Exploring Representations Again via the Lens of Exiled Kashmiri Authors

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ABSTRACT: This book analyses the long-lasting Kashmiri conflict through the lens of maladaptive societal changes, and it provides commentary on the many "stresses" (i.e., external pressures) and "strains" (i.e., internal fissures) that have worked on the Kashmiri society throughout the ages to bring about the transformations. Because of these shifts, the war in Kashmir has been able to persist in more complicated and novel ways, further eroding the region's social and cultural fabric. Kashmir's music, poetry, literature, and philosophy have all changed or disappeared as the region's political climate has shifted. Kashmiri cultural transformations may be partially explained by the ways in which the region's complex identity politics are portrayed.

KEYWORDS: Kashmiri society, extinctive music, poetry, literature and philosophies

I. INTRODUCTION

The basic argument of this thesis is that the dispute in Kashmir has not been resolved because of internal tensions in the area, particularly the cultural changes that have taken place there over the ages, as well as because of Indo-Pak nationalistic interests. I want to illustrate these shifts by tracing the replacement of one philosophical tradition by another, as well as the development of music, poetry, and literature from antiquity to the present day, with a focus on the period after the 1947 division. Kashmir has changed over the years from a centre of learning and culture to a conflict zone where more authoritarian norms prevail. Cultural shifts are thus telling signs of the conflict; reviving or encouraging some of the region's historical practises might lead to more reintegration and peace among the groups now at odds.

The primary goal of this study is to determine whether an increase in communal conflict is related to a decline in the traditional aspects of Kashmiri culture, which include mysticism, community harmony, and creative expression (in the forms of literature, poetry, and music).

What's the big deal here? Much of the existing literature on the Kashmir conflict focuses narrowly on the 1947 Partition and Indo-Pak jingoistic nationalism, omitting consideration of other factors that may have played a crucial role in the conflict's inception and maintenance. Alternately, acculturation and cultural disintegration are outcomes of political tension in Kashmir. Here, I use an anthropological point of view in order to explain the roles played by sociopolitical elements in the war. I zero in on the central tenet of Kashmiri culture that stands in diametric opposition to the causes of strife in the region: a tradition of communal harmony and mysticism in contrast to the current climate of Indo-Pak nationalistic jingoism, Hindu-Muslim animosity, and insurgent militarism. This may help shed light on the root causes of the Kashmir conflict. Despite the fact that economic disparities, insufficiencies, and political tensions are more difficult to overcome, sharing a common cultural heritage can aid in the healing of social wounds and the forging of deeper bonds between groups with divergent identities.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & METHODOLOGY

Since the Kashmir conflict will be analysed in this paper from a social and cultural anthropological vantage point, the paper's primary focus will be on societal shifts and steady states in the region. Anthropologists have only just begun to theorise social conflict, a field that draws heavily on the psychoanalytic theory of personality and the structural-

functional theory of social systems (LeVine, 1961). Two major schools of anthropological thinking have focused on the study of war. The first is the work of J. Siegel and Alan R. Beals from Stanford University, while the second is the work of Max Gluckman and V.W. Turner from the University of Manchester. The latter have used their idea in larger situations, spanning several countries and cultures, unlike the former. Crucially, the former see conflict as inherent in orderly societies, while the latter see it as the result of shifting cultural norms. While some see conflicts as healthy for society because they foster group solidarity, others argue that constant fighting is bad for everyone involved. In the case of Kashmir, the latter's theoretical stance will be given the greatest weight.

Siegel and Beals argue that stressors and strains lead to social strife. External forces, such as those of acculturation, place strains on a society, while internal divisions and upheavals are what cause stresses. The stress aspects proposed by Siegel and Beals (1960) are as follows: subtlety, unpredictability, complexity, duration, reduction, and selection.
There are many varieties of factionalism, and Siegel and Beals (2009) identified the three most common ones. The first kind of conflict resolution includes disagreements between different parties or different groups. The second form, known as "schismatic factionalism," occurs when a bigger organisation's constituent subgroups fight among themselves; when these disputes are resolved, the larger group collapses. The third kind, "pervasive factionalism," is a social and cultural phenomena characterised by clashes between disorganised and fleeting subgroups. It begins and grows under certain environmental stresses but is unaffected by other stresses. For this reason, we hypothesise that persistent factionalism emerges as a result of the interplay between external forces and preexisting communal patterns of strain. In both the third and fourth phases of factionalism, people gradually stop working together.

It might be challenging to theorise the benefit of conflict in a practical sense. Depending on the context, disagreements may be either disruptive and maladaptive or adaptive and facilitative of a certain form of cohesion. It's not always easy to tell if a dispute is adaptive or maladaptive in a particular setting. Lewis shows how conflict may be adaptive and eufunctional by strengthening group unity across institutional levels. Local'schism' and 'fission', say Gluckman and Turner, may hold together a social system as a whole. They theorised that if cultural patterns indicative of conflict are more intense and frequent at the inter-cultural or inter-community level, then they would be less intense and frequent at the intra-cultural or intra-community level. Conversely, the stronger and more common these patterns are within a given community or culture, the weaker and less common they tend to be at a broader, inter-communal or cross-cultural level. Thus, there is a negative correlation between structurally distinct conflict variables. Creating a cross-cultural rating system for the disruptiveness of different conflict-indicating patterns is another approach to determining the practical worth of conflict.

LeVine (1961) proposed a set of criteria that groups tasked with resolving conflicts should use to establish norms for doing so. Military deterrence, incorporating other communities into the major descent group, and allegiance to both the local community and other groups outside of it (via marriages, cross-cultural kinfolk, etc.) are all contributing factors. The aforementioned theoretical framework will be utilised extensively to examine Kashmir's shifting social and cultural landscape.

Given that this thesis is a case study that necessitates contextual interpretation of qualitative data, the methodology employed is predominantly qualitative, consisting primarily of secondary sources like academic writings with some primary data like video clips and literary texts like poems (Bryman, 2008; Feldman, 1995). As a result, the research design will be inductive, with interpretative epistemology and a constructivist ontology. Literary, cinematic, and representational studies through the lenses of self and other need some familiarity with discourse analysis (Fielding & Fielding, 1986). In this scenario, Kashmir will be contrasted to other regions of India, such Bengal and South India, where comparable situations have arisen.

Buddhism, Saivism, Sufism & Other Philosophies in Kashmir
The emergence of Naga (snake) worship may be linked to a connection between pre-Aryan people and the inhabitants of Kashmir, yet written records of Kashmir only date back to the third century B.C. From the time of Ashoka's reign, around the 3rd century B.C., Buddhism, especially the Mahayana branch and the Sarvastivadin school, became prominent in Kashmir and remained an important feature of the region until the 12th century A.D. (Pacholczyk, 1996).

It remained in place during the 1st century AD Kushan dynasty and the 2nd century AD Kanishka dynasty. The Buddhist religion and its literature thrived under Karkotas (Koul, 1972: 33). Kashmir was the hub from whence Buddhism spread to the rest of Asia and China. Sarvastivada Buddhism, as well as Mahayana's Madhyamika and Yogacara formulations and Gandhara's Graeco-Buddhist art, all thrived throughout the first several centuries of Kanishka's rule (Larson, 1976). Around the same time, the Naga cult's traditions began to reemerge (Larson, 1978; Pacholczyk, 1996) and Saivism flourished through the Saivagama texts. By the time the Kushan Empire collapsed, Buddhism had already begun to lose ground, and Saivism had largely taken its place. The last Buddhists left Kashmir about the year 638 (Koul, 1972: 32). Saivism's mysticism had a deep imprint on Kashmiri culture. Vaisnavism, as well as Ganesha, Durga, Surya, and Kamadeva cults, thrived alongside Saivism. Tantra (the spiritual belief and practise of channelling with the cosmic energy of god via the microcosm of the human mind and body) along with the other arts were supported and promoted. From the third century until the fourteenth century A.D., a time when Buddhism flourished in Kashmir, is referred to in many writings as the Hindu period. The mixing and mingling of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Central Asian, and Mediterranean cultures made Kashmir a cultural crossroads (Larson, 1976).
Kashmiri Saivism developed during the reigns of King Lalitaditya in the eighth century and King Avantivarman in the ninth century (Larson, 1976). Buddhist and Hindu intellectuals engaged in vigorous discussions and arguments. It is also said that the great Sankaracarya visited Kashmir about the same period.

Abhinavagupta was a Kashmiri Saiva thinker who lived during the 10 and eleventh centuries. Saivism, bolstered by Abhinavagupta's writings on topics as diverse as linguistics, theology, tantra, and poetry, reached its zenith during Queen Didda's reign. Abhinavabharati, his commentary on Bharat Muni's Natya Shastra, compares and contrasts rasavada and brahmasvada. Importantly, he popularised a brand new school of thought within Kashmiri Saivism that diverged significantly from Advaita monism. Abhinavagupta, and by extension Kashmiri Savisim, describes the connection between the brahman and the visible world as abhasavada (theory of reflection), in contrast to the vivartavada (theory of appearance) used by Advaita. The latter refer to akhyati or svarupakhyati (the inability to tell two things apart). Vimarsa (depression), svatantrasakti (individual force), and iccha (will) are all considered integral parts of the ultimate existence. Abhinavagupta argues that a person is more than the sum of his or her parts, including his or her acts, knowledge, individuality, and connection to the divine. In sum, Abhinavagupta's theoretical stance may include giving equal weight to religious anthropology's treatment of language, art, and philosophy.

Literature, Poetry, Music & the Culture of Kashmir
There are over thirteen different languages and dialects spoken in Kashmir, including Dogri, Kashmiri, Ladakhi, Pahari, and Dardi (Koul, 1972). Kashmiri, along with other languages spoken in the region, has Tibetan and Dardic roots (Bamzai, 1980: 9). The Indo-Aryan languages are descended from a parent language called Aryan. A new language, Dardic, developed in the area formerly known as Dardistan when the Iranians broke away from the Indo-Aryans. The term Dard appears often in the Sanskrit and Puranic texts. In more recent times, Tibetan has had a greater impact on the Kashmiri language. Previous forms of the Kashmiri script included sharada (or sharda), devanagari, and Roman (Pacholcyzk, 1996: 15). The Arabic script is now being utilised in its Urdu adaptation.
"Learning, lofty houses, saffron, icy water, and grapes" (Akbar, 1991: 10) are the attributes recorded by Kalhana about Kashmir. Knowledge and academic pursuits come in front. Ashoka's reign marked the beginning of saffron cultivation (Koul, 1972).

Kashmiri literature, written in Sanskrit and Persian, draws on Hindu and Islamic beliefs and traditions to tell tales of love, courage, sadness, miracles, and tragedy. From ancient times on, it had a reputation as a centre of knowledge and culture on par with Nalanda and Taxila (Koul, 1972: 254-56). In addition to Kalhana's historical chronicle Rajtarangini, RajnakesitiKanthe'sMaheyney Prakash is the first work of Kashmiri literature, but it is written in poetry and consists of just eight taranga (cantos). Kashmir proved to be an accommodating and receptive environment. As Kalhana points out, this is borne up by his assessment of Buddhism: "We are not to debate with Buddhists. It is not our place to debate with people who have opposing views.

Damodara Gupta's poem Kuttanimatam, written in the eighth century, tells the story of Kuttani, a procuress who helps the prince learn to avoid falling into sexual temptation (Akbar, 1991). Lalla Arifa, a renowned poetess whose

compositions were repeated by Muslim minstrels for over 500 years, introduced a genuine Kashmiri literature to the world in the 13th century.

Persian stories like "Farhad and Shirin" and "Yusuf and Zulaikha" served as inspiration for subsequent folktales. Blending romantic imagination and myth, the love-lyrics of "Bumbru and Lolare," "Himal and Nagrai," and "Bulbul and Myna" are beautiful.

Music:
Since Ashoka's son Jaloka or Jaluka (in some texts), whose wife used to dance, the art of music is thought to have flourished (Koul, 1972: 255). Kashmiri folk music has been documented all the way back to the ninth century. Chhakri is an Afghan refugee who settled in the area.

Kashmiri SufiyanaMusiqi (Sufi music) or Soofiana kalam (sufi words) is a vocal ensemble style that originated as a result of cultural exchange between Central Asian Persians and Indians (Pacholcyzk, 1996: 8-59). It is mainly a religious ceremonial performance, given by and for the Sufis (Muslim mystics) of the Qadiri order during religious gatherings known as mehfils. It is also conducted in secular settings for the affluent, whether they Sufi mystics and worshippers or Kashmiri Pandits. Live performances may also be heard on the radio or in person on occasion. Qaiser Qalandar claims that this kind of music was popularised at the court of the Dogra ruler Maharaja Pratap Singh. Ramzan Joo, a renowned musician, was the first to play for the monarch.

A number of artists, both vocal and instrumental, perform as an ensemble. Maqams are like suits for music repertoires. Maqams may mean both a particular sort of melody generated by a set of ascending and descending notes and a set of pieces from a larger repertoire. At certain times throughout the day, musicians perform the maqams in their designated tala-s, or rhythmic mode. Similar to the ragas of Hindustani classical music, each of the roughly forty-seven recognised maqams has its own distinct style and may provoke different feelings in both the musician and the listener. Ragas and maqams are musically connected, with many having the same basic structure of the notes organised in ascending and descending order, as well as comparable names and moods. Most maqams are named after animals or things and are performed at certain times of day for maximum impact; for example, the maqam "araq" is meant to elicit tears when played at dawn. Some believe that listening to maqams can have a healing effect.

The songs' contents and lyrics are taken from Sufi poetry penned by both Kashmiri and Persian artists. Hafiz, Sa'di, Omar Khayyam, Jelal-ud-din Rumi, Jami, and Nizami are all great examples of Persian poetry. Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi (died 1594), Ghani Kashmiri, and Mirza Ghalib are only a few of the Persian-writing poets from Kashmir. Mahmud Gami and the Kashmiri poetess Habba Khatun, wife of Sultan Yusuf Chak (1579–1586), are two examples of Kashmiri writers who simply copied the Persian style. Rasul Mir, Khwaja Habib Allah Hubbi, Niame Sab, Rahim Sab, Hazrat Ali Thani, Iqbal, and Nasir-ud-Din are only few of the Kashmiri poets who have also written in Persian. Pirzada Ghulam Ahmed Mahjur, Shah Sadiq Qalandar, and Punjabi are only a few of the sufiyana poets that wrote in the twentieth century. Sufi philosophy and symbolism inform and enrich the poetic traditions of Kashmir and Iran. Both those familiar with and unfamiliar with this ideology take away various meanings from it. For some, it is about human connections, love, and life; for others, it is about God's love and mystical union. Numerous poetic forms are employed in sufiyana, including the quatrain (or ruba'i), the couplet (or do-beiti), and the ghazal (or "lover's exchange").

Poets and Kashmiri Literature of the Modern Times
The contemporary poets of Kashmir lack a mystical and intellectual undercurrent (Koul, 1972: 255). Poets of the modern age have spoken out against oppression and injustice in works by poets like Ghulam Muhammad Mahjoor and Abdul Ahad Azad. According to Bazzaz (2011), many Kashmiris regard Mahjoor to be their country's official poet. Rasool Mir was an inspiration to Azad. Poetry of Daya Ram Ganjoo and Zinda Kaul (better known as Masterji) was distinct from that of their predecessors. Asad Ullah Mir, Lachman Bhat Nagam, Nand Lal Ambardar, and Abdul WahubHajin are only a few examples of early modern poets. During the Quit India movement, the proletarian poet Abdul Sattar Gujri Aasi was detained for writing the poem "SiasiQaidi" (political prisoner). Through his poetry, Dina Nath Nadim conveyed important social messages. Other great poets include Roshan ("Ashq") and Zutshi ("Vijwav").

Along with the existentialism and Marxism that sparked new literary movements, India's Progressive Writers Movement had a significant impact on Kashmiri writing in the twentieth century (Bazaz, 2011). Political fights for independence from British control in Kashmir's contemporary literature's genesis in the 1930s and 1940s. Rehman Rahi, Amin Kamil, Hari Krishan Kaul, and Akhtar Mohiudeen are only few of the modernist poets and short story writers that it inspired. motifs of violence and existential crises, as well as motifs from Kashimiri Saivism and Sufi thinking, help to retain an inner continuous despite what seems to be a fundamental break with previous literary canons. The political topics of the 1950s and 1970s may be seen in the works of Rehman Rahi, Amin Kamil, and Akhtar Mohiudeen, such as the incarceration of Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of Kashmir, and the prolonged struggle for plebiscite between 1953 and 1975. It's worth noting that Kamil's "Zero Bridge" to peace in Kashmir isn't the "Bridge of Peace" between India and Pakistan envisioned by Sheikh Abdullah.

The collapse of Kashmiri writing coincided with the growth of insurgency and militancy against Indian authority in the 1990s. As a result of the instability that occurred between 1990 and 1995, many Kashmiri authors never had their writings published. In the case of Abdul Sattar Ranjoor and Sarvanand Kaul Premi, they were even murdered. Poets Naseem Shifai and Bimla Raina of Kashmir have written feminist criticisms of nationalism in their works. Agha Shahid Ali, a poet from Kashmir who now lives in the United States, is known for writing about violence and destruction. One may thus argue that Kashmiri literature published in the 1990s was a product of a different age and location.

III. CONCLUSION

Kashmiri society will always be riven by divisions inside, such as the historical hostility between Hindus and Muslims (often recast as a more generalised Indo-Pak patriotic jingoism) and the resulting identity politics. India and Pakistan have much more at stake than just territory in their dispute over Kashmir.

An external'stress' agent might incite and amplify preexisting tensions, threatening Kashmir's fragile peace. Kashmir's internal tensions will remain latent, ready to explode at the slightest provocation, regardless of whether the region is totally absorbed by Pakistan, remains a part of India, or becomes a fully autonomous independent state.
Partition in 1947 is only one example of how stresses may manifest themselves in many ways. Therefore, things may be thought to improve if the strains can be reduced or eliminated entirely (although this is rather utopian). However, since that is unlikely to happen, we must consider other options. To return to a less conflictive state, external influences may be avoided and components of social peace can be reestablished via music, poetry, and literature.

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