
Power and Resilience: A Textual Study of *Bhula* by Shahid Nadeem

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Abstract

This research paper aims to examine the concept of power and resistance in the play *Bhula* (2004) by Shahid Nadeem. Through the theoretical lens of power and resilience, the analysis demonstrates *Bhula*'s transcendence from voicelessness to empowerment through the interplay of individual trials and community imposition. It involves analyzing the psychological and sociocultural factors that contribute to *Bhula*'s metamorphosis. Upon close reading of the text, the study explores *Bhula*'s progression within the overarching power dynamics of the narrative as well as the implications of the depiction of resilience-building processes, represented in an increasingly symbolic realm. The understanding of power and resilience applied in this study builds on insights from multiple arenas. While his work on power is expansive, Foucault's text *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977) provides specific analyses of power at work in society, particularly in relation to disciplinary systems that point to how power operates and individual and collective agency. Thus *Spoke Zarathustra* by Friedrich Nietzsche (1883-1891) focuses on the concept of resilience and strength through the will to power and becoming who you are meant to be, as well as overcoming struggles to create a better society. This research therefore, employs these theoretical frameworks to be applied to the analysis of *Bhula* to elucidate the protagonist's transformative journey while also underscoring the broader implications of power and resilience in contemporary narratives and societal contexts.

Keywords: *Bhula*, Shahid Nadeem, Empowerment, Resilience, Textual Analysis, Voiceless to Voice, Psychological Factors, Sociocultural Influences.

Introduction

Power has been a multi-layered force throughout history, influencing societies and individual lives. From the time of ancient kings claiming power in the name of God to contemporary institutions making use of the officers of a disciplinary structure, the study of power has come a long way. Though power has been studied as an abstract force, its application to individual agency and scholarship on social change, especially in South Asia, has been limited. The dynamics between survival and empowerment, of forces that lead to overcoming or being overcome, are demonstrated in Shahid Nadeem's play *Bhula* (2023), an ideal text through which to explore the process of resilience framed by power. Using textual analysis, this study unpacks how Nadeem's representation of *Bhula*'s journey encapsulates deeper understandings of power and resistance. This study aims to analyze such complexities through both psychological and sociocultural lenses by exploring the sociopolitical space in which characters navigate power dynamics and develop resilience in response to adversity.

Statement of the Problem

The interplay of power and resilience, one of the most important yet understudied themes in the contemporary South Asian literary landscape. The relationship between region, power, and resilience is an under-discussed area, despite proliferating theoretical conversations via authors

such as Michel Foucault, Friedrich Nietzsche, and others. If seen through the lens of Bhula (2023), the Shahid Nadeem play, personal agency and social limits suggest an exquisite balance and a transformative journey into stardom, reflecting an individual's relationship to the moments they have to work in a striving society. But there is little real understanding of how discourse around power and resilience informs individual empowerment and social change, especially in the context of literary texts.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does the play reflect resilience through the character of Bhula?
2. How does Bhula voyage from the voiceless to the voiceful?
3. How do the elements of relationship, spirituality, and emotion within Bhula's world contribute to his becoming empowered and gaining agency?

Research Objective:

- To dissect the rendition of energy in the play and recognize what is progressively driving Bhula into the change.
- To explore the idea of resilience by reflecting on the struggle, resilience, and growth of Bhula.
- To shed light on the play's insights into overcoming obstacles and building communal resilience.

Literature Review

Although so many articles have been written on this particular theory and some are also published on present play, I have chosen for this research. Some of the recent and most related to the present research are discussed in this chapter. Many authors have taken the subject power and resilience, including Foucault's analysis of the prison system in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977) and John Dewey's description of education as a catalyst for social change in *Democracy and Education* (1916), to describe the way that Nadeem's work reveals the tension between social scaffolding (conformist behaviors) and nomadic behavior (behavior that falls outside the bounds of the ideologies or norms). The study focuses more prominently on how education can change civilizational empathies, and how teachers play a central role in influencing the minds of society. The research criticizes conventional educating methods and highlights the role of teachers in helping students grow beyond mere academic qualifications. It explores teaching practices, using the work of Dewey and his advocacy of group-based and collaborative learning, and examines the comparative responsibility of each for success and progress within society. This study may help broaden the views on education as a joint process of responsibility between the teachers and the learners, fighting for their future to go on, so it fits the Nietzschean essence of personal empowerment for development, throughout the period of *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) that could strengthen towards a healthy and oligarchic systemic society. They are less about individual ways of thinking and more about how people come to believe in conformity versus deviance because of factors from society. By concentrating on the broader themes of education and societal development, this study extends the breadth of the analysis and presents concepts that are applicable to many of the themes discussed in *Bhula* (2023).

An important article is of Ahmed Khan (2020): *Problem of Power in Michel Foucault's Philosophy* which is an extensive overview of Foucault's theory for power relations. Grounding the research in the works of Michel Foucault, the study is elaborated on the idea of both disciplinary mechanisms and biopower (as presented in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*) and how power is exercised through rule sets within the societal systems to guide both individual and societal behavior through acquired norms. But, Khan also points out a nuance in Foucault's thinking where power is not simply repressing people but rather producing identities, knowledge, and relationships

inside a structure. This exceptionalism in research is consistent with John Dewey's position in his work *Democracy and Education* (1916) which sees education as a mechanism for empowering individuals in social structures. Yet rather than isolating Sartre's project, Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical exploration of the will to power in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) offers a framework through which to recognize the capacity of the individual to transcend the confines of the particular society. These approaches contribute significant understandings of power and resistance — indeed, the themes explored by Shahid Nadeem in *Bhula* (2023), as the protagonist navigates through society's pressures and their own transformation. Through Foucault's lens, and through interdisciplinary dialogue with Dewey and Nietzsche's philosophies, Khan's work deepens the lens with which we can view both social and individual relations. Focuses on how power structures in a given text affect the way that power is challenged in other internal or external texts; theoretical food for thought.

In the article *Vulnerability and Resilience in Reading Fiction* (2024) by Pascal Nicklas, which attendees along with the author discuss vulnerability by reading fiction. Nicklas believes stories in books give readers a way to understand their own feelings and provide an opportunity to face various challenges and personal growth indirectly through the characters. This connects with John Dewey's ideas in *Democracy and Education* (1916), when he writes that literature provides people with opportunities to learn through their emotions and through critical thinking. Nicklas also draws in ideas from Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977), particularly his theories on how power operates in society and how stories can reveal and resist these mechanisms of power. As Nicklas's research details, storytelling—*Bhula* (2023), by Shahid Nadeem, for example—explores vulnerability and resilience. *Bhula*'s protagonist struggles but ultimately finds strength, and Nicklas's conversation on literature as a means of contemplation on one's own life also rings true to some extent. Analyzing the above thoughts, you will find how such stories do not just entertain, but they fill us with the idea that you can also alter the way you see your struggles, which was *Bhula*.

The theorization of individual agency and resilience is absent in Nadeem's narrative. The present study aims to fill in this gap by analyzing *Bhula* as a case of the engagement of power and resilience which puts forth a transformation of the protagonist psychologically and socioculturally. The study draws on ideas derived from Michel Foucault's theories of power and knowledge practices to examine the ways in which society provides limits to individual agency alongside correspondences to Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of resilience and the will to power. Such theoretical lenses serve as a useful backdrop to understanding *Bhula*'s evolution from voice-deprived to voice-enabled. In this way, the study extends its evaluation of the sociocultural and psychological forces at work in the emergence of *Bhula*. This analysis deepens our understanding of the protagonist's evolution and the particular societal pressures she navigates, illuminating how resilience and agency can be both transformative and restorative visions of reality, sharpening our comprehension of the protagonist's struggle for agency against the oppressive forces surrounding her.

Research Methodology

This is a descriptive qualitative research paper based on textual analysis of *Bhula* by Shahid Nadeem. In this study, the researcher digs into the play's story, characters, and dialogues to examine their representation of power and resilience, applying a critical lens based on Michel Foucault's theories of power and Friedrich Nietzsche's "will to power." *Bhula*'s text itself is the raw material for this study. Through close reading of pivotal scenes, symbolic language, and character interactions, the research illustrates how power functions within the social, familial, and cultural structures through which *Bhula* moves. This analysis of the text helps us to understand the socio-cultural and psychological reasons for *Bhula*'s change from voicelessness to power. This refers to Michel Foucault's theories of power relations, such as disciplinary functions and biopower, to understand social norms. Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy of the "will to power" offers insight into *Bhula*'s capacity for inner strength, resilience, and eventual reclamation of his own agency. As

noted, your qualitative research approach that relies on textual analysis of *Bhula* by Shahid Nadeem is well complemented by methodologies described in *Research Methods for English Studies*. It is worth noting that textual analysis forms the basis of cultural criticism, which calls for the close reading of cultural artifacts for meanings, as pointed out by Catherine Belsey (*Research Methods for English Studies*). This means directly engaging the text, considering particulars without overlaying them with irrelevant presuppositions, and insinuating the analysis into historical and cultural frameworks that appropriately and depthfully contextualize the material. Such a cross-field approach—drawing on Foucault's theories on power and Nietzsche's "will to power"—is indicative of the interdisciplinary nature of this work, as it couples literary criticism with philosophical constructs to elaborate on the sociocultural codes that underpin *Bhula*'s tale. Belsey: Reading in this way requires consulting original sources, as well as situating the work within its contexts of production and reception. In addition, the close reading method—how to interpret key scenes, symbolic language, how characters interact—follows the best practices for text analysis discussed in the text. This approach also helps you theme rather than story structure featuring power dynamics and psychological transformations, helping with the aims of your study.

Data Analysis

Nadeem's textual study about the power relations and the protagonist's resilience has blossomed into a story of Bulha. The play reflects on how Bulha's transformation from voicelessness to agency is shaped by societal structures, familial pressures, and personal struggles. By analyze a few crucial dialogues and scenes from Act 1 and Act 2 to decode that representation of resilience and the use of power in the narrative. Shahid Nadeem's play *Bulha* serves as a deep dive into the themes of resilience, power, and self-transformation. Bulha (representative of hundreds of thousands) is subject to supernatural trials, and through a tumultuous journey, he grows in spirit and eventually overcomes societal resistance to become an empowered. In this way, the analysis in the article exposes moments in Bulha's life of resilience and agency building while at the same time placing them in the context of the power structures surrounding him.

The Bulha Act 1: The Depiction of Resilience

His refusal to conform to societal expectations and his expression of his beliefs in the face of opposition conveys the tenacity of Bulha. This defiant stance is driven in Scene 2, when Bulha is denounced as a blasphemer for proclaiming "An-Al-Haq (I am the Truth): Bulha: 'Did I say God forbid?' (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 231). This refusal to how to fear, particularly in the face of the Mufti's threats, is evident throughout this moment. His resilience is also evident when he decides to pursue spiritual enlightenment under Shah Inayat against his family: Bulha: 'You are my family, you are my home, my everything.' (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 236).

From Voicelessness to Agency: Transformation

Bulha's transformation from voicelessness to agency is played out as his journey in the spiritual realm. In the early stages, Bulha is under the authority of Qazi and Mufti figures who question his faith and threaten his survival. But the encounter with Shah Inayat is the key. Shah Inayat: 'The first baggage you have to throw away in this journey is that of ego.' (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 237). This guidance allows Bulha to honor his essence and gain transformational power through love and spiritual truth. He reaffirms his agency when he asserts: Bulha: 'Let whoever calls me a Syed burn in hell. Those who name me Arain may grace them with the delights of Paradise.' (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 236). It's a triumphant declaration of independence from social stigmas, an assertion of his spiritual equality.

Environmental and Relational Factors Involved in Empowerment

Bulha's empowerment is connected to his environment and relationships. His relationship with Shah Inayat becomes a place for spiritual development: Inayat: 'God, the secret of the whole world is here and there, to sow the seeds.' (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 235). Moreover, opposing threats from his

family and the Syed community force him to stand by his beliefs. That social and parental opposition serves as the challenge and catalyst for his own transformation. The resilience of Bulha is reflected in his unwavering opposition to tyrannical power apparatuses and his dedication to his spiritual quest. As he continues his journey despite societal rejection, family opposition, and threats from religious authorities, Bulha stays steadfast in his pursuit of truth and spiritual enlightenment. Bulha is spiritually enlightened under the guidance of Shah Inayat, which becomes instrumental for his character transformation. Through a refusal of conventional, earthly love, he emerges from the shackles of society into divine love where serving God and self-respect are compatible. Shah Inayat's mentorship offers the spiritual guidance and wisdom necessary for Bulha to face his fears and discover his voice. His family and community push back against his theodicy and as he struggles to find meaning in this world, he transcends beyond it. The Sufi teachings, representing cultural and spiritual traditions, provide a paradigm of Bulha's empowerment. While Bulha — a play inspired by the life and works of the Sufi poet Bulha, written and directed by Shahid Nadeem — offers a rich in sociopolitical critique, mystical exploration, adversity, and oppression, it is also a work of radical compassion.

The following is a step-by-step marking and explanation of chosen scenes and references:

The Element of Power and Oppression in the Context of Act 1 Second Half

"The petty kings and warlords were jockeying to seize whatever pieces of turf they could scrounge up." This illustrates how the collapse of centralized authority leads to lawlessness and exploitation (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 239) as the power struggles between rival factions increasingly leave the common people at their mercy and at the receiving end of degenerating social instability. Overtaxing and the allegiance of the masses reveal their misery for tyrannical rulers. Bulha uses the medium of symbolism through his songs to reflect the absurdity of these conflicts. The song's metaphors about printed sweetmeat (p. 240) express the absurdity and pettiness of struggles for political power: "How can the perfumed reori fight with the crispy patasay?" It starts with another allegory, according to which the competition is not so much about the sense of "to (be) fight" h., that a violence of naturalness (of the Nature), but rather a "the sense of" every being of one of conflicts h. with small no matter how large and powerful, or macrocosmic (microcosmic) — silently emphasizes the futility. According to Sufi Philosophy Resilience Bulha's resilience lies in his unwavering commitment to truth and his refusal to submit to oppressive power structures. "In Scene 7 (p. 241), the Qazi accuses Bulha of bringing defame to his family and provoking rebellion. But these charges reveal fear in society of his ideas of equality and revolution. His dancing and composing poetry are a form of nonviolent resistance. Of Qazi's statement: 'He would dance in the streets! He'd write subversive poetry.' In the background of such societal hatred and prejudice, the mystic's spiritual practices were misrepresented to authorities at the time, thereby they were considered to be politically rebellious (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 241). A Dialogue of Martyrdom in Considering Revenge and Justice Bulha and Banda Singh encapsulate a deep debate genre of justice, revenge, and the cycle of violence. Banda has a fierce and personal thirst for revenge against the Mughal rulers, based on the suffering of Hindus and Sikhs alike: 'For every Sikh that was killed by the Mughals I must kill ten Muslims.' Yet Bulha defies that logic, wondering when blood can bring about justice: 'You cannot abolish oppression with oppression and injustice with injustice' (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 243). This exchange raises the play's main idea of resilience, with Bulha calling for a solution of compassion and forgiveness despite great suffering." Banda's thirst for revenge against the Mughal rulers comes from both personal and communal pain: "For every Sikh that has been killed by the Mughals, I have to kill ten Muslims." (*Bulha*, 2004, p.243) Instead, Bulha subverts this logic, asking whether due process through bloodshed is ever possible; "Injustice cannot be dealt with injustice and oppression cannot be cancelled out with oppression." This dialogue elevates the play's underlying idea of resilience — Bulha promotes a journey of gentleness and forgiveness in the face of devastating hardship. "Mysticism and Resistance" in Scenes 8 and 9 (p. 247) explores the mystical elements of Bulha's philosophy. His relationship

with his spiritual guide, Shah Inayat, reflects the tension between mystical truths and social mores. These are the secrets of mysticism. Shah Inayat warns Bulha that if he publicly proclaims his spiritual sensations, he may invite trouble: "If they are exposed to everyone, they can damage things." Bulha nevertheless remains unyielding, unwilling to silence his own truth, even though this comes with admonition against its expression. His proclamation: "I want the entire world to love my beloved, as I do." shows his audacity to challenge hypocrisy and preach his vision of divine love and unity. "Symbolism of the Marginalized" However, the imagery of dogs (p. 246) in Bulha's poetry serves as a potent symbol of humility, loyalty, and resilience. In his poem, he elevates the dogs above the hypocritical practitioners of religion: "They do not leave the door of the master / Even if they are beaten black and blue, / They are better than you." (*Bulha*, 2004, p.246) Such a comparison has been both romanticizing the powerless while condemning the moral bankruptcy of both the high echelons of society including the venal politicians. Bulha by Shahid Nadeem is a powerful examination of power, oppression, and resilience. Bulha stands out as the voice of dissent against oppression, guiding love, reality, and fairness through his poetry and philosophy. Through encounters with both oppressors and victims, the play illustrates the timeless relevance of the danger of not heeding Sufi wisdom in a time of grave societal and spiritual crisis. Such analysis exposes the multilayered deconstructions present in Nadeem's work where themes of power and steadfastness reflect the present-day fight against injustice and inhumanity. "Power Structures and Resistance" in the play shows the power struggle on multiple levels—political, religious, and personal. In Scene 6, for example, a description of Punjab under the Mughal empire shows the disorder and anarchy brought on by a lack of political stability. The ruler's erraticism — and the disjointed rule of warlords — has led the country into a state of chaos, and the common people of the country have become the collateral damage. With the backdrop of the power grab around him, Bulha's arrival with his comedic ditty about sweetmeats battling one another is the absurdist touch that underscores the ridiculousness of the struggle for power. His jovial commentary provides a momentary distraction from the violence, but it also shows his understanding of the banality of such conflicts (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 239-240). Religious authorities control, and the freedom to be takes center stage. In Scene 7, the Qazi accuses Bulha of defaming his family and engaging in subversive activities. The Qazi's accusations provide a vehicle to illustrate the clash between spiritually liberated free will and the dogma-spouting holders of orthodoxy. Bulha's willfulness, therefore, directly confronts the social and religious hierarchy subordinating him; his image becomes that of a sinner, of a street-level resistance to authoritarian power.

Through rejection and persecution, at the heart of Bulha's journey is his unwavering commitment to his spiritual beliefs. From this point in Scene 10, Bulha finds himself in a very challenging human psychology conflict, feeling very hurt that his spiritual master, Shah Inayat, turns him away for being unduly arrogant about revealing secret knowledge. This moment of rejection was a turning point for him in his spiritual path as he battles against the external forces of his teacher versus the internal call of his spirit. Yet, despite this, Bulha is a strong one; he continues his spiritual journey against the standard that is entitled to hug him. Through the issuing of a fatwa against Bulha's qawwali singing in Scene 11, Tazeen also explores this theme of spiritual resilience in the face of oppression further, showing how integral this aspect of devotion is to the manifestations of Bulha's spirituality. The fatwa is an outside force trying to muzzle not just his freedom as an artist, but his freedom as a believer, too. Nonetheless, Bulha refuses to bow to the threat of persecution, echoing the stubbornness of someone who defies their persecutors — crass religious authorities. However, A Pather Myou, those who sought spiritual liberation found themselves stuck in the search. A Journey to Spiritual Liberation | Bulha's journey to Spiritual Liberation. Bulha writes that he is going to sing a strange song in Act Two, Scene 1, whose function will be to purify his estranged beloved; Bulha uses the imagery of love and fire, which in this context serves the dual purpose of making the love utterly pure and enlightening. In this moment,

Bulha reflects an inner state of resilience, as he seeks to surpass worldly divisions on the road to a place of divine oneness, and spiritual love: "I'll sing a unique song. So, I will placate my pipe-dream beloved. Love is the fireplace and stars are the firewood; I will set the Sun on fire with them." In *Bulha* (Bulha, 2004, p. 257), in the scenes where Bulha seeks guidance from spiritual figures like Hazrat Ghulam Ghaus and Tansen, the themes of power and resilience are juxtaposed. It is at the shrine of Hazrat Ghulam Ghaus where Bulha meditates and receives further instructions through a vision, which directs him towards Tansen for meaning and upper guidance in the musical sense; again, signaling the need for mentorship and to learn from it. If we delve deeper, using music and dance as spiritual tools as a means, we only see how each element illustrates resilience over spiritual adversity. Bulha is not afraid to ask for spiritual playgrounds, and this shows us a moment of weakness and strength Bulha's journey comes to fruition at Shah Inayat's house. The return of Bulha, now dressed as a woman and dancing around Shah Inayat's house, is a striking moment of spiritual surrender and retrieval. It shows deep resistance to the imposition of the outside world, the world of society, gender, and one's immediate environment; it shows a deep attachment to one's spirituality: "Your love has made me dance in ecstasy, come quickly my healer, I am dying, your love has camped inside my heart, I have drunk the hemlock with my own hands." (Bulha, 2004, p. 261) Here, in this scene, we see Bulha's resurrection—he has crossed all the limits imposed upon him and acquired a spiritual identity that is transforming and freeing (Bulha, 2004, p. 261). In the end, Bulha and Shah Inayat's reunion signifies not just spiritual redemption, but also the victorious closure of inner strength. The evolution of Bulha climaxing in his meek surrender to Shah Inayat, reciting its name as if it were the first time Bulha felt at home, expresses how spirituality alone can conquer great social adversity: "Bulha, is that you?" (Bulha, 2004, p. 262) Here, Bulha's steadfastness is rewarded with nirvana, or acceptance and spiritual fulfillment, which marks his acceptance back into the divine order. The protagonist's journey is about the power of resilience and the transformative power of spirituality as evidenced throughout Shahid Nadeem's *Bulha*. Ranging from challenging societal constructs to liberation through unexpected methods of expression, *Bulha* is a shining example of how personal freedom can be derived from inner power and spiritual rebellion. His odyssey of estrangement and reconciliation with his beloved and his master and, finally, with himself resonates with the book's central theme of resilience in the face of challenge. Following specific moments of Bulha's spiritual and personal growth, like defiance and metamorphosis, the text emphasizes the connection between power and resilience that ultimately yields more profound spiritual liberation. Bulha — ACT 2 Scene 3 Bulleh 2 is seen as if he is rebelling in this act, in which he is charged with dismissing the ethical code associated with Islamic law and behaving transgressively. Mufti and Qazi condemn him because of his relationship with the Sikhs and hermaphrodites, alleging that he spreads shamelessness (Bulha, 2004, p. 263). The Qazi convinces Bulha that if his own master could get the favor of God, then how can he allow an infidel poet to disturb the sanctity of religion by even mocking God in his verses? The Qazi exclaims, "Bulha... is ordered to be exiled from Kasur" (Bulha, 2004, p. 265), reconstructing the emblematic consequences of Bulha's defiance of orthodoxy himself (both the Qazi and Bulha). The compounding of Bulha's resilience comes in the form of his standing firm even when implored by the Qazi to repent. His poem, defiant, he quickly brings insight to the hypocritical fashion of religious repentance — "Those who oppress are not afraid to oppress, they are producing themselves the slaughter their own deeds" (Bulha, 2004, p. 266). This marks a rejection of the false piety prescribed by the religious establishment and an embrace of a deeper, personal truth. In Scene 4 Act 2, the height of Bulha's spiritual journey is when his master, Inayat, teaches him *wahdatul wajood* (unity of being). To be blessed by Inayat is interpreted as a moment of spiritual elevation where Bulha is inspired to walk down this path alone, which denotes empowerment as well as isolation (Bulha, 2004, p. 264). The *qawwali* he performs also represents his transcendence beyond worldly constraints; he is able to associate his own identity with that of the divine. Power and resilience are explored through Bulha's interactions and his poetry with

Banda Singh (Scene 6). A rebel, Banda Singh, who is captured by the Mughal soldiers, discusses with Bulha about their struggles against the oppressive forces. Banda Singh's recognition of the need for more voices such as that of Bulha illustrates the promise of resilience in nonviolent resistance: 'Why aren't there others like you, Bulha?' (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 268). Bulha's answer is telling of his struggle to hold on to his own truth in the face of the overwhelming power of state and military. Bulha is unabashedly political, presenting a powerful story of resilience against societal and religious obstacles through Bulha's poetry, which is wielded as both a weapon and a shield. In doing so, he becomes the shining light of resistance for not just his time, but for all times. His courage to stand for what he believed in, and his unwavering commitment to the freedom of the spirit, all mark him as the ultimate rebel against the forces of oppression. Power and resilience are the overarching themes in the concluding scenes of *Bulha*, written by Shahid Nadeem after Bulha passed away. His personality has such spiritual power that even if he had been murdered, after he was exiled and crucified, an angel filled and redeemed the tomb of the whole existence. The story depicts how his endurance is eternal and societal power structure-less. Sona and Chandi condemn Kasur's religious and political authorities for the treatment of Bulha in 10. Bulha's song was inspired to address the revolting power structures and was made prominent in a society embroiled in systems of oppression, and it is through Sona's condemnation of the city's leaders as "pompous idiots" that "history will condemn" that we see how corrupt power dynamics try to get rid of Bulha's voice (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 277). Chandi agrees and asserts that the leaders are not even eligible to lead Bulha's funeral prayer, suggesting that power and authority are transitory while the Sufi poet's influence is permanent. The Qawwali during Bulha's funeral procession, when he passes away, becomes a celebratory song, showcasing his victory over death. The mood of the mourners shifts as they chant this line: "Bulha, I am not the one who has died, there is someone else in the grave" (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 277). This line illustrates the idea of spiritual immortality, emphasizing that Bulha's spirit is eternal and that he continues to live on even after his physical death. The scene ends with Sona and Chandi reminiscing about the undying strength of Bulha's soul. As Sona comments, the Qazi, mullahs, and nawabs have turned to "dust," and history has no memory of them, but Bulha remains (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 278) alive and kicking even 250 years after his death. To be and say this is to mark Bulha as one who remains unbeatable in terms of his legacy — whose echoes will forever reverberate through generations of followers, however much temporary oppression may try to take him down. The final scene returns the story to its beginning, showing how Bulha's death did not take away his power. He is not remembered as a criminal, but revered through his tomb in Kasur, where generations of his former oppressors present themselves in death to be buried at his feet. The act of stepping on the stones of Bulha's disciples before entering Bulha's tomb itself is a symbolic gesture that highlights his spiritual authority and the authority derived from Bulha himself (*Bulha*, 2004, p. 278). In the end, Bulha narrates a touchy story of rebelling against compressing substances forces. Bulha's spiritual essence remains unquenchable even in the shadow of exile, censure, and death. His message, his poetry, his life, and its celebration even after his death represent the invincibility of his truth, as it still addresses the challenges of society today many centuries later.

Conclusion

Researchers conducted this study to investigate the themes of resilience and empowerment found in Shahid Nadeem's play *Bulha*. By examining the protagonist's evolution, the research emphasized the way in which the piece reflects the tenets of Sufi philosophy, particularly in its focus on self-exploration, spiritual awakening, and a resistance to social subjugation. By critically analyzing the story, the study showed that Bulha symbolizes the empowerment of the oppressed and those excluded by mechanical sociopolitical orders, not only for himself. The results suggest that Bulha's resilience is rooted in his unswerving dedication to truth and freedom from all things material. His confrontation with orthodoxy and his opposition to hierarchy exemplify how self-awareness and spirituality can bend, break, and transcend the systems that bind them. Shah Inayat

teaches him how to rise above his limitations and slowly gives him a sense of agency to rebel against the system. This dynamic speaks to a broader Sufi ideal of love and unity as a means of resistance and transformation. In addition to this, the use of mysticism and poetic imagery in the play renders it universally appealing and makes Bulha an ever-live object of revolt and compassion. His experience resonates with ongoing battles against oppression, emphasizing the power of nonviolent resistance and spiritual egalitarianism in achieving social transformation. Bulha, Shahid Nadeem's representation of Sufi philosophy that imbues it with resilience and agency, is powerful. This play emphasizes the timeless relevance of Bulha's teachings, encouraging people to purposefully pursue their metaphysical and spiritual development and the dismantling of oppressive systems. This study sheds light on the ways literature might mirror and shape socio-political contexts, with implications for spirituality in terms of uplifting and empowering people and communities.

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