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STATE POWER AND THE SPECTACLE OF DEATH: VIOLENCE, IMPUNITY AND MARTYRDOM IN FATIMA BHUTTO'S MEMOIR "*THE HOUR OF THE WOLF*"

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Abstract
This article examines the problem of state violence and institutional impunity in Pakistan through a close textual analysis of Fatima Bhutto's memoir The Hour of the Wolf. It argues that political violence in Pakistan is not an institutional failure but a recurring mode of governance in which law is selectively suspended, accountability is indefinitely deferred, and death is symbolically managed through public narratives of martyrdom. To conceptualize this process, the article develops an original theoretical framework, the Exception-Martyrdom Apparatus, by integrating Giorgio Agamben's notion of the state of exception with Judith Butler's theory of grievability. Drawing on sustained close readings of the memoir, the study demonstrates how violence is administratively coordinated, how impunity is produced through delay and silence, and how martyrdom functions as a form of political eyewash that substitutes moral reverence for justice. Rather than offering narrative closure, The Hour of the Wolf exposes the structural conditions that allow political killing to persist without accountability. The article positions the memoir as a critical counter-archive of state power and contributes to South Asian Studies by reframing impunity as governance rather than breakdown.

Key words: *state violence, impunity, political memoir, martyrdom, grievability, state of exception, public mourning, Pakistani politics*

Introduction

The historical order of state violence in the modern world has been paradoxical: constitutional legality, legal institutions and democratic processes exist formally, but the lethal force is often used without any significant accountability. The extrajudicial murders, enforced disappearances, custodial deaths, and politically motivated assassinations have been permanent elements of the governance system in Pakistan, especially during the political turmoil or in cases of rivalry between elites (Alavi, 1972; Jalal, 1995; Siddiqa, 2017). Instead of signifying the failure of the law, this violence is frequently carried out via state agencies themselves; police, intelligence, and administrative, thus making impunity a normalized form of rule instead of its exception (Cheema, 2018; Hussain, 2020).

South Asian political scholars have begun to highlight that the problem of impunity in Pakistan cannot be satisfactorily described by institutional weakness, corruption, or lack of democracy, only (Ahmed, 2013; Jaffrelot, 2015). Although valuable, these explanations cannot explain the

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persistence of violence in cases when the perpetrators are publicly identified, the inquiries are announced, and the legal procedures are allegedly pursued. Under these conditions, the law does not disappear or cease to exist, it is selectively suspended, postponed, or procedurally inactive. The result of this structural situation is a political climate whereby violence becomes administratively viable and morally consumable without legal penalty (Agamben, 2005; Mbembe, 2003).

This pattern of violence followed by silence, delay, and symbolic closure has been shown in high profile attacks on politicians, some of which also included political families, in the history of politics in Pakistan. The Bhutto family is at the heart of this narrative both as political interlocutors and as individuals who have over time served as the conduit through which the constraints of accountability in Pakistan have been openly flouted (Jalal, 2014). *The Hour of the Wolf* by Fatima Bhutto comes out as a very important political writing in this context. Not only is the book a personal memoir but also a continuity of critique of the way state violence is carried out, concealed, and neutralized morally in the political system of Pakistan.

The murder of her father, Mir Murtaza Bhutto, is not recounted in the autobiography as an act of impulse or chaos but a well-planned operation with the use of police, the manipulation of infrastructures, and the denial of emergency medical services (Bhutto, 2026). The story is obsessed with predicting logistics; streetlights were killed, police office nailed down, warning shots were issued, so violence became institutionalized process, but not an accidental overkill. Such administrative detail also directly counters the prevailing political discourses which treat such deaths as unfortunate accidents or inevitable consequences of chaos.

More importantly, *The Hour of the Wolf* records the consequences of violence: not justice, but impunity. The memoir documents questions awaiting answers, inquiries awaiting a verdict, and discussions among people that slowly relinquish responsibility in favour of emotional control and symbolic comfort (Bhutto, 2026). This procedure shows impunity not a state failure but one of its state techniques. Violence is not denied at all, but it is subsumed into a political culture that values closure more than justice.

Although there is an increasing academic literature on the topic of political violence in Pakistan, no adequate theorization of this convergence of extraordinary violence, institutional impunity, and symbolic martyrdom is provided by literary and cultural scholarship. The literature on Pakistani life-writing is mostly dedicated to trauma or memory or identity without capturing the political machine of transforming death into a moral spectacle (Smith and Watson, 2010; Shamsie, 2017). On the same note, the political studies tend to ignore the role of martyrdom and social grieving as technology that stabilizes sovereign authority by diverting the masses out of the law (Butler, 2009; Mahmood, 2016).

This paper fills that gap by placing *The Hour of the Wolf* in the context of a wider theoretical debate on state power and grievability. Based on the idea of the state of exception developed by Giorgio Agamben and the theory of grievable lives introduced by Judith Butler, the paper offers a combined analytical approach, the Exception Martyrdom Apparatus, to understand the way the Pakistani state deals with political death. This machine is run through a sequence where law is suspended to allow violence, responsibility is already postponed forever, and death is then made sacred by stories of martyrdom that offer emotional closure but not justice.

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In *The Hour of the Wolf* martyrdom is handled with a lot of scepticism. Although the discourse of the populace is continuously striving to frame political deaths as a noble sacrifice, the text defies this redemptive logic by dwelling on unresolved causality, and institutional responsibility (Bhutto, 2026). In this sense, martyrdom serves not as a form of resistance, but as political eyewash; a symbolic process by which the state can be made to seem morally responsive and avoid legal scrutiny. Through the contrasts of the deaths of political leaders, the victims of lynching, and marginalized groups, the memoir reveals the unequal distribution of grievability in the political order of Pakistan itself.

The value of this work is that *The Hour of the Wolf* is put in place as a critical counter-archive, recording the subjective experience of state violence where official documents cannot. The memoir questions the prevailing forms of political death memory in Pakistan by denying the narrative closure and emotional balm.

In this regard, this paper poses interrelated questions: How does *The Hour of the Wolf* exemplify state violence as institutional practice and not disorder? How does the memoir expose impunity as a form of governance in the political system of Pakistan? What is the mechanism of martyrdom as a strategy of replacing justice with moral spectacle? And what can the Exception-Martyrdom Apparatus do to allow us to analyse South Asian political life-writing in terms of transferability?

By answering these questions, the article aims to prove that political violence in Pakistan is supported not only by coercive force but also by well-controlled grief and sacrifice discourses. Thus, it contends that *The Hour of the Wolf* is a significant intervention into normalizing impunity, and it demands that political death is not complete until accountability is called by name.

State Violence and Sovereign Power in Pakistan

The issue of state violence in Pakistan has been widely analysed in the context of political sociology, history, and security studies, with scholars dating it to the colonial forms of governance, the military hegemony in the aftermath of the independence, and the continued centrality of coercive institutions in political life (Alavi, 1972; Jalal, 1995; Ahmed, 2013). Violence has instead been revealed to be a normal system by which the state deals with dissent, political rivalry, and territorial dominance (Siddiqa, 2017; Verkaaik, 2004).

The original definition of postcolonial state provided by Hamza Alavi recognizes coercion as a basic component of government, especially in the states where legitimacy is fragile, and political power is often undisputed (Alavi, 1972). Expanding on this, Ayesha Jalal (1995) illustrates how the alternating nature of civil and military regimes in Pakistan has embedded the political culture where violence is accepted as a tool of stability and not as a failure of governance. All these studies put forward the fact that the violence of the state in Pakistan is not incidental but institutional.

More recent work has moved beyond visible military rule to the more mundane activities of policing, surveillance and administrative coercion. The ethnographic research conducted by Verkaaik (2004) on Karachi depicts how police brutality, intelligence activities and informal rule creates an environment where law and lawlessness co-exist. Likewise, Gayer (2014) states that urban violence in Pakistan should be conceptualized as ordered disorder where coercive force is applied in a selective way in order to control political and social life.

The state in this literature is not conceived as non-existent or ineffective, but rather it is hyper-present in its ability to determine when law is applicable and when it is not. This observation is close to the notion of *state of exception* introduced by Giorgio Agamben (2005), which has been

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actively used to understand South Asian politics ever since (Hussain, 2020; Roy, 2019). Theorists believe that emergency powers, counter-terrorism legislation, and informal security practices enable the state to override the rule of law without losing the organizational legitimacy.

However, as much as these studies are useful in mapping the architecture of state violence, they usually fail to go further to explore what comes after violence i.e. systematic absence of accountability. It is especially high in Pakistan, where high-profile political assassinations are often followed by investigations with no verdict, reports with no repercussions, and silence with no resolution among the population (Cheema, 2018; HRCP, 2022). It is under this unresolved land that the issue of impunity is raised as the critical analytical point of concern.

Impunity as Governance: Law, Delay, and Institutional Silence

The concept of impunity in Pakistan has traditionally been considered because of weak institutions, politicization of the judiciary, or military meddling in civilian governance (Jaffrelot, 2015; Khan, 2017). Courts slowness, flawed investigations, and executive meddling are all the order of the day as reasons as to why the perpetrators of political violence cannot be prosecuted (Cheema, 2018). Although these considerations are admittedly pertinent, recent research proposes that these explanations run the danger of clouding the structural logic of impunity.

Instead of being a sign of the failure of the legal system, impunity is more a method of rule, which is sustained by the art of delay, administrative vagueness and partial application of the law (Agamben, 2005; Mbemba, 2003). The idea of necropolitics by Achille Mbemba is especially relevant in this case because it prefigures the ability of the state to determine not only the people who will live and die, but also whose death will have political implications and whose death will have been made inconsequential (Mbemba, 2003).

Nasser Hussain (2020) illustrates the way in which the Pakistani context promotes the application of emergency laws and security doctrines that generate a legal framework within which violence is exercised without legal consequences. This does not involve a formal suspension of the constitution; rather it depends upon the so-called “jurisprudence of emergency” in which the law is indefinitely postponed. Even delay itself becomes a political tool.

This trend is always recorded in human rights reports. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2022), the prosecution of state actors, especially police and security services, is hardly ever successfully prosecuted, even when the evidence is publicly accessible. The lack of accountability is therefore not a coincidence but an expected outcome.

Nevertheless, the study of culture and literature has just started to take impunity as a serious thematic and structural issue. Although studies of trauma are concerned with psychological aftermath (Caruth, 1996), and studies of memory are concerned with remembrance and forgetting (Pandey, 2006; Zamindar, 2007), fewer scholars examine the role that narratives must reveal the *mechanics* of non-justice. A very rich area of such analysis can be found in political life-writing, where violence is recorded but also the waiting, silence and frustration that surround it in the long term (Smith and Watson, 2010).

It is in this scholarly blank that *The Hour of the Wolf* is of critical importance. The memoir prefigures impunity as experience instead of failure by explaining not just the violence itself but also the institutional reactions to it. However, this aspect of the text has never been theorized adequately by the existing literary criticism, especially as far as the political system of Pakistan is concerned.

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Martyrdom, Grievability, and the Symbolic Management of Political Death.

Martyrdom takes the frontline in the political culture of Pakistan alongside the violence and impunity. Martyrdom, whether used in a nationalist iconography or in a religious discourse, is a potent story in which death is hallowed and politicized (Asad, 2007; Mahmood, 2016). Researchers have demonstrated that martyrdom may act as a place of opposition, solidarity and formation of collective identities (Butler, 2009; Devji, 2008).

But the new theoretical literature makes this celebratory interpretation more difficult. The notion of *grievable lives* by Judith Butler questions the notion that all deaths are equally mourned by suggesting that the states are actively involved in controlling which lives should be grieved by the populace (Butler, 2009). In this formulation, grief is not simply emotional but highly political, it creates the limits of recognition and accountability.

This politics of grievability has been studied within the context of communal violence, the deaths of minority groups, and the role of state in responding to terrorism in South Asia (Roy, 2019; Chatterjee, 2012). These analyses indicate that mass grieving is very selective and serves to support the prevailing structures of power instead of questioning them. In these instances, martyrdom runs the danger of being a figurative alternative to justice.

Talal Asad (2007) warns that the moral language is often instrumentalized by the modern states to justify violence, and the ethical discourses can be used to hide the political responsibility. This observation holds especially true to Pakistan, where political assassinations are often digested into language of sacrifice, patriotism, or tragic necessity. These stories allow emotional resolution without investigation of structural reasons.

The literary texts that do not succumb to such a symbolic closure therefore play a significant critical role. *The Hour of the Wolf* by Bhutto is a repetitive denial of redemptive martyrdom, and a stressing on the incompleteness of political death and the question of responsibility that remains open. However, even though the emotional intensity and political courage of the memoir have been remarked on by reviewers, academic attention to its critique of martyrdom is very sparse.

This paper intrudes by theorizing martyrdom not merely as ideology but as political eyewash; a process that controls mass feeling when justice is lacking. The article combines both the theory of grievability by Butler and the state of exception by Agamben, advancing the idea of Exception-Martyrdom Apparatus which enables the simultaneous analysis of violence, impunity and symbolic mourning.

The Exception–Martyrdom Apparatus: Integrating the State of Exception and Grievability

The analysis of state violence and impunity necessitates any rigorous analysis that must depend on a theoretical framework, which is capable of explaining not only the act of violence, but also the political conditions that make such violence legally irrelevant and morally digestible. The current explanatory frameworks based on institutional failure or democratic deficit are not adequate in the context of Pakistan, where the prevalence of political killings is a common occurrence in the presence of operational institutions but is rarely followed by any consequences (Jalal, 1995; Cheema, 2018). This paper thus evolves a comprehensive theoretical framework that combines two potent streams of political theory, namely the theory of state of exception as developed by Giorgio Agamben and the theory of grievability as developed by Judith Butler. When synthesized, these theories illuminate how violence is both *enabled* and *symbolically neutralized* by the state.

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This synthesis generates what this article calls the Exception -Martyrdom Apparatus; a conceptual framework that describes the functioning of sovereign power in terms of suspension of the law and the ensuing handling of grief in the population. The structure is especially appropriate to the study of *The Hour of the Wolf*, which records the political killing, as well as the institutional silence and symbolic sanctification that ensues.

The State of Exception: Sovereignty and Legal Suspension

The theory of the state of exception by Giorgio Agamben offers some background information to the understanding of how contemporary states exercise their power without legal responsibility. Agamben in *State of Exception* contends that the ability to suspend the law without losing its formal form defines sovereignty. It is as follows: He writes: "The state of exception is not a special kind of law (like the law of war); rather, insofar as it is a suspension of the juridical order itself, it defines law's threshold or limit concept" (Agamben, 2005, p. 4).

This definition is essential since it does not focus on the lack of law but on its strategic inoperability. Law is not abolished; it is simply made inapplicable. Agamben further clarifies: "What is at issue in the state of exception is the suspension of the law itself, the breaking of the nexus between law and its application" (Agamben, 2005, p. 31).

In this kind of structure, the violence perpetrated by states need not be legally justified since it exists in an area in which legality and illegality are reduced to each other. This observation is specific to Pakistan, where extrajudicial murders, police shootings, and political assassinations are frequently preceded by investigations that yield no results (HRCP, 2022; Hussain, 2020).

The theory of Agamben enables us to see impunity as a sovereign technique rather than as an institutional failure. It is exactly through the decision to violate the law that the state shows its power. Agamben notes: "Sovereign power is the power to decide on the exception" (Agamben, 2005, p. 11). This reasoning is apparent in *The Hour of the Wolf* in the organized efforts of police, the denial of emergency medical treatment and the lack of justification that follows. Violence occurs inside the state, through the state, but is not legally remediable. This framework developed by Agamben therefore explains how the possibility of violence is made but fails to give a complete explanation on how such violence is subsequently morally internalized by society. To this end, the theory of grievability by Butler is necessary.

Grievability and the Politics of Mourning

The theory of grievability by Judith Butler deals with the politics of mourning and recognition. In Frames of war, Butler asserts that not every life is equally perceived as deserving of grief, but grievability is a construct created by political and cultural discourse. She says: "Specific lives cannot be apprehended as injured or lost if they are not first apprehended as living" (Butler, 2009, p. 1).

This realization shows that states and societies actively decide on what deaths are important and what ones can be neglected. Butler continues: "If a life is not grievable, it is not quite a life; it is already the unburied, if not the unburiable" (Butler, 2009, p. 25). Grievability is not, then, a natural feeling, but a political state. Mourning transforms into a process by which power is exercised and influences collective memory and moral response. Butler goes further and connects grief to accountability "The public dimension of grief is precisely what allows us to question the differential allocation of grievability" (Butler, 2009, p. 39).

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In South Asian politics, martyrdom is commonly a prevailing frame where death is made significant. Although martyrdom might tend to venerate the deceased, it can also end critical questioning by turning political violence into moral sacrifice (Asad, 2007; Mahmood, 2016). The framework proposed by Butler gives us the opportunity to question how these narratives handle public affect and push responsibility aside.

Bhutto opposes this symbolic closure many times in *The Hour of the Wolf*. Death is not told as a redemptive sacrifice but as an open wound of politics. The theory of Butler, therefore, describes how the issue of death is symbolically dealt with, but it does not describe what legal circumstances permit the violence to take place without any penalty. This weakness requires theoretical amalgamation.

The Exception–Martyrdom Apparatus: An Integrated Conceptual Model

By integrating Agamben's state of exception with Butler's grievability, this study formulates the Exception–Martyrdom Apparatus as its central conceptual framework. This apparatus describes a recurring political mechanism consisting of three interlinked processes:

Exceptional Violence: Law is suspended or rendered inoperative, enabling violence without judicial accountability

Institutional Impunity: Investigations are delayed, diffused, or abandoned, normalizing non-resolution as governance

Symbolic Martyrdom: Death is reframed through public mourning and moral rhetoric, providing emotional closure without justice

Martyrdom in this context is not resistance but a form of political eyewash; a form of token compensation that covers the lack of responsibility. The state seems to be morally answerable and legally inexplicable. This model is especially applicable to Pakistan whereby the death of a political figure is often sanctified despite the causes being unknown. The examination of this process as an apparatus highlights its systemic and repeatable quality, instead of seeing every case of violence as something extraordinary or incidental.

The Exception-Martyrdom Apparatus provides the theoretical grounding for analysing *The Hour of the Wolf* as a political text that exposes the mechanics of impunity. The memoir's emphasis on procedure, delay, and unresolved grief directly corresponds to the three stages of the apparatus. By refusing consolatory martyrdom and insisting on political causality, Bhutto's narrative functions as a counter-archive that disrupts both exceptional legality and managed mourning.

In this way, the theoretical approach does not only sustain the analysis but is the main intellectual contribution of this article that provides a model of analysis that can be transferred to political life-writing in South Asia and elsewhere.

Analysis and Discussion

***The Hour of the Wolf*: State Violence, Impunity and the Symbolic Management of Political Death**

Political memoirs that come out of the elite families of Pakistan tend to swing both ways between personal and national history. *The Hour of the Wolf* by Fatima Bhutto holds a very hot spot in this tradition since it is authored by a first-hand observer of state violence and by a woman whose own family has been the target of political assassination on many occasions. Instead of providing a traditional autobiographical account, the memoir is a prolonged interrogation of the way the

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Pakistani state generates violence, how it copes with its consequences, and how it absconds responsibility by symbolic means.

The main issue that this article is dealing with is not just the presence of political violence but a systematic generation of impunity in its aftermath. The memoir by Bhutto reveals how the executions of killings are carried on with familiar state processes and then buried under procedural silence. The issue is particularly acute in Pakistan, where extrajudicial murders, forced disappearances, and political murders with no suspects have become a routine part of social life.

State Violence and Architecture of impunity.

The Hour of the Wolf is a story of state violence not in terms of rupture and excess but in terms of administrative procedure, revealing the way sovereignty in Pakistan functions, with coordinated action and institutional silence. Following the definition of state of exception as developed by Agamben, the memoir shows that law is not absent or violated; it is just made ineffective during the moment of murder, whereas institutional form is completely preserved.

The story of the murder of her father told by Bhutto is vivid in the way it is logistically accurate. She writes:

> My father was killed on his way home from a political meeting on the outskirts of Karachi. All the streetlights on our road had been shut off, and there were a hundred policemen in wait, some high in the trees in sniper positions. When my father… got out of the car, a signal was fired in the air by an officer charged with identifying my father, the single shot an order to commence firing. (Bhutto, 2026, p. 13)

This text demystifies spontaneous violence. The death of streetlights, the positioning of snipers, and the signal shot make the killing procedurally regulated. Violence in this case is not a mere accident or a retaliatory action but is carried out in the form of familiar state actions. Agamben emphasizes the facts that uniformed police are present in the state, not outside of it.

More importantly, Bhutto focuses on the post-gunfire. The wounded are not taken to emergency facilities: “They never took the men to hospitals with ERs but dropped each of them off at a different clinic around the city, not one capable of saving lives” (Bhutto, 2026, p. 13). This action is representative of what this paper refers to as post-shooting governance, the extension of lethal power by administrative dispersal. The state can make sure that death happens without any one point of legal responsibility by splitting the responsibility of many clinics. Medical abandonment is therefore a continuation of sovereign violence, transforming injury that could be survived into death but is procedurally invisible.

This erasure is opposed by the insistence of bodily suffering on the part of Bhutto: “No matter what people tell me, I know my father suffered and I know he must have been in pain” (Bhutto, 2026, p. 13). Pain here is counterevidence in which the law is silent. The memoir also recurrently prefigures corporeal vulnerability in a bid to combat institutional silence, highlighting the importance of impunity that is perpetuated by the denial of corporeal injury.

Notably, the text does not end in justice or closure. No judgment, no decision, just endless indecision. This lack of narrative is not by chance. It reflects what Bhutto in other places refers to as learned state: “Let sleeping dogs lie, that was what I learned... In some cases, it was preferable, easier, not to know” (Bhutto, 2026, p. 31). In this case, silence is being normalized as survival strategy, a wider political culture where doubting state violence is a risk in itself. Impunity, thus, does not just work by legal procrastination, but by internalizing silence by the citizens themselves.

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Martyrdom as Political Eyewash.

Although the state is facilitating violence in the name of exception, it is counterbalancing these political effects with symbolic martyrdom. Based on the theory of grievability provided by Butler, this section shows how *The Hour of the Wolf* reveals the unequal distribution of grieving and how death is turned into a moral spectacle.

This dynamic can be seen in what Bhutto said about Aitzaz Hassan Bangash: "I call this young man Shaheed, which means 'martyr.' I call him a martyr because he gave his life so others could live. I recite the names of our brave and defiant every day, like a rosary" (Bhutto, 2026, p. 27).

This language of reverence is an indication of strong emotional commitment but the repetition, "like a rosary", also suggests ritualization. Martyrdom is the repetitive memory without structural transformation. The sanctification is juxtaposed with systemic failures in the memoir, implicitly challenging the purpose of such sanctification where the situation does not improve.

The difference is even more pronounced in the lynching of Mashal Khan described by Bhutto "In Pakistan, there is no death sentence more inescapable, to describe an alleged act of blasphemy is to blaspheme… Just the accusation is enough" (Bhutto, 2026, p. 27). In this case, grievability fails completely. The death of Mashal is neither sanctified nor judicialized but is engulfed in collective silence. The argument by Butler that ungrievable lives are already the unburied is substantiated in the memoir where death occurs and no one feels responsible or grieves the loss.

The murders of Hazara miners in Mach also reveal this pecking order of sorrow: "They marched the men out of the mine, took them to a mountaintop, and killed them… their families sat in the bitter cold and grieved, waiting for the prime minister… Still, the prime minister refused. He stated that he would not be 'blackmailed'" (Bhutto, 2026, pp. 28-29). The denial of mourning turns into the claim of sovereignty. Through the refusal to acknowledge, the state deprives these lives of grievability, which makes them disposable. The refusal of the families to bury the dead serves as counter-politics, which opposes the symbolic closure and demands accountability by the suspension of ritual.

In all these episodes, martyrdom is not the principle of resistance but a kind of political eyewash; a symbolic process that takes on the anger but leaves institutional violence intact. The memoir by Bhutto rebels against this by denying redemptive closure and demanding unresolved grief and unresolved causality.

This discussion has revealed that *The Hour of the Wolf* reveals a methodical political process in Pakistan in which state violence is facilitated by legal suspension and thwarted by symbolic martyrdom. The article develops a framework that clarifies how by theorizing this mechanism as the Exception-Martyrdom Apparatus.

Conclusions and Findings

The conclusions of the findings that cumulatively shed light on the functioning of state violence, impunity, and symbolic mourning in the political system of Pakistan. To begin with the study concludes that political violence in the memoir is not portrayed as a breakdown or disorder that occurs at times but as a state practice organized administratively. The memoir shows that violence is facilitated by familiar institutional processes by narrating in detail the deployment of police, manipulation of infrastructure, and medical abandonment of the shooting. This subverts hegemonic discourses that explain political murders by chaos, corruption or rogue elements and positions violence as a sovereign decision-making process.

Second, the article concludes that impunity is a structural product of governance as opposed to institutional failure. The continued focus on investigative delay, procedural silence and lack of judicial resolution

throughout the memoir shows the normalization of non-accountability. The institutions of law are still evident but their lack of action creates a state where justice is never served. This discovery redefines impunity as a foreseeable aspect of political authority that works in the form of postponement and decentralization of accountability as opposed to the lack of law.

Third, the paper concludes that martyrdom is a symbolic process that internalizes the political outcomes of violence. Public grieving and sanctification of death give emotional closure but not structural reasons. The memoir brings into light a hierarchy of grievability whereby certain lives are publicly lamented and others are made expendable by juxtaposing martyrs that are commemorated and those that are not. Martyrdom, in this regard, does not interfere with power, but stabilizes it by substituting accountability with reverence.

Fourth, the results validate the analytical worth of the Exception Martyrdom Apparatus as a unified conceptual model. The framework explains the neutralization of political death through the simultaneous performance and neutralization of legal suspension, institutional impunity and symbolic mourning. The memoir is a counter-archive that does not allow narrative closure and demands responsibility and unresolved grief. Collectively these discoveries reveal that *The Hour of the Wolf* reveals the machinations by which violence remains an option in Pakistan, which provides important perspective on the connection between state power, popular memory, and political life-writing.

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