"SUSTAINING CULTURE OF VIOLENCE": A STUDY OF SELECTED CONTEMPORARY SOUTH ASIAN FICTION IN ENGLISH

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **"Sustaining Culture of Violence": A Study of Selected Contemporary South Asian Fiction in English** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

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ABSTRACT

Title: "Sustaining Culture of Violence": A Study of Selected Contemporary South Asian Fiction in English

South Asian communities have witnessed a meteoric rise in the events of violence and terrorism in the wake of 9/11. Shamise's *Burnt Shadows*, Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and Tanweer's *The Scatter Here is Too Great* are examples of literary works that represent this surge in violence and terrorism; representing the nexus between violence and culture in South Asian communities. This study highlights why high levels of violence in the community, such as bomb blasts, killings, political and social upheavals often persist in what Steenkamp has termed as "post-accord societies". Furthermore, this study discusses that the period of extended violent conflicts has given a drastic expansion to a "Culture of Violence", which goes on an extra mile and creates a socially permissive environment within which violence can be continued even after peace accords have been signed. This thesis utilizes the conceptual framework of violence and types of violence theorized by Slavoj Žižek and the conceptualization of the culture of violence which is mapping the dynamics of violent intra-state conflict as presented by Christina Steenkamp. The study investigates the factors that create and sustain culture of violence at the international, state, collective and individual levels in post-accord societies and communities. The study also analyzes the consequences and impacts of culture of violence on the lives of communities by non-state actors, groups and institutions through the analysis of the lives of the main characters and their interpersonal relations.

Keywords: *9/11, Culture, South Asian Communities, Terrorism, Urban Spaces, Violence*

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DEDICATION

"Behind every child who believes in himself is a parent who believed first."

- Matthew Jackobson

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents. To my father, who told me the stories that matter. To my mother, who taught me to remember them. This dissertation is the result of their nurturance and sacrifices they made in their lives for me. To my siblings, who supported me in every disappointing situation.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Two of their buildings fell down and they think they know about the world's darkness, about how unsafe a place it is capable of being.

- Nadeem Aslam, *The Wasted Vigil*

The study focuses on the depiction of violence in post-war communities through the analysis of the works of South Asian writers written after the major event of 21st century, September 11, 2001 (9/11). The purpose of the study is to analyze how violence and culture of violence is sustained through the actions of individuals and how culture of violence escalates from individual to collective and supersedes to state and international level. The key historical event that ties together the selected texts of the study is the Afghan war and its impact on various communities. The Afghan War, thus, has a strong connection and roots in one of the major events of the 21st Century – a trend that is also visible in the literature of this period. For instance, in the novels of Khaled Hosseini, Mohsin Hamid and Kamila Shamsie. Contemporary novels like *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsim Hamid, *Home Boy* (2010) by H. M. Naqvi and *Burnt Shadows* (2009) by Kamila Shamsie incorporate the major themes and issues of post 9/11 for instance loss of identity and belongingness, impact of 9/11, cultural identities and delineation of ethnic background.

Since 9/11, however, there has been a sharp increase in violent and terrorist incidents in modern-day Pakistani society. The attack on the Twin Towers, carried out by Al-Qaeda, dealt the United States of America a devastating blow to its standing as the dominant and supreme power of the world. Consequently, United States of America (combining US Marines and CIA) started different missions to retaliate against these terrorist groups and institutions set in Afghanistan and named these missions as 'War on Terror'. Pakistan, sharing mutual borders with Afghanistan and having a political and geographical significance in South Asian Communities, naturally appeared on US' radar. This led to Pakistan taking part in the missions initiated by United States of America, by offering not only access to air space, but land routes and air bases to NATO forces as well (Riedel pr. 1).

I analyze and represent the situation of violence and the "culture of violence", which arose as a result of interactions between the South Asian states and anti-state groups in society through the analysis of literary writings or works (Steenkamp 12). The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the underlying strategies of sustaining culture of violence operated by state and non-state actors and its effects on the characters living in a post 9/11 era, as depicted in the selected contemporary works of South Asian English Literature.

My research helps to emphasize how fiction or works of literary writing can help to underscore the consequences of a sustained culture of violence by non-state actors, groups and institutions, using the model presented by Christina Steenkamp in her work *Violence and Post-war Reconstruction: Managing Insecurity in the Aftermath of Peace Accords* (2009) as well as concept of violence from Slavoj Žižek's book *Violence* (2008). My study focuses on three novels *Burnt Shadows* (2009) by Kamila Shamsie, *The Scatter Here is Too Great* (2014) by Bilal Tanweer and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2009) by Khalid Hosseini.

1.1 Definition of Key Terms

Since violence and culture of violence are the focus of my research, I must first define these terms and how I utilize them in my work. Violence can be defined as a practice of physical force and power, either to attack or threaten, an individual or a group of individuals, which brings injuries, deformation of body physically and psychologically moreover it damages the property. According to Steenkamp, violence is defined as "An exercise in ideology when acts or forms of action are classified as violence in order to suit the agenda and interests of a group" (20). Furthermore, Žižek in his book *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* categorizes violence into two types subjective and objective violence, which Steenkamp argues are "structural (also called 'indirect') violence is built into the economic and political structure of society and which manifests itself as social injustice in terms of the unequal distribution of power and resources (Steenkamp 25). Physical (or direct) violence, on the other hand, is related to the harmful actions of a subject or person and can be verbal or physical (Steenkamp 25). A sort of violence that is easily linked to a specific person or group is subjective violence, which is an act perpetrated by an agent.

Žižek claims that harsh and "violent acts" are examples of subjective violence that perpetrators experience, see, and commit on specific victims (Žižek 4).

More crucially, Žižek in his edited book *Mapping Ideology* (2012) argues that subjective violence draws attention to the act of violence and its immediate harshness, which helps to absolve us of the obligation to take action (Žižek 5). For Howie, violence that is practiced and manifested by the terrorists and the non-state actors is inevitably subjective violence (Howie 59). It is frequently "dramatic" in its execution, frequently perpetrated by a single person or a small group of people, and it is frequently performed against the public (Howie 26). As a result, according to Žižek, the profound impact of violent acts and the empathic connection to victims operates as a compelling force that effectively obstructs cognitive processes, serving as a lure that inhibits critical contemplation. (Žižek 04).

There are two types of this background violence, or objective violence. The first is "Symbolic" violence, which manifests in deeds and discourse. The other is "systemic" violence, which is defined by Žižek as "the often catastrophic consequences of the smooth functioning of our political and economic systems" (2). The primary definition of this type of violence is an unopposed, unbroken hold on the social, political, and economic power structures that may lead to the subjugation of the administered citizens which Steenkamp argues as "an indirect" or "Structural" violence (25).

In this research, I analyze the conflict between subjective (physical or direct) violence carried out by radicalized groups and individuals and the objective (indirect or structural) carried out by state to sustain authority over its subjects as depicted in the selected fiction. I investigate the aspects, which make a culture, culture of violence.

1.2 Post 9/11 South Asian Fiction in English

As selected fiction is published in the era of post 9/11, Pakistani writers writing in English presented the experiential knowledge of terrorism and violence in contrast to the West. Writers such as Kamila Shamsie, Nadeem Aslam, Mohsin Hamid and Uzma Aslam Khan have underscored this aspect in their work respectively to portray through the writings of South Asian context rather than being considered as religious (islamophobia) and extremism.

Since violence and culture of violence are the primary concepts of my research, my study analyzes violent conflicts in the society created by individuals, which then scale upwards by moving through various stages, eventually leading to the national and/or global level. As per Steenkamp, the culture of violence encompasses a framework of norms, values, and attitudes that permits, enables, and even encourages the utilization of violence to address any conflict or interpersonal relationship (Steenkamp 34). The assertion posits that a society harbors a culture of violence when employing force to resolve conflicts is deemed acceptable. It suggests a breakdown in regional sensibilities, mores, and customs that harms the environments, which encourage trust, legality, and normality. A normative assessment of violence is evoked by the idea of a violent culture. This implies that the use of violence is ingrained in the larger norms and values that unite a community.

This is why the terrorist attacks and culture of violence in the South Asian Communities are believed to have a direct connection in suppression of anti-state groups. Furthermore, destructive impacts of such violence on society as a whole cannot be ignored, which is something literature helps to achieve. Hence, it is crucial to avoid viewing violence by terrorist organizations merely in the context of insurgency against authoritarian systems in society. Rather, literature helps us to consider the many effects those non-state actors' acts of violence and terrorism have on society on an individual and collective level. For example, in texts like *Nobody Killed Her* (2017)*, Shadow City: A Woman Walks Kabul* (2019) and *The Kite Runner* (2003) portray the issues of violence in South Asian Communities.

1.3 Rationale for Selection of Texts

The novels that I have selected for my research provide a new dimension to see the aspects of violence not only on the community level but also on a global scale. This selection of writers from Afghan (Khaled Hosseini) and Pakistan (Kamila Shamsie, Bilal Tanweer) discusses the issues of conflict in the South Asian communities, which makes them unique from the rest of existing literature. Moreover, the selected texts, and their timespan of publication, are rooted in a major event of the century, 9/11, which continues to exert significant impacts on the literary and sociocultural standings of South Asian communities, particularly Pakistan. Understanding violence and the factors involved in

sustaining it necessitates an appreciation of the significance of 9/11, thereby rendering the targeted texts contemporary.

1.3.1 *Burnt Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie

Kamila Shamsie, the most selling author of postcolonial South Asian literature was born in 1973 in Pakistan. The author Kamila, notable for her literary accomplishments, achieved acclaim with her inaugural work, *In the City by the Sea*, which garnered a nomination for the Mail on Sunday/John Llewellyn Rhys Prize. Her subsequent novel, *Salt and Saffron*, secured her a position on Orange's '21 Writers for the 21st Century' list. In 1999, Kamila was bestowed with the Prime Minister's Award for Literature in Pakistan. Possessing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Creative Writing from Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, she also served as an instructor in Creative Writing. Furthermore, she holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Kamila's versatile literary contributions extend to publications such as The Guardian, The New Statesman, Index on Censorship, and Prospect magazine, along with radio broadcasts. Her literary oeuvre encompasses the novels *Kartography* (2002), *Broken Verses* (2005), and *Burnt Shadows*, published in the UK in 2009 and in the USA last month.

It is about twenty-one-year-old Hiroko Tanaka who is in love with Konrad Weiss. Her existence is abruptly and irrevocably transformed when she comes onto her porch while wearing a kimono with three black cranes swooping over the back. The burns on her back, which are shaped like a bird and serve as an eternal reminder of the world she has lost, are all that are left after the atomic bomb destroys all she has ever known. Two years later, Hiroko goes to Delhi in quest of a fresh start. There, her life would become entwined with that of Elizabeth, Konrad's half-sister, her husband James Burton, and Sajjad Ashraf, their employee, from whom she begins to learn Urdu. With the division of India and the founding of Pakistan, Hiroko will be uprooted once more in a world where new battles are taking the place of old ones. But when the Burton, Ashraf, and Tanaka families are transported from Pakistan to New York and, in the novel's startling finale, to Afghanistan in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the shadows of history—personal and political—are cast over their interconnected worlds. The bonds that have kept these families together for years and generations are put to the absolute test, with unexpected results.

1.3.2 The Scatter Here is Too Great **by Bilal Tanweer**

Bilal Tanweer, an emerging figure in Pakistani English fiction, assumes the roles of a fiction writer, poet, and translator. In addition to his contributions to fiction, Tanweer has engaged in translating works such as *The House of Fear* by Ibn e Safi, *Love of Chakiwara*," and *Chakiwara Chronicles* by Muhammad Khalid Akhter. These translations and his poetic endeavors have been featured in diverse national and international journals, including Annual of Urdu Studies, Granta, Words without Borders, and Pakistan Academy of Letters Pakistani Literature. Recognized for his literary promise, Tanweer was selected as one of Granta's New Voices in 2011. He holds a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree in Creative Writing.

The Scatter Here is Too Great is a novel set in Karachi, is written against the backdrop of an extremely chaotic incident. The book reads more like an anthology of short stories. There are really nine parts that are arranged into five major segments. The journey of several individuals and the connection they share are captured in the book. Tanweer recounts the lives of its people in the midst of the violence that wracks the city through a variety of narrators, including a child, a young boy, a communist, and a writer. A bomb goes off close to the Cantt station in the middle of all the daily commotion. The author expertly depicts the tragedy's aftermath while also perfectly capturing the brutality of that horrible occurrence. The book shows the numerous strategies that individuals employ to live in a violent environment. The book is a miniature representation of the world's megacities, namely those in South Asia.

1.3.3 A Thousand Splendid Suns **by Khaled Hosseini**

American author Khaled Hosseini was born in Afghanistan in 1965. Although he is also a doctor, he became famous for writing *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns.* Hosseini entered the medical field in California after graduating, but with the popular release of *The Kite Runner*, a book centered on Afghan society, he decided to give up medicine and focus on writing. The realistic depiction of Hosseini's birthplace Afghanistan is a key aspect of his books. He either constructs his protagonists as people who are victims of the repressive tactics of the state and society, or as subservient female characters who must deal with patriarchal dominance in Afghan life. His voice might be thought of as an

embodiment of Afghan culture. By bringing them to the attention of the modern world, he highlights the traditional beliefs and values of Afghan culture.

In the narrative of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Mariam, brought to Kabul at fifteen for an unsettling marriage with the resentful Rasheed, who is three decades her senior, unfolds a story of intertwining lives. Approximately two decades later, amidst escalating unrest, tragedy compels fifteen-year[s]-old Laila to abandon her family and seek refuge in Mariam's somber abode. The ensuing bond between Laila and Mariam evolves into a resilient and enduring connection reminiscent of sisterhood and maternal bonds. Against the backdrop of Taliban rule in Afghanistan, the streets of Kabul echo with the ominous sounds of gunfire and explosives, and life becomes a harrowing struggle against hunger, violence, and fear, pushing the endurance of these women to its limits. Despite the dire circumstances, love emerges as a transformative force, inspiring unforeseen actions and instilling a courage that enables the women to overcome the most formidable challenges. Ultimately, love triumphs over annihilation and death. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* portrays a nation scarred by wounds, narrating a tale of family, friendship, a tumultuous era, an improbable connection, and an indomitable love.

1.4 Thesis Statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the situation of violence and the "culture of violence" represented within the novels *Burnt Shadows* (2009) by Kamila Shamsie, *The Scatter Here is Too Great* (2014) by Bilal Tanweer and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2009) by Khalid Hosseini. My research helps to emphasize how fiction or works of literary writing can help to underscore the consequences of a sustained culture of violence by non-state actors, groups and institutions, using the model presented by Christina Steenkamp in her work *Violence and Post-war Reconstruction: Managing Insecurity in the Aftermath of Peace Accords* (2009) as well as concept of violence from Slavoj Žižek's book *Violence* (2008).

My research aims to show that literary writing can help to underscore the consequences and impacts of culture of violence on the lives of communities by non-state actors, groups and institutions through the analysis of the lives of the main characters and their interpersonal relations as lived in post 9/11 environment.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How do the writers map out the dynamics of culture of violence and their impacts through their depiction of the characters' lives and their interpersonal relationships in the selected fiction?

2. In what ways do historical and cultural factors play a role in the depiction of culture of violence in the selected fiction?

3. How do the writers depict the contribution of state and non-state authorities to the sustaining culture of violence in the selected fiction?

1.6 Delimitations

I have delimited my study to the contemporary Pakistani/South Asian fiction written in English, in the post 9/11 years. Specifically, I have delimited my study to *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khalid Hosseini, *Burnt Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie and *The Scatter Here Is Too Great* by Bilal Tanweer. The present study conducts the research to map out the violence and culture of violence only, as delineated in the theoretical frame presented by Christina Steenkamp.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The current study is significant because it makes an effort to look at the relationship between the growth in violence and different types of authority in Pakistani culture. It emphasizes the subtle kinds of violence that are inherent in centralized state authority and the imbalance in social connections that it involves when examining this relationship through the analysis of literary works or writings. It examines the impact of unbalanced power relationships on the socially oppressed, examines whether there is a connection between non-state and state actors, and examines their contribution in sustaining culture of violence. In addition, this study also examines the forces and factors that drive a behavior to become violent and legitimize the use of violence through the analysis of the lives of characters and depiction of their interpersonal relationships with each other. My research is interventionist in style since it initiates an engagement on the conflict between state and non-state actors and examines it through the lens of violence and culture of violence.

1.8 Chapter Breakdown

I have organized my study in five chapters. Chapter One deals with the introduction of the projects and explains the rationale and the significance of the study. It also outlines its research questions upon which the study is carried out.

Chapter Two of this study deals with the literature review section. This chapter examines the existing body of literature available in my area of research and indicates the gaps present in it. It also helps to contextualize my study with respect to the existing literature.

Chapter Three deals with the theoretical framework and research methodology section, which I employ in this research I have chosen the concept of violence and culture of violence as theorized by Christina Steenkamp as a theoretical framework of my research. A detailed account of research methodology, methods and approach is explained in this chapter.

In Chapter Four the researcher has analyzed selected texts individually in the light of grounds stated in the chapter one.

Chapter Five presents the findings and conclusion of the research extracted after the analytical study of the present data. This chapter also addresses the recommendations, which could be utilized by the future researchers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter offers a survey of the body of literature already accessible in the subject area. This literature evaluation is done for the following two reasons: First, looking at the body of literature already written in my field of study may help me appropriately situate my research and, consequently, determine the importance of the present study. Second, it could help in highlighting the inevitable gaps in the current critical corpus on my field of research. This chapter is crucial to the study since it clarifies how other scholars have approached the topic of conceptions of violence in various situations.

2.1 Terrorism and Violence in the Backdrop of 9/11

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks marked a pivotal moment in the global understanding of terrorism and violence, leading to a significant body of research that examines these phenomena from various angles. In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, scholars such as Martha Crenshaw emphasized the psychological and strategic motivations behind terrorism, highlighting how extremist groups utilize violence to achieve political goals (Crenshaw 405). This period saw a surge in studies focusing on the root causes of terrorism, including political, socio-economic, and ideological factors. For instance, Krueger and Malečková's research demonstrated that poverty and lack of education are less significant predictors of terrorism compared to political oppression and lack of civil liberties (Krueger and Malečková 119).

Another significant area of research post-9/11 is the role of media in shaping public perception of terrorism. Nacos' work on media framing illustrates how news coverage can influence public fear and support for counter-terrorism policies (Nacos 87). This has profound implications for policy-making, as governments often rely on media narratives to justify security measures. Moreover, the securitization theory, advanced by scholars like Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde, posits that political elites exploit the threat of terrorism to expand state power and curtail civil liberties (Buzan et al. 24).

The impact of 9/11 on international relations and global security paradigms has also been extensively studied. Scholars such as Pape argue that the U.S. foreign policy response,

particularly the War on Terror, has had mixed results, often exacerbating anti-American sentiments and fostering environments conducive to terrorism (Pape 45). Additionally, the concept of "blowback," as discussed by Johnson, highlights how U.S. military interventions in the Middle East have unintended consequences that fuel further violence (Johnson 39).

Furthermore, research has explored the psychological impact of terrorism on societies. Studies by Galea et al. indicate that 9/11 caused widespread psychological trauma, leading to increased rates of PTSD and other mental health issues among the American populace (Galea et al. 582). This underscores the necessity for comprehensive mental health support in the aftermath of terrorist attacks.

Despite the extensive research on terrorism and violence, there remains a significant gap in understanding the cultural dimensions of violence, particularly through the lens of narrativization. Christina Steenkamp's work on the culture of violence provides a crucial perspective that has not been fully integrated into mainstream terrorism studies. Steenkamp argues that violence is not only a physical act but also a cultural phenomenon shaped by historical narratives and social contexts (Steenkamp 177). The narrativization of violence, or how stories of violence are constructed and perpetuated within societies, offers a vital framework for understanding the perpetuation of terrorist ideologies and acts. This gap points to the need for a more nuanced approach that considers the cultural and narrative dimensions of terrorism and violence. My study aims to fill this research gap by examining the culture of violence through the lens of Christina Steenkamp and the narrativization of violence, offering a deeper understanding of how cultural narratives influence and sustain violent behaviors and terrorist activities.

2.2 Types and Culture of Violence

Mikhail Bakunin's influential "Letters to a Frenchman on the Present Crisis," which were featured in Sam Dolgoff's *Bakunin on Anarchy* and explores "the theory and practice of revolution" (Dolgoff 183). During the Franco-Prussian War, in which France was soundly defeated, Bakunin composed this text to emphasize that "the parasitic, artificial institute of state" cannot preserve the French nation (184). Bakunin goes on to state in *The political philosophy of Bakunin: scientific anarchism* that advocating for a radical

revolution involves strategically challenging established positions and dismantling institutional structures, specifically targeting the foundations of property and the State, as articulated by Bakunin. It is underscored, however, that this revolutionary fervor must exercise discernment, steering clear of inflicting harm upon individuals. The notion is to avoid self-incrimination and the inevitable societal backlash that ensues when the sanctity of human life is compromised (Bakunin 12).

On the other hand, some writers contend that since the oppressors are the ones who perpetuate the existing hierarchical order with violence, it can only be overthrown via violence. Violence is not only acceptable, but also required in this perspective. Errico Malatesta's writings for instance, offer an illustration that it is, "essential to demolish with violence, since one cannot do otherwise, the violence which denies to the workers" (Malatesta 03).

This problem is now known as "Diversity of Tactics" (Frazer 2). There are compelling reasons for both sides. For instance, some adhere to Tolstoy's philosophical view that there must be a peaceful resistance movement and that utilizing violence as just a method of action is incompatible with anarchist principles. Others follow Bakunin's philosophy of violence and relationship with violence, which he discusses in a variety of ways. From his early Hegelian dedication to "a passion for destruction," which is a "creative passion" to the objective of inciting rebellion and talking about the worth of war (Bakunin 57). The Russian organizations that started the 'mad summer' of 1874, which was generally credited to Bakunin's influence, puts him in a position to argue that the revolution wanted to eliminate institutions, not people, in opposition to murder and bombing tactics (Leier 226).

Violence can be an active or physical one as well as passive in the form of conflict between ideas and agendas propagated by certain individuals or groups. It can be seen that a community moves towards the peace after violent conflict however, another form of violence named as "post-accord violence" follows this struggle for peace even after the conflict is resolved and this violence is sustained through generations from communities to the countries (Steenkamp 2).

Violence, which occurs after a peaceful agreement has already been reached, is regarded as a "spoiler problem" in the peace process (Darby 23). Armed groups execute post-accord violence primarily to undermine the execution of a negotiated peace deal. Nevertheless, past research did not consider all armed actors to be potential violent offenders. Stedman asserts that the majority of spoilers are rebels who were a part of the peace deal and that they are the main perpetrators of post-accord violence. Darby asserts that spoilers, who employ violence because they oppose the peace process and peacekeeping, can be found among the government, other rebel groups, paramilitaries, or even communities. All parties, including those who signed the agreement and those who did not, as well as organizations not acknowledged as genuine armed players, are capable of using violence to sabotage the peace process.

The impacts violence has on peace process and community is a secondary query. The majority of literature shows that violence may have detrimental effects on the execution of peace agreements. For instance, *Nobody Killed Her*, *An American Bride in Kabul* and *The Swallows of Kabul* show a high level of violence and its effects on South Asian Communities. South Asian Communities just emerged from the previous violent conflicts face violence in the post conflict era (reconstruction after conflict) by the policy makers known as signatories and non-signatories or common people. Early in the implementation stage, when signatories engage in violence against one another, the degree of implementation is frequently. Violence by signatories reveals a lack of commitment to implementing peace. Surprisingly, however, non-signatories' use of violence has the greatest potential to undermine the peace process. Nilsson asserts that non-signatory rebel group post-agreement violence has a more detrimental effect on long-term peace.

As discussed above South Asian communities witnessed one of the major conflicts and events of violence. Since violence and culture of violence are the concepts for my study, this study analyzes how these aspects are portrayed in South Asian literature. Moreover, this research analyze how violence and culture of violence is sustained in the South Asian communities as well as its effects on the urban communities.

2.3 Past Research on Selected Writers and Texts

The scholarly work of Khan (2011) analyzes the novel of Kamila Shamsie, *Burnt Shadows,* links between nationalism and transnationalism, which falls in the category of Postcolonial diasporic literature. It further moves on to analyze and critically evaluate the novel through the standings of the Muslims and their situation in the post 9/11 environment. Moreover, it assesses the ongoing radicalized policies of Islamic fundamentalists, capitalist authorities and terrorism. In an effort to contrast the novel's alternative reading of nationalism, the paper makes an attempt to link feminism and the unconventional heroine, the irreversibly marked Hiroko Tanaka, with feminist forces. It says that despite the fact that Hiroko poses serious challenges to normative and established power structures; her physical body actually functions as a manuscript that is inscribed with symbolic changes to governmental and social structures. This claim is consistent with the novel's examination of the ways in which colonialism and nationalism use representations of women as points of contention. Khan claims that Shamsie has explored nationalism and terrorism from a postcolonial perspective, inspiring her readers to view these events from novel and unexpected angles (55).

Khan's scholarly article is delimited to the concepts of postcolonialism more specifically diasporic nationalism and transnationalism. This shows that the study has not touched the aspect of culture of violence.

Kamila Shamsie's use of intertextuality in her book *Burnt Shadows* is examined in the scholarly article of Shafique and Yaqoob. She strives to write back towards the center, just like other postcolonial authors. Additionally, it is a purposeful and self-aware response to the colonial classic *A Passage to India*. The research reveals that creators of literary works choose words from a language system, but they also draw inspiration from preexisting written works and literary institutions for universal elements, character traits, and even whole sentences and phrases. As posited by Shafique and Yaqoob, postcolonial literatures aim to examine the marginalization of non-European (including Asian, African, South American, and settler colony) literatures and cultures resulting from colonial rule. The objective is to identify potential modes of resistance, retrieval, and reversal concerning their pre-colonial histories (479). Postcolonial writers frequently bring up issues of

identity, instance, and unhappiness in their writing, inspired to different degrees by colonial exploitation and marginalization. By rereading and rewriting the colonial classics, they demonstrate resistance in their literary works. It has been observed that these intertextual techniques of rereading and rewriting are highly beneficial for the study of postcolonial literature.

As compared to Khan's research article Shafique and Yaqoob walk an extra mile in the critical study of Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*. They compared and contrast it with the colonial canonical work by using the postcolonial agenda of writing back to the empire. However, it still not discusses other issues of violence, which this fiction underpins.

The subaltern's position in Kamila Shamsie's writings is addressed in Mader's MA thesis. Mader's goal is to discover and investigate the sources of Spivak's concept, how she has developed this, plus, of obviously, how it might be useful to us. She does not seek to refute or disprove Spivak's views. Not only is it crucial to place Spivak's work among other significant and fundamental postcolonial theorists, including Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Homi K. Bhabha, but it is also helpful to keep examining Spivak's own, now-canonized idea of the subaltern. Mader contends that Kamila Shamsie's novels provide a valuable avenue for exploring a crucial discourse: when the affluent and privileged are unable to advocate for subaltern women, what ethical and responsible actions might be within their purview? Examining, *In the City by the Sea*, *Salt and Saffron*, and *Kartography* collectively, Shamsie employs a nuanced and imaginative strategy, incrementally navigating towards the achievement of what may initially appear unattainable.

Poonam aims to identify the feminine characteristics that can be found in *Burnt Shadows*, Kamila Shamsie's work. Of course, any analysis of the gender question must start with an understanding of the sociopolitical context and its historical roots. The inquiry comes to an end with Kamila Shamsie's feminist novel *Burnt Shadows*, which explores the thoughts of its female characters including the lead character Hiroko. It is similar to a psychoanalytic approach in several ways, analysing a woman's life events from childhood to old age. The research aims to investigate Shamsie's portrayal of women who are completely aware of the difficulties they encounter yet decide to rebel against the ingrained systems and conventions that dominate their surroundings. These women stand out for their

acceptance of the consequences of their decisions, which is both shockingly novel and unique.

Poonam's research article is specifically limited to analyze the novel *Burnt Shadows* through the lens of characteristics of women. It describes the image of women. Hence, the literature discussed above shows that no research is done on the novel *Burnt Shadows* from the perspective of violence. This provides me the room to apply the concept of culture of violence as theorized by Steenkamp, which I selected as my theoretical framework. The next novel I selected to for my research is *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini.

The first study is a review of *A Brutal but Moving Story of Life in Afghanistan* by Baker (2007). He claimed that *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is a truly emotional narrative of family and friendship as well as an evocative depiction of a shattered nation. It is a lovely, heartbreaking tale about a cruel period, an odd friendship, and an unbreakable love. Mariam is brought to Kabul at the age of fifteen to wed the disturbed and resentful Rasheed, who is thirty years her older. A catastrophe strikes fifteen-year-old Laila nearly two decades later, forcing her to leave her home and join Mariam's miserable family in an atmosphere of rising discontent. Laila and Mariam have the potential to derive solace from each other, fostering a relationship that may evolve into a robust and enduring connection akin to the bonds shared between sisters, mothers, and daughters. The gradual ascent of Taliban influence in Afghanistan is accompanied by the resounding echoes of gunfire and explosive turmoil in the streets of Kabul. Life transforms into a formidable struggle against hunger, violence, and pervasive dread, testing the limits of the women's resilience. Despite the dire circumstances, love emerges as a potent force, capable of eliciting unforeseen behaviors and instilling courage in the face of formidable challenges. Ultimately, love triumphs over the specters of annihilation and death.

Pangarsa's interpretation of Rasheed's violent behaviour against his women in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, written by Khaled Hosseini (2007). This research centers on Rasheed's violent behaviour and attempts to determine the possible causes of his cruel treatment of his wives. It addressed two topics. The first focused on Rasheed's aggressive behaviour towards his wives. Pangarsa makes the important discovery that Rasheed mistreats his wife both physically and mentally. It was clear from his conduct. He commits

psychological abuse by being silent in front of his wife and responding to Mariam's questions in a harsh and contemptuous manner. The second subject covered in the book was Rasheed's violent attitude towards his wives. Pangarsa claims that Rasheed's abusive attitude against his wives was a result of his socio-historical background. Afghanistan's marriage system was especially male-dominated, which made it easy for men to undervalue women as wives. To address both problems, the researcher employed a psychological technique. The researcher also used the notion of aggressiveness to describe the many acts of aggression that Rasheed committed against his wife.

Qasim and Yaqoob, in their scholarly article, illustrate the collision of "conflicting identities" in Tanweer's *The Scatter Here Is Too Great* (Qasim & Yaqoob 100). The metropolis, Karachi, draws a violent image of "monstrous space" that engulfs the contrastive ideologies and raises a sense of tension in the community (Qasim & Yaqoob 107). The body is a common metaphor commonly employed to depict urban environments, and Karachi is portrayed as a sick metropolis characterized by dirt, misery, and death. The narrator notes that the city is slowly dying since there are no signs of life around. Qasim and Yaqoob opine that:

> [Bilal Tanweer's] The Scatter Here is Too Great represents Karachi as the breeding ground of monstrosity, a place where monstrous culture is continuously generating the monsters of violence that are becoming the reason for the city's death (Qasim and Yaqoob 109).

Syed Murtaza Ali Shah's scholarly article maps and highlights the phenomenon of "Existence precedes Essence" in Bilal Tanweer's *The Scatter Here Is Too Great,* where the focus of the article centers on characters "striving to attain their essence" because they are accountable for their acts and have the ability to make free choices. Consequently, they reject all forms of authority and move on with their uniqueness, or "authenticity" (Ali 1-2). Ali utilizes the lens of Jean Paul Sartre on account of humans' existence and essence. Ali opines that:

> the existence is caught up by the regular and incessant chaotic instance, provoking them to find themselves in the nothingness. Whether it is the mention of the

character of the Father, son, Aapa, each managed to stay what they wanted to pursue (17).

2.4 Research Gap

The review of the literature around the research's source documents illustrates the numerous perspectives that the critics have already considered. In comparison to the novel *The Scatter Here is Too Great* (2014), which has received less attention from reviewers and scholars, the novels *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2009) and *Burnt Shadows* (2009) have been studied in more detail. However, no one has discussed the selected fiction through the lens of culture of violence. Hence, this is my research gap. This study has offered me the insight to analyze the selected fiction through the lens theorized by Christina Steenkamp. Furthermore, the model incorporated by Christina Steenkamp in her work, *Violence and Post-war Reconstruction: Managing Insecurity in the Aftermath of Peace Accords* (2009) is not selected as a framework by any research scholar.

Moreover, for mapping the manifestations of violence, I have selected Slavoj Žižek as a sub-theorist of my research and I have incorporated concepts and manifestations of violence from his book *Violence* (2008) in the theoretical framework of my study to carry out analysis of the selected works of my study. The perspective 'culture of violence' offered by Christina Steenkamp and the concepts of violence and manifestations of violence by Slavoj Žižek have not been applied to the selected works. Specifically the model theorized by Steenkamp is contemporary in its account. Steenkamp argues in her work that the concepts she has proposed can be discussed in literary as well as cultural studies. Hence, this provides the researcher a new dimension to apply this framework to the selected fiction to carry out analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical perspective that the researcher has selected to apply on the primary texts is 'Culture of Violence' as elucidated by Christina Steenkamp in her work *Violence and Post-war Reconstruction: Managing Insecurity in the Aftermath of Peace Accords* (2009). In this chapter, the researcher discusses her theoretical model in detail. In addition to the concept of 'Culture of Violence', the researcher has selected Slavoj Žižek's book *Violence* as a sub-lens to support the analysis of the study. Furthermore, in this chapter, the researcher also discusses the research methodology as well as the research methods employed in the analysis chapters. This study is grounded in an interpretative analytical understanding of the texts within the qualitative paradigm.

3.1 Research Methodology

Somekh and Lewin use the terms principles, theories, and values that form the basis of a specific research approach along with the compilation of methods or rules governing the execution of a particular research project to characterize methodology (Somkeh & Lewin 346). The framework for the research, according to Walter, is the technique, which is shaped by the "paradigm in which our theoretical perspective is placed or developed" (Walter 35). According to the most frequently accepted definitions, methods are the organized techniques, procedures, or tools used for collecting and analyzing data, whereas methodology is the entire research approach linked to a paradigm or theoretical framework.

Due to the interpretive nature of the current study, it follows the qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research methodology gives researcher a freedom in the construction of meaning of text according to his or her own subjective interpretation while using theoretical and conceptual framework. As I have chosen violence and culture of violence as a theoretical lens of my research, it provides me the liberty to construct the meaning from the selected texts according to my research parameters as set in the Thesis Statement and Research Questions.

This research evaluates the manifestation of violence and culture of violence by help of literary writings. In addition, this study underscores the consequences of culture of

violence on the communities living in post 9/11 era by analyzing literary works or writings. This research walks an extra mile by bringing into account of measuring the escalations of violence and culture of violence from individual to collective and international level through the analysis of literary works or writings. However, another core purpose of this study is evaluate and analyze how violence perpetuated by non-state actors supersedes to state level and an extra mile to the international level.

3.2 Manifestations of Violence

The book *Violence* by Slavoj Žižek provides an in-depth examination of violence. In this study, he presents a typology of violence to address the complex relationships that exist between terrorism and tolerance in democracies. He is concerned with three sorts of violence: systemic, symbolic (objective), and subjective. Subjective violence is the very evident violence committed against and by recognized subjects. According to Žižek, this is violence in its most common form. At the outset of Violence, Žižek points out that we usually pinpoint violence with criminal behavior, terrorism, civil unrest, and war. He argues that in order to understand violence, we must remove ourselves from the "fascinating pull" of this type of "subjective violence," or "violence done by a clearly identified agent," and instead turn our attention to the violence that exists in the background and contributes to subjective violence (Žižek 1).

Subjective violent outbreaks usually have a context that obscures the perpetrator of objective violence, making it difficult to identify. According to Žižek, objective violence is a normative situation that serves as a "very low-level criterion against which we view as subjectively violent" (Žižek 2). It is utilized to establish subjective violence.

Government and language are the two key variables that are involved with systemic and symbolic forms of violence, according to Žižek, which can manifest as objective violence (Žižek 10-12). It is called "systemic violence" to describe the frequently devastating consequences of our political and economic institutions' effective operation (Žižek 2). Žižek goes on to say that although systemic violence is the "normal" order of affairs and provides the context for our understanding of subjective violence as distressing, it is typically hidden (Žižek 02).

Furthermore, Žižek argues that some institutional practices or social systems like political domination or capitalist exploitation cause subjective violence both between people (like rape and murder) and among groups of persons (like riots and war). Put differently, societal institutions that lead to subjective violence perpetrated by people are referred to be "systemically violent" (Žižek 4). Žižek uses "systemic violence" in this sense when he claims, as previously indicated, that "explosions of subjective violence" seem nonsensical if we do not consider systemic violence as its "invisible" backdrop (Žižek 2).

Second, in order to explain how violent threats are utilized to uphold unjust social structures or institutions, Žižek uses the phrase "systemic violence" (Žižek 10). Third, just as subjective violence may have significant negative repercussions; Žižek uses the term "systemic violence" to illustrate how unjust institutional arrangements can do the same. The discourse around systemic violence aims to highlight the fact that, even in situations whereby we are not the victims of subjective violence, institutional policies or institutions can still unfairly inflict harm upon us and pose a subjective danger. Agents of systemic violence may intentionally direct or encourage subjective violence; in such cases, they have moral responsibility for it.

Put another way, the use of subjective violence is becoming increasingly detached and mechanical in the modern world, despite the fact that it is still not quite as natural. Subjective violence frequently comes as unexpectedly to its victims, paralyzing, frightening, and powerless. Their pain is exacerbated by the awareness that someone is out to harm them physically or kill them, which undermines their everyday trust in even the most fundamental human decency and collaboration. Instead, what we find especially in Žižek's work, especially in *Violence* is the claim that systemic violence legitimately causes subjective violence because it projects violence.

3.3 Framework of Sustaining Violence/Culture of Violence

Christina Steenkamp's work provides a conceptual lens to study violence in "post-war reconstruction" (Steenkamp 2). In her work *Violence and Post-war Reconstruction: Managing Insecurity in the Aftermath of Peace Accords* (2009), Steenkamp argues that, "there is a wealth of evidence illustrating that societies emerging from violent conflict are prone to continuing high levels of violence" even after signing peace accords (Steenkamp

01). She incorporates in her work that violence is the use of coercive power or a "credible threat" of using it with the goal to steal from or damage the property of another person, to harm or kill "another person", or to harm or kill oneself (Steenkamp 4). She further categorizes it in to first "Structural (also called indirect)" violence to damage economic and political structure of society and second "Physical (or direct)" which can be seen as the damaging acts that a subject or person does, which can be either "verbal or physical" (Steenkamp 25). It is obvious that structural violence cannot be overlooked or not less important however her work is concerned with direct physical violence. Steenkamp believes that such violence "signals flaws" and creates situation of chaos in the communities (Steenkamp 10).

The values and norms and cultures of communities emerged from violent conflicts are affected by those conflicts. Therefore, culture of those communities is affected in such a way that individuals are permitted to continue the "use of violence" (Steenkamp 33). Culture is explained as "the beliefs, values, behaviors and material objects shared among members of a group or society" (Steenkamp 33). In this case, the non-material aspects of it—the shared knowledge, values, conventions, and beliefs among community members— are the main emphasis. According to Steenkamp, culture is "learned and shared" (Steenkamp 33). A common way of life for a community or culture is built upon certain ideas, values, behaviors, and things. She focuses on the "abstract and intangible aspects" of culture, and the ideals and norms governing the use of violence are of particular interest (Steenkamp 33). Values (or morals) are standards of evaluation that determine what matters most in life and are applied to determine whether a particular behavior is suitable, good, and right. She argues, "Norms (or customs) are the shared rules and expectations that are used to guide behavior and are reflective of our values" (Steenkamp 33). Her study also analyzes the "values and norms of society which guide individuals' use of violence" (Steenkamp 33).

Steenkamp opines that a culture of violence encompasses the norms, values, and attitudes that permit, enable, and even encourage the utilization of violence as a mean to address conflicts or interpersonal relationships (Steenkamp 34). The concept underscores how the use of violence becomes a socially acceptable means of maintaining power and status by serving to further instill it into the norms and shared beliefs of a society on a

greater scale. Consequently, Steenkamp claims that violence and culture of violence is "allowed and even encouraged" (Steenkamp 37). She emphasizes that the crucial consideration lies in understanding how norms and values supporting the persistent use of violence are established and ingrained in society, rather than solely focusing on the reasons individuals exhibit violent behavior (Steenkamp 37).

Steenkamp has formulated a framework (see Appendix A) comprising various factors that foster a culture of violence across four levels: international, state, collective, and individual. The framework delineates the position of these factors within each level and their diverse manifestations (Steenkamp 37-38). These elements work together and complement one another to create the circumstances that permit the use of violence by an individual rather than existing independently of one another. These elements acknowledge the fact that violence may occur simultaneously at several distinct levels and reinforce one another.

3.3.1 International level

International impacts and interactions formed by different sides during violent conflicts (like the Afghan War) are examples of forces that exist in a realm that transcends national borders. These connections, which engage in the "creation and sustainability" of a culture of violence, might be "Formal" or "Informal" (Steenkamp 37). It is crucial to highlight that the shaping of international conflict resolution practices is distinctly influenced by military authorities. These entities persistently advance and reinforce norms that not only condone but also actively endorse the application of violence as a means to establish and maintain power and control over civilian populations (Steenkamp 37). This underscores the significant role played by military forces in not just resolving conflicts but in shaping the underlying norms that guide such resolutions, often with implications for the use of force on civilian populations.

International organized crime: To finance their operations, the majority of insurgent groups and other militarized organizations count on international networks that support organized crime. These criminal networks are sometimes closely linked to the use of violence and engage in "grey (smuggling of goods like cigarettes, alcohol or other

consumer goods) or black (such as prostitution and narcotics)" commerce, with the help of legitimate organizations and groups (Steenkamp 39).

The illicit entry of small guns into the society is the focus of the component of international arms smuggling. The flow of these weapons, in Steenkamp's opinion, is crucial to "sustaining" violence, and violent conflicts give rise to violent cultures in communities (Steenkamp 37). These weapons are not only capable of being used for criminal purposes but also as a means of bridging the gap between views that support the use of violence and the actual use of violence.

3.3.2 State level

Violent norms and values can arise in a society as a result of the actions of the state apparatus (in all of its guises). These state organizations like "security forces, judicial system ... political government" take part in the act of sustaining a surrounding in which "violence continues" (Steenkamp 40). In this, state through different aspects and levels, not only legitimizes the use of violence but also sustains it for an unquestionable control over the governed. Steenkamp argues that state "convince[s] the population" for legitimization of violence by "mould[ing] society's culture" in a way that it glorifies "past use of violence" (44). These violent events are celebrated as "memorials" etcetera for manipulating people to sustain and legitimize the "norms and values supporting the use of violence" (Steenkamp 44).

3.3.3 Collective level

The collective level represents the third stage in the development and maintenance of a violent culture. Numerous variables can contribute to the perpetuation of a violent culture on a societal scale. As an illustration, Steenkamp claims that seeking retribution "is a mechanism to achieve power and status" and that, on the other hand, violent "norms and values" are upheld in communities where honor killings occur (Steenkamp 46).

In the context of a violent culture, religion is the most significant and vital factor. According to Steenkamp, religious beliefs are exploited "as a justification for the use of political violence" and influence individuals to "justify their use of violence" (Steenkamp 46).

3.3.4 Individual level

The final yet equally significant factor contributing to the formation and perpetuation of a culture of violence operates at the individual level. In this domain, these factors manifest not in the broader dynamics of the international community, the state's interactions with its citizens, or the relationships among citizens. Instead, they become known within the individual, emphasizing the internalized aspects that play a role in sustaining a culture of violence. She states that experiences of an individual stimulate the culture of violence. Moreover, she sheds light "on the way the individuals have a sensory experience of violent conflict, whether they were victims or witnesses of violence" (Steenkamp 50).

In this research, the researcher utilizes the concept of culture of violence by Steenkamp to investigate and analyze the factors that affect a culture and the strategies for sustaining culture of violence to practice power and authority. This study also analyzes effects of culture of violence on the urban environment. This research specifically focuses on the physical level/type of culture of violence on individual as well as collective level. This violence is mostly sustained for unquestionable control over governed. As Steenkamp argues, by demonizing and objectifying the enemy, the impression is created that violence against some groups is somehow less criminal than against others (Steenkamp 22).

3.4 Narrativization of Violence

The narrativization of violence refers to the process of shaping and conveying experiences of violence through narrative structures, which ultimately shape societal understandings of aggression, conflict, and trauma. Scholars have emphasized how narratives not only depict acts of violence but also contribute to normalizing, justifying, or resisting violent cultures. According to Jean Franco in *Cruel Modernity*, narrativization allows societies to mediate between collective trauma and personal suffering by embedding violent events within larger political, historical, and ideological frameworks (Franco 13). By placing violence within a narrative structure, it is often given meaning and context, which can either expose its brutality or sanitize it depending on the authorial intent. Similarly, Judith Butler argues in *Frames of War* that the portrayal of certain lives as

"grievable" and others as not, shapes how violence is perceived and reacted to on a global scale (Butler 38).

Through narrativization, violence can also be framed as an inevitable or justified act, particularly in the context of state-sponsored or systemic violence. As Žižek notes in *Violence*, narratives of violence often obscure the underlying systemic forces that sustain it, focusing instead on visible, subjective violence while leaving the roots of the issue unexamined (Žižek 5). In literature, the narrativization of violence frequently serves to critique or expose these dynamics, transforming raw, brutal events into stories that call for moral, political, and social reflection. This study examines how narratives of violence in post-9/11 literature reflect and challenge the culture of violence in global contexts.

This study incorporates the concept of narrativization of violence to analyze the primary texts by exploring how the selected novels—*Burnt Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie, *The Scatter Here is Too Great* by Bilal Tanweer, and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini—portray violence as a narrative force that shapes individual lives and societal structures. Through the lens of Christina Steenkamp's "culture of violence" and Slavoj Žižek's typology of violence, this research examines how the authors depict the personal and collective impacts of violence on the characters, particularly as they navigate power dynamics shaped by non-state actors and institutions. The study aims to show how the narrativization of violence reveals the complex interplay of historical, political, and cultural forces that sustain violence in post-9/11 societies, as experienced by the characters. By focusing on the interpersonal relationships and lived experiences of these characters, the analysis underscores how literary writing can expose the consequences of a persistent culture of violence and offer critical insights into the ways violence is both legitimized and normalized within the broader global contexts. Through this approach, the study engages with the questions of how violence is being mapped, sustained, and resisted; both in the fictional worlds and in real-world sociopolitical environments.

3.5 Framework for Analysis

For the analysis of my research, I apply Steenkamp's model that she presented in her work *Violence and Post-war Reconstruction: Managing Insecurity in the Aftermath of*

Peace Accords (2009) also the concept of culture of violence theorized by Christina Steenkamp. As Steenkamp does talk about various factors that may create and sustain culture of violence however I have narrowed down my research to a few factors that deal with the issues that I have proposed in my research question. In order to employ concept of violence I use Žižek as second theorist of my research. I employ Žižek's concept of violence in my research.

For the first research question of my study, I analyze the manifestation of violence and culture of violence by evaluating the primary texts under the light of the theoretical frameworks I have selected. Furthermore, to carry out my analysis of the second question of my study I employ the factors, individual level (previous exposure to violence), collective level (religious violence) and state level (state security apparatus), incorporated by Christina Steenkamp in her work *Violence and Post-war Reconstruction: Managing Insecurity in the Aftermath of Peace Accords* (2009). Moreover, to evaluate the effects of culture of violence and analyze the authorities that contribute to create and sustain culture of violence I have selected the factors, international level, state level (state security apparatus, political government, law and order and economic factors), individual level (exposure to violence) and collective level (religious violence).

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

"My people have taken enough. If the persecution doesn't stop there will be Jihad. I, and millions of others, will gladly give our lives for the cause." "But why, why?" Parvez said. "For us the reward will be in Paradise."

-Hanif Kurieshi, *My Son the Fanatic*

After a deep study to construct an analytical literature review and formulation of research gap in the previous chapters this study further elevates to the next step of discussion. In this chapter, this study analyzes and interprets the novels *The Scatter Here Is Too Great*, *Burnt Shadows*, and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* individually. This study analyzes the mentioned novels by using the conceptual lenses of two theorists. In this chapter, this study interprets the selected texts through Christina Steenkamp's framework to analyze and unveil the factors that may create and sustain culture of violence. This study further goes an extra mile to map out the dynamics and manifestations of violence from individual to collective level by using the conceptual lens theorized by Slavoj Žižek.

4.1 Political and Ethnic Violence in *The Scatter Here Is Too Great*

Bilal Tanweer is an emerging Pakistani English fiction writer. Bilal Tanweer published his first novel, *The Scatter Here Is Too Great*, in 2013- Tanweer recounts the lives of its people in the midst of the violence that wracks the city through a variety of narrators, including a child, a young boy, a communist, and a writer. Bilal Tanweer's *The Scatter Here Is Too Great* seems to valorize Žižek's view of violence and its manifestations. Therefore, in the ongoing chapter, this study highlights and analyzes the manifestations of violence at various levels and its effects on its subjects with respect to rise of terror and violence in Pakistani society as portrayed in Tanweer's text. *The Scatter Here Is Too Great* unveils the manifestations of violence especially subjective violence, which according to Slavoj Žižek is the highly obvious or "violence done by a clearly identified agent" (Žižek 1).

4.1.1 Manifestations of Subjective and Systemic Violence

The Scatter Here Is Too Great paints a Pakistan metropolitan area as one festered with the events and incidents of violence and upheavals. It focuses on the clash between state and non-state actors, which gives rise to aspects of violence in the society.

In the epilogue or the starting pages of the novel writer dictates the thought of the reader to feel the chaos and uncertainty of the society by raising questions like "bullet smashed windscreen", "broken, beautiful and born of tremendous violence" which according to him is the metaphor for his world that symbolizes the Pakistani society and its condition (Tanweer 07). The scatter symbolizes the wreck of social order, institutions and lives of the inhabitants of the city in result to the violence being perpetrated.

The writer makes his characters to describe the situation of the city through narrating their stories. A young boy narrator who becomes the victim and suffers is that of the terrorist's attack on the bus. One day they (young boy and his father) take the bus to the sea. Everyone on the bus kept quiet as some thieves attacked the bus and stole all the money while assaulting the passengers psychologically and physically (Tanweer 16). The obese man himself "was not smiling" at this point. In a split second, the bus's lively atmosphere and the passengers' joyful dispositions shift as they personally face the threat of violence. The bus criminals operate quite similarly to the bullies at the boy's school (Tanweer 17). They drove the bus through the city to seashore without any hurdle or hesitation, which shows the condition of law and security enforcement institutions of the city. People were threatened on gunpoint to handover their belongings to save their lives. A disabled person is "slapped" twice for raising voice against this criminal action, is muted by the use of violence, and arms (Tanweer 16). According to Marxist theorists, the visible presence of significant socioeconomic disparities creates an evident feeling of injustice among those in the lower strata of society, as well as feelings of anger and frustration stemming from their exclusion from the wealth displayed in their midst. As a result, this dynamic produces a climate conducive to the expansion of economic infractions, as well as an increase in street-level violence. Chambliss contends that crime, "represents rational responses to the competitiveness and inequality of life in capitalist societies" (Chambliss 5-6).

Violence and terrorism are known to traumatize victims, as well as those who were not as directly affected by the tragedy. All the characters and their stories are interlinked with an act of subjective violence. A bomb goes off near the Cantt station, which causes massive destruction and loss of lives. The smell of burning flesh, cries for aid and screams, and the survivors' indelible terror of death all help to create the atmosphere. Tanweer also incorporates the story of a little boy into the book. Bilal Tanweer uses the voice of this little boy to vividly depict the blast's severity by stating that the blast's "strength" was "so terrible" that it "shook the bridge" and then abruptly "something flew and smacked solidly into the back windscreen" (Tanweer 37). There is a difference between people's individual and societal reactions to calamity. In Karachi, people on the roadways "drive to survive" (Tanweer 37). Furthermore, there is a difference in the responses of males and females to a certain situation. There is also a collective reaction to the bomb, as seen by the crowd's responses as the "cars raced" in the "wrong way," "no one was going to stop," and all individuals "wanted to rush out of that center of fire and hell" (Tanweer 38).

Akbar, another character and the novel's narrator, is disturbed by the critical impact of the bomb detonation. He hits his forehead "with his palm" several times (Tanweer 113). The situation at Cantt station has deteriorated to the point that the body of a youngster was "crushed inside a car" (Tanweer 97). Akber was so overcome that every time he talks about the youngster and his condition, he begins "weeping" (Tanweer 97). Though Akber's family is not directly affected by the bomb detonation, the harsh impact of subjective violence and the bomb blow hits his family indirectly. Akber's anguish affects his family, turning the lively "house in utter silence" into a terrible scenario (Tanweer 98).

At the moment of the explosion, Noor Begum and the narrator's mother are in the family flat with the businessman (the comrade's son). They are terrified and threatened by the bomb detonation from a safe distance, in their flat near Cantt Station. They immediately experience fear, rage, dread, insecurity, and sadness. The scenario's hopelessness, their crying, and motionless movements are evident indicators of the severe chaotic circumstance. Afzal et al. state in their research paper on this account that Pakistan after joining the bench of United States of America has suffered more than its ally. Moreover, it can be seen that "America suffered only 9/11" however, in Pakistan there are uncountable violent events of bomb blasts, target killing, and kidnapping etcetera (Afzal et al. 196).

These upheavals have deteriorated Pakistani community its policies and situation of law and order.

Tanweer's most compelling metaphor in this narrative is that of a chalkboard. When both father and son are not talking, they scribble their moods on an imagined chalkboard. After the incident, the youngster imagines a blackboard "as huge as the sea on which" there is a ship, and then he sees fabric with which the robber covered his face as he returns home. (Tanweer 17). Žižek's assertions also encompass the notion that instances of subjective violence, such as criminal behavior, can be traced back to the inherent objective violence embedded within economic systems. This economic violence, in its essence, may lead to the marginalization of specific societal groups, subsequently compelling them to engage in acts of resistance through violent means in response to their disenfranchised state (Žižek 30-38). The imaginary chalkboard indicates that the youngster is still traumatized, and in that situation, he imagines the darkness and want to flee it. The darkness symbolizes the impact or the effects of violent events and being witnessed to it. In fact, he drags the sun into the water to provide light so that he can flee the darkness in his existence. Likewise, the son said how he felt like "Baba was drawing a night on his blackboard; a night with a lot of rain and the wet lights of cars, but no sun" after his father lost his job (Tanweer 8). Sun used to be there often. The writer skillfully used the chalkboard as a metaphor for the readers in this instance, and the sun stands for optimism in the face of despair.

Sadeq, another central figure in the novel, represents the youth who are both victims and products of the urban chaos in Karachi. His storytelling and reflections on the city highlight the way violence permeates Karachi's atmosphere. Sadeq's recounting of past bomb blasts, and his casual attitude toward such events, reveal how the city's residents have come to accept violence as a part of life. Žižek's symbolic violence is evident in Sadeq's narrative, as the socio-political forces that perpetuate violence are not directly addressed but are deeply embedded in the city's structure. His awareness of the destruction around him, yet his inability to escape it, showcases how systemic violence traps individuals within urban spaces, making them both observers and participants in its perpetuation (Tanweer 56). His narrative underscores how the city's design and culture reinforce cycles of violence and shape the inhabitants' psyche, as the violence becomes not just external but an internalized state of mind.

The city itself becomes a character, embodying Žižek's notion of symbolic violence, where the systemic inequalities and social hierarchies go unquestioned. The novel presents Karachi as a fractured and unpredictable metropolis, where individuals navigate the daily threat of violence while becoming desensitized to its presence. Tanweer's depiction of the city highlights how urban environments can normalize violence, making it an almost mundane part of life. For instance, in one narrative strand, an unnamed boy witnesses a bomb blast and is left to navigate the city alone. This act of violence, though shocking, is met with a kind of grim acceptance by the characters, showcasing how the city's residents have internalized the violence that surrounds them (Tanweer 85). The boy's emotional detachment from the violence around him underscores Žižek's concept of symbolic violence, where the psychological impact of systemic issues goes unnoticed because it has become a natural part of the urban landscape (Tanweer 51). The city's unpredictable violence reflects deeper systemic issues, where political instability and economic disparity fuel a cycle of violence, leading to a pervasive sense of unease and resignation.

In one of the reflective stories, a father and son fly a kite near a construction site where violence is implied, rather than overtly stated. The father, seemingly engrossed in an innocent, joyful activity, symbolizes the urban individual attempting to hold on to remnants of normalcy amidst the surrounding violence. However, the site, with its looming machines and unfinished buildings, represents the violence of Karachi's urban development—where the city grows unchecked, destroying natural spaces and creating psychological disorientation. The subtle violence here is systemic, seen in how the city's structures erase peaceful spaces and demand adaptation, even for families trying to preserve tradition (Tanweer 77). The father's reflection on past kite-flying experiences, now shadowed by urban chaos, shows how the city's expansion distorts not only physical landscapes but also the emotional landscapes of its inhabitants.

It can be carefully stated that terrorism and violence have strong roots in Pakistani society as a result of a number of circumstances, including weak leadership, the marginalization of rural areas, the delayed and ineffectual administration of justice, and easy access to weaponry. In addition, its geographical position makes it vulnerable to terrorist threats. Researchers have established that extremism may exist in every society

and is influenced by illiteracy, poor health, lawlessness, poverty, and unemployment. Socioeconomic problems fuel extremism because, taken together, they provide terrorists with favorable conditions. Pakistan with its weakness later under the authoritarian reign of Zia ul Haq and his illegal and extreme policies added another excerpt to upheavals and uncertainty. These upheavals blow apart the peace accords and efforts to sustain a harmonized society and bring the South Asian communities to the door of terrorism and violence.

4.1.2 Culture of Violence

A culture is made up of various constituents however; the two, Values and norms are the most significant parts to determine a culture. Values are standards of evaluation and determine the significance and priority of something at a specific time and space. Norms are shared rules to channelize the behavior(s) of individuals of the society and reflective of our "values" (Steenkamp 33). Similarly, a culture of violence is a state of mind or behavior and attitude that allows rather channelize the use of arms and violence to liquefy the violent conflicts being happened in the society.

4.1.2.1 Internationally Organized Crime

A society becomes violent when use of arms, guns and different weapons becomes permissible to resolve violent conflicts. After the end of Second World War and invasion of Soviet Union (USSR) in Afghanistan, America has direct intervention in Middle East and countries of South Asia, which opened a door to a violent conflict and rise in tension in those regions. The plot of the novel, *The Scatter Here Is Too Great* (2013) reveals the same account. In the setting of the novel, Americans provide finances, firearms, and a lack of responsibility for drug trafficking to an unnamed person or organization. This points to the involvement of external actors in fueling violence in the local setting. America initiates the act of violence by strengthening jihadist "to fight" against the Soviets (Tanweer 19). This implies that these resources are provided with the intention of engaging in armed conflict.

General Zia, a catalyst, a common character in engaging violent conflicts in South Asian communities (most importantly in Pakistan and Afghanistan) under the directions of World's Super Power is incorporated in the novel. He spreads the non-state actors, provides

them "drugs, guns and bombs" what they all need to blow apart the society (Tanweer 19). The "dog of CIA", General Zia, mutes his opponents or the people who raise their voice against his brutal policies like "Lefties" or the "Comrades" (Tanweer 18). He screwed and "fucked" the country and its development through his vicious acts and the lust to control and dictate (Tanweer 18).

Nkrumah, in his work *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, states that "new élites", one of among them, are brought up and strengthened to take over the authority by the superpowers to practice and sustain their agenda (Nkrumah 30). The example of General Zia ul Haq completely fits in to the idea who overthrew the elected government and works under the directions of United States of America and Pentagon. Since drug trafficking frequently results in criminal activity, rivalry, and social unrest, the link between drugs and violence is widely established. Drug trafficking is implicitly supported by Americans, which indirectly reinforces the violent culture present in the community. It demonstrates how exterior actors acting in their own interests have an impact on the violence within the novel's setting in addition to internal reasons.

However, this study by moving on rejects the standings of this idea. There can also be a second side of coin. The superpowers or the first world countries are not the only one responsible for the upheavals and violence in the current geopolitical context but the nations that are "willing to [attack and takeover] the rest in the name of freedom and justice" should also acknowledge and bear the consequences and outcomes of their own actions (Kramatschek). Pakistani government, Army, Inter-Services intelligence, and Military Intelligence are the ones who enjoyed privileges from Central Intelligence Agency and Pentagon in terms of money, drugs, opium, and illegal guns and arms. The Pakistani Army and Central Intelligence Agency staged a proxy war against the Soviet Union, which later turned on them and resulted in highest upheavals of the 21st century like 9/11, bomb blasts, and target killing.

4.1.2.2 Influence of Political Parties

In the novel, although the state wields a potent apparatus, bolstered by formidable repressive institutions, it encounters persistent challenges to its authority from radical political factions. As far as the text is concerned various political parties protest against the

radicalized policies of the state through arms and ammunition. There is a constant competition for hold between protestors (political parties), and social activists. The political workers are known for "guns and steel" (Tanweer 85). Debra Thompson highlights the existence of rivalry among distinct loci of power within the state apparatus:

> While the state establishes a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence through institutions like the police and military, it is essential to note that the cartel is never entirely free from competition. Various forms and sources of authority, frequently fragmented and subject to internal and external pressures, pose challenges to the cartel's dominance (Thompson 11-12).

Tanweer intellectually illustrates the violent acts of political parties to overcome the state repression and go forth by reorganizing their own rule over the community and its inhabitants. The important point this study illustrates is how carefully Bilal Tanweer incorporates the violence employed by state authorities, and its opponents against each other for the struggle of power. Political parties, non-state actors and the institutions not only replicate the tactics of the state but also assimilate the methods of its repression to "gain power" (Steenkamp 47). Ultimately, the people of the community have to bear its consequences in either way.

Additionally, Steenkamp fails to consider the modern influences of technology and media on the culture of violence. The character of Sadeq in The Scatter Here is Too Great explores how media narratives shape public perceptions and understandings of violence in contemporary Karachi. Sadeq's involvement with media and his reflections on its role in society exemplify how modern technology influences cultural narratives of violence. This aspect of narrativization is critical for understanding how contemporary storytelling through technology can perpetuate or challenge violent norms. By highlighting Sadeq's experiences, Tanweer provides a modern dimension to the culture of violence that Steenkamp's work overlooks. The role of media and technology in shaping and disseminating narratives of violence is essential for a comprehensive analysis, demonstrating the need to incorporate these elements into the broader understanding of violence.

4.1.2.3 Religion as a Tool (Islamization)

Religion plays a crucial role in the life of an individual or the group of individuals. A religion is something for one is always reluctant as it dictates the way of living of an individual. In this novel religion is manipulated and used as a tool to conduct the acts of violence in the backdrop. General Zia's use of direct violence through sate and non-state actors during his regime his concept of "Islamization" is something that signals flaws in the society and brings upheavals to the society (Tanweer 52). He exploits Islam and Islamic laws for his personal interests. He uses Islamic laws and regulations to disguise his personal interests and unquestionable authority over the state and its subjects. During Zia's era, if people retaliate their fate gets written, it results in imprisonment, whips and "torture" in jail (Tanweer 119).

Sukhansaz, a Comrade, who deserted his loved ones just to practice and continue the selfless and secular ideas to raise the voice against religious extremism and "Islamization" being propagated, paid a heavy price (Tanweer 52). Islam, which is a religion of peace and equality, is corrupted and exploited as a result of the evil and personal practices of dictatorship of a man (General Zia ul Haq) "greedy" for power and authority to practice (Tanweer 17). General Zia ul Haq, "a dog of CIA", "fucked the country and this city for his jihad next door" through his praetorian practices, which acted as a fuel to fire, and the whole country bears the consequences of his policies (Tanweer 19). A bunch of youngsters shouts the comrade Sukhansaz as he begins to perform his poems on a bus. He yells back, but shortly after getting off, a bomb attack at Karachi Cantt station kills him. The events and *actions* of the life of Comrade Sukhansaz's life from imprisonment, whips and his death paints the sharp edge of political turmoil and religious extremism. Karachi, and collectively Pakistan are strangled by the vicious policies, Islamization and subjective violence. A city and a country that are tangled in a web of "tremendous violence" (Tanweer 07).

Žižek asserts that "explosions of subjective violence" seem illogical if we do not bring in to account systemic violence, which is always invisible and disguised in apparent subjective violence (Žižek 02). Same in the case this study carefully states that Zia ul Haq constructed the concept of Islamization in such a way to legitimize his dictatorship and

take over. When Soviet forces entered Afghanistan, General Zia ul Haq possessed the unmatched potential to win right away on every front. Zia, with the active support of the United States of America, converted Pakistan into a frontline state against the Soviets in order to assist the Afghan Mujahideen in their struggle against the Red Army in what would turn out to be the final significant Cold War theatre before the fall of the USSR. Zia ul Haq used Islam to support his oppressive reign during the Mullah and military alliance era of politics. Cavanaugh, in his scholarly article argues that religion is something that manipulates the individual or a group of individuals. Furthermore, he states that "religion promotes violence because it tends to be: 1) absolutist; 2) divisive; and 3) not rational" and authorities use it as a tool to exploit the people to sustain their power in the community (Cavanaugh 487). This study show how religion plays a crucial role in one's life and is always a fruitful tool to exploit people for personal and political means. Subsequently, it became clear that the Islamization process was merely cosmetic and made only to strengthen political and strategic reasons.

4.1.3 Conclusion

The Scatter Here Is Too Great by Bilal Tanweer illustrates the insurgent scenario of the metropolis community. Bilal Tanweer also paints the use of violence as a tool of retaliation and coercive power not only by state authorities but also by non-state actors and influence of international bodies and superpower[s]. Violence serves a twofold purpose in the framework of this novel's textual interpretation. On the one hand, it appears to question and constrain political power, but it also interrupts the usual stream of social life, resulting in extensive devastation and mayhem. Zia ul Haq, his policies of Islamization and the support of armaments and drugs from America personify the forces exercising violence for their means and this eventually leads to chaos in the society. In the context of the selected text, non-state actors within society frequently employ acts of political violence as a strategic mechanism to bolster their territorial control, with the primary objective of diminishing the dominance exerted by the state over said territory. Added to that, the novel throws light on the authoritarian tendencies of these dissident factions as they strive to force their political agendas on the masses through the use of violence. This qualitative reading of the text serves to highlight the dynamics and manifestations of violence through the analysis of individuals and their actions. Furthermore, it also maps out the certain

factors and authorities that contribute to sustain the culture of violence and its impacts on the individuals of the community.

4.2 International and Religious Violence in *Burnt Shadows*

Kamila Shamsie is one of the most renowned Pakistani novelists; she splits her lifespan between Pakistan, England and the United States of America. *Burnt Shadows* is one of the masterpieces that was later shortlisted for the Orange Prize in fiction. In *Burnt Shadows*, two families the Pakistani-Japanese Tanaka-Ashrafs and the German-English-American Weiss-Burtons are tracked during they interact across several decades and significant world events.

Burnt Shadows is divided into four parts, part one navigates around and after the event of Nagasaki bombing. Part two opens up when Hiroko Tanaka (the main character of the novel) migrates to Delhi. Part three begins in Pakistani political and spatial context where American forces are strengthening Islamic extremists for proxy war in Afghanistan against USSR (Soviet Union). Part four paints the scene of high levels of violence political upheavals and military operations in South Asia (Afghanistan and Pakistan) after a chaotic event of September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center.

This section illustrates and evaluates the acts and the manifestations of violence at various levels and its impacts on its subjects keeping in view the rise of terror and violence portrayed in the Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*. Furthermore, this chapter also discusses the factors through which Culture of Violence is being sustained by the State, Non-state actors and International bodies.

4.2.1 Manifestations of Subjective and Systemic Violence

Burnt Shadows, in its fragmented formation, incorporates the major historical events woven with each other through fictional characters and their stories. It is a complex and ambitious novel that navigates around the impact of war, terrorism, 'war on terror', subjective and various types violence and its manifestations, and migration on individuals and families. It is a story of the consequences of the major events of the century and their effects on the common people.

In the prologue the scene of Guantanamo bay, a highly security classified cell, is painted where an unknown prisoner, in his worst condition waiting for his fate. Completely "naked" and stripped of basic rights, thinking what would happen to him and "how did it come to this" (Shamsie 06).

The protagonist of the novel Hiroko Tanaka, she is twenty one years old in love with a German refugee of second world war in the metropolis of Nagasaki. The metropolis is destructed and continued being bombarded by the American troops. Shamsie vividly depicts a scene of chaos, destruction, and violence, illustrating the profound impact on those in close proximity stripped down to mere skeletons. Even those at a distance experience a harrowing effect, likened to the peeling of skin like grapes. The possession of new bomb intensifies the concern, with a sentiment that the relentless American pursuit will not cease until everyone is reduced to either skeletons or grapes (Shamsie 16).

Nagasaki and collectively the condition of Japan and its allies were being torn in to pieces by continuous bombing. Hiroko Tanaka is stuck by the thoughts of destruction of the city. She goes back and forth and compares the condition of the city from past to present. She asks herself that if there would be an adjective to explain the condition of the city it is "distilled or distorted" (Shamsie 9). The world has become full of "weapons than as humans" (Shamsie 9). However, it is even true that with everything at its worst Nagasaki is still less damaged than the other countries in "aerial raids" (Shamsie 10). Hiroko Tanaka believes that, "Nagasaki would be spared all serious damage[s]", as its most of the population is "Christian" (Shamsie 10). Nevertheless, Konrad makes it clear that Dresden was too a Christian city even though it was bombarded and effaced. Everything she was used to and her entire universe was immediately destroyed on August 9, 1945, in the morning. The explosion claims the lives of her father and Konrad as well as their dreams for her bright future. Her back is covered in bird-shaped scars that mix "charred silk, seared flesh", serving as a constant reminder of the horrific occurrence and everything she has lost (Shamsie 25). Hiroko is too much traumatized by the bombing of Nagasaki that she yells on Sajjad (the one she married to after migration to India), "yelling and pummeling Sajjad" that the "bomb did nothing beautiful" but blow apart her life (Shamsie 81).

In Nagasaki, the atomic bomb is not just an act of physical violence but also a symbol of the trauma that lingers in the collective memory of its survivors. Hiroko Tanaka, the protagonist, carries the scars of this violence as she migrates across different cities, experiencing displacement and the subtle violence of being "othered" in foreign environments. Shamsie's portrayal of New York post-9/11 is particularly poignant, as the city becomes a microcosm of global tensions and the anxieties of living in a post-terrorism world. The city's architecture, its imposing skyscrapers, and the presence of military forces serve as reminders of the violence that both built and threatens the urban space (Shamsie 46). The novel reveals how cities are not only shaped by historical events but also serve as spaces where systemic violence, such as xenophobia and nationalism, thrive.

It becomes clear throughout that war leads to destruction and violent consequences, nothing, and no one can escape from it. Hiroko Tanaka, who refuses to accept the bitter reality of the world suffers a lot and has to pay a greater price for that. Secondly, it shows that countries and nation-states could do anything to the other just to save their own self and ideology as it is shown in the novel clearly when an American said that bombing is not good it was inevitable and necessary "to save American lives" (Shamsie 55). Similarly, that is what Shamsie advocates in one of her interviews "I do have a rather bleak view of a particular aspect of nation-states, which has to do with their ability to justify all kinds of horrors in the name of war" (Singh 160).

The Partition of India is one of the most significant and unsettling events in the book, and it represents the setting for the most terrifying carnage civilization has ever known. The birth of independence was costly. The Partition, which was meant to make way for the creation of two distinct and independent countries, India and Pakistan, instead provided the setting for a ferocious bloodshed. Thousands of people lost their lives and millions their shelter and a place called home. Because of India's political unrest, Hiroko and Sajjad have to find a "new world," but it is something that is also extremely sorrowful (Shamsie 100). Sajjad who is one the main characters has to suffer through this disease of displacement and exile. Sajjad, who loves 'Dilli' so much and do not want to leave it has to be displaced to a Turkey. This and all the events of bloodshed and violent conflicts on the base of separation and cultural and religious differences stigmatize him. According to

Sajjad, the solidity of relationships that once appeared unbreakable crumbled when confronted with the corrosive query: "Are you for India or Pakistan?" (Shamsie 93).

Although Sajjad and Hiroko had first intended to remain in Delhi, they were finally compelled to travel to Pakistan. This event opened a doorway to another violent scenario in their life and brings back Harry Burton, James and Elizabeth's son (an agent of CIA who later becomes a private security contractor hired by U.S. government for missions in Afghanistan).

Raza Konrad Ashraf (son of Hiroko and Sajjad) becomes the victim of United States backed "proxy war" in Afghanistan against Soviet Union and later Afghanistan War ('War on terror' against Talibans) (Shamsie 144). During his early age and throughout Raza Ashraf is dictated by the effects of his mother's (Hiroko's) exposure to a major violence and bloodshed, dropping of nuclear bombing that later staged his fate in Guantanamo Bay prison. Raza Konrad Ashraf does not get acceptance in the society and is mocked as "bomb-marked mongrel", an event that makes him feel dejected in the society (Shamsie 168). Even though not being its first hand victim but this maps a crucial role and place in his life. On the one hand Raza is rejected by his own community by being mocked on the other hand, he gets acceptance in the immigrants from Afghanistan which acts as a turning point not only for his life but for Ashraf family. From meeting an Afghan boy (Abdullah, who later becomes his brotherhood friend) and being a fake Afghan national Raza encounters a drastic change in his life. The novel excerpt vividly illustrates the transformative moment for [him] as he senses the conviction of the lie, which seems to physically align with his spine, straightening his posture. Raza Konrad Ashraf, after wiping his hands on his shalwar, rises from his seat. However, it is Raza Hazara who, by cradling the AK-47 in his arms, discovers the profound alteration that can occur in a person through such a seemingly straightforward action (Shamsie 145-146).

Raza Konrad Ashraf becomes Raza Hazara; this drastic change in the personality brings him closer to Afghan community and made him feel like their problem is his problem. This ended up leading him to risk his and Abdullah's lives in Afghanistan Mujahideen camp to fight against the Soviet Union, a war that is named jihad, which was dormant before. In recent days, Sajjad has diligently endeavored to establish contact with

individuals possessing potential knowledge regarding Raza's current location. While at the fish market, he encounters Sher Mohammed, who serves as Harry's designated chauffeur. Due to Sher Mohammed's affiliation with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), his true identity remains undisclosed to the general public. When Sajjad passionately calls out Sher Mohammed's name and advances toward him, Sher Mohammed is taken aback by the sudden confrontation, ultimately resorting to a fatal act of violence, resulting in Sajjad's demise. Steenkamp states this doctrine in her work that these acts "of violence in communities remain highly visible and part of the daily lives of communities" (Steenkamp 40). This violent event torn apart Ashraf family. In the aftermath of Sajjad's death, Hiroko decides to leave for America, motivated by the need to evade the specter of an impending nuclear conflict. Fueled by reports of Pakistan's persistent nuclear preparations in response to India's atomic explosion, she seeks sanctuary in the hope of finding safety and putting distance between herself and the escalating tensions.

To sum up the discussion this study states paints how terrorism and extremism represent non-traditional security threats that have reached their peak in Pakistan since the events of September 11, 2001. The attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center had a polarizing impact on United States allies globally, leading to a division into two camps: those who supported the United States' actions and those who did not. This study claims that Pakistan, which has been a steadfast partner of the United States, has had to grapple with security consequences that have been more detrimental than beneficial. The security situation in Pakistan is compromised, and is now becoming worse every day. Even after staging war on terror on global phenomena, Pakistan is still struggling in its position against this plague of violence. Kamila Shamsie's Burnt Shadows clearly depicts the collateral damage these highly sensitive events have brought to Asian, particularly Pakistani communities.

4.2.2 Culture of Violence

Culture is a product of human experiences. Additional factors can affect experiences, but it also depends on how a person perceives them (Avruch 17). In alongside inheriting and learning concerning culture, individuals may also create and mold it. A Culture of Violence is delineated as the intricate network of norms, values, and attitudes

that not only permit but also facilitate or even encourage the utilization of violence as a means to address any conflict or interpersonal relationship (Steenkamp 34). Violence affects culture, but it also has an impact on how violence is employed. This relationship between violence and culture is reciprocal. War and sustained exposure to violence leads to a way and have a strong impact on norms and values that guide the behavior and attitudes the 'use of violence' which not only affects regional level but also the international level and global level.

4.2.2.1 Religion and Previous "Exposure to Violence"

Raza Konrad Ashraf (son of Hiroko Tanaka and Sajjad) who is not acknowledged by his society claims to be from "Hazara" community to a young Abdullah from Afghan community who he meets (Shamsie 132). Raza Konrad Ashraf expresses to Abdullah his desire to expel the Soviet Union from the Afghanistan. Abdullah lets him hold the "AK-47 Kalashnikov" which is the point of transformation of Raza Konrad Ashraf to Raza Hazara (Shamsie 145). Abdullah (the Afghan boy) tells Raza of going to "one of the [Mujahideen] training camps" at the age (fourteen), he is now (Shamsie 186). It is also seen that Abdullah's brothers "were all mujahideen" and playing their role to drive away the Soviet Union (USSR) from the Afghanistan (Shamsie 180). Raza who is called "bomb-marked mongrel" feels dejected, encourages Abdullah to join Mujahideen Camps and war against the Soviet Union, and promises him to accompany him in this fight (Shamsie 168). Raza, shaped by prior encounters with violence, including a nuclear bombing, concealing his identity, and the loss of his father Sajjad, becomes an enigma to himself. Struggling to reconcile his past, he attempts to reconnect with his Hazara identity by listening intently. Imagining himself wielding a Kalashnikov, he envisions the posture, yet amidst individuals for whom the firearm is commonplace, he recognizes the disparity between his perception and their casual familiarity with the weapon (Shamsie 202).

Raza's transformation over the years also involves a pronounced shift towards religious inclination. This evolution becomes particularly evident when Raza encounters a genuine religious experience during a collective prayer session among fellow mujahideen at the training camp. This pivotal incident marks the transformation of Raza Konrad Ashraf into Raza Hazara, signifying a profound alteration in his character:

Suddenly, Raza found himself captivated by the profound beauty of the situation, and he approached it with an unparalleled sense of devotion, unlike any he had experienced before. With reverence, he carefully placed his pattusi on the ground and stepped upon it ... As Raza Hazara awakened, he surveyed his surroundings, perceiving them with a newfound sense of magnificence (Shamsie 233).

Shamsie's characters in the novel for instance (Raza Hazara) completely fit on the account that Steenkamp incorporates in her framework that the transformation and inclination of an individual towards violence is the "continuous legitimization" of violence against violence itself (Steenkamp 44). This phenomenon helps in the creation and further sustaining the norms of culture of violence.

In addition, it is analyzed that Steenkamp's emphasis on institutional policies does not fully capture the ethnic dimensions of violence, which is vividly illustrated through Raza Hazara in Burnt Shadows. Raza, a Hazara living in post-partition Pakistan, experiences systemic discrimination and targeted violence due to his ethnic background. His character embodies the broader patterns of ethnic violence that Steenkamp's macro-level lens tends to overlook. Steenkamp discusses the role of state and institutional structures in managing post-war violence, but this approach does not account for the personal, lived experiences of ethnic minorities (Steenkamp 35). Raza's narrative exposes the intersection of ethnic identity and violence, highlighting how ethnic minorities become targets of systemic aggression. The violent incidents Raza endures, including the brutal treatment by authorities and societal exclusion, underscore the deep-seated ethnic prejudices that shape his experiences. This personal account is crucial for understanding how ethnic violence is not merely a byproduct of state policies but a pervasive issue embedded in cultural and societal norms. Through the analysis of Raza's character, this notion can be challenged that institutional frameworks alone can encapsulate the entirety of violence's impact, emphasizing the need to consider individual and cultural experiences. Steenkamp's framework of institutional responses lacks this nuanced understanding (Steenkamp 47).

Kim (daughter of Harry Burton), responds totally different two the collision of World Trade Center (9/11). Both Kim and Hiroko witnessed the Twin Towers attack but

in contrast to Hiroko responds drastically different to the war on terror. She comes up with a "paranoid" sense of patriotism suspecting everything that seems un-American to her (Shamsie 245). She harshly accuses an "Italian" man and confronts her as a Muslim (Shamsie 290). Kim, who turns Raza Hazara unintentionally thinking him an Afghan militant (Abdullah) to Police enforcement agencies is asked to feel "proud" of this act as this was the man that her "government ha[d] been searching for" (Shamsie 323-324). However, Hiroko Tanaka condemns this act of Kim as she says:

> In the big picture of the Second World War, what was seventy-five thousand more Japanese dead? Acceptable, that's what it was. In the big picture of threats to America, what is one Afghan? Expendable. Maybe he's guilty, maybe not. Why risk it? Kim, you are the kindest, most generous woman I know. But right now, because of you, I understand for the first time how nations can applaud when their governments drop a second nuclear bomb (Shamsie 323).

Shamsie skillfully portrays the gradual encroachment of intolerance during the era of the 'War on Terror'. Kim finds herself involuntarily fixated on America's perceived persecution, to the extent that she becomes oblivious to her own involvement in the victimization of others. Similar to her grandmother's subjugation of Sajjad during the British Raj, Kim manifests her paranoia by directing it through her interactions with Muslims. She perceives them as bearing a cultural burden for the events of September 11, 2001 (9/11).

Hiroko, Raza, and Sajjad all notice that Pakistan is undergoing "Islamisation" and becoming more and more politically religious and to be polluted by religious extremism (Shamsie 61). Hiroko is the most opposed to this political change, remarking that the atmosphere reminds her of wartime Japan: "Devotion as a public event, as a national requirement. It made her think of Japan and the Emperor, during the war" (Shamsie 128). As religion becomes more and more public, the way that people, especially women, dress changes: "So many sleeves all the way to the wrists instead of just part-way down the upper arm, and covered heads here and there" (Shamsie 185). As the Pakistani government begins to enforce religiosity more and more, Hiroko's difference becomes more and more apparent. Hiroko contends that "Islamisation" is the term that the masses know is a

"political tool of a dictator" to manipulate however, people are still allowing this tool to manipulate their lives and mould it according to the will of the dictator (Shamsie 161). Steenkamp expresses this notion in her work:

> The presence of an active military within the country, maintaining a prominent presence on the streets with visible army bases even after a peace accord, gives rise to a sustained militarization. This perpetuation introduces a pervasive display of symbols of violence in society, including guns, armored vehicles, soldiers, and barbed wires, creating an omnipresent atmosphere laden with these military elements (Steenkamp 40).

It can be argued that the emergence of Talibans or Jihadist groups, their power, and the roots of war in Afghanistan are the fruits of the dictator's Islamization era. Steenkamp argues that it is easy for them "to convince how to convince the population of the legitimacy of the sacrifices they are expected to make" to sustain the violence to have an unquestionable control (Steenkamp 44).

4.2.2.2 Internationally Organized Crime

After the end of the Word War II powers of whole world shifted drastically. Varisco in his scholarly research paper emphasizes the ideological differences between the two major power of East (Soviet Union) and the West (United States of America) and their interests to dictate, and become more influential, bipolar world is characterized by the dominance of two opposing major powers wielding substantial economic, military, and cultural influence over their respective allies (Varisco 01). Soviet Union (USSR) invaded Afghanistan in order to dictate and influence the other nations on the other United States of America staged a mission against Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

Harry Burton, who represents an American law enforcement institution on a foreign land, reaches Pakistan for a mission of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) provides the facilities and help to make sure of the provision of armaments and enough military training to the Jihadist and Taliban groups in Afghanistan through Pakistan in the aim to support resistance against Soviet Union. This engagement is not for strengthening Talibans but acts as a "proxy war" against the Soviet Union, which is one of the national interests of United States of America (Shamsie 144). Harry takes

great pride in his American heritage and views his involvement in Afghanistan as a crucial contribution to the global fight against communism. He holds a positive view of America, emphasizing its openness to immigrants. In imparting the essence of being American to his daughter, he conveys that all "you [need] to do [is] show yourself willing to be American" (Shamsie 151). However, his claim seems to be a shallow one when he publishes an article in "an influential defence journal" about Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) abandoning Afghanistan and Tablian by "turn[ing] its back" with a pseudonym "Lala Buksh" (Shamsie 248). This action ultimately leads Harry Burton lose his Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) job. Even after losing his job, Harry, as a private "CIA paramilitary" contractor, is sent to a mission to Afghanistan to uproot "Al-Qaeda" (Shamsie 247).

Another major event of CIA and Pentagon's intervention can be seen when Central Intelligence Agency uses Raza Hazara for the proxy war against Soviet Union. Nevertheless, later CIA terms Raza Hazara as "grunts who know their positions can be filled by a million other desperate rats" (Shamsie 270). This clearly indicates the American policies for its national interests. America only uses the "third world" people for the satisfaction of its national interests and does not accept someone who is no more fruitful for them (Persauda & Kumarakulasingam 200). Harry's operation goes, and is killed in one of the "Cave[s]" in the Afghanistan, Raza Hazara who shows loyalty to the United States is alleged to be the killer of Harry Burton (Shamsie 247). Similar to this concept Steenkamp opines in her book:

> Internationally organized networks play a pivotal role in financing the operations of many insurgency groups and military networks. These networks typically enable engagement in both grey activities, such as smuggling goods like cigarettes, alcohol, or other consumer items, and black market endeavors, including prostitution and narcotics. The illicit trade of weapons and ammunition is often intricately connected to the utilization of violence (Steenkamp 39).

To sum up, this research unveils that The United States has used a free-market philosophical thought to promote the privatization of military operations in the context of its worldwide counterterrorism effort, known colloquially as the Global War on Terror (GWOT). This strategy has resulted in the pursuit of profit through practices that have

frequently been chastised for their unethical labor practices and the indirect committing of crimes by proxy troops. Furthermore, the outsourcing of combat-related tasks to foreign corporations, which usually include persons from economically deprived places, notably those in the "Third World", has obscured the human cost of the Afghan conflict. This brings into account the term that Hiroko uses "expendable[s]", the third world people can be exploited hired on money and used for the interests of First World (Shamsie 323). As a result, the use of foreign people in these jobs has led to a distorted view of the fatalities suffered in support of the war effort.

4.2.3 Conclusion

Shamsie's fiction establishes the post-9/11 image of Muslims within the framework of Islamization tactics implemented by Zia's Pakistan and continued US activities in the area from the late 1970s. This story emphasizes the political and historical elements that underpin modern worldwide prejudices about Muslims and the rhetoric surrounding the War on Terror. Shamsie also provides light on the ramifications of the United States' military backing for Pakistan, which was largely motivated by Cold War tensions with the Soviet Union, as well as the United States' intricate maneuvering in utilizing Islamic fundamentalist organizations as proxy against the Soviets throughout the Afghan struggle. The study, through the analysis of the text, maps out how violence prevails through certain dynamics. From the second world war, Partition of the Subcontinent, dictatorial role of Zia, invasion of Afghanistan and CIA's (Central Intelligence Agency) proxy war, twin tower collision, to post 9/11 chaotic events, all these give rise to violent upheavals in the community. The study further shows the stepwise ignition of violence from individual to collective level and legitimization of the use of violence for unquestionable control over the governed. By moving further, the analysis through this particular lens unveils the factors that may aid the perpetrators of violence by producing arms, ammunition and money etcetera. In addition, as a result of political turmoil and upheavals, instead of resolving conflicts, endanger the lives of civilians.

4.3 Religious Violence in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

Khaled Hosseini, an Afghan born novelist. He is one of the most renowned South Asian novelist with an American citizenship. His remarkable writings are *The Kite Runner*

(2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), and *The Mountains Echoed* (2013). For some the scholars "Hosseini is almost certainly the most famous Afghan in the world" (Grossman). Moreover, for others Hosseini is "the first Afghan novelist to fictionalize his culture for a Western readership" (Rasheed).

The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is divided into four parts. Part one narrates the story of Mariam who is a young girl born in Afghanistan. Part two describes the life of another major character Laila who was born in Kabul (Afghanistan). Part three and part four are mostly narrated by these two characters that paint the scenario of Afghanistan. Part three of the novel employs a distinct narrative approach, with specific chapters being presented from the perspective of Mariam, while others are narrated through the lens of Laila. This section crucially portrays the evolving dynamics of Mariam and Laila's relationship. Part four, serving as the narrative's denouement, delivers a fitting resolution that underscores how marginalized women employ their experiences of suffering as a means of self-empowerment.

The novel delves into highly descriptive depictions of domestic violence, sexual assault, strangulation, and various forms of egregious abuse. From the harrowing exploration of interpersonal abuse to the grim backdrop of wartime experiences, this literary work meticulously explores the darker aspects of human behavior. The novel chronicles the period encompassing the tragic event of September 9, commonly associated with the alleged Taliban bombing of the Twin Towers, culminating with the governance of Afghanistan under President Hamid Karzai. The overarching theme throughout this narrative is the continuity of conflict, beginning with the Soviet invasion, followed by internal strife among the mujahideen, and ultimately culminating in the American Operation Enduring Freedom aimed at ousting the Taliban regime. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* starts "programmatically and gains speed and emotional power as it slowly unfurls" (Kakutani pr. 02).

This section evaluates the novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and highlight the acts of violence through the lens of manifestations of violence by Slavoj Žižek. This study argues and sheds light on not only the violence but also its attendant, the collateral damage that acts and manifestations of violence bring at various levels. The violence can be mapped

through individual to collective and further international and its vice versa. This study further goes on analyze the factors that may cause or sustain culture of violence and its effects on the subjects through analyzing the text.

4.3.1 Manifestations of Subjective and Systemic Violence

A Thousand Splendid Suns navigates around the horrific incident of September 09 (9/11) when the twin towers were blown apart. Hosseini's literary work, also situated within the backdrop of Afghanistan, examines the enduring impact of the tumultuous events that have unfolded in the country over the past three decades on the lives of its ordinary inhabitants. The characters in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* are portrayed as individuals whose choices and destinies are intricately intertwined with the external harsh and unforgiving world, shaped by the forces of revolution, war, and adversity. These characters persistently confront their challenges, displaying unwavering determination. The narrative within *A Thousand Splendid Suns* poignantly laments the dearth of opportunities and the absence of happiness. Hosseini, through his literary craft, conveys the poignant story of mothers, daughters, wives, and sisters within a milieu where religious, political, and cultural factors have long collaborated to circumscribe their freedoms and prospects.

The opening sentences of the novel serve as a poignant indicator of the presence of institutional violence and its various forms. These lines narrate the stigmatization of a child, Mariam, who is entitled as 'harami' or illegitimate: "Mariam was five years old the first time she heard the word harami" (Hosseini 03). Mariam's parentage is the result of an affair between Jalil, a wealthy man, and Nana, his domestic servant. To avert a scandal, Jalil's wife compels him to exile the pregnant Nana to a remote rural area outside the town. Nana herself later comes to view her own child as illegitimate, particularly during moments of anger. The enduring stigmatization follows Mariam throughout her existence, with derogatory references such as 'harami' continuing to be hurled at her, even within the confines of her matrimonial household.

The two main terminologies, legitimacy and illegitimacy sustain a significant role in society. A child with a tag of illegitimacy might never be accepted in conservative religious societies and is always considered as a curse for the societies. This stages a trauma in the psychological life of an individual. However, it can be observed by the perception

of Mariam who thinks that this tag is the product of Nana's discrimination and derogatory label "Harami" (Hosseini 07). As people in Herat do not know about her, "no one called her a harami. Hardly anyone even looked at her. She was, unexpectedly, marvelously, an ordinary person here" (Hosseini 30). However, later it can be seen, a significant portion of the characters depicted in Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* closely align with Nana's portrayal, casting aspersions on the child as an illegitimate individual. This does not stop here rather it goes an extra mile to allow the society to sometimes perish or exile the person from the society consisting of most legitimate individuals to eradicate their curse. Mariam has no chance to be accepted in the society but to be excluded.

Even though after Nana when she (Mariam) is sent to live with her father, her sister violates her basic rights through violent acts. Mariam, a "fifteen year[s] old" girl is forcefully married to Rasheed, a "forty-five year[s] old" man by her father and family (Hosseini 45). Who later turns into a hostile by the passage of time when political violence overtakes the city. Throughout the story, Mariam is repeatedly beaten and raped by her husband Rasheed. Rasheed, her husband, not only sexually assaults her but also mentally, and psychologically. In the narrative, physical abuse is a regular source of anguish for Mariam. Rasheed harshly complains about Mariam's cooking, and in a distressing turn of events, he forces her to chew on stones, which causes significant harm to her teeth. Rasheed asserts that the only thing Mariam has brought to their marriage is unsatisfactory food. He forcefully gripped her jaw with his powerful hands, inserting two fingers into her mouth to pry it open. With determination, he compelled the insertion of cold, unyielding pebbles. Despite Mariam's resistance and mumbled protests, he persisted, a contemptuous sneer on his upper lip. "Now chew," he commanded (Hosseini 95).

Bandura posits that aggression is a deliberate behavior with the intent of causing harm or damage to the victim's personal well-being or property. This harm can manifest in both psychological and physical forms, such as the devaluation or degradation of an individual's emotional state or the physical deformity of the victim resulting from the aggressive actions (Bandura 4). This harm can manifest in various ways, including "physical injuries, emotional distress, or strained social connections" (Allen & Anderson 28).

The analysis shows Nana's urging Mariam to cultivate endurance serves as an early sign of the difficult life awaiting her, marked by an abusive marriage and the absence of children. Nana's stress on Mariam's ability to withstand suffering not only hints at the hardships in her future but also sheds light on the lessons she absorbed while growing up under Nana's care. As the story unfolds, Mariam's resilience becomes her lifeline, helping her navigate through harsh circumstances and cope with profound personal losses.

Another act of subjective and direct violence occurring within the familial context is exemplified when both of Rasheed's wives, Laila and Mariam, are apprehended following an unsuccessful attempt to escape. Subsequently, they are returned to their residence by the police and find themselves alone with Rasheed. In this vulnerable situation, in line with his longstanding threats, there are no external authorities or legal safeguards to prevent him from inflicting a punitive lesson upon his wives.

> He threatens her, that if you dare to repeat this action, rest assured, I will track you down. I solemnly swear by the Prophet that when that time comes, no legal institution in this forsaken nation will restrain me (Hosseini 246).

Rasheed exhibits a notable disregard for others, displaying a pervasive indifference to external perspectives, including the welfare of a vulnerable child who is adversely affected by his aggressive behavior. This is exemplified by his initiation of violent actions towards his cherished young wife, with Mariam consistently enduring the most of the physical abuse. Despite being a father, Rasheed insists on compelling young Aziza to beg for the family's sustenance, a proposition met with resistance from Laila. A stark instance of this conflict unfolds when Rasheed delivers a forceful slap to Laila's cheek, prompting a retaliatory punch from her. Faced with limited alternatives, Laila and Mariam contemplate resorting to violence as a means to protect themselves and their children. Furthermore, Rasheed's propensity for aggression persists, evident in his explosive reaction to the loss of his store in a fire, during which he channels his discontent towards Laila, critiquing her scent and attire. (Hosseini 276).

It can be observed throughout the analysis of the novel of Hosseini that no one from the inhabitants of Afghanistan community can save their lives from physical or subjective violence since it sustained its roots. A violent act of Talibans and several different

ideological groups can be encountered to withstand the idea when they do not even spare the dead bodies and graves of the people who opposed or raised their voice. The Taliban deliberately approached the burial site of Tariq's admired singer, Ahmad Zahir, callously firing bullets into the sacred ground. Reflecting on this grim event, Laila, conversing with Mariam, questioned the harsh reality, with almost two decades elapsed since his passing, one can't help but question: isn't the torment of death once enough? (Hosseini 255).

The manifestations of cruelty peaks when the Talibans take charge. The do not even allow people to participate in any kind of concert. In addition to that, they (Talibans) prohibit all kind of musical instruments in Afghanistan. Their propensity for violence transcends even the boundaries of life and death, as evidenced by their deliberate act of desecrating the grave of an individual whose actions they found objectionable, even when that individual was alive. This intriguing behavior underscores a cognitive process that may seem irrational and incomprehensible to an external observer but holds a distinct rationale for the perpetrators of the violent act.

Afghanistan has a history in which commanders, militia, and other forces have used rape as a form of retaliation and fear, as well as to dishonor the males of a specific tribe. Sexual assault is pervasive in Afghanistan, with impunity characterizing the disturbing phenomenon. This extends to heinous acts committed by fundamentalist warlords against women and even children as young as three years old (Jala et al 132). Women are entitled as 'honor' and respect of tribe and house in Eastern, especially in South Asian communities (more specifically in Afghanistan) under the lens of Islam. Henceforth, women are raped and sexually abused in front of their household persons just to practice the power and take the revenge from the people who opposed them.

During the Taliban regime, instances of sexual assault and harassment notably declined, primarily attributed to their rigorous punitive measures against perpetrators. However, in contrast, Talibans also implicated such coercive, violent and criminal actions of subjective violence. The Talibans not only brutally tortured the young women of opposing factions but they also exploited them sexually. The violent conflict staged between Mujahideen and the Soviet Union and their forces which sustained for years, there can be seen a complete absence of law enforcement rules and regulations and such violent

cases of sexual exploitation and subjective violence remain unaddressed. Drevitch contends that, for leaders of armed factions, rape serves as a strategic tool to subdue populations, diminish resistance, and provide incentives to soldiers (Drevitch 45). Despite existing laws for prosecuting such perpetrators, their infrequent application arises from the victim's fear of losing the opportunity for a secure marriage once the crime is publicized. Consequently, these situations seldom come to the fore in local courts, which are reputedly insensitive in addressing such matters Furthermore; openly discussing such concerns is frowned upon in Afghan society. Jalil et al. state some of the well observed reasons, self-immolation transpires in the absence of legal protection and support for women; rape transpires due to pervasive impunity and the backing of rapists by those in power; domestic violence prevails as a result of the entwining of fundamentalism and ignorance with the ruling elite, and so the list goes on (132).

The term rape or sexual violence has a significant place in Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Rape or sexual exploitation is woven like a web with other violent acts in Afghan community. "Mariam becomes aware of distressing instances where women, gripped by the fear of rape, resort to taking their own lives. Additionally, she learns of men who, invoking notions of honor would resort to murdering their wives and daughters if they were to fall victim to rape by militia forces (Hosseini 228). Steenkamp states that, in order to avoid violence "the use of violence is legitimized" by individuals and the groups in the common life (Steenkamp 40). Hosseini's novel has backdrop of twin towers (World Trade Center) collision on September 11, 2001 (9/11) bombed by Talibans and its attendant Islamophopbia to the regime of President Hamid Karzai. From the proxy war against the Soviet Union and among Mujahideen and Talibans themselves to staging the "Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)" by United States of America in Afghanistan to extract the perpetrators of terrorism and Talibans (Durch 14). All of these actions have a common violent action and that is the brutal rape and sexual abuse and bloodshed of women. Moreover, the nexus between rape and ethnic discord is pronounced, as the latter emerges as a fundamental catalyst for sexual violence. Conventional norms encapsulating horror and shame undergo a transformative process, assuming the role of instruments in the context of warfare. This transformation manifests in the perpetration of rape and sexual assault directed at women from opposing ethnic groups, strategically employed as a means

to disgrace entire communities and strategically diminish the resilience of populations against military advancements (Jalal et al. 134).

Giti, a minor character in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, provides a profound yet often overlooked example of how violence in Kabul's war-torn urban structure affects its most innocent residents. Giti is a young friend of Laila's who dies suddenly when a rocket strikes the street she is walking on. While her death might seem incidental in the broader narrative of war, it represents how the violence in Kabul permeates everyday life, claiming the lives of ordinary civilians. Her death is a striking example of Žižek's symbolic violence, where the structural conditions of war make random deaths a normal occurrence. Giti's death also shows how the urban environment itself becomes complicit in violence—war transforms the city into a space where life is precarious, and innocence is no longer a safeguard. Giti's narrative highlights the erasure of childhood and the normalcy of death, reflecting Kabul's tragic transformation under violence (Hosseini 75).

Aziza, Laila's daughter, provides a unique perspective on how violence in Kabul's urban environment shapes the psychology of its youngest inhabitants. Born into a world of constant conflict, Aziza spends part of her childhood in an orphanage due to Rasheed's financial inability to care for the family. While she is spared much of the physical violence that Laila and Mariam endure, the systemic violence of war affects her mental development. Aziza's time in the orphanage is emblematic of how the city's structures—schools, homes, and social services—are incapable of shielding children from the consequences of violence. Her withdrawn behavior and moments of fear, especially when hearing explosions, demonstrate how Kabul's violence infiltrates even the safest spaces, affecting children's sense of security. Aziza's experience reflects the symbolic violence that urban war zones inflict on their youngest residents, shaping their identities in ways that go beyond the physical scars of war (Hosseini 97)**.**

The urban structure of Kabul, with its bombed-out buildings and war-torn streets, becomes a metaphor for the broken lives of its inhabitants, especially the female characters. Kabul's destruction is not just physical but also psychological, as the city's institutions, dominated by patriarchal and religious forces, perpetuate a culture of violence against women. Žižek's symbolic violence is evident in how the legal and social systems in Kabul

legitimize the oppression of women, making their suffering an accepted part of life. The novel's urban landscape reflects this symbolic violence, where the crumbling infrastructure mirrors the disempowerment of its citizens. For instance, Mariam's forced marriage to Rasheed and the subsequent abuse she endures highlight the intersection of personal and systemic violence, as Kabul's social norms allow such practices to continue unchecked (Hosseini 104). The city, once vibrant and full of promise, becomes a prison for its female inhabitants, where violence is normalized through the institutions that govern their lives.

This study further elucidates the ethnic doctrine, which often leads to conflicts, constitutes a highly provocative element within society and represents another manifestation of violence in a broader context. Hosseini's novel is replete with depictions of such doctrines. One of the characters, Babi, articulates the situation, defining it as the condition of Pashtuns as the majority ethnic group and, conversely, portraying the remaining ethnic groups, particularly the Hazaras and Tajiks, as minorities. Babi delineates the tensions prevailing between the Tajiks, a minority group, and Tariq's people, the Pashtuns, constituting the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan (Hosseini 117). The geographical region in question perennially grapples with intense conflicts marked by violence among diverse ethnic and religious factions, representing a central theme of profound significance within the narrative. The violence and brutality does not stop here furthermore, it walks an extra mile when these two opposing groups vent out their aggression on each other. Hosseini paints the violent image of this instance through Laila when she becomes aware of a dire situation where Pashtun militiamen are systematically attacking Hazara households, forcibly entering and executing entire families in a method akin to execution. In response, Hazaras retaliate by resorting to the abduction of Pashtun civilians, perpetrating sexual violence against Pashtun girls, launching artillery strikes on Pashtun neighborhoods, and engaging in indiscriminate acts of killing. This cycle of violence unfolds with alarming intensity and brutality. On a daily basis, the grim aftermath of this conflict reveals lifeless bodies discovered bound to trees, frequently exhibiting extreme mutilation. Instances of bodies being burned beyond recognition are distressingly common. The brutality extends to victims being shot in the head, subjected to eye gouging, and having their tongues severed, painting a disturbing picture of the pervasive violence in the region (Hosseini 160).

Within the novel, this juncture stands out as the most harrowing point, wherein both the Pashtuns and the Hazaras find themselves ensnared by the consequences of the deeply ingrained structural violence that defines their interactions. Foster elucidates that violence, while inherently a deeply personal and intimate act between individuals, also bears cultural and societal implications (Foster 95).

4.3.2 Culture of Violence

A culture is made up of different aspects, but the two most important parts that establish a culture are values and norms. Values are evaluative criteria that establish the relevance and priority of anything at a certain time and place. Norms are common guidelines that channel the behavior(s) of individuals in society while also reflecting our "values" (Steenkamp 33). A culture of violence, on the other hand, is a state of mind or actions and mindsets that permits rather than channels the use of guns and violence to disintegrate the violent disputes that occur in society.

4.3.2.1 Previous "Exposure to Violence"

It is often observed that people who face trauma and violence in their life instead of sustaining the values and norms of peace opt its vice versa and employ such kind of norms and value that act as a tool of sustaining the use of violence.

In most of the cases, it is crucial to acknowledge that individuals may resort to acts of violence as a means of ensuring their own survival and securing the necessary means of livelihood when they perceive no alternative avenues available to them. Once of such instances from novel is when Tariq resides in a refugee camp. The conflict arises due to the severe illness afflicting his mother. Under such dire conditions, Tariq is presented with a moral dilemma, wherein he recounts an incident involving the confrontation of a considerably younger kid, approximately "twelve or thirteen years" of age (Hosseini 306). In a measured and composed manner, he describes how he employed a shard of glass to compel the juvenile to relinquish his blanket. This blanket, acquired through these means, was subsequently allocated to Tariq's ailing mother. This narrative excerpt serves to elucidate the multifaceted nuances inherent in human behavior, particularly within the challenging environment of a refugee camp, where the imperative of survival can lead

individuals to make ethically intricate decisions in their pursuit of securing their own welfare and that of their loved ones.

This study analyzes Tariq's use of violence staged by his previous exposure to violence in Afghanistan and crucial environment in refugee camp. Tariq can be a fictional character of the novel however situation and scenario, which is painted through Tariq's life and narrative, is a depiction of real life and its bitter reality for survival. Cassaignard-Viaud reemphasizes, "the use of violence as a legitimate mean to achieve some end" (Cassaignard-Viaud 19). It can be analyzed that the decision Tariq takes is the result of circumstances he (Tariq) faces and eventually he has no other options left for him. Steenkamp in her scholarly article, *The Legacy of War: Conceptualizing a 'Culture of Violence' to Explain Violence after Peace Accords*, states the driving force of this violence that, "the upheavals in conflicts have methodically dismantled and eroded the communal support systems that previously offered assistance and protection" (Steenkamp 264).

Another instance that fits on this issue of violence from the novel can be extracted from the life of Mariam. The act of murder of Rasheed by Mariam is a significant and crucial one, which results through the exploitation, and sexual abuse Mariam faces throughout her life. When Rasheed comes to know that Tariq is back and Aziza (young girl) of Laila is the daughter of Tariq. Rasheed, as usual, beats Laila and no law is there to stop this violent physical abuse of Rasheed. In the toolshed, Mariam grabbed the shovel.

> … Mariam saw that she was no longer struggling. He's going to kill her, she thought. He really means to. And Mariam could not, would not, allow that to happen. He'd taken so much from her in twenty-seven years of marriage. She would not watch him take Laila too (Hosseini 318).

Similar to the idea discussed above (Tariq's use of violence) Mariam does the same in order to stop the violence being practiced by Rasheed. However, it further extends as in Mariam's case she uses violence to stop violence, which results in the murder of Rasheed. However, it should be kept in mind Mariam only resisted but she has no other options left except to save themselves. Cassaignard-Viaud argues that when violence is in its most prevalent forms "individuals may take justice in their own hands" just to sort out or tackle the violence (Cassaignard-Viaud 18). To prove this point an excerpt from Steenkamp's

article fits on the idea that previous exposure to violence allows the legitimization of "individual's use of violence" (Steenkamp 263). On an individual level, sustained exposure to violence as a sensory experience leads to persistent psychological distress when such violence becomes internalized. Failure to address this internalization, coupled with the introduction of new anxieties and doubts, perpetuates the dominance of violent norms and values in shaping behaviors.

Mariam's story underscores the importance of considering the gender-specific dimensions of violence, which often remain hidden within broader discussions of conflict and post-war reconstruction. Her resilience and eventual sacrifice offer a poignant critique of patriarchal structures, emphasizing the need to address gender-based violence as a distinct and critical issue. Laila's resilience in the face of relentless violence, her struggle for survival, and her determination to create a better future for her children highlight the complexities of living through prolonged conflict. Her story exemplifies how women navigate, resist, and survive in violent environments, providing a nuanced understanding of gendered violence that complements and extends Steenkamp's broader analysis. Steenkamp's framework of institutional responses to violence lacks this intimate portrayal of individual suffering and resilience (Steenkamp 103).

4.3.2.2 Internationally Organized Crime

The study further moves on by unveiling the intervention of United States of America and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in sustaining culture of violence in Afghanistan. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini portrays finely the policies of United States of America to intervene in Afghanistan to stage chaos in the community by aiding armed groups in the violent conflicts against Soviet Union. In addition to that, United States of America brings continuity to war throughout the novel either directly or through indirect intervention or proxy war. Furthermore, USA does not stop here, America stages a mission to uproot Al-Qaeda, Talibans and Mujahideen who once America aided by providing armaments. This brings forth the continuous upheavals and turmoil in communities. One of such instances can be extracted from Hosseini's novel when American authorities (President) start providing "Mujahideen Stinger Missiles to down the Soviet helicopters" (Hosseini 101).

There is a point this study disagrees, Hosseini, having a US (United States) nationality, through the voice of his characters (for example Laila etcetera) legitimizes the invasion and intervention of America for the betterment of Afghanistan. Nevertheless, this is the one side of the coin. It is America that sets the roots of terrorism and extreme violence by aiding and supporting the armed groups for its personal cause. Even Rasheed (himself) is a contrary character but he rightly says that Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A) supported the wrong faction and armed group by putting "all the guns" given to them "in eighties" are now "killing children and women" (Hosseini 189). Steenkamp argues that international bodies play a crucial role in sustaining culture of violence through the "flow and [provision] of weapons in the society" even after the war and peaceful environments (Steenkamp 39). Later it can be seen after the twin towers collision, America, for its sovereignty and standing "declare[s] war" against those who were once backed by America and Central Intelligence Agency (Hosseini 349). When Laila comes back to Afghanistan again from Pakistan, she faces violent scenarios again. However this time it is the turn of "American bombs" (Hosseini 350). It is the superpower America, which has once again initiated the provision of armaments "to the warlords" (Hosseini 350).

This study opines that war has shown to be an inadequate approach of addressing the Afghan people's long-standing problems. As the restless specter of battle has continually plagued their lives, the illusive embrace of peace and its attendant stability remains beyond their reach. American foreign policy has contributed to this state of things, worsening the situation. Furthermore, the persistence of American military interventions looks set to continue the cycle of unending violence that has unfortunately become the norm in the Afghan people's life. This chaos appears to be the one constant, lasting even in the aftermath of American military intervention in the region.

4.3.3 Conclusion

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini portrays the extreme and violent events of century. The most significant thing that makes the novel unique is Hosseini not only incorporates the insurgency and violence being practiced on international level but he goes an extra mile by incorporating the conflicts between ethnic groups. The word 'thousands' in the title can symbolize the thousands of people who lost their limbs, homes,

and lives in one of the most violent upheavals. This study shows violence not only practiced by groups but also the individuals sometimes to stop the violence and rest to eradicate it. Through the Steenkamp's framework of culture of violence, this study manifests the legitimization of violence for personal means by State, no state actors, individuals and international bodies.

Creating and sustaining a culture of violence can be observed as a matter of interest for state and no state actors both to support their respective purposes or personal means through the use of violence. This study clearly unveils the agenda by painting the events from Soviet Union's invasion, Proxy war of America, launching Jihadist (Mujahideen), to the direct intervention of America by staging a mission operation enduring freedom (OEF). This study shows that the exposure to violent conflicts and direct or subjective violence leads a community on the stage of uncertainty and insecurity henceforth the community or communities have to bear its consequences.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

But have you ever heard a story in which the evil person triumphs at the end?" The boy thought for a while before replying. "No," he said, "but before they lose, they harm the good people. That is what I am afraid of.

-Nadeem Aslam*, The Blind Man's Garden*

I embarked upon this study with the basic argument that selected South Asian literary writings depict subjective violence and culture of violence at various levels in the post accord South Asian communities. I have made an effort to examine the occurrences and cases of subjective violence and violent acts committed by both state and non-state actors. In addition, the emphasis of this research has been on highlighting the use of violence and repression by the state through its institutions of repression to fight the terrorist threats posed by radicalized organizations.

I have endeavored to uncover responses to the research questions that propelled the initiation of this study, employing a meticulous examination of the selected works. These questions have served a dual purpose, refining the study's objectives and guiding a systematic analysis. Primarily, my focus has revolved around understanding how the chosen texts depict the surge in violence within South Asian cultures subsequent to the events of 9/11. Furthermore, I have examined the interplay between state authorities and non-state actors, investigating their mutual reinforcement of the culture of violence within the examined texts. This exploration extends to an assessment of the ramifications stemming from such collaboration. Employing conceptual frameworks such as Steenkamp's culture of violence and Žižek's manifestations of violence, I have utilized these theoretical perspectives as analytical lenses while consistently aligning with the overarching research questions.

I have utilized the lens of Žižek to map out the manifestations of violence and violent upheavals in the primary texts. I have also investigated various factors that create and sustain culture of violence in the texts by using the model of Steenkamp. I have analyzed how Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and Tanweer' *The Scatter Here Is Too*

Great illustrate the political and ethnic violence. Similarly, I have also investigated the international and religious violence in Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*. Steenkamp maps various factors that may create and sustain culture of violence and make the norms and values of a culture violent. Through this, I have explored the factors that contributed to sustain culture of violence in the primary texts. This shows that these factors not only affect culture but also the communities that are struggling for peace and most importantly not their stakeholders but the common inhabitants of metropolis become their victims.

The study discussed the primary texts/novels Tanweer's *The Scatter Here Is Too Great*, Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*, and Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by comparing and contrasting the selected texts with respect to the framework discussed in Chapter Three, operating on the belief that comparative literature has "intrinsically a content and form which facilitate the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of literature" (Zepetnek 13). The three novels under discussion; *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, *Burnt Shadows*, and *The Scatter Here Is Too Great,* are from three different authors and three different regions. However, the event that ties these novels together is the collision of twin towers (9/11) and a South Asian community. This section sheds light on the similarities and differences in the above mentioned writings which is the primary focus of this chapter. Jahan references Wellek and Warren, who similarly articulate that comparative literature endeavors to delineate not only parallels and affinities but also divergences among literary works (48).

Since any definition of power somewhat touches on ideas like influence, authority, and legitimacy, power is a difficult term to describe. Power, according to Hague et al., is a component of politics since, without it, a government would be as meaningless as a vehicle without an engine. In addition, the reason for this is that power is the primary political resource that allows rulers to both subjugate and gain advantage over their subjects. According to Hay, it is critical to comprehend that "policies, distribution, and exercise[s]" are the results of possessing power. Nevertheless, power refers to the ability of a person or group of people to influence the behavior of other people or groups in the way that they choose. In the realm of scholarly discourse, power is elucidated as the capacity to exert influence over the policy choices of other actors through the application of rigorous punitive measures in response to acts of non-compliance. Steenkamp asserts that it is power

and its struggle that makes authorities stake holders to "practice violence [over] their subjects" (Steenkamp 48).

Khaled Hosseini's novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* illustrates a vivid picture of country and a region festered by not only ideological contrastive ideas but also ethnic, religious and the most important of all international bodies and their conflicts. The manifestation of violence for the lust of power and hold through the bloodshed and killing of Hazaras and Tajiks groups who are "minorit[ies]" by the "Pashtuns", the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan (Hosseini 117). This study opines that Hosseini's novel portrays power and its struggle as a tool to dominate others throughout. For the Talibans it is like grabbing the whole country in their arms, for individuals like Rasheed it is a tool to legitimize their control over the subjects like his wives (Laila and Mariam) in the name of their manliness. In addition to that on a broader scope power and its struggle, for the hegemonic or international (superpowers) bodies like America and Russia is to dictate the weak countries practice their authority. In this analysis, it is observed that *A Thousand Splendid Suns* as compared to other primary texts of the study is more concerned with the regional, cultural and ethnic upheavals that further scale upward from individual to international level. This supports the idea of Steenkamp on violence and factors that act as a tool to sustain it. Nevertheless, it does not mean that international bodies and the violence employed by hegemonic powers have no impact on it. This study carefully claims that violence, its manifestations and the factors to sustain violence and Culture of Violence are a back and forth process that can be initiated from global or international level to collective or regional level and further individual level or its vice versa.

In comparison to the first novel Bilal Tanweer's *The Scatter Here Is Too Great* provides the vivid picture of cultural norms and values being polluted by the violence and its manifestation. On one hand, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* describes the situation of a country and various ethnic groups residing in it as a whole; while *The Scatter Here Is Too Great* depicts a condition of a city shattered like a "windscreen" (Tanweer 07). Karachi, the former capital city of Pakistan, is festered by the upheavals and political turmoil. The metropolis and lives of its inhabitants are affected by the violence in the result of various political, state, and international struggles for power and authority. Zia ul Haq, the dictator overthrows a political government and oppresses his political rivals through all means.

There is a violent visible struggle by the "comrade[s]" against this dictatorship (Tanweer 22). In contrast to violent conflicts in ethnic groups in Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* the novel of Tanweer portrays the rivalry between the state and its subjects. In addition to that, Tanweer's novel *The Scatter Here Is Too Great* also illustrates the resistance between different politically "armed groups" and radicalized groups (Tanweer 125). This study also brings Steenkamp's idea into account, the use and possession of illegal arms and guns by civilians for their defense just because of the chaos and the presence of military and radicalized groups in the society. Nevertheless, the idea and the common grounds that tie both of the novels together are "Islamization" and the violent norms and values being practiced in the name of Islam (Tanweer 52). However, this study claims that the concept of Islamization and the norms and values to form a religious regime are the ways to naturalize and normalize the use of violence over its subjects.

Kamila Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows* is unique and versatile in its own way. From international level to national, ethnic, regional, and further individual level it illustrates different dimensions of violence and factors that sustain culture of violence. In comparison to the previous two primary texts that are limited to particular regions *Burnt Shadows* extends and incorporates the violence being manifested on international level. Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* maps the broader area from the rivalry between hegemonic powers to control and sustain their authority over the rest of the nations in the name of atomic bombings to the proxy war sustained and strengthened by America. In addition, the power dynamics that transpired in 1945 precipitated the nuclear arms race between Pakistan and India during the 1990s. Shamsie articulates the poignant repercussions of the partition of the Indian subcontinent, portraying it as a symbolic representation of numerous political and psychological calamities within the familial context. Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows* throughout paints chaos, upheavals, violence and political turmoil just for struggle and lust for power and gaining authority. Although, in this novel, like the previous two texts religion also plays a key role in sustaining violent norms and values but it varies through different situations. Hiroko thinks that "Nagasaki" would not be bombed as most of its population is Christian even after that Americans dropped atomic bombs on Nagasaki (Shamsie 10). Similarly, on the other hand Talibans and Mujahideen fight against the Soviet Union in the name of Islam and America supports this proxy war. Hence this study

claims that religion is something utilized as a tool to manipulate the subjects of hegemonic powers to gain authority and legalize or naturalize the use of violence which Bourdieu labels as "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu).

In summary, the study encapsulates an examination of socio-economic inequities compelling individuals to resort to armed resistance against the governmental apparatus. The literary works delineate the tactical orchestration of violence by non-state entities and individuals, aimed at eradicating the hegemony of centralized state authority, thereby facilitating the reconfiguration of societal dynamics into non-hierarchical frameworks. The inherent value of power, endowing its possessors with distinct advantages and privileges, engenders an inevitable and fierce contestation in the pursuit of power.

The intersection of violence and urban structures within South Asian metropolitan areas reveals a complex narrative that is deeply intertwined with the psychological responses of individuals and communities. Urban spaces, often marked by socio-economic disparities, become battlegrounds where the manifestations of violence are not merely physical but also psychological. The persistent exposure to violence and its ramifications cultivates a culture of fear, which can lead to desensitization or a paradoxical normalization of violence within these communities. The psychological impact of living in such environments often manifests in heightened anxiety, mistrust, and a pervasive sense of helplessness, further perpetuating cycles of violence. Therefore, the narrative of violence in South Asian literature is not only a reflection of external conflicts but also a commentary on the internal struggles faced by individuals trying to navigate their lives amidst chaos.

While psychological trauma plays a significant role in shaping the experiences of characters within urban environments, the study also engages with Slavoj Žižek's typology of violence to extend the analysis beyond the psychological domain. Žižek's framework identifies three types of violence: subjective, systemic, and symbolic, each of which contributes to the multifaceted nature of violence in South Asian metropolitan narratives. Subjective violence is most evident in the overt physical acts of aggression depicted in the texts, but the study reveals that this form of violence is merely the surface manifestation of deeper systemic issues. Systemic violence, often hidden from immediate view, is embedded in political and economic systems that perpetuate inequality and oppression,

particularly in post-9/11 societies where state and non-state actors wield significant influence. Symbolic violence, on the other hand, operates through language, culture, and ideology, reinforcing existing power dynamics and sustaining the conditions that enable both subjective and systemic violence to thrive. This broader understanding of violence underscores the complex interplay of historical, political, and cultural forces that shape the lives of characters in these urban settings.

Conclusively, by comparing and contrasting the primary texts, this research shows the struggle for power and tension between the state and its subjects. Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked that individuals also use violence to bounce back. The perpetration of this act has, in a manner, contaminated the cultural milieu, distorting its norms and values to the extent that violence and its outward expressions appear rational for survival within these societal cohorts. Consequently, the legitimation of such behavior and the ensuing power struggle have exacerbated the urban landscapes and communities in South Asia. In the aftermath, societies suffer the repercussions of violent conflicts, grappling with prolonged insecurity, loss of life, and enduring material damage that persists long after the cessation of confrontations.

5.1 Findings of the Study

I opted for a qualitative research methodology, given its interpretative and exploratory nature. Consequently, the outcomes of this investigation are likely to lack generalizability. It has to be noticed, bearing in mind the research questions of the study, that the selected texts and novels display the manifestations of violence in South Asian Communities at various levels. The study, through the analysis of selected works shows, the influence of cultural and historical factors in sustaining the culture of violence.

A religion is a most crucial element in anyone's life. This element can dictate the life of an individual or a group of individuals. Through the analysis of the selected texts, I have found out that Western Countries or the hegemonic powers that tend to be secular utilized the religion as a tool to manipulate third world countries (especially South Asian communities). Through the manipulation of religious perspective, these western hegemonic powers (America) inculcated their agenda to practice their own authority over the remaining. Through using the ideologies of 'Islamization' they not only manifested

violent upheavals but also polluted the norms and values of South Asian communities and their cultures. In addition to the discussion above, the next finding I have found, which is quite similar to the above one. The selected South Asian works illustrate a connection between South Asian communities (especially Pakistan) due to their geopolitical standings. Pakistan, as a proximate ally to the United States of America, seems to reinforce the USA's hegemonic influence in the region by granting access to its territory for operations, notably in the context of the 'war on terror' and Operation Enduring Freedom.

This psychological dimension is pivotal in understanding how urban violence shapes the collective memory and identity of communities. The narratives in the selected texts illustrate how individuals internalize their experiences of violence, leading to a fractured sense of self and community. The psychological trauma inflicted by violence can hinder social cohesion and collective agency, as individuals become more focused on survival than on fostering communal ties. Furthermore, the urban structure itself often reflects these psychological scars, with neighborhoods becoming physical representations of trauma, decay, and the lingering effects of violence. As such, the exploration of violence in these literary works necessitates an understanding of the psychological consequences that extend beyond the immediate events, affecting the urban landscape and its inhabitants for generations.

The narrativization of violence in the selected texts thus becomes a vehicle for exposing how characters navigate power dynamics that are shaped by both state and non-state actors. Through Žižek's typology, we can see how systemic and symbolic violence not only harm individuals but also fragment communities and foster cycles of violence that persist over generations. In post-9/11 societies, where the global "war on terror" has intensified surveillance, militarization, and civil unrest, the characters' experiences reflect the ways in which historical and political forces sustain violence. The interplay of these forces is particularly evident in how violence becomes legitimized by institutional power, whether through law enforcement, government propaganda, or religious ideologies. As characters contend with these realities, their personal struggles illustrate the profound impact of structural violence on their identities and their relationships with others.

In addition, keeping the significance of the study in mind, it can be observed that the misuse of powers of state authorities against its own subjects allows the individuals to take up arms and guns. This ultimately leads to destruction and violent upheavals in the community. The lives of the characters of the selected texts show the drastic change and violent behavior in their interpersonal relationships with the other characters due to their previous exposure to violence. Nevertheless, the manifestations of violence and the factors that create and sustain culture of violence sometimes may scale upwards from individual to collective level and then state and international level. Violence is a phenomenon that cannot be generalized, on the contrary to the Steenkamp's model that shows violence and culture of violence from collective to individual level this research further extends its limitations. In addition to the limitations of Steenkamp's model, this research, through the analysis of primary texts, shows that individuals' prior exposure to violence and trauma may also lead them to behave violently that may scale upwards to global level.

Consequently, this study goes an extra mile that through analysis of the selected works it is shown that violence employed by state and non-state actors and further sustaining it, may prove to fester the South Asian Communities. Terrorism exhibits multifarious detrimental consequences in many domains of a country, encompassing its social, political, and educational aspects, among others. In addition to the severe human cost, it takes a toll on vital infrastructure components. When it comes to a third-world country like Pakistan, recovery from the effects of terrorism is particularly complex, mainly because of the inherent limitations imposed by scarce resources.

Moreover, through the analysis of the selected literary works, I have found that violence and culture of violence in all of their dynamics put a negative impact on society. The violent upheavals and perpetration carried out by state authorities and non-state actors only target the common inhabitants of the metropolis. In this way, the public property and their lives are threatened and only common people are being scapegoated for that. The opening section of *The Scatter Here Is Too Great*, the condition of the Afghan community in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and the metropolis (Karachi) in *Burnt Shadows* show (discussed in the analysis section) how the societies are entangled in the consequences of violence and its manifestations. In addition to that, I claim that these violent upheavals and sustained culture of violence bring chaos in the South Asian communities even after the

peace accords have been signed. The policy makers and stakeholders need to readdress the policies, the issues that the communities face, and the factors and norms and values that sustain the culture of violence.

The role of urban structures in facilitating or exacerbating violence cannot be overlooked. These structures, designed often without regard for the needs of marginalized communities, can contribute to the conditions that foster violence. Inhabitants of these urban spaces, faced with a lack of resources, opportunities, and safety, may resort to violence as a means of asserting agency or seeking justice. The psychological toll of these environments can lead to a cycle of violence where individuals, feeling disenfranchised and powerless, engage in acts that further destabilize their communities. This cyclical nature of violence and its psychological underpinnings emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of urban environments in South Asia, as they are not just backdrops for violent narratives but active participants in the shaping of these experiences.

Žižek's concept of symbolic violence also helps illuminate how cultural and ideological practices contribute to the perpetuation of violence. In the texts, symbolic violence manifests in the exclusion and marginalization of certain communities, as well as in the ways language and social norms reinforce hierarchical structures. The characters' interactions frequently reveal the insidious effects of this type of violence, where oppression is internalized and perpetuated even without overt physical conflict. In this way, the study highlights how narrativizing violence serves not only as a commentary on physical acts but also as a critique of the cultural and ideological frameworks that sustain violence in both fictional and real-world settings.

In this contemporary era, several NGOs and institutions have been formulated to sustain a peaceful environment globally. However, on the contrary, these institutions and hegemonic powers dictate other nations even after signing the peace accords. After conducting the analysis this study provides one other finding that all the wars even after the peace accords, are initiated by First World countries or the hegemonic powers that pretend to be peacekeepers. These first world countries "bomb us from the skies, then they work hard to cure our stress" (Hanif 55). Moreover, it is the 'First World' order that festered the world with the upheavals and ultimately the developing countries like Pakistan,

Afghanistan and Iraq etcetera have to bear its consequences. This study by bringing Kwame Nkrumah's work (discussed in the previous chapters of analysis) carefully claims the hegemonic powers (particularly America) have formulated a territory in the South Asian communities to practice their experiments. Based on the outcomes derived from the analysis of primary texts, I am poised to proffer recommendations for prospective researchers engaging in the exploration of South Asian English literature.

Moving a step forward in findings, Steenkamp touches on the continuity of violence across generations but does not delve deeply into its intergenerational impacts. This study finds that violence has long-lasting effects that transcend individual experiences and affect entire families and communities. It subverts Steenkamp's model by emphasizing personal, cultural, and intergenerational dimensions, while also acknowledging and complementing her broader analysis of global and institutional violence. Through these literary narratives, this study enriches the discourse on violence, advocating for a more inclusive and multifaceted approach to understanding and addressing the complexities of violent environments.

By examining the psychological effects of violence on urban structures, this study also highlights the importance of addressing mental health and community resilience in the aftermath of violent events. The narratives in the analyzed texts point to the need for comprehensive approaches that consider psychological healing as a crucial component of recovery and rebuilding. Community-based interventions that focus on restoring trust and fostering social cohesion can help mitigate the long-term effects of violence. Moreover, these interventions should be informed by the unique cultural contexts of South Asian societies, ensuring that solutions are relevant and effective in addressing the specific challenges faced by these communities. Recognizing the interplay between urban structures, psychological well-being, and violence allows for a more holistic understanding of how to address the issues plaguing South Asian metropolitan areas.

In incorporating Žižek's typology, this study contributes to a broader understanding of how violence is sustained, resisted, and normalized within urban structures. The characters' interpersonal relationships, often marked by tension and mistrust, reflect the larger socio-political conflicts that define their environments. These relationships serve as

microcosms of the power struggles between state and non-state actors, illustrating how individuals are implicated in the broader systems of violence. The narratives demonstrate how the personal and collective impacts of violence extend beyond immediate trauma to shape social and political structures for generations. Ultimately, this analysis shows that the narrativization of violence in South Asian literature reveals not only the devastating effects of violence but also the possibilities for resistance and resilience in the face of seemingly inescapable conflict.

Moreover, Steenkamp's model acknowledges the importance of state and institutional responses in managing violence and rebuilding societies. Žižek's distinction between subjective and objective violence offers a critical lens for understanding how systemic violence is embedded in societal structures and ideologies. This perspective subverts Steenkamp's focus on state and institutional responses by emphasizing the underlying cultural and ideological forces that perpetuate violence. Žižek's work suggests that addressing violence requires not only institutional reforms but also a fundamental critique of the ideological constructs that sustain systemic oppression. In addition, this study extends this discussion, since these frameworks offer Western narratives and cannot be completely implemented to South Asian communities which have diverse cultures and their standings in comparison to the west. In order to understand violence and its impacts on cultures of South Asian communities need to be seen through Eastern/South Asian lenses and historical contexts.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

This study opens the doorway and allows the researcher to recommend to future researchers to explore and analyze the Pakistani English literature and collectively the literature produced and translated by South Asian writers from various dimensions and perspectives. Similar to the primary texts of this study various contemporary novels like *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* by Mohammed Hanif and *A Burning* by Megha Majumdar can be analyzed through this lens. Nevertheless, contemporary translated literature of Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Nepal also manifest the upheavals and violence being practiced in the society. *Brotherless Night* by V. V. Ganeshananthan and *Fruits of the Barren Tree* by Lekhnath Chhetri, translated by Anurag Basnet illustrate the resistance and political

struggle for authority and power. The above mentioned novels portray the festered environment of countries entangled in civil wars and most violent upheavals.

Since this study was delimited to manifestations of violence and Culture of Violence, after analyzing the primary texts this study suggests the future researchers to analyze these primary texts through the perspective of city literature. In the dimension of the city literature these novels can be analyzed particularly by using the lens of Flânerie (the act of roaming around to appreciate or describe the microcosm) and cognitive mapping. Furthermore, this study also walks an extra mile by suggesting the future researchers to analyze the Pakistani and South Asian Anglophone literature through the lens of the apocalypse. The researcher hopes that this thesis will help and aid the future researchers to explore the Pakistani and South Asian Anglophone literature by using these grounds.

Nevertheless, following an in-depth analysis of existing literature in the course of this research, the scholar puts forth a critique of syndicates and organizations providing foreign scholarships. Subsequent researchers could examine literary works through an interdisciplinary lens of Re-Orientalism and Violence. The researcher asserts that, based on a meticulous interpretation of contemporary literary works, these scholarships contribute to the infusion of Western ideologies into the academic and competency realms of scholars. Consequently, this engenders a form of violence and ideological tensions within society. Last but not the least future researchers can also cite and use this thesis as the foundation of their study. The researcher believes that these recommendations will be fruitful for subsequent research projects by using Pakistani and South Asian Anglophone literature.

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APPENDIX A

Level	Location	Manifestation
International Level	Formal links	• International conflict resolution
	Informal links	• International organized crime • International arms smuggling
State Level	State security apparatus	• Official use of violence • Extra-judicial actions • Devolved use of violence
	Judiciary, law and order	• Inefficient criminal justice system • Weak state • Impunity for past violence/atrocities
	Political government	• Post-war reconstruction policies • Glorification of violence
	Economic	• Post-war policies
Collective Level	Family	• Disruption of families • Revenge
	Peers	• Marginalization of young people • Social rewards
	Community/ethnic group	• Limited sanctioning • Target construction • Glorification of violence • Breakdown of social capital
	Religion	• Divine sanctioning of violence
Individual Level	Personal	• Exposure to violence
	Psychological	• Inadequate trauma support • Isolation, fear and insecurity

Table 1: Factors that Create and Sustain a Culture of Violence (Steenkamp 38)