PRECARIOUS LIVES PRECARIOUS GEOGRAPHIES: REPRESENTATION OF BIOPOLITICS, VIOLENCE AND NECROPOLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY PAKISTANI ANGLOPHONE FICTION

Toqeer Ahmed

Department of English,
Mirpur University of Science & Technology
toqeer.eng@must.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

*This article examines the ways in which Pakistani writers—Jamil Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon* and Fatima Bhutto's *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*—rebut violence and politics of life and death in the tribal areas of Pakistan against the backdrop of effects of wars in the neighbouring Afghanistan. Even though violence varies between and within countries, Pakistan and its tribal areas have long been seen as the epicentre to execute or take refuge by those who have been involved in the acts of violence and extremism in the region. This tribal region due to its special constitutional status has been considered as safe haven for people fighting against their own state and in the region; first against the Soviet and later the United States-led war against terrorism which affected the life of people living in the region. Through the examination of literary texts, I argue that life in the tribal areas of Pakistan was managed through indigenous structures which maintained discipline for centuries before the region was exposed to foreign occupations and wars in the neighbouring Afghanistan; as a result of foreign occupations (Soviet and war on terror) in the neighbouring areas the strategies of domination, subjugation and occupation also changed. Using the theoretical framework of violence and politics of life and death developed by Michael Foucault, Achille Mbembe, Giorgio Agamben, Zygmunt Baumann and others, this article highlights the shift from 'making live and letting die' to 'let live and make die' in the tribal region between Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is qualitative research with a specific focus on violence in the selected texts in the context of tribal areas. The similar effects in other parts of the country can be explored through future studies.*

Keywords: Biopolitics, Necropolitics, Violence, Tribal Areas of Pakistan, Effects of Wars

INTRODUCTION

The article focuses on the tribal areas of Pakistan and its representation in the Anglophone fictional narratives. I examine the indigenous structures of the tribal society through which life was managed and governed and how these are affected by the regional and global actions in the region. Jamil Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon* and Fatima Bhutto's *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* represent pre and post 9/11 settings in the tribal region and how the people have been treated in this ungoverned area since long. Both novels offer an altogether different perspective on the management of life in the region, while Ahmad's novel offers insight into the tribal norms and structures which maintained discipline in the society for a long period of time through their own laws and norms which are affected badly in the post-9/11 setting because of political and military interventions in the region. On the other hand, Bhutto's novel invites insight into the war on terror and its effects in the region where sites of torture created by the US drone attacks and military operations are significant.

The Wandering Falcon is published in 2011 and documents the tribal life of the 20th century society which is governed through their own norms and laws. It begins with a young eloping couple who takes refuge at a border outpost as they are running away from their tribe. After six years, their tribe tracked them down and killed the couple as a punishment for going against their custom of marriage. Their son, Tor Baz is left to die in the desert by the tribesmen who becomes 'wandering falcon' as he travels among the tribes in the region. The novel is divided into nine interlinked stories in which Tor Baz is portrayed as a mysterious witness to the events rather than a protagonist. Ahmad through his wandering explores the norms and structures of different tribes living in the region. Tor Baz encounters with varied characters in different stories from rebel mullahs, aging warriors,

wandering nomads, government representatives besides others. The novel has no continuous plot and there are number of narrators of events in different stories.

On the other hand, *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* explores the effects of war on terror and its devastating consequences in the tribal region. The setting of the novel is in an imaginary town called Mir Ali somewhere in the tribal area and it represents the life and struggle of a family. The narrative opens on a Friday morning when three brothers, the main characters of the novel—Aman Erum, Hayat and Sikandar— agrees to go their own way to offer the prayer since the threat of suicide bombing or drone attack could kill the whole family if they offer their prayer at one place. The eldest brother Aman Erum recalls his past on his way to the mosque that how and when he returned to the town after spending years in the US. He recalls his childhood, his relationship with Samarra, memories of his father, his travel and stay in the US and ultimately his becoming of an informant for the state. Sikandar, a doctor by profession married to Mina—who after the death of her son goes to attend the funeral of each and every one who dies in the town—drives to his hospital and Hayat joins a Shia separatist group to fight against the state, took his own way to a mosque on his bike. Bhutto through Samarra and Mina portrays that the war has not only affected the lives of armed men but the women of the area equally. Samarra is tortured at a military camp and Mina goes to funeral houses of even unknown people in the town to recall the memories of her dead son. Bhutto through her characters represents three-dimensional never-ending conflict —the US allies targeting the Taliban through drone attacks and military operations; Sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shia; and the local fighting against the state for independence.

Bhutto's narrative connects global (the US allies) and local (military) forces of power to eliminate those who do not matter through drone strikes and military operations which requires analytical approach to examine the relationship of social, political and territorial power structures, something that Mbembe (2003) describes as the “dynamics of territorial fragmentation”. In such conditions necropower functions by “conclusive divisions between two nations across a boundary line,” and significantly through the production of “multiple separations, provisional boundaries, which relate to each other through surveillance and control” (Weizman qtd. in Mbembe, 2003). Against the backdrop of this concept of territorial fragmentation to examine the narratives in *The Wandering Falcon*, I discuss how the residents of this tribal area between Pakistan and Afghanistan experience indiscernible boundaries of exclusion, abandonment and violence. I argue that this novel draws attention to territorial fragmentation when the narrator through the lens of an insider portrays geographical layout describing socio ecological effects of violence on the indigenous people.

The selected fiction represents pre- and post-9/11 settings and how the people have been treated in the area. This tribal region is in the North-western side of the country and shares its border with Afghanistan. As this area has been outside the constitutional reach for 70 years, the people have been living with their own customs or centuries old Jirga system. Daniel Markey (2008) discusses the geographies of this area and states that the tribes are divided geographically due to hard travelling conditions in the area and there is no or less access to health care, education or the other services provided by the state because of no infrastructure. He also states that the local people since centuries do not like the influence of external authority and they can be characterized as being fiercely independent warriors (Markey, 2008). The geography of the area is also not easy to govern; it has always been left independent or has had less interference by the invaders to the subcontinent like the British (Markey, 2008).

The tribal region previously named as Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) was administratively distributed into seven political entities and six Frontier Regions: Khyber, Kurram, North and South Waziristan Agencies were established in the mid of the 19th century by the British rule, however, three agencies, Mohmand, Orakzai and Bajaur, along with six Frontier Regions, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, and Dera Ismail Khan were established after the independence of Pakistan (Khan, 2009). The British government controlled the area through their political agents with the help of tribal heads in the area. This autonomous status was accepted by the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah after the division of the subcontinent and the area had been neglected by the central governments during the British rule and then by Pakistani central governments. The colonial administrators through political agents had an oversight but never fully controlled this area due to geographical difficulties. The internal affairs of this area were controlled by the tribal elders through a meeting called Jirga—an assembly of elder people—where all

the decisions pertaining to any problem of the society are made. The Jirga system was an alternative to modern judicial system. The British India had declared such areas as ‘protected’ and ‘administered’ because it did not pose any security threat to British India (Khan, 2009). However, when the region and its people stood against the policies of British government in India and perhaps, they were playing in the hands of the USSR, it resulted in form of new legislation to control the region and its people in the late 19th century. The law was named as The Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) which was refined in 1901. This law remained intact until 2018 when the central government of Pakistan merged the tribal areas in its neighbouring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The research work illustrates the following research questions:

The article addresses the following questions:

1. What are the contemporary forms of domination and subjugation and how life is managed through political, religious and social discourses in the contemporary Anglophone Pakistani fiction?
2. How do *The Wandering Falcon* and *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* represent the tribal society and what causes the shift from indigenous to violent structures?
3. How does the management of life in the tribal region move from biopolitics to necropolitics and how it is represented in the selected fiction?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In his 2003 article “Necropolitics”, Achille Mbembe discusses the politics of population management and the conditions where life is disregarded and given the status of living dead. Necropolitics offers a space for reflection and analysis of certain conditions which biopower is unable to cater. Michel Foucault’s ideas of biopower and the sovereign right to kill describe how modern states function and Giorgio Agamben (1998) statement that “the sovereign sphere is the sphere in which it is permitted to kill without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice” is significant in understanding the concept of sovereignty and its role in the context of tribal region of Pakistan. As the tribal society was governed through indigenous laws, the post-9/11 situations represent that the tribal norms and laws were suspended by the sovereign which Agamben (1998) terms “new starting point for the Law”. Drawing on Agamben’s idea of sovereignty, Mbembe (2003) names ‘necropolitics’ to this absolute state power to elaborate the exercise of sovereignty as “the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die”.

Foucault’s notions of biopolitics and biopower have been useful in analysing the power relations and the regulation of life. However, there are certain conditions and social realities which are more centred to death rather than life, showing that necropolitics and necropower are more significant in the examination of strategies managing life and death in the tribal areas in post-9/11 setting. The relationship of sovereignty and represented social and political issues are significant and requires exploration. Through the examination of life and death represented in the tribal region by Ahmad and Bhutto, this research finds the tribal region as a state of exception where violence and death has been used as an apparatus by the sovereign in the post-9/11 setting.

Death has been used as an important tool in politics to control populations. Foucault’s notions of biopolitics and biopower are useful in analysing the power relations and the regulation of life. However, there are certain conditions and social realities which are more centred to death rather than life. Taking sovereignty as an important player in the circulation of necropower, this research engages with notions of sovereignty and state of exception by Agamben as an important theoretical apparatus to understand necropolitics. Étienne Balibar’s *Violence and Civility* is also significant to analyse the nexus of politics and violence in the region. Butler’s examination of politics and sovereignty in *Precarious Life* is also important in the context under discussion. In this book, she analyses the historical conditions that characterised the US politics after 9/11 and the events afterwards. She takes Guantanamo and the Iraq war as exceptional conditions where political management takes a new form of sovereignty. While discussing the historical condition that characterised the American politics after the war on terror and events afterwards, she discusses particular conditions created in Guantanamo and Iraq as examples to discuss the new form of sovereignty which emerged after 9/11. In contrast Foucault’s (2011) notions of governmentality and sovereignty propose obedience to the law instead of setting it aside. Foucault discusses this concept by dividing into the sovereign who exercise the power

and the one on whom it is exercised. By analysing the notion of sovereignty by Foucault and Butler, I now turn to Agamben's take on this notion.

Agamben (1998) discusses the state of exception as an important condition in his discussion on sovereignty. He examines this notion as a political category where sovereign exercises the power by setting the law aside to create certain conditions such as the US created in post-9/11 setting to justify the war on terror. He discusses the relationship of exceptional spaces with sovereignty where these spaces are excluded from the normative juridical power, "The exception is a kind of an exclusion" (Agamben, 1998). This exclusion is operated by the sovereign not through complete disagreement of the rule but in relation to it. The rule here refers to the rule of sovereignty or simply as a rule of law.

Even though Mbembe (2003) precisely analyses politics of death in the backdrop of modern military occupation, his scholarship however, suggest an analytical perspective through which contemporary debate on violence in terrorism affected territories, particularly, the production of the meaning of death, is useful. Moreover, certainly he refers to South Africa and Israeli-Palestinian conflict as fundamental locations of contemporary occupation, but violence against the local in the tribal region of Pakistan raises questions where the power is used alike by national and global military forces.

This article borrows much of its critical approach from the works of Foucault (2008, 2011), Mbembe (2003, 2001) and Agamben (1998) who examined the legitimation of violence against marginalized. Building primarily on the treatises *Homo Sacer* and *State of Exception* which propose deconstruction of the paradoxes that are the part of any modern state, Agamben (2003) explains the 'state of exception' as the legal suspension of law. It is a state where necessity is declared to act outside the parameters of law. This "necessity" is normally supported by the need to manage specific people whose lives are considered as "bare life"—a life that has no worth beyond its sheer being (4). I situate myself in conversation with this critical tradition in the represented setting of tribal areas of Pakistan. The legal philosophers have examined to comprehend and legitimize the state of exception as a structurally comprehensible notion within the philosophies of law however, Agamben (2003) argues that the state of exception surpasses the inside/outside distinctions of law (23). As such, the state of exception "constitutes [...] an emptiness of law," and reveals the "essential fracture" between law and the possibility of its application to material reality (6, 31). Claims of "necessity" are central to legitimizing a state of exception. Yet only the state wields the power and authority to declare beginning and end of necessity. In the context of tribal areas, this necessity is quite significant as how people in the region were trained to fight against the Soviet and later the state eliminated them through the military operations.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The interlinked stories in *The Wandering Falcon* represent historical situations of tribal areas which identify local structures through which the society has been managed. The novel portrays subjective violence as a tool of subjugation to discipline and convert them into acceptable, submissive subjects. In the first story "Sins of the Mother", (Ahmad, 2001, 1) Gul Bibi goes against the laws of her tribe by eloping with her lover but her tribe hunted her down even after six years so that the society remain intact. The death of the couple is a message to the rest that they will meet the same fate if they will go against the norms of their tribe. Their five years old son, Tor Baz, is left to die but he survives. He grows up as a wandering falcon with no fixed identity.

The laws of tribal societies are shown to be so powerful that even the state institutions do not interfere. When the couple reached at a military camp and asked for refuge, the Subedar replied, "Refuge, I cannot offer, I know your laws well and neither I nor any man of mine shall come between a man and the law of his tribe" (5). Reluctance of the Subedar in the given circumstances is emblematic of the strong indigenous structure of the tribal society which stands above everything. Despite the strict tribal laws, instances of going against their norms are shown which results in violence and killing to control others. In the words of Octavia Butler (1993) "the poor and the different" (289) of *The Wandering Falcon* are the victims of tribal laws as well as the state authorities. Tor Baz lives nomadic life in these interlinked stories and wanders around Afridis, Wazirs, Bhattanis, Gujjars and Mahsuds tribes where they all share almost similar cultures and norms.

Ahmad through his stories represents the difference between the people who has been governing themselves and the modern states. He in "A Point of Honour" tells how a group of Baluch rebels was tricked by the state through an advertisement of negotiation. When the group came to negotiate, they ended up disarmed and sentenced to death. This is important to note here that the law was set aside through which they were offered to give up their separatist demands and the state will forgive them but when they reached for negotiation, the law was set aside, and the death sentence was announced by the magistrate without listening to their side of the story. Ahmad notes the behaviour of the magistrate as:

"Write down in the record that the accused admitted to the killings."

Before the evening lamps had been lit, the trial was over. The clerks had started to tie up the files and close the cupboards. They wanted to leave for their homes as soon as the sentence was passed.

The magistrate turned to the clerk. "Show in the record that only seven men were tried, and they pleaded guilty. Let the child go."

He then passed the sentence of death and asked the staff to drop off the boy in the town on their way home. (35)

This is an extreme example of ultrasubjective violence as Balibar (2015) calls it. He differentiates between ultraobjective and ultrasubjective violence as:

The first [ultraobjective] kind of cruelty calls for treating masses of human beings as things or useless remnants, while the second requires that individuals and groups be represented as incarnations of evil, diabolical powers that threaten the subject from within and have to be eliminated at all costs, up to and including self-destruction. (52)

Ultraobjective violence is structural in nature and does not come as single instances but causes ultrasubjective violence. The extreme example of subjective violence is of Nazism where the other is an Other, not treated equally but considered as a threat and is considered worthy of eliminated. Furthermore, this state of exception where the representatives of the state misuse the authority and power and could decide whose lives matter and who is to be hanged or killed and there is no one who could raise voice against this brutal treatment of the citizens. Ahmad (2001) states:

There was complete and total silence about the Baluchis, their cause, their lives, and their deaths. No newspaper editor risked punishment on their behalf...No politician risked imprisonment: they would continue to talk of the rights of the individual, the dignity of man, the exploitation of the poor, but they would not expose the wrong done outside their front door. (24)

Ahmad portrays different sights where the elders of the tribes operate under the state of exception to maintain their domination. Ahmad's protagonist goes through the terror and violence from the time of childhood till the end of the narrative. He witnesses the lynching of his parents at the age of six by the men of her mother's family who are not direct agents of the state, but they invoke the nation-state as their source of authority and the bodies are removed violently which possess threats to the orders of political, social and economic power by the dominant.

After the death of Tor Baz's parents, he lives a life of homeless wanderer and moves from one place to another observing how his society is operated. He goes through a similar condition as represented by Butler (1993), "They have no power to improve their lives, but they have the power to make others even more miserable. And the only way to prove to yourself that you have power is to use it" (143). Tor Baz survival not only depends upon other people but also his own use of power at different occasions to survive the possible death. He witnesses how people are controlled through their own norms. In *The Wandering Falcon*, the violence does not occur at a particular place like camp or prison but it represents structural violence of tribal society enveloped within a space of exception. On the other hand, *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* describes a different society which is in the state of war fighting against different segments of society and regional and global forces.

The Shadow of the Crescent Moon sets on a Friday morning in Mir Ali in Waziristan at a non-specific time during the first decade of the 21st century. The narrative deals with political tensions, Islamic jihadists and external interference in the area after the 9/11 incident. The story revolves around three brothers and two women who have different choices to deal with their life in Mir Ali. Aman Erum is the eldest a commercially minded and opportunistic, Sikander who is

apolitical doctor, and the youngest Hayat, a committed revolutionary takes different turns while living in the same house.

Mir Ali is in a region where the military is trying to return the life to normal but the war on terror and military operations has turned the area into a battlefield. All three brothers have different choices and deals the problems in their own way. The eldest, Aman Erum wanted to start his own business but “Everything – success, comfort, respect – felt out of reach in Mir Ali,” (85). Then, he decides to go to the US for higher education and it is not easy to get a student visa if you belong to the tribal area. His student visa not only costs him his separation from Samarra, but he also finds himself in a mess of security agencies for exchange of information. Sikandar, the middle of the brothers, though decides to help his own people in Mir Ali through his medical profession. The youngest looks at the future of the town and becomes rebellious and decides to fight against the state with his separatist Shia organisation. Mina and Samarra are shown to be the strongest of all the characters in the story. The writer examines how forced disappearances and unequal treatment by the sovereign have led different life choices of her characters.

The represented tribal region where the majority of population is Pashtun feel more linked with tribes in Afghanistan than the central government where people from other provinces dominate. This results in a state of war through jihadist forces earlier with the Russian invasion and later with American forces. Bhutto’s fictitious Mir Ali is not all an imaginary creation, but it is the political and historical representation of tribal region as in a Gulf News interview, she discloses:

When I was a journalist, I had travelled a lot. All the things that did not fit into articles, all the little moments you have with people, those stayed with me. The surge in this book came from that period of journeys. The scenery or the descriptions come from what I saw. So, even though it is fiction, *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* is not a fake story (Bhutto, November 14, 2013).

The writer who belongs to one of the largest political families of the country describes how militaries on both side of the border in the tribal region have divided operations and how that have impacted the lives of the people living in the area. She highlights the contemporary realities of tribal society where management of life through civil order has collapsed, she writes that “there was an injustice that was swallowing their people whole” (Bhutto, 2013, 23). She creates a scenario of how it feels subjectively when “violence has started to follow you home,” not for days or weeks but for years (36). Mir Ali’s mountainous neighbourhood “where religion crept into the town’s rocky terrain like wild flowers,” (2) a place where it is “hard not to die” (42) and where “people watched you even as you slept, as you dreamed” (112). The uncertainty of life is throughout the narrative. It tells the tales of people shuttling between life and death and the ways their bodies are managed through religious, political and linguistic apparatuses. Hayat is a part of the movement targeting the state, “moving weapons, even heavy artillery, under the eyes of the military” (170). Bhutto describes him as, “A Shia separatist, a senior underground operator who works alongside firebrand students, radical professors and other fellow cadres” (120). The narrative focuses on how injustice, forced disappearances and violence by the state authorities are some of the brutal ways the bodies are managed in Mir Ali. People are picked up, interrogated, tortured and scarred even if they have not committed a crime, as a result, they fight back. The writer is critical of the state, its apparatuses and the way they treat and manage people. She also portrays the resistance of the local people against the state. Both female characters, Samaara and Mina represent the youth of tribal society who has turned against the state brutalities and oppression. The female in the tribal society was just a commodity and was not active in the political affairs as represented by Ahmad in his narrative but in the post-9/11 setting they are part of political struggle and fight equally with their men.

The writer explains what most of the citizens of Pakistan think of Mir Ali, she writes: “Most Pakistanis thought of Mir Ali with the same hostility they reserved for India or Bangladesh; insiders—traitors—who fought their way out of the body and somehow made it on their own without the glory of the crescent moon and star shining overhead” (19). This perception of being traitors about the people of Mir Ali is significant because it gives authorities the justification to use violent apparatuses against “traitors” as she writes, “The state would begin to fight its own” (22). This fight between the state institutions and the people of Mir Ali results wide range of massacres on both sides as, “Town by town, civil wars were lit by the wide-scale violence of the army—a violence that spanned decades...Swat, Bajaur, Deer, Bannu...one by one they all rose up against the state” (22). These

encounters create a state which is described by Agamben as “State of Exception”, a state where some lives are deemed unworthy of living (2003, p. 2). The state of exception created in Mir Ali can also be understood when Aman Erum on his visit to Islamabad compares the security checkpoints of Islamabad and Mir Ali. He describes: “Islamabad checkpoints were different from Mir Ali’s, there were no tanks here, no camouflaged shooter posted at significant angles so that anyone who tried to bulldoze their way through a checkpoint would be taken out with a clean shot to the head” (30). This shows that how people in Mir Ali are treated by the security forces on the checkpoints and in such situations, death is sanctioned through suspension of juridical order and the sovereign prevail over the other. In this context, checkpoints are places where death is produced and regulated.

Against the backdrop, Mbembe’s (2003) idea of “the right to dispose” is useful in describing these situations (checkpoints) where individuals are deprived of their humanity and their right to live (25). Bhutto’s representation of checkpoints in Mir Ali presents situations where some lives (military) are worthy of full rights, but others (local) are disposable and could be removed. Agamben (1998) too argues that the state of exception appraises that some bodies are disposable and reducible to “bare life” whilst others are not (47). The life of the people of Mir Ali is reduced to bare life through different restrictions. The military was given special powers to control and subjugate those who resist the writ of the state. The structure of the government in this area is in contrast to Pakistani constitution and the inhabitants are denied protection and recognition and they live under permanent state of exception.

The relationship of the people living in these tribal areas with the state has not been good and the causes are highlighted in the represented stories of Bhutto. For example, she narrates the stories of force disappearances by the state forces and subsequent torture and deaths. While discussing the disappearance of a brother of Azmaray—a student at the only university of Mir Ali— Bhutto calls, “*Askari* disappearances. It was a service...like termite extermination or pest control. The army had of course, taken men and held them without warrants before, for weeks or even a few months...disappearances, there was a beautiful science to them” (63). This backdrop allows to see more clearly that the people who are picked by the state forces in Mir Ali are “undesirable”, “unfit” or “out of place” (Baumann, 2004). The wasted humans come from the population of those who are not allowed to live by the sovereign. Baumann (2004) has also used another term, “surplus population” for these humans who are considered unworthy of living (30). He links the process of wasted human with economic progress and order building and in the process, they are dismantled to shape into new forms. In the process, some components are damaged to the extent that they are not repairable and are disposable. This is the ground on which sovereign in Mir Ali operates and eliminates those whom they consider disposable without considering any law in the state of exception. Law, as Agamben (1998) puts it:

is made of nothing but what it manages to capture inside itself through the inclusive exclusion of the exception: it nourishes itself on this exception and is a dead letter without it...Exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule. (27, 18)

Baumann (2004) further elaborates the role of law in the creation of such conditions. He states that, “It is the law that brings lawlessness into being by drawing the line dividing the inside from the outside. Lawlessness is not a mere absence of law; lawlessness arises with the withdrawal, suspension, refusal of law” (24). Through the suspension of law or enforcing special laws people are excluded and recycled into wasted human. As these acts are outside the operating law, therefore, the exempted act is no more the concern of law, and it protects the actions of sovereign. Baumann (2004) describes that “There is no law for the excluded. The condition of being excluded consists in the absence of law that applies to it” (25). Agamben (1998) draws similar conclusion about *homo sacer* as ‘excluded’ where ancient Roman law is “set outside human jurisdiction without being brought into the realm of divine law” (82). As wasted life falls outside the concern of law, the life of a *homo sacer* also has no value, therefore, elimination is justified. Both these concepts of Baumann and Agamben are applicable on the conditions in Mir Ali because the sovereign creates ‘*homo sacer*’ and ‘wasted lives’ through forced disappearances and killings. As eliminated lives are considered a waste and has no value like *homo sacer*, therefore, no legal action takes place against the abductors of Samara and killers of brother of Azmaray. ‘Wasted lives’ are eliminated on checkpoints and ‘*homo sacer*’ are

created through special acts to keep their domination. The conditions created by Bhutto cannot be defined in term of laws and rights, but they can only be discussed through sovereign's capacity to refuse and deny the access to the population of Mir Ali. They are doubly excluded as Agamben (1998) states that "The political sphere of sovereignty was constituted through a double exclusion" (83). The people of Mir Ali are not only denied their access to the laws of the country, but they are also denied the basic human rights. Baumann (2004) considers *homo sacer* as the major category of human waste in law abiding and rule governed sovereign dominions and that is how the citizens are controlled by the state apparatuses. Similarly, Agamben (2000) discusses this relationship further and states:

All well-meaning chatter notwithstanding, the idea of a people today is nothing other than the empty support of state identity and is recognized as such. For those who might still nurture some doubt on the matter, it would be instructive to take a look at what is happening around us from this point of view: on the one hand, the world powers take up arms to defend a state without a people (Kuwait), and, on the other hand, the people without a state (Kurds, Armenians, Palestinians, Basques, Jews of the Diaspora) can be oppressed and exterminated with impunity, so as to make clear that the destiny of a people can only be a state identity and that the concept of people makes sense only if recodified within the concept of citizenship. (67)

The concept of nation state and the right over its citizen make this relationship complicated where some are more important than others. The people are then divided between the most important and the ones who are considered as waste. Baumann (2004) distinguishes this as, "Throughout the era of modernity, the nation-state has claimed the right to preside over the distinction between order and chaos, law and lawlessness, citizen and *homo sacer*, belonging and exclusion, useful (legitimate) product and waste" (25). Mir Ali seems to have all the negative sides of this distinction as humans are not treated as human but subhuman and considered as waste and lawlessness prevails over the course of narrative in the whole region. The narrative represents oppression and crime committed on the tribal people by the state military and brutality in the killing of children and women by local militants who bombed a government hospital, and American drones. This reflect how the people are shuttling between life and death in the region where anyone could be picked and killed by any of the organisations operating on the basis of linguistic, religious, national and international backgrounds and objectives. The mistreatment by Colonel Tarik and his team with the local community represents the relationship of the state and its citizens. Samaara is another example how she is taken into custody and subsequently raped and tortured to teach her the lesson and to warn others of the dire consequences. This treatment by the military pulled her to spend her rest of life in activities against the state to take revenge. This relationship of the sovereign and the wasted lives contribute substantially to my understanding of how governments treat their populations through exceptional mechanisms. Drawing upon the history of Pakistani politics, Bhutto highlights political violence perpetuated in Mir Ali. She highlights the complexities of different power structures which mange the life and death in this complex area. The power in Mir Ali is divided into two groups as the region is governed partially by Pakistan government and partially ruled by the Taliban. In short, the subjective violence as called by Žižek (2007), is evident in fights between American and the Taliban, sectarian violence between Sunni and Shia Muslims, and the insurgents resisting the army to break away from government control.

Against this backdrop, the nexus between institutional violence and necropolitics is clearly visible which controls and regulates life and death in the area. It is shown that the tribal norms and social structures are not capable anymore to regulate life in the region; therefore, more violent apparatuses are operating Bhutto's narrative. The joint military operations by Pakistan military and the US forces are launched to control those who are fighting against these states on both sides of the border. Bhutto (2013) paints it as, "So the Americans let the Pakistani military in, wiped their hands clean and went back to fighting from the sky. While the Pakistani army kept going on the ground" (64). The joint venture from the sky and on the ground causes more hate and resistance. As a result, people are abducted by the military officials without any legal formalities. Furthermore, Taliban who were fighting on the other side of the border have foothold in this part of the region and they recruit people who are affected by drone strikes.

CONCLUSION

The examination of both these texts shows that the represented tribal society has been managed through indigenous and violent structures, but it is more affected after the wars in the region. The society was governed through indigenous structures such as Jirga system for centuries and there were little instances of violence in case of violation of their traditions but no resistance against the central governments before the region is exposed to foreign occupations and the wars in the neighbouring Afghanistan. As a result of foreign occupations, the indigenous structures fail to regulate the tribal society and more violent strategies are adopted to regulate life and death in the region as Mbembe puts, necropolitics replaces biopolitics. The post-9/11 tribal society is divided into many sections and much effected by the state brutalities and global actions in the region. Moreover, the relationship of people of the region with the state and its institutions has been complicated after the military operations and exceptional mechanism. Furthermore, it can also be concluded that there was less or no interference in the tribal society from outside before the region is engaged at the time of Soviet war and later the war on terrorism. This interference affected the tribal structures badly and the post-9/11 society is divided into many sections and is affected by the state brutalities and global actions in the region. It seems that the divide represented in the fiction on the basis of religious differences and effects of wars in the neighbouring Afghanistan has not only affected the tribal region but also the other parts of the country which could be the subject matter of another study.

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