

# **Cultural Resistance And The Indian National Liberation; A Study Of The Indian Freedom Movement From A Cultural Perspective In A God In Every Stone**

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## **Abstract**

The colonial advances have always witnessed different modes of resistance offered by the native subjects throughout history. Various nationalist movements emerged in the colonies to oppose the external control of their land. Studies have highlighted that colonial domination was repelled by armed- resistance and political agitation. However, Kamila Shamsie's *A God in Every Stone* (2014), adds another mode of resistance witnessed by the British Empire in the Indian subcontinent, cultural resistance through nonviolent means. Shamsie depicts the Pashtun contribution to the Indian freedom movement and their resistance against the British through cultural capital. The study contends that the tool of cultural and nonviolent resistance, advanced by the Pashtun population, played a major role in the freedom of the Indian subcontinent, and the use of peaceful means and nonviolence is more compatible with Pashtun people who are generally associated with violence and warmongering. This is a qualitative study based on Shamsie's historical novel. The analysis is developed around the theoretical framework of Amilcar Cabral's *National Liberation and Culture* (2015). The study, in contrast to the commonly held notion,

concludes that alongside the other forms of resistance, cultural resistance was a major factor in the Indian Freedom Movement.

**Keywords:** Cultural Resistance, Nativism, Nonviolence, Freedom Movement, Decolonization, Pashtuns, Race, British Empire.

## **Introduction**

The use of physical force and military power not be ruled out in the colonial projects in general and in the establishment of the British Empire in the Indian subcontinent in particular. However, the role of the soft tools like cultural practices, social values, ideological apparatuses, and colonial discourses had a considerable contribution to the establishment of the Empire. (Inam Ullah et al., 2020). Such indoctrinating tools are employed to justify the occupation of other people's lands and turn them into their colonies. The cultural practices and belief systems were promoted through their language which the colonized were supposed to learn and it categorized the colonial subjects in the colonizers' system of representation (Lawson & Tiffin, 2002). The indigenous culture and language of the colonies were always deemed as stumbling blocks by the colonizers in the establishment of their hold on the colonies. The colonizers, therefore, under the guise of the civilizing mission, transported European language, literature, and learning to the colonies, "which involved suppression of the vast wealth of the indigenous cultures beneath the weight of the imperial control. (Griffiths et al., 1995, p.1)

The cultural invasion of the colonized countries involved three major instruments: trade, administration, and education. Many of the once colonized countries in their post-independence era are making efforts in terms of creating greater awareness of their traditions and culture as a response to the cultural imperialism of the colonial powers. Cultural reawakening is set as an underlying objective of their educational system (Bishop, 1990). The colonizers in a bid to foster their control and gain legitimacy and control over the colonies and assert their supremacy made efforts to give currency to their culture to the level of making it universal, however, the effort at times proved a damp squib and practically did not work. The Western values propagated through English literature were at times not understandable by the native students due to their exotic reflection. The major reason for their intelligibility remained the nonexistent of such values in the indigenous culture which the English tried to exhibit as universal (Larson, 1973). The colonizers' emphasis on promoting their language and education was aimed at promoting their culture at the expense of the indigenous culture of the colonies. The education system in the Indian subcontinent, as Lord Macaulay says, was launched with the same ulterior objectives. The massive wealth and the higher moral values of the Indian inhabitants will always be the stumbling blocks in our project of Indian colonization. English cannot be successful unless they break the Indians' backbone which is their spiritual and cultural heritage by introducing the English education system and culture. Britain could not afford to educate the Indian masses but the system was launched to create a section of people which is Indian in blood and flesh and is English in morals, intellect, opinion, and taste (Young, 1835). Because language is not merely a means of communication but it does

constitute our worldview and mental approach. Language carries culture, and culture is the total of the entire body of values and belief systems that determine one's standing in the world. The language is thus instrumental in internalizing the cultural superiority of the colonizers in the colonies (Thiong'o, 1992).

The colonial power, to assert its cultural and moral superiority, employed English literature as a soft tool. The subject was deliberately chosen to lend them cultural superiority and preference to their values and system of norms. Whereas, at the same time it was aimed to devalue the indigenous traditions, social system, and cultural practices (Kincaid, 1990). During the colonial period the evangelicals efforts, to mold the Indian natives into their fold by imparting the cultural values and belief system, failed as the natives took it as a direct attack on their religious belief, the colonizers used education systems and especially the English literature as a crucially ideological apparatus and a wheel of disseminating their cultural superiority and value system (Viswanathan, 2014).

Among the ideas imposed and promoted by the colonizers, the idea of cultural and racial superiority stood out. The so-called distinction between the colonizers and the indigenous subject was a dangerous plank of the strategy of the colonial designs, which was aimed at imprisoning the mind as strongly as chains incarcerate the body. The colonialism thus did not mean just an economic or political change but deep down a psychological one. The anti-colonial resistance, therefore, could only be successful if this approach is understood and challenged. (Fanon, 2017). The attempts of internalizing the sets of colonial cultural values among the colonial subjects was a successful way of disempowering the indigenous population and as a result, they had to carry the stigma of social inferiority and look down upon their culture and people. If colonization is aimed at colonizing the mind, decolonizing the mind should be an integral part of the resistance against the colonial rule which involves culture and language (Thiong'o, 1987). The anti-colonial struggle should, therefore, at first resort to cultural resistance. First, they have to find a voice and identity, and thereby reclaim their past. Because the colonizers for centuries have intentionally devalued the culture, customs, and traditions of the colonized people and depicted the era before the beginning of the colonial period as a pre-civilized age and historical void. Efforts have been made to internalize the idea in the masses that the progress, culture, and history on their land began with the arrival of the Europeans (Fanon, 2007).

During the first half of the twentieth century and especially in the aftermath of the World Wars the geopolitical landscape of the world witnessed changes. The structure of international politics changed and Britain was relegated to a lower standing in the global power hierarchy. Her economic power rapidly declined and it became economically unfeasible for the Empire to administer the colonies. Consequently, anticolonial voices and various nationalist movements surged to advocate the cause of freedom of their land from the clutches of the colonial administration (McLeod, 2010). The struggle for freedom appeared in various forms ranging from political agitation to armed resistance, however, in the Indian subcontinent a different mode of anticolonial resistance

surfaced, the cultural resistance. Alongside the other forms of resistance, the cultural resistance played a major role in the anti-colonial struggle in the Indian subcontinent, because the culture had been of immense importance both in the establishment as well as in the resistance against the colonial projects.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Colonization was opposed and resisted through various means by the native subjects of the colonies across the globe. The major forms of resistance frequently witnessed included armed resistance, guerilla war, political agitation, and social and economic boycott. However, in the Indian subcontinent, the British Empire witnessed a different form of resistance- cultural resistance. The native subjects, especially the Pashtun population, instead of resorting to violent means of resistance chose their culture as a tool of resistance to peacefully oppose colonization and demand freedom for their land. The study, through analyzing the Pashtun characters of the novel, shows that how they started observing the indigenous cultural practices, upholding their customs, and conforming to their traditions as a way of offering resistance to the British in the Indian subcontinent. They shun the cultural ways and symbols of the British but neither show racial hatred nor resort to armed resistance. The study also finds that the Pashtuns, who are generally associated with the negative connotations of bellicosity, pugnaciousness, warmongering, and violent disposition, maintain a peaceful posture and advocate the cause of freedom.

### **Research Methodology**

The study is qualitative and based on the textual interpretation of the passages from Kamila Shansi's *A God in Every Stone* (2014). The study, in particular, takes into accounts the relevant structures, expressions, and passages that demonstrate cultural resistance and avoidance of war and adopting nonviolent posture on part of the characters. Passages and instances that reflect characters conforming to their customs and traditions and shunning the British cultural values and social ways as a way of resistance against colonization are included for analysis. The study relies on Shamsie's *A God in Every Stone* as the primary source of the data for analysis. The analysis is divided into two sections; the first views that how the Pashtuns characters resort to their own culture and customs and shun the British culture as a mark of resistance against the colonial control of their land. The second section of the analysis takes into account the nonviolent posture of the Pashtun people, who keep struggling for their freedom through nonviolent means of resistance. The data is analyzed in Amilcar Cabral's theory of cultural-based anticolonial resistance.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is conducted under the theoretical framework of Amilcar Cabral construct "National Liberation and Culture".

According to Cabral (2015), whatever may be the material aspects and techniques of foreign domination, it can only be maintained by organized repression of the cultural life of the concerned

population, because in the face of a strong indigenous cultural life, foreign domination cannot take its root on the land. The colonial forces used various indirect techniques like propounding theories such as progressive assimilation and apartheid or attempts at cultural alienation of the local population or creating a social gap between the indigenous elites and the masses to neutralize or paralyze the cultural life of the natives. The importance of culture as a tool of resistance to foreign domination lies in the fact that culture is the vigorous manifestation of the physical and historical reality of society. Culture, just like a flower in a plant can reproduce, assures the prospects for evolution and progress of the society and continuity of its history. The foreign domination, therefore, needs cultural repression of the dominated people either in parts or the whole.

The national liberation movements, therefore, are preceded by an increased expression of culture and attempts by the dominated people to affirm their cultural personalities. The foundation of national liberation rests in people's right to have their history. People who want to free themselves from domination will be free if they return to their own culture. Thus if imperialist domination needs cultural oppression, national liberation should be an act of culture. The armed and political resistance, as history shows, was easily crushed by the technical superiority of the imperialists as in Portuguese, whereas the cultural resistance such as in Africa was repressed and persecuted but was never destroyed and survived all storms. The movement should adopt the popular character of the culture and conform to it in its entirety, and be able to appreciate its true value. It should combat the negative elements, utilize strengths and either weed out weaknesses or transform them into strengths. The leaders should enrich their culture and enhance their capacity to run the movement in the interest of the masses. The illiterate people will go beyond their village universe and learn more about their political rights and cultural values. The movements should also keep the focus on promoting humanism, solidarity, respect, and selfless devotion to human beings.

### **I. Culture as a tool of Resistance; Indian Freedom Movement and the Cultural Resistance**

Shamsie's work is set in Peshawar and covers up the era before and after the First World War and takes into accounts the key incidents of the Indian freedom movement. As the germs of freedom and voices for autonomy prevailed across the length and breadth of the Indian Subcontinent, the Pashtuns from the NWFP instead of using other means of resistance, resort to culture as a tool of struggle against the Empire. During the struggle against the British colonization, they remain peaceful and nonviolent and avoided war even when it was imposed on them. They conform to the Pashtuns' cultural code Pashtunwali and use it as a weapon against the Empire in their struggle for freedom. Ghafar Khan mobilizes his Pashtun fellows and educates them about their political rights, social standing, and cultural and historical background and want them to strengthen themselves in these areas and abstain from war and violence:

Why didn't you join Haji Sahib in his Jihad? A number of the men looked at each other, scratched their chins, sighted a little. The question wasn't new to them. Taking up arms after your lands have been conquered is like building a well after your house has caught

fire. The sword in the tribesmen's hands will not cut this yoke from your necks. No sword will cut this yoke from our necks, if we want any of advancement, we must get rid of our wrong ideas. We must wake up from this rabbit's dream. (Shamsie, 2014, p. 143)

Ghaffar Khan holds large public gatherings and sensitizes his community across the Pashtun territory in the Indian Subcontinent and builds their capacity regarding culture and politics. He exhorts them to avoid armed resistance and instead uses cultural resistance. Discard the negative aspects of our culture and value the positive ones and make it our strength in our struggle for freedom. The liberation movement, as Cabral (2015) holds, "should induce the development of the positive and progressive elements and to combat with flexibility the negative and reactionary elements, utilize strengths efficiently and to eliminate weaknesses or to transform them into strengths" (p. 56). Khan keeps explaining how the negative aspects of our culture harmed us and destroyed our unity. The Pashtuns should look inwardly and reform themselves by discarding the negative traits of their culture. "...Khan continued explaining how blood feuds and revenge were eating up the Pashtuns from within" (Shamsie, 2014, p. 142). Having discarded the idea of armed resistance against the British Empire, he puts cultural resistance as a viable course of action and keeps reforming the negative traits by mobilizing his community to resist colonial control through the soft power of culture. (Cabral, 2015)

The old man was silent for a while and then nodded firmly as if a decision had been made. After you've helped me plant the cane fields, you'll go and find Ghaffar Khan. He'll teach you what you need to know. –And what do I need to know? – How to remove your blindfold, and see your place in this world. (p.141)

According to Cabral (2015), the leaders of the movement should work to enrich their culture and enhance their capacity to run the movement in the best interest of their people. "... The peasants who are usually illiterate and never have moved beyond the boundaries of their village or region.. realize their crucial role in the struggle.. break the bonds of their village universe.. acquire new knowledge and strengthen their awareness" (p. 64). As Khan starts educating the masses, people especially the peasants and farmers, feel attracted to the movement. The farmer advises young Qayyum Gul to join the movement and work for the liberation of the land. The message of the movement spreads fast and the number of his supporters increase. The farmer convinces Gul who has recently returned from Vipres and had fought there on part of the Empire. The farmer continues, "We deserve the yoke we wear. Of your generation, only Ghaffar Khan is true Pashtun" (Shamsie, 2014, p. 141). The movement is gaining mass character and is not confined to a certain section of society. The liberation movement is gaining currency and peasants and laymen are participating in it. And the value of culture is being enhanced and people's interest is aroused in it. (Cabral, 2015).

With time the movement gains popularity and people join it. Qayyum Gul becomes an ardent follower and offers his services to it. To educate the masses about their history, social and political rights, the movement open ups school in the Pashtun territories. "When Qayyum started to ride

away on his bicycle he could hear the calls of the departing boys-Alif Bey pay! The Pashto alphabet a song which they carried across the orchards to their homes...” (p. 159). Gul, instead of harboring military ideation against colonial domination, joins one of the schools to educate the youth of his community. “ Ghaffar Khan had said don’t forget the most important thing you will teach them is service” (Shamsie, 2014, p. 159). The movement of national liberation based on the cultural resistance should develop the capacity of the masses especially, “in the domains of art, science, and literature” (Cabral, 2015, p. 65). The masses should be educated to know their place in the world and promote feelings of humanism and devotion to human beings. The movement here seems to achieve all the objectives set for cultural resistance instead of armed resistance against foreign domination. (Cabral, 2015)

As the movement strides, education is imparted, social, cultural, and political awareness is taking place and the number of its followers increases day by day. Qayyum Gul who himself was a loyal servant of the crown is now an ardent follower of the movement and advocates the cause of his freedom through cultural resistance and peaceful means. He exhorts his younger brother Najib Gul, who works in the British archeological department, to abandon the job and join the movement instead. He writes to his brother, “Your museums are all part of their Civilizing Mission, their White Man’s Burden, their moral justification for what they have done here.” (p. 185). Gul questions the various ideological constructs and the very rationale behind the white men’s projects of colonization. The fundamental objective of the colonial discourses, according to Bhabha (2012), “is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types based on their racial origin, to justify conquest and establish systems of administration and instruction” (p. 70). Equipped with historical and cultural knowledge, Gul deconstructs the ideological foundations and the colonizers’ mindset and approach towards the native subjects which is a key feature of the cultural resistance on part of the native subjects (Cabral, 2015). Gul continues:

The English are too few, we too many..... brother- and even while I rejoice at this I fear for you who will one day wake from your illusions and see you are nothing but a subject, a yoked Pashtun who thinks the yoke is a silk cravat and that a silk cravat is as much yours to wear as a turban. (p. 185)

Having known his strength and cultural power, Gul warns his younger brother to know his right place and status. Serving the Empire, adopting the ways of colonizers at the cost of your culture will not give you any benefits. Gul points to his brother’s dress which symbolizes the culture of colonizers. The services you offer and adopting the ways of the colonizers will not change your status, at the end of the day, you will again be the subject of the Empire and not an independent person. He symbolically highlights the shallowness and subsequent perils of adopting the cultural ways of the colonizers and the importance and strength of that of the indigenous ways. The colonizers use various techniques to create a social gap between the subjects and deepen the divisions in the society to repress their cultural life. The elites and educated ones, as Cabral (2015) writes, “assimilate the colonizers’ mentality, consider themselves culturally superior to its people

and ignore or look down upon their cultural values” (p. 57). The cravat is symbolic of the colonizers’ way of dressing and as part of the Pashtuns’ dress, it symbolizes a yoke of slavery in your neck. Gul wants his brother to come out of the misconception that cravat can accord him any importance as a turban can, the latter is symbolic of Pashtuns’ cultural dressing and carries a huge responsibility on part of Pashtuns once they become young and responsible people. (Lipson & Robson, 2002)

I bear no hatred for the English. It is our weakness that is responsible for the state we are in. How dishonored a people we are to allow the men of a small island who burn at the touch of the sun to come here and be our masters. And when the English leave, as they must, I will welcome them back into our house as visitors and show them all the courtesy and hospitality of the Pashtuns. (p.185)

To assert their superiority and look down upon the dominated population, the colonizers intentionally negate the cultural background and historical process of the colonized people. The process is so planned that even the dominated people themselves accept their lower status. As Cabral (2015) holds, “The imperialist domination, by denying the historical development of the dominated people, necessarily also denies their cultural development” (p. 55). Gul points to such weakness of his people who have become mental slaves to a nation that is geographically and population-wise much smaller than the Indian subcontinent. Having built his capacity and gained knowledge about his history, culture, and political rights, Gul makes it clear that he does not carry any racial hatred against the English but seeks the right to his land. Every liberation movement based on cultural resistance is always preceded by an increased amount of cultural expression to assert their cultural personality and negate the oppressor culture (Cabral, 2015). Gul here manifests his cultural values as part of the resistance strategy. Hospitality (Melmastya) is an essential and integral component of the Pashtun cultural code Pashtunwali. Pashtuns uphold it irrespective of the race, economic standing, and religion of the guest. Even if an enemy visits a Pashtun, he serves him cordially (Khan et al., 2019). Gul makes his case both by highlighting the oppressors attempt of distorting the indigenous culture and asserting his cultural personality (Cabral, 2015).

That man came to tell me that will take my land away if I continue to stand here and speak to you. They think they can defeat us with threats. But I will endure what losses I must endure for the sake of freedom. And you? Are you honorable enough to endure, my brothers? For the sake of freedom are you men enough to put down your guns and endure? -Yes, came the answer. Sweeter than an apple, more eloquent than ink. Yes! (p. 200)

The English officer threatened Gul with confiscating his land if he continued educating the masses about the movement. Gul stands firm for his rights and is ready to suffer any loss that comes his way for the sake of freedom and gets assurance from his countrymen for the cause. Gul makes it clear that they cannot be afraid of threats because they are not involved in an armed struggle that carries harm, the cultural resistance through soft power and nonviolent means will not incur any harm. However, he reiterates the strategy of a complete peaceful posture by abstaining from any



kind of weapons. Gul succeeds in getting his fellows convinced of the cultural resistance through peaceful means. Gul joins the peaceful procession which is to be held at the Kabuli Gate Police Station Kissa Khwani:

...the leaders told the police that they would present themselves for arrest at the police-thana at Kabuli Gate- and here they all were, on their way, showing the English that you can arrest two men or ten but hundreds more will follow behind and demand liberty. (p. 204)

The British authorities could not allow the peaceful procession and ordered their arrest. The members of the movement, instead of physical resistance, voluntarily presented themselves to be arrested but they will not back out of the demand of liberation. Gul joins the protest and the size of the crowd grows and chants the slogans. They neither use violence nor back out of their demand for freedom. The leaders, “insisting they were there to be imprisoned” (p. 2014). The spirit reflects their unflinching commitment to liberty and reclaiming their history and culture. Seeing the growing number of protesters, the authorities finally arrest the leaders. On entering the door of the police station the supporters, “threw a handful of petals at them as if they were brides entering, their marital home for the first time” (p. 204). The movement is now seen in its full bloom, people are actively participating for the cause of their freedom but they don’t resort to armed struggle rather draw strength from their culture and assert their right to the land, its history, and culture. (Cabral, 2015)

“Accelerating cars, men crushed beneath wheels, machine guns, fire, screams of death and slogans of freedom, bullets, and stones. The Street of Storyteller turned into a battlefield” (p. 2015). The British authorities opened fire on the unarmed men of the movement who had staged a peaceful protest and chanted slogans of freedom. The crackdown resulted in dozen of casualties and injuries, but the movement remained peaceful and unarmed. However, despite the loss they suffered, they remain steadfast and clung to their demands, and are never ready to compromise their cause. People start joining the scene and refuse to retreat, “If a man is to die defending a land let the land be his land, the people his people” (p. 205). They are now well aware of their right to the land, its people, history, and culture and consider the British usurpers and foreigners who must leave. Building the capacity of the dominant people about their rights, history, and culture is the most important aspect of the liberation movement based on the cultural resistance, and the same is now reflected by the followers of the movement (Cabral, 2015).

## **II. Countering Pashtuns’ Racial Profiling and Stereotypical Representation through Culture**

Though the movement was supposed to be peaceful, the participants of the gathering were strictly directed to be unarmed, yet the British authorities made use of ruthless force and sophisticated weaponry against them. “We’re trying to understand why they sent in the armored cars? There is

Civil Disobedience all across Indian and nothing like this has happened” (p. 209), a participant on the spot mumbled as he made space for Qayyum Gul:

Qayyum knew the answer. It lay in all those speeches by the British officers which had made him feel such pride when he was in the Army and thought there was honor in being identified as a Martial Race: Because they couldn't believe we were unarmed; they wouldn't believe we weren't intent on violence. (p. 209)

Orientalism, the sum of the Western representation of the East, is never derived from facts and logical arguments but is a Western fantasy based on fabricated constructs. The West makes Orientalism an institution and projects it as a reliable truth that becomes a subject of their academia and an established area of debate (Said, 2016). Gul recalls the representation of the Pashtuns by the English officers who would term them a martial race that is always intent on violence and warmongering. The movement had made it clear to be peaceful and offer resistance through soft tools, but the authorities did not believe because of the Western stereotypical representation that was in vogue. The movement attempted to dispel the misrepresentation of the Pashtun race which the colonizers had promoted by distorting the indigenous culture and historical facts. The colonizers always employed reasons and recruited history to achieve their goals (Kabbani, 2008). The peaceful demonstration was, therefore, aimed to negate the oppression through projecting their cultural personality and soft image. (Cabral, 2015)

It is not all perfect. Many of the Congress party believe the Pashtuns are good for nothing except war and quick temper. They continue to express doubts that we will be able to follow the path of non-violent resistance when we are tested. But Ghaffar Khan tells us we must be patient and show through an example that they are wrong. We will soon have the opportunity to do so. (p. 191)

Gul is out to build his case by projecting his own culture and countering the stereotypes and the negative connotations that have been associated with it. The stereotypical representation of the Pashtuns has made it unlikely for people to believe that Pashtun can remain peaceful and offer resistance through culture. He makes it an opportunity both to project the soft image of his culture and contribute to the freedom movement. Reviving and asserting one's cultural traits and putting them into practice actively is always a befitting strategy of the cultural resistance aimed at national liberation. The signs of the indigenous culture are deemed as a serious threat by the colonizers and as long as the native people keep their cultural life alive, the domination will lose hopes of perpetuation (Manji, 2017). Gul continues, “but to explain: it is an unarmed army- you read that correctly- which will recruit unlettered men and bring them into our struggle” (p. 192). The focus on building soft power and offering resistance to the British Empire through means other than armed struggle is reiterated by Qayyum while convincing his brother about the strategy of the movement. The emphasis on unlettered people here serves the objective of the movement in a better way. The colonial education system was aimed to promote the racist perception of the colonizers and the educated section of the society was already under the cultural influence of the

British. The unlettered people were, therefore, best suited to project the culture in its original form untainted by the English. Gul adds:

Righteousness and patience. These are Muslim virtues, these are Pashtun virtues. – I am not going to tell you that non-violence is compatible with Pashtunwali. I am going to tell you that in the circumstances in which we live non-violence is essential to Pashtunwali. (p. 198)

Cultural resistance demands patience and nonviolence, the arms and physical might are always replaced by soft power and cultural strength. Gul has gathered his community in his orchards and addresses them to understand the exigency of the time and the threat they are faced with. Since armed resistance is out of the question and can't yield the desired result, therefore the best alternative would be to put your own culture into practice, reclaim your traditions and revive your history as a form of resistance to the colonial forces. The disposition is essential because the principal plank of every imperialist strategy is to negate the historical process and cultural development of the dominated people and the resistance must involve the expression of your own culture more vigorously (Cabral, 2015). As Gul continues addressing his village-mates about the movement, a British officer arrives and dislodges the gathering

Women in the Pashtun culture are expected to lend support to their male members in an emergency. They are supposed to supply food, water, and other necessities to their male members in critical situations and thus they are also exempted from attack during the war (Rzehak, 2011). While looking at the protesters from her balcony, Diwa is reminded of her duty. “Water, she nods, yes, of course, they must all be thirsty, and this at least she can do. She angles the earthenware vessel, and opens the tap, and rope of water slips out” (pp. 286-87). Diwa keeps supplying water to the Pashtun protestors out of her cultural responsibility. In the meanwhile she sees a long-tailed turban lying against the wheels of an armored car. “She picks up the turban and places it down onto her skull...very slowly heads up,..- She steps back into the battalion of Peshawari men. One of the men, his beard white, pats her shoulder” (p.292). Some people were wounded and some were dead, but Diwa, instead of attending to them first, preferred to pick up the turban and show respect to it. The turban is part of the Pashtun cultural dress and is widely revered and held in high esteem by Pashtuns. Even in a time of emergency Diwa shows regard to her culture by showing courtesy to her cultural symbols as part of the cultural resistance and showing the inclusivity and mass character of the movement. (Cabral, 2015)

The crackdown in Peshawar claimed many lives both men and women of the Pashtun population. Only ten persons were allowed to accompany a corpse to the graveyard. During the burial of the corpse an English lady, Vivian Rose Spencer, appears who is riding alone a bicycle across the graveyard. As she saw the mourners she felt frightened and jumped off the bicycle and fell into the wheat fields. The mourners rushed to help her, on seeing them advancing towards her, she felt threatened and shouted:

By the laws of Pashtunwali you may not attack a woman, she practiced saying in Pashto... and then, a greater terror, not dozen of a footstep, not a group of Pathans among whom at least some could be relied on to insist their brothers hold fast to Pashtunwali, but only two sets of feet walking closer, stepping into the wheat field. (p. 224)

Vivan Rose's reference to the Pashtun cultural code, Pashtunwali, comes as a reflex response and shows that she is well-aware of the cultural characteristics of the local population. Under the dictates of the Pashtunwali, the interaction of men and women who are not related is strictly prohibited, and women, in general, are respected and considered a weaker gender (Tainter & MacGregor, 2011). The Pashtuns advanced and help her with the bicycle, "holding the very end of the handlebars, his face turned away from hers... she caught the other end of the handlebar, and the man holding it let go as he felt her touch travel along with the steel frame" (p. 224). The person, following the strict observance of Pashtunwali, does not look at her and tries not to touch her body. A male is not allowed to be in contact with a stranger woman, and secondly, both women and minors are excluded as targets in all cases of revenge (Barfield, 2003). The followers of the movement are witnessed in strict observance of their culture even in contact with the colonizers who themselves understand it. The adherence to the cultural practices and asserting traditions as a tool of struggle for freedom is a vivid reflection of the cultural resistance for national liberation (Cabral, 2015). Having helped her, the Pashtun man says:

We've come to bury our dead, not to attack a woman. Please don't believe what your people say about us. We will accompany you back to ensure your safety, he said, still not looking at her, and she wanted to thank him, she wanted to say she was sorry about the loss which had brought him to the graveyard, but instead, she jumped to bicycle and pedaled as rapidly as she could (pp. 224-225)

The person demonstrates his culture and also voices concern about the stereotypical representation of his community by the colonizers. Having suffered the loss of his loved ones at the hands of English, and while burying them he encounters a lone English lady in the graveyard but instead of avenging her, he takes the opportunity to demonstrate his culture, project the soft image of his community and uphold the objectives of the freedom movement based on the cultural resistance. Though the crackdown resulted in the deaths of women as well, he shows courtesy for the woman, helps her and offers the assurance of her safety and the company back to her station. Under the laws of the Pashtunwali, a man is under the obligation to protect a woman under any circumstances, and the failure leads to doubt his manhood (Tarzi, A., & Lamb, 2011). By not looking at her, he strictly adheres to his culture and counters the negative connotations and the stereotypical representation of his community. For the cultural resistance, it is necessary to reclaim your traditions and cultural practices through practical demonstration and thereby challenge the oppressor culture (Cabral, 2015).

The movement now gains wide popularity and finally, Qayyum's younger brother Najib, who was serving the British Empire, also parts his ways with English and joins the movement. Najib Gul

finally stands convinced about the need for the movement. He takes off the English uniform and instead wears his cultural dress with a turban on his head which indicates shunning the oppressor culture and adopting his cultural practices as a form of resistance. “ ..Najeeb Gul’s bloodied bandage and waving it like a flag, joining in the cry of Iqilaab Zindabad. “ But first she wants to know what was beneath the turban” (p. 290). Najib Gul who was always taking side with the English and was serving them, now openly chant the slogan of revolution and wants the English to leave and let native live their life following their customs and laws. The mimic men, who side with the colonizers, get their education and work for them, undergo a state of ambivalence, and finally part their ways with them and join their people (Ullah, 2018). Najib is now convinced that the history, traditions, culture, and customs of his people and land were better and beneficial which need to be revived. He opens up to his elder, “Lala, why can’t you see that the past is beautiful” (p. 263). Such understanding and approach is the key feature of the liberation movement based on cultural resistance through peaceful means. (Cabral, 2015).

The movement offers resistance through indigenous culture and peaceful means. All the characters attempt to adopt their cultural practices, custom, and traditions and revive their past. They are out to demand liberation from the colonial control, but don’t resort to armed resistance and instead try to get themselves conform to their culture and use it as a tool of resistance because, in the face of a strong indigenous cultural life, foreign domination can’t be sure of its perpetuation.

## **Conclusion**

Colonization, throughout its history, has faced various forms of resistance offered by the local population of the colonies. The anti-colonial resistance against the British Empire was no exception in this regard. However, the study adds another form of resistance- cultural resistance. Shamsie’s *A God in Every Stone* is set in Peshawar and covers the key incidents of the Indian freedom movement. The study shows that the Pashtun population of the Indian subcontinent offers cultural resistance to the Empire through nonviolent means. Ghaffar Khan rules out the advantages of the armed resistance and Qayyum Gul follows him. They work on the reformation of their culture, exhort their fellows to discontinue the negative aspects of the culture and strictly conform to the positive aspects and abandon the British cultural ways a form of resistance to the Empire. They open up schools to impart knowledge to the children and hold mass gatherings to educate the people about their social and political rights. The movement also aims to revive the indigenous history and traditions as a plank of its strategy of cultural resistance (Cabral, 2015). The movement succeeds in gaining support from the masses and a large number of the participants stage a peaceful demonstration and freedom. Qayyum’s younger brother Najib Gul who was an ardent supporter of the Empire and was working with the British, finally abandon his services and put off the British uniform and instead put on his turban as his cultural dress and joins the movement. Alongside the men women also join them in their demand for freedom. The study also counters the stereotypical representation of the Pashtun people, who are widely represented as violent and warmonger, they

remain peaceful in the demonstration in their movement and abstain from the use of violence and armed resistance.

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