

# Narrative Ideology and Repercussions: Representation of the Kashmir Conflict in Modern Literature

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## Abstract

The research aims to explore the Kashmir conflict that has fractured the lives of the Kashmiri people. In the current times, the Kashmir conflict has been remarkably engaging literate circles all over the world. The conflict has been in the news worldwide for the last three decades because it may cause modern-day warfare between India, Pakistan, and China. Hence, people all over the world want to know about the situation in the region. The historical, sociological, and moral approaches by Wilbur Stewart Scott are used to grasp the context of the selected novels *The Collaborator* (2012) and *Book of Gold Leaves* (2015). Mirza Waheed, as an eyewitness, sketched the novels on the sufferings of Kashmiris, engaging daily with a god of death because of the conflictual situation. This situation has been routinized since the invasion and occupation of the land by the three nuclear armament-holding neighbors, India, Pakistan, and China, immediately after the emancipation of the first two from their British colonial masters in 1947. The political scenario of Jammu and Kashmir became murkier in 1988 and onwards when India intensified its military operations to quell the armed resistance movement for “Azadi” (freedom) of land. The modern Kashmiri literature roots out the sentiment of freedom; India gave impunity to any draconian tactics in the name of rules that justified any inhuman treatment of custodial killing, torture, rape, etc. As a result, more than three lac women are dead, approximately 10000 are missing, and thousands are languishing in jails.

**Keywords:** political interests, humanitarian issues, war crimes, freedom movement, Islamic fundamentalist

## 1. Introduction

The study investigates the conflict and violence in Kashmir that has disrupted the lives of Kashmiris in modern literature worldwide. Violence as an inseparable part of literature is filled with bloody pursuits and bloodshed in postmodern genres (Fatima & Raja 116). *The Collaborator (TC)* (2012) and *Book of Gold Leaves (BOGL)* (2015) are the sources of data to investigate the Kashmir conflict from an insider’s perspective, Mirza Waheed. The historical, sociological, and moral approaches of Wilbur S. Scott will grasp the proper context of the selected novels (Kothari 2004). The article will use autobiographies, interviews, essays in journals, magazines, newspapers, books, critical books, periodicals, e-articles, websites, and other works that reflect the author and phenomena in addition to their works.

The Kashmiri Muslims are portrayed as religious zealots. Muskan Moazzam, in her article “Kashmir as a Humanitarian Issue” (2022), explains that India has failed to crush the mounting sentiments of self-determination for the freedom of Kashmiris since 1990. Waheed inspects the social, moral, environmental, cultural, and political realities of the Kashmir conflict contrary to terrorism as “Jihad.” The war has demolished the valley but not from the memories and hearts of the Kashmiris. Freshwater ecosystems are extremely valuable in aesthetics, culture, socio-economics, and ecology (Jeelani 261).

Waheed describes in *TC* (2012) how the hostile actions of surrounding states influence the life of Kashmiris. The novel chronicles the conflict in Kashmir in the 1990s and has been hailed as a pivotal moment for Kashmiri literature (Haque and Iftikhar 2019). In Waheed’s debut book, the protagonist goes by a code name and is engaged in a fight. It has a sinister and gloomy atmosphere. Kashmiri children have crossed the Line of Control (LOC) to become deadly militants. The 19 years old unnamed protagonist’s village is now abandoned close to the Line of Control. The protagonist feels depressed and lifeless due to his attempt to define truth and destitution of the people.

There are three main sections in *TC* (2012). The first section alternates between the past and the present to describe the pain and suffering of Kashmiri families abandoned in their communities. The second section describes the daily raids and crackdowns at night. The relationship between the unnamed narrator and captain Kadian is discussed in the final section. Waheed niftily parodies the propaganda language of media about the conflict that has influenced public perceptions of the battle zones outside the boundary of occupied Kashmir. The narrator's father reveals the hypocrisy of India's national broadcaster, Doordarshan news, "all lies, *sarasarbakwas*, and utter nonsense" (*TC* 112). Bhat (2014) explains that people worldwide want to comprehend the genuine nature of the issue to grasp the Kashmir conflict for better understanding. Propaganda and misinformation have painted the Kashmiri people as radical Islamic terrorists. The media defends the murderous rampage, including rape, torture, and murder, as necessary.

Women are raped because they are soft targets, but the forces never accept them. Schools for children have been converted into bunkers. Amnesty International reports that "In Jammu and Kashmir, rape is systematically humiliating and intimidating the local population during counter-insurgency operations" (Jahangir 4). People are compelled to leave their native land. The authorities pull up the folks who wait for their loved ones to return home during crackdowns (Ghafoor and Farooq 2020). Waheed's story is set in firmly ingrained historical and political elements against military tyranny, which has its roots in colonialism, "when the powerful enslaved populations by destroying logic and reality and corrupting, distorting, and disfiguring it." (Fanon 215)

For this study, Wilbur S. Scott's (1974) approach to modern literature has been applied. Scott describes the literary approach to modern literature as a special human knowledge that must be examined on its terms. The work itself contains all the components required for understanding it. The formal style, structure, tone, and imagery are present throughout the work. The writer's main objective is to ascertain how these components interact with the text's substance to influence how the reader will react. Modern literature has underlying recurring patterns of political, ecocritical, psychological, and economic elements, especially from war zones where media propagate the government narrative. Resistance stories that are "embedded" in their historical and material contexts and "contain" the authors' allegiances and active participation to testify to the essence of the liberation fight as it is being carried out behind the misleading statistics of the media in the political events of their countries' coverage and reports from the government (Harlow 98).

Modern authors use characters, imagery, landscapes, topics, structure, and diction to represent the state of society at any given time and establish a link between statistics and a critical view of society. According to Scott, the focus should be on the literature's form, a distinctive type of human knowledge that must be studied in isolation. The article aims to explore the two novels of Mirza Waheed, *TC* (2012) and *BOGL* (2015), from the perspective of traumas of the war field, crimes, and sufferings in Kashmir valley. The characters in both novels are stuck in similar situations to show the variations in focus and treatment of the issue. The author spent a lot of time in the battle area to relate the stories to the world, which is the most important factor.

The writer says, "What did I know of the ways of the world? There was a full-scale armed movement underway somewhere, everywhere, and things like this must be happening everywhere" (Waheed 2012). Waheed employs each component to tell the complete story, which has timeless and enduring effects. Postmodern literature has a visual element instead of the reader's visual experience. Waheed, the author, uses political, social, and historical perspectives to reflect on life experience. The author's life and time spent analyzing and interpreting human issues are reflected in the characters.

Several literary writers, through their writings, have captured this shattered life steeped in strife. Among a few Western attempts to bring Kashmir and its issues to the public are Tyndale Biscoe's *Light and Shade* (1922) and Justine Solid's *In the valley of Fog* (2009). The Indian viewpoint is examined in Vikram Chandra's *Srinagar Intrigue* (2000), M. J. Akbar's *Past the Vale* (2011), and Prem Shankar Jha's *Kashmir 1947* (1996). However, only a few notable authors like Zareef, Sajjad Inqilabi, Basharat Peer, Siddhartha Gigoo, Rahul Pandita, Feroz Rather, Shahnaz Bashir, and Mirza Waheed, a native Kashmiri, have attempted to keep the conflict as the backdrop of their stories to contextualize history while describing the paralyzed and traumatized lives of the locals.

Many writers documented this pulverized life gripped in conflict through works of literature. Zareef and Zareef, Sajjad Inqilabi, Basharat Peer, Shahnaz Bashir, and Mirza Waheed are the few notable ones who have tried to keep the conflict as the backdrop of the plot of their works to describe the paralyzed and traumatized life of the inhabitants while contextualizing history. This research aims to explore the literature written by Kashmiri writers, who witness the conflict on a day-to-day basis, to underscore the cause of the conflict. Basharat's peer in *The Curfewed Night* gives a picturesque account of the conflict. *The Half Mother* by Shahnaz Bashir underlines the trials of a half-mother who doesn't know whether her son is dead or alive after being abducted by some 'unknown' people. The other novel, *The*

*Book of Gold Leaves*, describes a love story caught in the Kashmir conflict of the 1990s when Kashmir took to armed rebellion against military occupation. The works offer an unimaginably macabre account of chilling death and destruction.

However, as it is often said that ‘Conflict creates art,’ Kashmir has witnessed, in the recent past, a good number of writers, poets, and artists who are deeply influenced by the ‘Kashmir struggle.’ (Nadeem 2017) As a result, many modern literary works like *The Collaborator* (2011) and *The Book of Gold Leaves* (2015) by Mirza Waheed, *Half Widow* (2012) by Shafi Ahmad, *Half Mother* (2014) by Shahnaaz Bashir, *Lost in Terror* (2016) by Nayeema Mehjoor, *Leaves from Kashmir* (2017) by Saba Shafi, *Zerafa; A Modern Fairy Tale* (2017) by Tooba Rasheed offer the distressing pictures of a Kashmir and its culture under siege to highlight the human uncertainty. The novels draw attention to how a political situation disturbs the lives of the people caught in conflict.

## 2. Discussion and Analysis

Modern writers examine the conflict, but history and culture have not been used to contextualize it (Haque and Iftikhar 10). The article seeks to place history in context while highlighting the terrible effects of the battle. In contrast to reality, the article’s main point is that Kashmiri Muslims are depicted as religious extremist. For the first time, the conflict is presented in the literature by insiders who have experienced a traumatic life in the conflict zone (Hanif and Ullah 3). Kashmir is either portrayed as a popular tourist destination or as a region populated by Islamic fundamentalists who have been causing havoc in the lives of people of other faiths.

The Kashmir conflict is a humanitarian problem rather than the outcome of Islamic fundamentalism. The political bigotry of the two nearby nations, India and Pakistan, affects Kashmiris more than anything else. They give hardly any scope to the idea that political discussions, but not military occupation and repression, are the actual means of resolving the Kashmir conflict. The people of Kashmir are the actual victims of the military occupation of their land and endure the worst possible suffering. The Kashmiris experience inhumane treatment, torture, rape, murder, and other war crimes daily, impacting their quality of life.

### *Propaganda against Kashmir Conflict*

Media propaganda keeps the crucial aspects of the Kashmir conflict secret from the outside world. Many photographs and tales are never rendered. In his interview, Waheed claims that the 1990s were a decade of darkness and brutality marked by horrendous violence and little communication with the outside world due to Pakistan’s and India’s respective descriptions of the conflict as “jihad” and a “law-and-order issue” respectively (Murad 2014). The narrator echoed, “You know, and sometimes I wonder because there is always an Indian and Pakistani version of everything in Kashmir.” (TC 15).

Additionally, letter censorship prevents Kashmiris from freely communicating with one another. The chapter “Country without Post Office” alludes to Agha Shahid Ali’s collection, *The Country without a Post Office* (2013), which has the same title. “Letters are initially sent to a facilitator in Nepal before ever being forwarded to the Pakistani training camps. The headquarters in Delhi also employs a separate team of spies to the battalion in Srinagar” (BOGL 52). Sumit Kumar has a warning about Panther from the Head Office, “volatile and weird.” (BOGL 58)

Waheed and other narrators assume the duty to restore expropriated history to the world and reclaim it for themselves to build a new world-historical order (Harlow 50). Waheed says 70,000 people were killed, abducted, left orphaned, and detained, but “the government of India disputes these figures” (TC 305). In addition to using force, India’s preoccupation with seizing control over Kashmir’s land necessitates the employment of espionage and extensive surveillance. Although the Indian Major Kumar is portrayed in the book as giving his informants financial support so he can learn more about their operations in Kashmir, “the city’s gardens of Eden are reportedly patrolled by armed and unarmed individuals (BOGL 139).

The media influences our attitudes, feelings, and thoughts for a more radical or subversive purpose through more radical or subversive voices during programming, media spread information or obliterates it is debatable (Baudrillard). When the men were kept in strict internment in a field on February 21, 1991, Waheed recreates the filming and reporting of national and international teams. The government, however, disputes this, “A brand new Kashmir Affairs Minister from Delhi was also reported as noting that *Poshpur* has never appeared on a map.” (TC 26). Waheed symbolizes *Poshpur* in Kashmir, where women aged 8 to 50 were raped and gang-raped throughout the night by ‘security forces’ (Batoool et al. 2016).

The incident of *Gawkadal* begins with the murdering of 50 people, “Young and old, men and children, dead, all dead, dead on a bridge” (TC 117). The government defends it to maintain a law-and-order situation: “There was a breakdown in the law-and-order situation...35 people were killed” (TC 117). The media always describes fake encounters as a

mere “skirmish” between the army and militants (*TC* 5). Also here, “It is all happening, dear, happening everywhere...the story of the sixteen boys (some said twenty, some thirty) who had disappeared together.” (*TC* 256). Governments impose strict censorship on the public’s access to information during any period of authoritarian rule (LaMay 26).

India arranges special camps and dead bodies for international crews, “...I can make any *maderchod*(mother-fucker) look like an Afghan. The dead don’t speak, remember, and I still have plenty of old photos and clothes (*TC* 9). The dominant power believes that it must fabricate history to defend its methods of oppressive machinations (Chomsky 35). The encounter films are kept for the future, “...to show off their catch on TV in the bordering villages or boys in far-flung area...drag bodies with mutilated faces and handover to do-gooder villagers for nameless mass burials...(TC 14) There are crackdowns and valley closures whenever politicians visit Kashmir valley. Politicians never pay attention to villagers’ plights, demands, or cries. People’s suffering is hidden from the camera’s lens while it is focused on broadcasting political speech. The stage manager has spread “goodwill” to give the rest of the world a “calm” impression of Kashmir.

### ***Bloodshed, Violence, and Trauma***

The writers from outside Kashmir, who have never lived in a conflict zone, have presented and misinterpreted the Kashmir Conflict by portraying incomplete scenes and pictures. Kashmir is portrayed as a popular tourist destination or a region populated by Islamic zealots who have been causing havoc in the lives of adherents to other religions. The artwork of a new generation powerfully captures life in a nation under constant attack. It has taken some time for contemporary Kashmiri writers who have been traumatized by the horrors of war and bloodshed to begin expressing through their works of art the suffering, internal displacement, and anguish of the people. They are forced to sing songs of necessity rather than songs of love, passion, nature, and beauty.

The Kashmir conflict serves as the backdrop for Mirza Waheed, a novelist of Kashmiri descent, as he explores the anguish and suffering of ordinary people (Bhatti et al. 2016). Iffat Malik (2002) evaluates that the two factors of the Kashmir conflict as an ethnic (Muslims and Pundits) and territorial dispute are interlinked. The human rights violations of Indian Muslims now drew them further away, while “Pundits” have drawn closer to India (100-101). Dinanath and Zafar’s conversation explains, “...People have not been harmed but killed, Zafar Saeb...punish all of us for the transgressions of some? Must you?...no one wants to leave their home...” (*BOGL* 262).

Since 1988, when India increased its military operations to crush the Kashmiri resistance movement, the political situation in Kashmir has grown murkier. The conflicting scenarios force the people of Kashmir to interact daily with the deity of death, “The people dying everywhere...town and village...thrown into dark jails in unknown parts...hundreds of the young men who were confined in those thick shackles never made it out alive...(TC 20). After World War II, the superpowers took control of the world’s political and economic systems. United Nations, under the supervision of the superpowers, is preventing any settlement because of Indian ties to the global economy and politics. Realists and liberals agree that maintaining power in Kashmir is the true objective (Moazzam 2022). The situation has become routine since the invasion and occupation of the region by the three neighbors with nuclear weapons, China, Pakistan, and India (Buettner 869).

Kashmiris have genuine complaints against the occupying forces as the issue is political and humanitarian rather than Islamic fundamentalism. The youth like Faiz, Hussain, Gul, Ashfaq, and Mohammed step forward in reaction to brutal actions against Kashmiris, as Faiz explains to dear sister Shahida, “the military arrived first! Later, the boys began to fight...” (*BOGL* 46) The 19-year-old protagonist in *TC* becomes excited after picking a gun from corpses, “As soon as I see myself holding a pistol in my hands, taking it home, and putting it under my pillow at night, a rush of eagerness suddenly overwhelms my senses.” (*TC* 15) It is because of the violence that affects vulnerable young minds.

The radical militias continue to attract young people as long as the public romanticizes resistance warriors and advocates for violent overthrow of the government. Rumi never returns home after being trained by Panther, resultantly his father, Khan Kabir Khan, is trapped and murdered. The occupation has sparked a network of violence complex and difficult to untangle from the novel’s central idea. “Roohi and Faiz genuinely desire peaceful coexistence, but that goal remains unattainable” (*BOGL* 109).

A subsequent conflict has further oppressed the already oppressed woman in a patriarchal society,

“...There were countless dead bodies on the roads, in hospital beds, in new martyrs’ graveyards, and scattered carelessly on the snow of unthinking borders, left behind by thousands of people who had vanished, leaving behind ladies with photographs and people who had been waiting for a long time.” (*TC*

60).

Ironically, India, which calls itself the largest democracy in the world, has banned the entry of media, foreign delegations, and human rights activists to Kashmir (Moazzam 2022). Furthermore, in *BOGL*, “Roohi is absorbed in enjoying the serenity of atmosphere: “Unlike the city, the meadow’s fresh air and light are devoid of dust and the influences of the outside world.” (*BOGL* 288) She has planned life with Faiz, “take to all our lakes and rivers...floating on the Jhelum beyond the shrine...through the heart of our country. I am sure, no, I know...river, fields, and forest will shelter us...havens for our children...” (*BOGL* 139) The marriage ceremony never takes place as Faiz crosses the border to be a mujahid to take revenge for his godmother. The godmother’s death vacates the courtyard from birds, “...courtyard has been overflowing with food for hundreds of years, and the birds have never been let down...” (*BOGL* 82).

The lovers are compelled to concentrate on the necessities of surviving, and their hopes for a tranquil existence fade away (Zia 2017). Kashmir is instilled with terror by enforcing a curfew, and one of the postponed events is the wedding of Faiz and Roohi. People disappear forever, “...to the publicized loud heartbreaks, there are thousands of private ones. She occasionally thinks. Some people persist for a lifetime in silence...” (*BOGL* 250) The pieces provide a shockingly horrific account of devastation and death, a distressing city and culture under attack, where political crisis rips apart the lives of the people (Bhat 229).

The newly trained militants eventually disperse or disappear in the dark, “Amber glows of last cigarettes bobbed up and down in the distance, diminished before disappearing. They vanished into our hills’ gloom.” (*TC* 78). The narrative is straightforward: rather than living in their homes, youth melt into nature to escape and become nameless. The hordes of soldiers present in every corner of the territory that Faiz tells in training camp to engineer, “it does not require an MA, BE, or PhD to comprehend the significance of numerous soldiers.” (*BOGL* 216) People have mired in depressing uncertainty about the security of their lives,

“tens of thousands of Kashmiri women are moms, grandmothers, wives of murdered and missing men, widows, half-widows, and widows. In occupied Kashmir, they are weak, poor, distressed, suffering, and degraded.” (Kaul 253).

The women are referred to as “Milk Beggars” under curfew. A pregnant woman receives a tummy kick from Captain Kadian. The narrator’s mother is one of the many oppressed women (Raja & Fatima 120).

Women are more attached to nature, and the home as Roohi swims at night in the river. The death of Faiz’s godmother, Fatimah, during a continuous clash between ‘security’ forces and militants, shocks him. Faiz quits his house and Roohi to ‘cross the border’. The struggle for independence begins right in the middle of Kashmir, but the forgotten voices of the border region residents view it as an inaccessible phenomenon (Singh 2021). The entire plot of both novels centres on how each character tries to understand, accept and reject the movement in a miniaturizing valley of Kashmir.

The girl’s high school principal, Madam Shanta Koul, in Srinagar, is a motherly figure for the whole area. But, regrettably, the threatening atmosphere of utter insecurity caused a relationship between Major Sumit Kumar and Shanta Koul that depicts the suppression of women in the land under security forces. The officers in school pursue a war in their own country. Kumar’s craze for war exemplifies, “...in the hot afternoon, is there any connection between the city’s gradual decline and the only place of education...where officers hellbent on waging war triggered by their own country...unusual climate change...cool, soulful Kashmir weather...Mughals brought here...declare the valley a paradise on earth...he questions whether this is what one truly lives for...” (*BOGL* 58).

Parents strongly discourage their daughters from enrolling in the school because of the greater risk of insults from military personnel. Faiz’s younger sister prays, “...plague on ruling classes...from dead Maharaja...to president of India...even the weather change is their fault.” (*BOGL* 45) The real irony is that while Afghan and Iranian women are receiving media attention on a global scale, Kashmiri women’s issues are not being addressed due to international geo-political economic ties and treaties between countries.

The school is a fair target for the militants because it now contains the organized militia of the oppressive state, so fewer women have enrolled at the institution. Major Sumit Kumar worries about establishing more bunkers in the city, “He is divided into two entities but to follow instructions of the superiors arriving from Delhi and local HQ.” (*BOGL* 153) Soldiers have used sandbags and nails to block off large windows. This increased emphasis on security has unsettling effects in the area, ultimately disturbing the teaching of young women in schools and upsetting those who live downtown. Native Americans are not permitted to settle there because ‘security’ forces have fetishized the place (Waheed 2015).

The narrator of *TC* is not a part of the action and struggles internally to join the movement because of the ambiguity of

his identity, so he puts it off. The protagonist “identify dead bodies in the valley where he has played cricket, sang and romped through the jungle with his fellows” (TC 50). He uses the term “murderous” for the ‘security’ forces. He shows his hatred by naming the “Rakshasa Rifles” as “RashtriyaRakshak Rifles.” The life-changing events make him lonely, especially after his friends cross the LOC.

The trauma grips the hero as he thinks back on memories of buddies and loses control as a result (Rizwan2014). He is also struggling to join the army,

“...what category will I be thrown into? Badge runner of the security forces, official scavenger of a murderous army officer, cleaner-sweeper of the brutal RashtriyaRakshak Rifles? The armed caretaker of the unknown dead, the chowkidar of my dead ilk...witness to a machine of carnage or a shameless forager of friends’ remains, a petty ID-card thief, or the grim reaper? I don’t know. I don’t know.” (TC 25)

### ***Affiliation of Kashmiris with Valley***

Waheed draws attention to how environmentally holistic it is to present the compelling depictions of the landscape as a metaphor for nostalgia, hope, and trauma for Kashmiris in both novels caused by the continued militant conflict. Thus, the stylistic and generic modes also function as narrative documentation of the ecological devastation (Pirzadeh 3). Kashmiris use geographical knowledge to resist occupation to liberate their land; the landscape proves their invaluable ally (Simatei 2005 88). The geographical proximity of Kashmir with India and Pakistan is a source of aggressive militant conflict (Pirzadeh 6).

Morgenthau believes that the environment plays an essential role in shaping political strategies (Więclawski 169). Indian irrigation minister Patel in 1957, announced that India would withdraw water from three eastern rivers irrespective of the 1960 treaty of the water dispute. After the Indian parliament’s attacks in 2001, they moved the same tactic of oppressive diplomacy with Pakistan (Moazzam 2022). “Kashmir, high altitude valley, in the greater Himalayas in South Asia...unsurpassed natural beauty, a wealth of water resources, and a prime location...important to the regional aspirations of power and dominance shared by Pakistan and India.” (BOGL 8)

The land named “paradise on earth” is rich in beautiful lakes, streams, snowy mountains, lush-green trees, fascinating blue sky, birds, miscellaneous breeds of animals, seasons, and a pleasant environment. It is filled with bloodshed, horror, and trauma due to barbarism, insecurity, militarism, violence, high-handedness, and state terrorism. State-sponsored violence has inflicted an ecological crisis (Bhatti et al. 1661). Faiz and Roohi have a Wordsworthian attachment to the Jhelum River, “listen to murmurs of the river in the dark” (BOGL 61). Faiz, in childhood, dives into the river, the life-line of Kashmir, “...through the Jhelum’s swift and tall trees grow on either side brown waters will be among the first to appear on the other bank...” (BOGL 5) The river is an escape from life’s traumas, “...only thing that can be seen outside is a blue sky with many stars but no moon.” (BOGL 7).

The “trained mujahidin” use topographical knowledge for secret movement, “...undulating rows of peaks, like piles of piled-up materials, some sparkling, some white, some brown. ...hide in their folds the secret tracks into Azad Kashmir, Pakistan. The covert routes into Azad Kashmir are concealed within their folds...” (TC 4) Waheed depicts the place of covert operations and movement of militants into Pakistan according to locals, “...lads became natural guides...every dirt track, every gorge, every crevasse, and every valley...had a mental map of all the check-posts dotting the silly Line of Control separating this Kashmir from that Kashmir.” (TC 47).

Professor Koul, in *BOGL* (2015), is heart-wrenched on the erosion of old values and lifestyle in a war zone, “...feels wounded on seeing the Golden Canal has been replaced by a huge foetid drain...the sewage system of the medical school, the hospital, the divisional police headquarters, and other top institutions pour toxic effusions...row through sheets of poop or your boat might tip over a cadaver...” (BOGL 186-87) The lakes are filled with fresh blood of youth, “river has begun carrying the dead as well, countless stories of cruelty drowning in its forward march, the dark deeds of the oppressor, too.” (BOGL 23).

War enables the youth to abandon their pastoral modes of life for militant ones, “...the boys became guides, secretly scouted city boys across the border...or devote themselves to free their parents from the burden of living as shepherds.” (TC 6-7). It reflects the absurdity of Indian stratification to conquer and ownership of the land, where the demarcation creates no-go zones for native Kashmiris (Simatei 87). The water of beautiful lakes is contaminated because of mismanagement of authoritarian forces, “fresh-pond created by the abundance of the lake to feed Nallah Mar canal...now is strangled cripple of that waterway...reminder become a legend throughout a generation or two, a tale that the young may or may not believe” (BOGL 83). Faiz and Roohi melancholically feel pity for Dal lake’s declining water quality, “...a gift preyed upon by all, violated over the years by rulers and equally ruled. It is still serene and makes an effort to purge itself of the poison humans have buried in its green folds every spring, like an old seer...”

(BOGL 140)

The Rockets replace the birds, “soon after the rocket sent a cloud of concrete dust into the air, they quieted the commotion...they have not stayed to compete with the rat-a-tat of the machine gun” (BOGL 85). Waheed presents the devastation of wildlife and flora and fauna of Kashmir, “deer, loins, cypresses, tall rose bushes, chinara leaves, Mughal princes on hunting trips with their high elephants.” (BOGL 3). The Kashmir valley, which was previously filled with lovely flowers, has been turned into a valley of the dead due to persistent misdeeds, “By the way, did I mention numerous little yellow flowers are blooming here among the grasses?...You can make out the outline of people in bright yellow, surrounded by darkness...It makes me cry...In other cases, the shape is beginning to blur now that the small plants are encroaching on the area where the ever-shrinking human remains once stood...I don't know the name of the flowers. Some wild daisies, perhaps?” (TC 25).

Shamsie (2011) says that Waheed, by stating “enough to drive anyone insane or to tears to see corpses among the daisies,” portrays the inner state of Kashmiris. The protagonist fears finding the bodies of his childhood friends Hussain, Gul, Ashfaq, and Mohammed during duty, “All the boys are gone, gone, no one left in the village. It is empty now all empty!” (TC 24). The physical and mental displacement of fighters fighting for their freedom, “all of my friends went away too, and God only knows if they will ever come back” (TC 6-7). Mir Zafar Ali (Faiz's brother), in *BOGL*, explains the purity of Kashmiri resources, “the gem-clear water of the lake near Sri Nagar is the ‘nectar of paradise.’” (BOGL 128) “Kashmir is to dominate nostalgia, resources, and buffer zones symbolic to imaginary past into the reality of a nation-state theory” (Shoaib 2019).

### ***The Pain of Loss and Displacement***

The trauma of loss and displacement is knitted through every literary element. The unknown narrator when recalls, “Hussain and I,” we carried on a bond of togetherness, of closeness having been made the only confidant.” (TC 256). The memories of friendship bond haunt him in a war zone, “here I am, in my valley, and here are these poor fellows, lost forever, murdered, beyond grief, beyond redemption, beyond brutality. Here I still...unable to decide...Do I flee with Ma and Baba across the border...or bury one by one, part by part, limb by limb, smile by smile, grin by grin” (TC 213-214).

The dead bodies are everywhere that fear Kashmiris about the uncertainty of finding the corpses of their loved ones, “...the place has turned into a ghostly graveyard...where I now surrounded by men, departed fathers, brothers, husbands, lovers, kids, cousins, uncles, friends, and mates were scattered, as well as fathers and brothers, rubbish-like in your playground” (TC 249). The novels focus on a distinct aspect of the rebellion in Kashmir. Narrator says, “the dusk does not arrive on the shoulders of golden sunsets but sombre parallel lines that cascade over the undulating landscape of unevenly spread corpses and other items follow long, creeping shadows of untraceable trees in the distance” (TC 250).

The Kashmiri people suffered greatly due to the security forces' countermeasures' against the resistance movement (Hoskote iii). The possibility of deaths, property damage, and evictions are reasons enough for strong opposition. The most vocal opponent of the movement is the protagonist's father. In comparison, the main character oscillates in believing that the atrocities committed by the security forces are necessary and chooses not to go against the security forces. He has witnessed the torture that forced him to hate the army more, “...after their sad departure from the valley, Kashmiri Pandit police officials harassed them day and night to get revenge... He was made to pee on an electric heater while they threw ice-cold water over him; they pierced a red-hot knitting needle through his...” (Waheed 2012).

The examples are clear that externally violent and inwardly oppressive rules cannot assure human security (Moazzam 2022). The law of mutual respect and human security are the only sources of survival for the state. However, Waheed faces criticism for blaming India for heavily militarizing the Kashmir valley and Pakistan for brainwashing its youth to embrace radical ideologies (Rather 2017; Rizwan 2020; Nahar and Morve 2021). The protagonist is the symbolic representation of Kashmiris when he begins to sob in private before declaring, “To hell with the Indians, to hell with the Pakistanis, to hell with The Line of Control... to hell with Jihad, and to hell with...” (TC 72).

The geographic location and strategic, political, and economic position of Kashmir is important for India and Pakistan in South Asia, where independence will affect India and Pakistan. Kashmiri products (apples, saffron, timber) and the beautiful valley significantly contribute to the Indian economy. In the novel *BOGL* (2015), Waheed includes the same Indian fixation with land, which is structured and connected with the subordination of a free and independent state in 1947 (Allaie 758). Waheed fictionalizes the historical mass killings when Roohi says, “soldiers ensure blood soaked headline in the papers daily...killed seventeen boys after trapping them in a lane across Zain'e Kadal Bridge...soldiers blind with rage...so mad here.” (BOGL 211-212).

Waheed's novel *BOGL*(2015) is the romance of unfortunate oppressive lovers (Haque and Iftikhar 2019), like Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* (2005). In contrast to Paro Anand, Mirza Waheed does not submit to the official narratives. The valley's serene environment is ideal for generating feelings of passion and love, but it crumbles after the security forces attack. The military "...used machine guns into the lane from where the rocket seemed to come, then right and left, then everywhere...on school minibus...do not spare the sky." (*BOGL* 85)

Kashmiri people have been deprived of the right to enjoy life; as Roohi says,

"places of faeries and the Royal Spring, the Shankaracharya Temple and Takht-e- Sulaiman are all barred to us...soldiers live there...government officials, army officers, VIPs from Delhi and their families can visit." (*BOGL* 213)

In the downtown area, it is challenging to "escape the crushing limitations of poverty" (*BOGL* 219). Waheed employs his well-known literary abilities to depict a picture of life through the conflict's most delicate and emotionally fraught aspects. The future effects of the conflict, especially on children, are a major concern in his writing.

The government asserts that it grants the right to vote to elect officials who support India to protect its national interests. Due to the pressure mentioned above, the problems and fundamental human rights of Kashmiri women are not in the spotlight (Moazzam 2022). Roohi to Faiz, "don't you know? It's not the same...smell of fresh blood in the air...even in my food...at sunset...trust me that terrified and think of you, my father, brother, my poor sad mother, and Farhat..." (*BOGL* 158) As defenders of human rights and democracies, the Kashmir issue demands global attention.

Waheed claims that people go through agonizing situations because they are "hunted like animals, "Chicken-like trap." They have been kept in cages like 'mad dogs' (*BOGL* 212). The brutality of the crime shocked the public, and the mothers of the kidnapped boys earnestly prayed for their safe return and "grieving." Roohi desperately waits for Faiz but also stops him from coming back, "When you come back to me, I will tell you everything..." (*BOGL* 220). Eventually, Roohi starts to romanticize the conflict that her beloved Faiz fought in opposition to the oppression of an organized army, "tyranny and cruelty are their downfalls. Remember that!...shadows shift, shake for a moment, but do not separate" (*BOGL* 221).

The study clarifies the motivations behind certain Kashmiris' decisions to aid the security forces in persecuting their people in Kashmir. Even our main character, *TC*, belongs to this category. We can see how opposed he is to the opinions of his peers and their followers due to his involvement. Despite his background and time spent serving with the security forces, the protagonist's anti-Indian discourse is evident in the words he uses and his thinking. Although it is clear that the militant has a strong love for Pakistan, the protagonist has a pessimistic view of Pakistan's involvement in the Kashmir dispute.

"Ilaqa-e-Ghair" refers to the part of Kashmir "forbidden" for anyone to enter. The relatives on both sides cannot visit each other, "a tragic irony of fate in all its horror." (*BOGL* 230). The people suffer and pray or sometimes do not, "Happens when you don't have any family, no one cares apart from a few prayers in the Mosque" (*BOGL* 201). A few years earlier, Faiz had believed it impossible that he would see the river on the other side, a forbidden part of his country.

Waheed claims that both India and Pakistan, Kashmir's neighbors, are responsible for destroying the region's untouched landscape by weakening the political clout. Traumatic incidents occur daily as a direct and indirect result of the obsessive desire to rule the Kashmir valley. Faiz's brother surrenders to the Zaal, and his hand will be permanently damaged (*BOGL* 211). Alice Albania, the author of *Empires of the Indus*, stated that "the catalyst for Faiz is the personal tragedy" (Rizwan 2020). He joins the militant group but can never take revenge on his godmother, and he becomes a heartless or desensitized creature. Nevertheless, Faiz is not the only character in the book who has been through a traumatic experience.

Shanta Koul, the daughter of Prof. Madan Koul, also suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder due to the shooting deaths of both her father and her Muslim lover, Syed Afaq Bukhari, during the conflict (*BOGL* 159). Assassinations and disappearances have occurred as a direct result of the military occupation, which unwarranted acts of violence have accompanied. As Roohi explains to Faiz in their correspondence, such attempts at liberation backfire because "there is suspicion and, of course, death all around" (*BOGL* 211). While the soldiers kill daily, the boys have begun to take the lives of some of our own. The murder of Prof. Kaul, revered by Hindus and even by Muslims, was mysterious. There are numerous motivations for pursuing independence. The "Survivor's Guilt," a mental disorder that stems from the fact that they survived, as Roohi talks about the current social climate, saying, "Those who haven't suffered themselves are tortured by combats" (*BOGL* 212). Security forces' invasion and the militant resistance were disturbing people's peace everywhere.

The results show that a portion of the Kashmiri community attempts to stay away from the more problematic places to find tranquillity elsewhere. One illustration is how Nowgam was entirely abandoned by its former residents. Therefore, this study examines the range of choices Kashmiris had in the 1990s, all of which had the potential to significantly influence the area's future. The study also emphasizes how important it is for regional writers to portray the conflict-related tale of Kashmir's national reality. Faiz, like characters, is revenging their loved ones. It praises the original text as a top source for understanding Kashmir's history and culture in India-occupied Kashmir. Additionally, it emphasizes the significance of the protest of Kashmiri citizens suffering from injustices.

### 3. Conclusion

The study demonstrates through its findings that the Kashmir conflict is a political issue rather than the outcome of Islamic fanaticism. The political prejudice between the two close neighbors, Pakistan and India, affects the people of Kashmir. Instead of military occupation and repression, the political resolution to the Kashmir conflict best captures the conflict's underlying essence to emphasize that the people of Kashmir are victims who suffer the most in a land that is embroiled in conflict. The daily torture, mutilation, murder, and rape of Kashmiris cause havoc and expose them to inhumane treatment and war crimes.

UN and other powers must look into the list of tragedies, issues, and persecutions in Kashmir and act swiftly to stop ongoing human violence, the humanitarian crisis, ecological chaos, and climate change. India and Pakistan cannot escape their obligations to squelch a rising culture of arrogance in the country. Security forces in Kashmir are in charge of Kashmiris' lives and deaths by enforcing curfews, harsh repression, and other types of brutality. Weddings, funerals, Eid, Jumma Salah, or any other occasion are ruined. Everyone fears losing their loved ones and females of their honor. Since it forbids Kashmiris' bodies from receiving proper burials, India's power in Kashmir is apparent even to the dead bodies.

The international world must demand that Kashmiris have access to the same values, human rights, and freedom of expression the first world enjoys in their nations. Kashmiri youth openly choose liberation without concerning consequences. Waheed, including all literary elements in his modern novels, presents an accurate picture of the Kashmir conflict. The younger generation likewise uses modern technology to amplify their call for independence. The time to realize the situation has come because Kashmiris will never vote against their freedom movement and in favor of India, even if it means tolerating chaos in their daily lives.

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