shape and determine the existence and possibilities, and even the consciousness, of the people dwelling in it. The colonial logic of control, surveillance, and divide-and-rule, now managed and perpetuated by a postcolonial state, is reflected in the checkpoints, curfews, surveillance, conversations in whispers, and threat of drones: it is control by the state. The environment of surveillance, with the resulting imposition of fear, and the extreme control of movement, determines the suffocating sense of confinement, and is perfectly matched by the confinement of the women in the social and domestic space, and in the control of their own psyche. The outer ends of the town, which are controlled and besieged by the state, reflect the control of the ideology of the tribe, the ideology of the religion, and the control of the honor which so perfectly contains the freedom, the self-determination, and the desires of the women. The concept of a "synoptic on" serves the town well as a description of a social system involving a few (the state military, local militants) surveying a larger population, while simultaneously the population surveys and controls itself politically. That the social spatial system is a dual surveillance state is a prime example of double colonization.

Over the course of a single train Friday morning, the novel's masterful narrative compression causes this claustrophobia to reach almost unbearable levels. It implies that the portrayed episodes are not stand-alone, dramatic aberrations but rather crises of an on-going, open-ended, and normalized condition of existence. The urgency and strain of the

compressed timeline are a reflection of the state of emergency and exception that the characters occupy where every personal decision carries a political risk, every connection elicits suspicion, and random violence is an ever-present, though unremarkable, part of the day. This analysis captures the political and the personal within these situations in the most extreme way possible. The wider geopolitical clash between the state and local insurgents is not a theoretical discussion or, at best, a headline that is far removed from reality. It is the lived reality of the characters, the tension that structures their relationships, and the fundamental determinant of their love, grief, speech, and vision.

## 4.8 The Male Characters: Complicity, Conflict, and Captivity within the System

There needs to be a consideration of the male characters, who, rather than being a single faceless oppressor, are individuals who are just as complex as the system which bounds them. The three brothers, Aman Erum and Sikandar and Hayat, each showcase a different, albeit unsuccessful, version of masculinity, as well as a different version of antagonism towards the power. They showcase how double colonisation also distorts the male subjectivities and places them into contradictory positions, as a response to power structures.

**4.8.1 Aman Erum is the collaborator:** He has entered a Faustian bargain with the state's intelligence apparatus, as he thinks social mobility and personal survival rest upon collaboration with the powerful. He had made his choice. *“It was a choice for survival, for the future beyond dust and violence of Mir Ali. He would the masters, tools, and if that meant forgetting who he was, then it was a price he was willing to pay”* He is the postcolonial subject, who, upon seeing the colonizer-turned-state's logic, becomes its local agent and spy. His character seems to be the most complex as he has a fraught relationship with Samarra, given that her ideological resistance is pure and in disposable proximity to his morally bankrupt ones. He is a man who has compromised on moral integrity and familial loyalties towards his quite secure and powerful, albeit precarious, position, and the character shows how the systems engender co-option, corruption, and profound intimacy in betrayal.

The character of Sikandar, the doctor, epitomizes the struggling, liberal humanist caught in irreconcilable contradictions. Compassionately concerned with “healing” and “repairing”

bodies in a universe focused on breaking and demolishing them, Sikandar expresses the desire, albeit futile, for neutrality and rational, scientific compassion, in the face of overwhelming, starkly irrational violence. His inability to cure his wife Mina's hideous psychological grief is the most moving and prophetic manifestation of his ultimate impotence. He is caught in an isosceles triangle dystopia of the state's formal demands, the militants' informal threats, and the legacy of tradition and expectation's crushing weight, and so, can choose neither decisively nor effectively any possible line of action. He epitomizes the inaction paralysis and complicity, by witnessing injustice and feeling powerless to stop any of it. Hayat, the idealistic militant, exemplifies the anti-state resistance; however, it is also deeply patriarchal and risks reproducing the same power dynamics it intends to dismantle. While his resistance to state oppression is noble, it unfortunately operates within an absent feminist liberation context, above and beyond the conventional understandings. He is an advocate for the territory and the autonomy it entails, yet, inasmuch as liberation is defined, he may not be an advocate for the women within that territory.

His character raises the unsettling issue as to whether or not the anti-colonial and nationalist struggles that occur outside the context of a feminist framework can be emancipatory for all members of a community. With these men, double colonization illustrates Bhutto's artistry; it fashions a maze with no exits for anyone. Men are both the agents and victims of the maze, and, while they are confined to the inequitably punitive, dehumanizing roles of the economy as provider, protector, warrior, or collaborator of the system, they in turn perpetuate it. Their struggles reinforce the point that the maze of oppression has adverse consequences for all who become ensnared in it, albeit in a differentiated, gendered manner.

#### **4.9 Extended Theoretical Conversations: A Expansion beyond The Basics**

Given the existing scholarly literature, the value of analysing the literary contributions of Bhutto and the subsequent critique of these contributions increases marginally for each of the findings. The central focus of double colonization is closely related to and strongly affirms the primary arguments of postcolonial feminist theorists, particularly Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Anna Rutherford. This analysis is in full support of Mohanty's Western feminist literary criticisms, which is the construction of a monolithic, ahistorical, and reductionist

representation of the ‘Third World woman’ as a singular, passive, and universally victim’ (Feminism 73). Through the character portrayals of Mina and Samarra, who come from the same small town but presented as polar opposites of each other, Bhutto’s narration pointedly highlights the specificity, nuance, and agency that women’s circumstances, experiences, and lives entail, even in the face of overwhelming adversity. Their oppression, while differing, was also valid, and this justifies the demand for a contextual, nuanced, and historically grounded analysis, thus countering any singular, uniform, or ‘one-size-fits-all’ feminist theory that disregards the granular and intricate realities of situation, class, colonial background, and individual psyche.

This research also offers an illustrative example of the philosophical and political challenges Spivak addresses in her seminal essay, (*Can the Subaltern Speak?*) The plight of Mina and Samarra can be perceived as a narrative representation of Spivak's representation of the most vulnerable of the socially excluded. Mina’s strategic, profound silence and Samarra’s mediated, contested, and perpetually interrupted speech illustrate the significant structural and discursive constraints that make the doubly marginalized subaltern subject not only unreachable, but also incapable of true self-representation uninterrupted, completely autonomous, and authentic self-representation within the existing hegemonic political and epistemological structures. Thus, this research supports Spivak’s skeptical conclusion, consisting of the multiple and contradictory structures of domination that make the emergence of a subaltern voice a paradox in and of itself. That said, it delineates the role of literature as an ethical and imaginative space to dramatize and illustrate the violations of speech and silence, thereby making the complex systems of erasure, appropriation, and misrepresentation tangible to the reader.

The intellectual backdrop for this work is supplemented by the end of the story, rather than the beginning, because the story's conclusion addresses the main concern of the novel. More than attempting to ‘give’ subalterns a voice, the novel illustrates the constraints imposed on characters, which ultimately guide the reader, ethically and critically, to attend to the echoes, whispers, and voids. Furthermore, one might profitably juxtapose this with the psychoanalytic colonial theory of Frantz Fanon. Mina’s internalized trauma and psychological fragmentation parallels, in a way, the ‘colonial mind’ theory, but serves as a gendered amplification. While Fanon described the internalized sense of inferiority, Mina, without a doubt, possesses a fragmented and shattered psyche, a product of her direct political violence, thus revealing the deeply personal aspects of what is usually seen as a political

concern. Samarra's advocacy is, to a degree, in agreement with Fanon's ideas on the resistance for the oppressed being a form of therapy, but Bhutto brings a significant feminist nuance by emphasizing the violence, gendered critique, and the immense personal costs that women endure when assuming that role.

Positioning this study alongside the political history and sociological analysis of Pakistan, such as the works of Ayesha Jalal and Farzana Shaikh, guides this analysis to the indispensable, though often overlooked, dimension of gender. Considering the previous remains work related to the macro-political analysis of Pakistan's history, this inquiry addresses the ways in which large-scale macro-political processes the coercive integration of geographically peripheral regions of the state, the dominant militaristic culture, and the politics of Islamic identity reconfigure the intimately political relations of gender, familial structures, and individual psychologies of people residing in Mir Ali. This analysis establishes that the 'security state,' in its nature, ought to be considered a 'patriarchal state' of which the policies, the discourse, and the materiality of the state enact, reinforce, and even violently alter customary social structures of gender for their interests.

Thus, the research creates an essential and pivotal connection among political science, history, and feminist literary criticism, demonstrating that these fields are not isolated but rather interrelated and fundamental for comprehensively grasping the mechanisms and lived experiences of power. Nonetheless, these findings also significantly expand upon and hone previous literary studies. While urban fiction studies focusing on Pakistani authors such as Kamila Shamsie and Mohsin Hamid offer valuable critical scholarship, this study shifts the scholarly gaze to the controversial, under investigated, and politically important tribal area. This shift in geography and politics is paramount. The region that Mir Ali fictitiously represents are the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which, since the colonial period, have been ruled by the Frontier Crimes Regulations, which brought an unprecedented suspension of democratic rights and legal processes, making it a self-contained zone of exception in which state power, authoritarian and absolute, was exercised in an indirect and brutal manner. This makes the region an especially fraught and illuminating space to study the colonial and neo-colonial practices of governance and the cruel legacies of double colonization.

Moreover, while many readings of Pakistani literature through a feminist lens insightfully tackle the question of patriarchy as a social system in in the literature, they often

fail to, or do so in an uncoordinated manner, recognize the colonial framework as an equally important, on-going, and constitutive force in the maintenance and shaping of that patriarchy. This research, as she enshrined and etherealized, focuses on the bottom integration of that which remains on the sentient and integrated strata of that which remains Stephen and which structures formed by the violence of intercontinental domination, and in the ensuing centuries of the postcolonial, including the Cold War, and the endless Global War on Terror.

#### **4.10 Rethinking Agency, Space, and Intervention**

The theory that these particular findings engage with, and that postcolonial feminists must grapple with, is dual. On the one hand, these findings offer rich, layered, and moving literary evidence of the theory's intersectional claim: that gender, race, class, caste, and colonial status are not stand-alone, parallel, or separable systems of oppression, but rather intersecting, inter-systemic, and co-constitutive systems of domination, producing distinct configurations of subordination and privilege (Mohanty, *Feminism* 45). The examination of Mina and Samarra reinforces powerfully and concretely that, as “women,” they are also and equally attached to being the specific subjects of a particular postcolonial security state, of a particular ethnic and tribal community with its own administrative and social structures, and of a global political and economic order characterized by imperialism. Their oppression is neither definable solely within the bounds of gender domination, nor political or economic subordination. It is the inter-systemic, co-constitutive dynamics and contours of these systems which determine their unique lived oppression. On the other hand, the findings here engage with postcolonial feminism to help further develop a more nuanced, elastic, and empathetic conception of agency and resistance. The enrichment of the theory is beyond the singular focus of defining empowerment and agency from the perspective of public acts of socio-political revolt and organized political movements. This engagement of this theory essay with this evolution of the theory is profound.

This study advocates for a broader, more inclusive and more contextualized definition of agency by positing as comparable with Samarra’s activism that Mina’s silent, prolonged, and quasi-geological presence of grief is a form of resistance that while being ethical and politically charged is also of profound significance. The study also posits in conditions of absolute and totalizing constraints, resistance could and should be identified in the refusal to

renounce one's grief, in the persistent daily and frequently unnoticed efforts of survival, in the retention of an authentic inner self in the presence of stifling social expectations to comply, and in the act of witnessing. Janet and Keila's reflections substantiate the theoretical framework of Leela Gandhi and Partha Chatterjee working on the political and ethical significance of the 'everyday' the 'minor' the 'domestic' as acts of resistance and defiance.

In addition, the research implications unequivocally contest any Whig Gish, teleological, and/or naively linear interpretations of history, which assume that national independence is self-evident and/or equates to the emancipation of women. In the novel, women in the postcolonial condition are, in various respects, just as confined, and, in some cases, even more so than under direct colonial rule, except that the control is exerted through a newly intricate and, frequently, more disingenuous set of local and global arrangements. This strongly supports postcolonial feminism's critique of, and her scepticism of, the nation- state and nationalisms as projects that, more often than not, sustain a certain brand of patriarchal power, the militarization of society, and the systemic instrumenting of women. In this sense, the critical lesson is that a rigorous, activist feminism must focus its attention equally on the legacy of Western imperialism and on the internal power dynamics of postcolonial states, and, in particular, on the nationalist discourse that is so frequently deployed on women, and the discourse's relation to global power and capital. Finally, the research emphasizes the importance of the theoretical contribution of space, place, and geography to double colonization. It suggests that the abstract and universal concept of double colonization must be consistently anchored, scrutinized, and improved in relation to particular sites.

The specific manifestation of gendered oppression in *Mir Ali* is uniquely determined by its history as a border town, a tribal area with special law, a buffer zone, and a frontline in the War on Terror. Thus, theoretical frameworks need to be resilient, thoughtful, and unpretentious in the sense of asking how from the geography as a product of colonial history and political conflicts and in what ways it shapes and diversifies the experience of being doubly colonized. The implications of this research go far beyond literary theory and other academic pursuits. The knowledge of the mechanisms and human consequences of the double colonization system, as presented in Bhutto's novel, can be invaluable in many spheres of life.

This document offers a detailed, humane, and thoroughly contextual depiction of the struggles and hardships faced by women in conflict and post-conflict regions, which, in turn, can help sustain policy and NGO efforts both nationally and globally. International and local development initiatives, albeit well-meaning and well-intended, often miss the mark and fall short of sustainability. This is primarily due to the adoption of a siloed technocratic approach. Examples include the promotion of female education without addressing the patriarchal biases and economic realities that inhibit girls from attending school, or the provision of microfinance without considering the impact of state violence and militarization on the local economy and on the disruption of social order which in turn amplifies the control over women, their social mobility, and their bodies.

This analysis has demonstrated that viable, ethical, and sustainable engagement must be holistic and integrated, while also being politically astute. This must address the need to dismantle state militarization, advocate for democratic justice, and reform and redirect the encroaching political power, all while transforming patriarchal social controls and norms in order to show how these intersecting domains are the twin pillars of the same structure of disempowerment. This presents a powerful case for a truly and appropriately gendered response to peace building, the provision of humanitarian aid, and development, while arguing that national security policies and traditional gender norms are inextricably linked.

Educational Use of *Shadow of the Crescent Moon* includes the *Shadow of the Crescent Moon* and some of the advanced critical analyses that accompany them, and can be of great importance and value with respect to the teaching of some subjects within the walls of the university and even advanced high schools. Examples include postcolonial studies, gender studies, world literature, political science, and South Asian studies. Students can utilize the text for its Hezbollah, subaltern, and postcolonial agency and nationalistic values, thereby realizing and understanding the most important theoretical values for the graduate students in the course. Above all, the text challenges the emotionally disengaged, ethically disengaged, and even unethical terrorism narratives that are so pervasive in much of the political science of the West and in some Western academic studies.

**4.6.1 With Respect to Culture and Public Discourse:** As a high form of storytelling, literature assists a society to reflect to itself, and to its past and future. This critique of the novel deeply and timely emerges to critique in a social and political order. By bearing witness to the absent, often invisible, undermined characters like Mina and the extreme, pricey,

complex opposition of a character like Samarra, this research brings the wit, and the love needed, to cultivate a more profound, and kinder public discourse in the shrunken enclosures of Pakistan, and also in the worldwide public sphere, regarding women rights, national identity, religious extremism, and the long, dark, and ghostly hand of colonial and neo-colonial past. It attests to the profound influence of the writer, the artist, and the critic, as the brave ones, in the perpetual and relentless fight for a more just, more equitable, and more reflective society.

#### **4. 8 Limitations and Future Research: Charting the Unexplored Territories**

This study must be able to acknowledge some innate challenges when it comes to academic rigor. This study's primary limitation is one of scope and focus. In devoting a chapter of the dissertation to a detailed textual analysis of a single literary work, the study achieves a great depth but must also unwillingly sacrifice breadth. While *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* is a rich, complex, and focused case study, the findings and interpretations are not and cannot be extrapolated to all of Pakistani literature, all representations of Pakistani women, or the multi-layered, complex, and diverse reality of all women across the various regions, classes, and ethnicities of Pakistan.

The experiences described in the text are steeped in the socio-political reality of the Pashtun tribal regions which have a unique history, a distinct set of cultural codes, and a particularly troubled relationship with the Pakistani state. This reality is very different from the one situated in cosmopolitan urban centers such as Karachi, the politically vibrant city of Lahore, or the agrarian heartlands of Punjab and Sindh. The second limitation is that the method used in this study is primarily textual, interpretive, and theoretical.

Bhutto's work depicts and reflects reality in complex ways and deserves deep critical engagement, but this study does not attempt empirical fieldwork aimed at aligning these fictional narratives with the lived experiences, oral histories, or surveys of real women in the comparable contexts of Swat or Waziristan. This study rests on the premise that literature is a different kind of knowledge and, in a sense, a different form of truth about the human condition, power, and the social order.

Therefore, literature offers a knowledge that is complementary to the social scientific knowledge produced by the numbers of sociology or the deep immersion of anthropology. In addition, considering these two primary female subjects of the study, focusing on the extent of double colonization, requires the analysis to conduct less profound and less sustained examinations of minor female figures and of the complex, ambivalent/contradictory, and often villainous male characters, who are also products and sometimes victims of the systems of domination. A different and perhaps more balanced analysis might focus on the three brothers, Aman, the compromised collaborator; Sikandar, the benevolent and powerless healer; and Hayat, the romantic and militant extremist; as explicit and distinctive representatives of the interlocking systems of patriarchal, state, and militant oppression. Their inner struggles, with the women, with each other, and among themselves would illuminate and complete the social tapestry. However, these are not fundamental flaws, but rather parameters that set the scope of the study, and more importantly, furnish a plethora of new and fertile grounds for future work.

**4.8.1 Comparative Literary Analysis:** An ideal next step would be an analytical comparison of Bhutto's work with contemporaries such as Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*, which also examines state, belonging, and gender in a cross-border context, or the writings of Bina Shah or Uzma Aslam Khan. This would enable scholars to outline the commonalities, concerns, and strategies; as well as the notable differences, of the representation of double colonization in literature across varying geographical contexts (e.g., urban Diasporas vs. tribal peripheries) and diverse temporalities associated with and outside Pakistan.

**4.8.2 Expansion to Bhutto's Oeuvre:** The research could determine the presence or absence of the theme of double colonization across Bhutto's expanding corpus, and how it might transform or be articulated differently in her memoir *Song of Blood and Sword*, in her journalism, or in her other non-fiction. It would offer a more thorough cross-sectional picture of the breadth, depth, and the culmination of her political and feminist consciousness, as well as her literary practices, across multiple literary forms and different periods of her life.

**4.8.3 Intersection with Trauma Studies and Memory Studies:** This examination has touched on the aspects of trauma, memory, and mourning, more so in the character of Mina. This could be the basis of an even closer study in the future tackling more profoundly the interdisciplinary apparatus of trauma theory (e.g. Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman) and memory studies (e.g. Pierre Nora, Marianne Hirsch), and the psychological, somatic, and

trans generational effects of double colonization of Bhutto's characters. It examines the intertwined, suppresses, and/or unprocessed trauma at both the individual and collective levels in a situation of sustained violence.

**4.8.4 Empirical Correlates and Interdisciplinary Dialogue:** This literary analysis could theoretically be a springboard, a source of hypotheses, and a humanizing narrative for empirical, field-based studies within social science disciplines sociology, political science, anthropology, gender studies. It could inform and design studies on the lived realities and resistances of women in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly FATA), or in other postcolonial conflict zones like Kashmir, Palestine, or the Kurdish areas, focusing on double colonization. This would initiate an important, enriching, and necessary dialogue between literary abstractions and social realities, and between the narrative and the lived experiences.

## Chapter Five

### 5. Conclusion

In the final analysis of this research, it is safe to say that Bhutto has done a remarkable job in documenting, in the form of literature, the phenomenon of the double colonization of women in the print and post 9-11, tribal Pakistan, and the literary arts. With respect to the women in the novel, Bhutto articulates the burdens of control the women in the colonial and neo-colonial state structures, and the indigenous patriarchy, are affected by, through the lives of Mina and Samarra. The systems do not work individually, but instead jump over together, in a ghastly mechanism that tracks women and confines them to the unrelenting chains of all, their living, feeling, and being politically 'visible'.

Her experience further illustrates how women's trauma gets compounded by loss, state-sanctioned violence, and patriarchal crisis. I contrast this with Samarra's articulate defiance and activism, who demonstrates political and personal defiance to patriarchal and state structures. This ultimately poses the question of how politically active women challenge the existing power structures. Samarra and Mina reflect different forms of political activism and agency, showing how different forms of activism and agency are structured by society, the state, and women's conditions. Woman's exclusion through borders and the military makes Mir Ali more than just a setting.

The domestic and military presence, particularly the surveillance and borders, are comparable to the control women face through domestic obligations, honor, and silence. This illustrates how control and power operate within the home and the country. In the world of postcolonial feminists like Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, feminists critique the idea of "The Third World Woman" and instead focus on more individuality and nuance with the characters of Mina and Samara and the contexts within which they struggle. Where Mohanty talks about silence, lack of agency, and Spivak's subaltern, there is the presence of struggle, the struggle of the women to speak and the struggle of women to manoeuvre the predatory frameworks that sought to contain Samara's defiance and Mina's silence. Bhutto's is not a tale of a battle and a war; it is more so the construction and the consecutive problematic layers of the intricacies of the oppression of women.

These women are not presented as passive 'victims' of wars; instead, they are incorporated with and give to the society enduring and defiant political structures. Mary has restored, through these characters, the freedom of expression, literature, and the art of the subjugated still resisting against an oppressive silence drawing hope and layering the art of subjugation.

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