

PATHOLOGY, POWER AND RESISTANCE: A FOUCAULDIAN DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS OF INFECTION IN SHAH'S *BEFORE SHE SLEEPS*

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ABSTRACT

This research provides a critical interrogation of Bina Shah's *Before She Sleeps* (2018) through the theoretical lenses of Foucauldian Biopower and the Medical Gaze. It contends that the novel's central 'infection' functions not merely as a narrative device, but as a sophisticated dispositif as a pathological pretext that legitimizes the state of Green City's transition into a totalizing biocracy. By conducting a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of the 'TalkBots' as digitized instruments of panoptic surveillance and examining the 'Agency's' clinical rhetoric, this study demonstrates how the female anatomy is systematically stripped of political agency and reconfigured as a site of biological emergency. Furthermore, the research utilizes the concept of Heterotopia to reframe the 'Panah.' The current research argues that the Panah functions as a heterotopic site where the reclaiming of non-productive conditions, such as sleep challenges, the state's monopoly over its citizen-subjects' biopolitical power. The research ultimately makes an important contribution to the body of dystopian South Asian literary studies through the revelation of the transition from religion-based to secular medical control of women.

Keywords: Pakistani literature, post-structuralism, biopower, medical gaze, digital panopticon, heterotopia, dispositive

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, governance is carried out by means of governing life biologically. Diseases, surveillance technology, and biosecurity measures have changed the character of the relationship between state power and human physiology. This is evident from the significant work titled *Before She Sleeps* written by Bina Shah in 2018. The story unfolds in a futuristic Green City, where humanity is affected by a disease that has caused the reduction of women. As a consequence of such a demographic shift, the society becomes governed by the regime named "The Agency," Green City. In this study, it has claimed that the infection

serves as the ideological discourse, which becomes the pretext for transforming Green City into a biocracy.

The theory of biopower by Michel Foucault (1978) offers the central theoretical approach to this research. According to Foucault, who elaborated on this concept in his book *The History of Sexuality* (1978), the exercise of power in contemporary society has transformed from the right of sovereigns to *take life* into the duty of governmentality to *make live and let die* (p. 138). Biopower involves population management, risk management, and body management. In Shah's

novel, the principle of biopower finds manifestation in the transformation of women into “precious biological assets” by the Agency. The female body has been denuded of its agency and turned into the means for survival of the species. In terms of the medicalization of control, another way to view this is through the medical gaze proposed by Foucault (1973). According to this idea, people are reduced to biological facts that can be measured. In Green City, surveillance has become part of domestic existence through the use of TalkBots as digital friends who observe what you say, your emotional state, and your behavior. This idea extends the disciplinary power of the panopticon that Foucault (1977) discusses in intimate settings. Surveillance continues on a constant basis but has become normalized.

In order to consider infection as something beyond a contextual factor, the current work uses the theory of the *dispositif* proposed by Foucault (1980). This refers to the formation of a heterogeneous array of discourse, institutions, and techniques in reaction to an emergency situation. The epidemic becomes such a device in the novel *Before She Sleeps*. In fact, this phenomenon grants the suspension of rights, legitimizes surveillance systems, and constructs the idea of gender inequality as the demand of the situation. Within the context of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1995), language becomes crucial to the power of the Authority. Mandates become protocols, and imprisonment turns into protection due to appropriate lexicon. However, resistance is also staged in the novel. The hidden place referred to as the Panah is an example of heterotopia, as defined by Foucault (1986), which refers to a space of difference. Within the Panah, women regain their right to engage in nonproductive activities, especially sleeping. In a society obsessed with perfecting the body, sleep takes the form of counter conduct by defying the productivity associated with it. Though there has been growing academic attention to speculative fiction of South Asia, few studies have approached *Before She Sleeps* using a consistent Foucauldian approach that takes into consideration biopower, medical gaze, *dispositif*, and heterotopia. This current study attempts to fill this lacuna by

focusing on how pathology functions as a mechanism of power and how resistance is formed spatially and discursively.

The study contributes in highlighting the role of infection as a discourse technology of governance, rather than a rhetorical tool used in literature. In addition, it contributes to the field of feminist dystopia studies by exploring the transition from patriarchal dominance based on religion to more secular forms of power based on medicine. Finally, the research intervenes in contemporary discussions surrounding biopower, surveillance, and pandemics. It is by making the connection between infection, surveillance, and counter conduct has claimed that Shah has tried to highlight how patriarchy has mutated in the contemporary world to become biocracy, which has replaced religion with science and technology. This is what makes *Before She Sleeps* an important commentary on governance.

1.1 Research Objectives:

- To analyze how 'The Agency' utilizes the rhetoric of pathology and the Medical Gaze to transform female anatomy into a regulated public utility.
- To investigate the Panah as a spatial rupture (Heterotopia) that facilitates 'counter-conduct' against the state's totalizing biopolitical surveillance.

1.2 Research Questions:

- How does the state of Green City utilize the "infection" as a discursive tool to legitimize its biopolitical control over the female body?
- In what ways does the Panah function as a Heterotopia of resistance that disrupts the digital panopticism of the state?

2. Literature Review

The main question investigated in this research project is "Pathologization of the Subject." In Green City, the state managed to equate being healthy with complying. In case the woman does not want to join a multi-wife, union or demand her right to privacy, she is not considered a rebellious subject but rather a pathological case that does not comprehend the necessity of

biological emergency. An evident gap in the previous work regarding the role of technology is TalkBots like in such processes was identified. Though the literature paid attention to the sociological role of the ratio of genders, the issue of the epistemological violence of the digital gaze has not received its due attention so far. The first question to be examined in this research would be to explore the role of the TalkBots as a "Distributed Panopticon," that makes an attempt at erasing the border between private self and public state. Another issue that should be addressed concerns the "State of Exception" (Agamben, 1998) created by the Agency. The declaration of a permanent "emergency" in connection with the virus makes the laws suspended in favor of "medical discretion."

2.1 The Metamorphosis of Feminist Dystopia: From Theocracy to Biocracy

Feminist dystopian fiction, however, traditionally begins from the perspective of an anti-patriarchal theocracy. *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (1985), a typical example of this genre, provides the setting wherein the state uses religious fundamentalism and moral instruction in order to justify its oppressive control over women. According to critics like Tom Moylan (2000), these are critical dystopias, where sovereign authority works either as punishment or prohibition in terms of a divine law. The woman here is typically portrayed either as the "sinner" or the "saint"; her body embodies theology. Nevertheless, current literature has pointed out that there is an equally important "Secular Turn" within the genre. In Bina Shah's *Before She Sleeps* (2018), we witness a complete shift away from the theocratic approach to the idea of a "Secular Biocracy." For instance, in *Green City*, the "Agency" does not call on any god but rather calls on Science. Rosi Braidotti, in her book *The Posthuman* (2013), explains how modern management of bodies now goes beyond anthropocentric and moral approaches and involves biological governance. The shift is captured by the change from the "deductive" exercise of sovereignty like the "right to kill or let live" as characterized by Foucault (1978) to the

"productive" exercise of power through Biopower, in which life is made into "a project for fostering life and making it flourish or a project for disallowing life to the point of death." The role of making women "holy" has shifted to the state endeavor of making them "healthy," using the pretense of survival of the species to create a biomedical imperative of reproduction.

2.2 South Asian Speculative Fiction and the Cybernetic Gaze

Before She Sleeps a Pakistani literature that has written in English has taken has gone through a dramatic change, starting from the realist tendencies of the mid-20th century and reaching the present day Speculative Turn. Usually, realism was used by authors such as Bapsi Sidhwa and Kamila Shamsie in order to address postcolonial issues and historical traumas. However, Bina Shah is among those writers who have opened up a new way of writing called "Speculative Feminism." One of the key features in this context is the use of the "Medical Gaze." Foucault (1973) describes the gaze in his book *The Birth of the Clinic* as a sensory method that clinicalizes the subject in terms of distinguishing "the subject's identity from his/her body." Earlier scholarship by experts like Kanwal & Aslam (2020) focused on examining Shah's works through the frameworks of "Agency" and "Survivalism." In contrast, there appears to be an apparent lack of research on technologically mediated gaze in this case. The contribution made by this study helps to bridge this gap by proposing that TalkBots in *Green City* are more than just surveillance tools; they are an expression of the architecture of the Distributed Clinic. Through the "Cybernetic Gaze," they contribute to the objectification of the interiority of the South Asian woman, reducing her to a series of numerical indicators like her ovulation cycles, genetic compatibility, and psychological stability. It can be suggested that Shah's research points to a new mode of "Post-colonial Surveillance" in which the "Eye of the State" is superseded by the "Sensor of the Algorithm."

2.3 The State of Exception and the Epidemiological Dispositif

A central theme that has yet to be fully explored within South Asian literary studies is the juridico-medical basis of dystopian sovereignty. According to Giorgio Agamben (1998), the "State of Exception" is the paradigm used by modern power to suspend the law in order to save the population, turning humans into "Bare Life" (Zoë). Current research on *Before She Sleeps* is centered around gender oppression, but fails to highlight the Infection as a pathological dispositif. A dispositif (apparatus) is defined as a heterogeneous assembly of discourses, laws, and scientific statements by Michel Foucault. In the story written by Shah, the infection plays a pivotal role in the formation of a "Regime of Truth" wherein bio-security triumphs over human rights. Moreover, the notion of "Necropolitics" developed by Achille Mbembe (2003) becomes an essential framework to comprehend the power of the Agency to determine disposable individuals. In the dystopian world after colonialism, the body that is deemed "infectious" by the state becomes "dead" to society. This current research argues that the "Panah" should not only be understood as a sanctuary but rather as a Heterotopia of Deviation (Foucault, 1986), which is a material space that challenges the hegemony of the state on time and productivity. In this context, the Panah stands out as an outright challenge to "Governmentality," the Foucauldian concept that refers to the art of conducting people.

2.4 Surveillance Capitalism and the Digital Confessional

Finally, there must be a discussion regarding the interaction between Foucauldian theory and Surveillance Capitalism. Shoshana Zuboff (2019) asserts that contemporary surveillance aims to predict and control human behavior for financial gain or power. Within *Before She Sleeps*, this is accomplished via the TalkBots, which act as a virtual manifestation of the Confessional within the Foucauldian framework. According to Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1978), the confession was used as a key method of "subjectivation" that is, teaching an individual to

regulate himself or herself through the revelation of personal thoughts to an authority figure. By encouraging women to "vent" their frustrations, the TalkBots ensure that dissension is vocalized, recorded, and neutralized. While scholars like David Lyon (2018) have examined the "culture of surveillance," very few have focused on the domestic realm depicted in Shah's narrative. The research makes an argument that TalkBots generate the "Domestic Panopticon", which results in the "Death of Interiority." Under this concept, the "Clinic" has penetrated the "Home." There is no boundary anymore between public health and private life. This absence of boundary is the defining characteristic of the shift from the society of discipline of the nineteenth century to the "Control Society," as discussed by Gilles Deleuze (1992). In the control society, surveillance is no longer a stable tower, but rather it is a flexible digital net. The ladies of Green City do not have to be confined to cells; instead, they are trapped in a "data-stream."

2.5 Theoretical Synthesis: Bridging the Gap

To integrate these various literary and philosophical threads, the current research utilizes a Tripartite Theoretical Framework:

1. Biopolitics and Governmentality: Instead of merely "governing" the TalkBots, this research explores the notion of governmentality wherein the Agency "governs" the souls of women through the TalkBots by making them complicit in their surveillance.

2. The Clinical Gaze: The role of medical technology in rendering the female body "legible" and "docile" for governmental purposes.

3. Heterotopology: The theoretical framework of Panah as a heterotopic space for "counter-conduct," wherein the linearity of state reproductive time is interrupted via the mechanism of "Heterochrony" (interrupting the state's official time).

Through this integration of theories, the study departs from a traditional thematic reading of the text and moves towards "Discursive Excavation." In other words, this research posits that Shah's

work is a cautionary tale on the “Medicalization of Authoritarianism” wherein the medical profession’s instrument, the stethoscope, is as dangerous as the soldier’s rifle.

3. Methodology: Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA)

This study employs Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) as its research framework. FDA is not merely a linguistic discourse; it is an archaeological and genealogical method used to uncover how “truth” is constructed through institutional language. According to Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), discourses are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.” In the context of *Before She Sleeps*, the FDA allows this research to move beyond the plot and investigate the “Pathological Dispositif” of Green City. The methodology is structured around three analytical layers:

1. Discursive Identification: Analyzing the medical and legal lexicon used by ‘The Agency’ to frame the HPV-variant virus. This involves identifying how the state uses “health” and “security” as interchangeable terms to justify the suspension of rights.

2. Power-Knowledge Dynamics: Examining the role of technology (the TalkBots) and medical rituals (fertility checks) in producing “docile bodies.” The research looks for the Medical Gaze in the way characters are described through metrics rather than personal histories.

3. Spatial analysis: By employing the spatial concepts of Foucault, comparing the “Panoptic spaces” of the private wives’ quarters to the “Heterotopic spaces” of the Panah. This aspect emphasizes how the very city structure serves to enforce the biopolitical control of the state. Through adopting such an approach, the research ensures that the text is regarded as a space of power negotiation where even dialogues and places contribute to the overall biopolitical space. This research examines the linguistic strategies used in medical researches, the “corrective” dialogues of the TalkBots, and the spatial politics of the

subterranean Panah. By synthesizing these findings, the research has provided a comprehensive critique of the “Clinical Authoritarianism” depicted in the novel.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The current study uses a post-structuralist theoretical triangle of biopower, the medical gaze, and heterotopia to investigate the sociopolitical structure of Green City in Bina Shah's novel *Before She Sleeps* (2018). The theories are elaborated using the concept of state of exception by Giorgio Agamben and the theory of necropower by Achille Mbembe to explore how biological life is turned into an object of political control. Infection emerges as a tool for ordering and regulating life in this context.

3.1.1 Biopower and the Administration of Bare Life

Biopower, as defined by Michel Foucault, is the contemporary power formation that exercises control over the population through regulating the living process itself. As Foucault puts it in his 1978 work, biopower works via a system of “making live and letting die” that turns the exercise of sovereignty over death into an act of optimizing the conditions of life. This idea is reflected in the biopolitical state of Green City that rules it through The Agency’s control of reproductive women’s life processes. This biopolitical order resonates with the concept of “bare life” by Giorgio Agamben (1998). Agamben defines bare life as the existence stripped of any political dimension in a state characterized by the permanent State of Exception. In the novel, the condition necessary to bring about this state is the spread of the infection among the residents. This transforms women from citizens with their political rights to mere biological assets subject to medical governance without any political involvement.

3.1.2 The Medical Gaze and Clinical Surveillance

The medical gaze by Foucault (1973) can be used to explain how people become objects of knowledge in a clinic setting. The medical gaze involves removing people from society and

defining them based on biologically measurable information. The medical gaze in Green City, however, transcends institutions and becomes a hegemonic epistemology. This process occurs through the incorporation of technology, including Talkbots, which allow the medical gaze to become decentralized and omnipresent. Monitoring activities include tracking speech, emotion, and reproductive processes to create subjects that remain constantly under institutional scrutiny. Using the theories of the social construction of medicine by Lupton (2012), this research actually shows how the female body becomes an object of perpetual biological danger. In doing so, surveillance becomes a form of caring while clinical monitoring becomes a disciplinary practice.

3.1.3 Heterotopia and Spatial Resistance

The idea of heterotopia introduced by Foucault (1986) is used to analyze the spaces of resistance within the novel. Heterotopias refer to real spaces that exist in opposition to social orders by defying normative systems. In *Before She Sleeps*, the Panah is viewed as a heterotopia of deviation that brings together people who are rejected by the biopolitical system in spaces beyond the dynamics of productivity and reproduction. In contrast to the monitored spaces of Green City, the Panah relies on temporalities that are not productive, such as silence and sleep, thus challenging the focus of the government on biological efficiency. The heterotopic space highlights the shortcomings of the biopolitical regime and provides opportunities for conduct beyond the prescribed normativity. In light of the idea of necropower proposed by Mbembe (2003), the heterotopia of deviation also demonstrates that life is managed in conjunction with vulnerability and death.

3.1.4 Theoretical Synthesis

Collectively, these theoretical paradigms help understand infection as a Foucauldian dispositif within the governance structure of Green City. The dispositif is a system where medical rhetoric, surveillance technologies, and spatial politics coalesce to create an overarching structure of governance. Using this dispositif, "health"

becomes synonymous with conformity, whereas deviance comes to be associated with illness. Nonetheless, heterotopian sites like the Panah become spaces of rupture, indicating that biopower can never be all-pervasive or absolute.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Infection as Permanent Emergency

The infection is discursively framed as an existential demographic crisis, repeatedly invoked in the language of preservation and survival. State rhetoric emphasizes women as rare and indispensable, utilizing a "benevolent" vocabulary to mask totalizing control. For instance, the Agency's propaganda and the social consensus it enforces define women not as citizens, but as biological treasures: *Women were the most precious commodity in the world, more valuable than oil or gold* (Shah, 2018, p. 52). Although framed in terms of values, this discourse translates biological fertility into a national asset. By virtue of this transformation, the female body becomes a demographic apparatus rather than an independent entity. The regulations surrounding marriage and procreation can be seen as practical and clinical reactions to the limited availability of women. For the Agency, the "multi-wife" practice is not voluntary; rather, it is mathematically necessary for the continued existence of the species. Lin sees the clinical nature of this practice: *The Agency's math was simple: one woman plus three husbands equals the best chance for a successful pregnancy* (p. 14). In this case, forced measures are rationalized as medical needs. The government has managed to use the plague as a means to erase the past from individuals' lives, replacing it with a timetable of reproduction: *Your life is not your own. It belongs to the City. It belongs to the future* (p. 88). Under the Foucauldian understanding, biopower regulates life through the optimization of population statistics; a "successful" woman's intelligence and social value have little bearing on her success, while her "ability to conceive" and "viruses" in her blood have been considered her "fertility score." As Agamben suggests in his concept of the *State of Exception* (1998), the HPV scandal maintains such an exceptional status quo wherein "the legal norm ceases to apply," as its

logic of emergency governance overrides all legal concerns. The Agency does not profess any hatred for women; it simply claims to "save" them, albeit only through the absolute transparency of the body for the state. Rights has not been explicitly abolished but has been subordinated to epidemiology.

4.2 The Digitized Medical Gaze: TalkBots and Distributed Surveillance

The surveillance technology in *Before She Sleeps* operates not only through the visible institutions of the state. It is made mundane by means of the TalkBots, which turn personal space into an extension of the clinic within the state. *The Talkbots' red eye was always glowing, its electronic ears always listening* (Shah, 2018, p. 32), says one character in the novel. Far from being just a description, this statement makes up a precondition of constant surveillance. Green City's surveillance differs from Bentham's panopticon architecture; instead of being visual, it is auditory and algorithmic. TalkBots use "therapeutic" language to give reminders to citizens such as *Remember your prenatal vitamins, Lin. Your well-being is of utmost importance to the City* (p. 45). On the superficial level, it seems that they are looking after their citizens, but in reality, they are ensuring that their citizens follow the rules set forth by the government. These signs of anticipatory compliance indicate that the surveillance process has been internalized by the subjects. This is evident from the way the individual alters his/her mannerisms or speech patterns when faced with the technological instrument like *I bit back the sharp retort, knowing the TalkBots would flag my tone as 'unstable' in its daily report* (p. 61). It is also clear in the context of reproductive measures: *I lived by charts: basal temperature, hormones, and the endless counting down until my fertile period* (p. 104). Subjectivity is converted to numbers here. According to Foucault (1973), through the Medical Gaze, the individual is stripped of her subjective reality and converted into a clinical object. In Green City, being healthy is equated to following the measured norm.

4.3 Spatial Regulation and the Panah as Heterotopia

Spatial logic at Green City underscores its biopolitical logic. The Panah, however, is framed through terms of quietude and seclusion: *The air did not buzz with surveillance chatter; instead, there was a dense, velvet texture of silence*. Sleep, which has political significance in a regime where value is defined by productivity, represents a disruption of utility. The Panah's invisibility as a space of shadows *kept tucked beneath the surface of the gleaming city* (p. 148), signifies its difference from the dominant logic of spatial organization. With the idea of heterotopia borrowed from Foucault (1986), the Panah allows for the emergence of opacity. While the city mandates reproductive scheduling, the Panah reintroduces unstructured temporality: *In the Panah, we don't sleep because we need recovery for work; we sleep because it belongs to the night*.

4.4 Counter-Conduct and Non-Legibility

In this biopolitical apparatus, the subject is Pathologized in terms of discursive construction. A fleeting instant of uncertainty like *I wondered if there was a version of me that wasn't a biological clock, a version that could just... be* (p. 112), is constructed as an instance of vulnerability in a context where resilience is demanded. However, such examples can also be understood as instances of counter-conduct. Resistance takes the form of tactical withdrawal. Panah institutionalizes this tactic. Through the valorization of sleep over childbirth and privacy over visibility, it problematizes the equation of health with docility. As the novel demonstrates, resistance can still occur in contexts where metrics fail: *They can track our blood, but they cannot track our dreams* (p. 210).

5. Discussion and Findings

In the dystopian landscape of Green City, "Infection" serves as the foundational instrument of power. However, to view the virus merely as a biological threat is to miss its role as a dispositif that is a *thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, and administrative measures* (Foucault, 1980). According to Foucault (1978), contemporary power operates not in a purely

repressive manner, but in a productive way: it establishes a "Regime of Truth" and compels subjects to live according to its parameters. In *Before She Sleeps*, the "Great Pandemic" is utilized as a permanent "State of Exception" (Agamben, 1998). By constantly framing the survival of the species as being in imminent danger, the Agency justifies the suspension of the juridical order. This allows the state to transition from managing citizens to managing "Bare Life" (Zoë). Women are stripped of their *bios* that is their political and social identity and reduced to their biological functions. This transformation is encoded in the Agency's lexicon; by re-labeling women as "Reproductive Units" or "Domestic Scientists," the state performs a rhetorical surgery that excises the individual's history, dreams, and sufferings. This is the ultimate manifestation of the Medical Gaze. As Foucault argued in *The Birth of the Clinic*, this gaze abstracts the patient into a collection of pathological symptoms. In Green City, femininity itself is treated as a pathology that must be monitored through ovulation cycles, viral loads, and genetic compatibility. The female body becomes a site of Anatomicopolitics, where every biological rhythm is synchronized with the needs of the state.

Whereas the "Infection" provides the moral pretext for power, the TalkBots provide the technical architecture for its exercise. While Foucault's (1977) Panopticon relied on a central tower and physical stone, the surveillance in Green City is digitalized, networked, and intimate. The TalkBots represent a shift toward Pastoral Power as a form of power that does not just look at the subject from a distance but seeks to "know" the subject's soul to better govern it. Unlike the "Eyes" in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, who represent a sovereign threat of external violence, the TalkBots function as the "Confessor." They are designed to be soothing, domestic presences that coax women into "venting" their frustrations. This modern-day equivalent of the confession is a mechanism of subjectivation; it encourages the woman to articulate her interiority so that the state may better categorize and "cure" her dissent. The result is a phenomenon described as the "Death of Interiority." Because the TalkBots

are always present, characters like Lin incorporate the "Gaze of the Agency" into their own psyche. This is the hallmark of the Panoptic effect: the subject becomes their own jailer. They begin to censor their own thoughts before they are even fully formed. The home is no longer a private sanctuary but an extension of the state's clinical apparatus. The "Doctor" is no longer just in the clinic; the Doctor is the architecture of the house itself, monitoring the emotional and biological pulse of the household in real-time.

The final movement of this discussion considers the Panah as a Heterotopia of Deviation (Foucault, 1986). In a biopolitical system that demands perpetual "productivity" that is defined as reproductive labor and emotional performance as the condition of non-utility represents an act of extreme rebellion. The Panah is a physical "counter-site," a space where the rules of Green City are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. The most radical aspect of the Panah is the act of Sleep. Within the Agency's regime, sleep is a regulated biological necessity meant to optimize health for reproduction. However, within the Panah, sleep is reclaimed as Heterochrony as a break from the linear, productive time of the state. By retreating into unconsciousness in a space where the TalkBots cannot penetrate, the women engage in a profound form of "Counter-Conduct." Sleep becomes a way to become "illegible" to the state. However, this resistance is fraught with the precarity of "Necropolitics" (Mbembe, 2003). To be "free" in the Panah is to be socially "dead" to the state. It has been necessary for the women to wipe out their public self, their name, and their past in order to preserve their private identity. Thus lies the tragic irony of the situation where, within a medicalized society, the restoration of one's own identity becomes possible through nonexistence. The Panah is thus a Heterotopia of the Void. Resistance here is not measured by political action, but by the degree of one's invisibility. The women of the Panah prove that in a world of total visibility, the only sovereign territory left is the silence of the dream-state.

5.1 Future Research Suggestions

Whereas this research concentrated on the Foucauldian perspective of the theme of pathology and space, future research will find useful information in:

- **Necropolitical Theory:** Considering the works of Achille Mbembe and applying them in the study of the “disposability” of individuals who do not meet the health requirements of the agency.
- **Dystopian Comparison:** Analyzing to compare the “Bio-Security” of Green City with “Surveillance Capitalism” in the contemporary Western world of speculation.
- **Ecofeminism:** Examining the connection between the environmental destruction discussed in the novel and biological control over females.

6. Conclusion

In this study, it was proposed that rather than reading *Before She Sleeps* as a dystopic tale dealing with a skewed gender ratio, it should be regarded as a complex depiction of biopolitical control in the wake of the pandemic. Using a multidisciplinary framework comprised of theories on Biopower, the Medical Gaze, Heterotopia, and the State of Exception, we have shown how pathologies can be used as tools of politics. “Infection” in Green City, thus, serves as a dispositif which is a tool through which power gets organized and exercised over life. In announcing a perpetual biological state of emergency, the Agency departs from legal norms and establishes itself as a regime of biomedical control. Law becomes subservient to procedure, and citizenship gives way to diagnosis. No longer do women receive any recognition as political subjects, only as sources for reproduction. Health becomes synonymous with conformity, and deviance is Pathologized. It is in this respect that Shah’s fictional future exemplifies Foucault’s (1978) assertion regarding the shift of power in contemporary society from an act of sovereign power, namely, the ability to kill, to an artful technique of power over life.

TalkBots have been used to digitize the surveillance process, which represents an important shift in the Medical Gaze. Not only is the Medical Gaze no longer limited to the medical

setting, but also ambient and domiciliary. Rather than being simply a passive observation, it involves anticipation, correction, and normalization. Through the incorporation of surveillance within domestic space, the system fundamentally changes the nature of subjectivity. The individual learns to hear the voice of the state evaluating her speech, her emotions, and her reproductive practices in anticipation of algorithmic judgment. Additionally, the politics of space in Green City further solidifies its biopolitical governance. The layout of the city guarantees reproductive visibility and administrative intelligibility. It works on segmentation and surveillance. In light of all this, the Panah comes across as a heterotopic rupture. It is neither a utopia nor a revolution since it does not bring down the regime but only makes it pause in that particular place. By highlighting sleep, silence, and obscurity, the Panah disrupts the pressure of productivity and quantification. For all these reasons, the analysis proves that resistance in Shah’s novel is not performed through active defiance, but rather through counter-behavior. Resistance is practiced through seclusion, illegibility, and refusal to be measurable. As long as Biopolitics relies upon visibility, classification, and optimization, then opacity has undermined its very essence. Thus, the Panah teaches us that even within a biocracy, other spaces and times may exist. It should also be noted that in this context, this discussion positions Shah’s work within the paradigm shift taking place in the sphere of South Asian science fiction literature. In contrast to the feminist dystopias of the past, which revolved around the oppression of women by the patriarchy-religion, the oppression described in Shah’s book has a basis in science and medicine, thus making it possible to justify the oppression through theories such as biomedicine. By illustrating the use of pathology in depoliticizing subjects, Shah’s book calls for a reassessment of the dynamics of care and control. Terms such as protection, security, and public health lose all distinction from coercion. However, at the same time, the novel recognizes the continued existence of resistance in the interstices of visibility. Through recasting the actions of silence and sleep as politics, *Before She Sleeps*

reconceptualizes resistance as withdrawal rather than confrontation.

Finally, this work makes an important contribution to literature and culture studies in showing how discourse analysis through the Foucauldian lens reveals the processes by which biosecurity practices produce the normalization of inequality. In other words, Shah's dystopian fiction functions as a diagnosis of our present reality, pointing out the fragility of human rights during an emergency and the politics of life.

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