



Fractured Bodies, Minds and Souls: Reclaiming the lost voices in *The Night of Broken Glass* and *Do You Remember Kunan-Poshpora?*

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Abstract:

The last thirty years have witnessed an upsurge in the number of cases of trauma due to unbridled militarism in Kashmir. The normal social life is permanently scarred where the general populace is routinely exposed to terror, death, tyrannical oppression and threat, morphing it into a depressive State. The unceasing conflict in Kashmir has deprived its people of vision of hope, peace and trust. The unabated military suppression of people has constrained the youth to resort to violence through stone pelting and through joining militancy. In such a scenario people often get entrapped in the vicious cycle of violence. The whole scenario seems to be so deeply entrenched in complications that there remains no room for negotiations; turning the State into groundswell of resentment. The consistent bouts of violence deflect public attention away from the everyday problems that people face in the valley. Under such pressures, no sympathies are shown and no liberties are given. Kashmir has become a place that now symbolises despair, confusion, and traumas. This paper intends to analyse pain, loss and traumas of people living in Kashmir through a neutralist standpoint using theoretical framework on trauma studies.

Keywords: Trauma studies, Gender studies, sexual assault, rape, resistance, conflict, Kashmir

Introduction:

Prolonged conflict between communities, large group of people, and the State, frequently leads to complex and multi-dimensional consequences on both sides. If one group feels they are battling for their rights, and sometimes for recognition in the State, the other group thinks it to be a downright reaction against the existing status quo. In such a scenario, while one's hostilities and reactions are seen legitimate and genuine, rather a necessary response to the rigid forms of authority, the actions and intentions of the opponents are seen as pernicious. Any site of prolonged and sustained conflict, where massive populace is caught in an



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imbroglio, is sure to find its reverberations in literary, political and social domains. Some key geographical areas like Syria, Iraq, Libya etc., where the vortex of violence has been the major impediment to peace and normalcy, have witnessed catastrophe on a high scale. India, too, has seen the aftermaths of such conflicts. At this moment, Kashmir has borne testimony perhaps to the longest upheaval arising out of its need for *aazadi*.

Kashmir, for the last thirty years, has witnessed an upsurge in the number of cases of trauma due to unbridled militarism. The normal social life is permanently scarred where the general populace is routinely exposed to terror, death, tyrannical oppression and threat, morphing it into a depressive State. Such a situation generates intensified feelings of vulnerability among the people. The unceasing conflict in Kashmir has deprived its people of vision of hope, peace and trust. The unabated military suppression of people has forced the youth to resort to violence through stone pelting and through joining militancy. Both—inhabitants and army forces—engage in self-serving clashes and face life-threatening experiences. Yet, they never break-free themselves from this vicious cycle.

What is now left of the inner conflict is the nationalist narrative abounding with extrajudicial executions, interrogations, abductions, rapes, tortures and subsequent traumas and deaths. The individuals remain bereft of vocabularies to articulate their traumas after experiencing sexual/corporeal abuses. The situations become more intense when women were raped, and men picked up for interrogations, return mangled with bodies bruised beyond recognition and are still expected to keep their composure. The process of grieving and wailing is expected and accepted as only women's expression to deal with pain and agony. However, in the war narrative there remains no space for the outpouring of men's grief, neither by the sufferer nor by the relatives who too get affected by the gory images, the memory of which sears their minds.

Aim of the paper:

This paper intends to examine how fragmentation of the State transcripts on the bodies of both males and females and how their crippled and disabled bodies reflect the current conditions that engender issues related to psychological, corporeal and sexual violence. Not



only does this paper explore the stories of sexual assault on men and women, paying close attention to the varied responses of the victims, their defensive coping strategies, their modes of resistance if any, but also studies how the political unrest permeates into the domestic/private space and psychologically affects the entire family and the community. Such traumatic experiences can best be understood by using the interpretive lens of Trauma Studies to investigate the travails of male and female characters in *Do You Remember Kunan-Poshpora?* and Feroz Rather's *The Night of Broken Glass*. A conscious choice has been made to include both fictional novel-in-stories *The Night of Broken Glass* and the non-fictional journalistic book *Do You Remember Kunan-Poshpora?* in my paper as both the categories seem to offer narrative account of characters, hence fulfilling the needs of this writing. The purpose is not to trace the veracity of history, events, or characters but to explore issue pertaining to physical, sexual abuses and the consequent traumas. The works under scrutiny unravel the most heinous crimes of rapes and assaults as well as the traumas of people marginalised in their own land whereby emphasizing the traumatic experiences of "the denied, the repressed, and the forgotten." (Whitehead 82)

Analysis:

I. Violence against Women:

Do You Remember Kunan-Poshpora? published as part of 'Sexual Violence and Impunity in South Asia' series, is a compelling account of women, who not only refuse to live as adjuncts of patriarchal law that belittles their bodies to a few sexual orifices but also try to subvert those structures that make them silent. The survivors of Kunan Poshpora reveal the story of intervening night of 23-24 February 1991, when the armed forces, divided into four groups, came galumphing around the villages and stormed into their houses at 11 p.m. The cordon and search operation this time was different from the usual checking of the houses that involved beforehand announcements on loudspeakers about the operation. Instead, the attack was sudden, men were dragged out of their houses, leaving women alone who were later raped and assaulted by the troops. In the face of extreme horror and terror, the people exhibited subjective endurance and presented coping strategies and responses emerging out



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of their traumatic wounding. Laurie Vickroy suggests that the trauma writers make such “terrifying, alien experiences more understandable and accessible” (222) to the general public by underscoring the traumas and fear-producing incidents. Chasfeeda, a rape-survivor, gives details of how 20-21 army men came invading, taking away her husband, but only to return after half an hour to rape her. Similar harrowing stories abound, where women of all ages from minors to grandmothers were raped mercilessly. Their experiences and traumas were in contradistinction to mere hidden “fantasies” as suggested by Freud.

The writers claim to present the verbatim record of the experiences, without which the feeling of pain and trauma of the sufferers could not have been effectively communicated. Durri recollects the incident of that fateful night and brings out the anger against men in uniform who had behaved like hungry predators:

My sister and I . . . were scared of that knocking. It seemed someone wanted to break down the door of our house. . . Within no time the soldier appeared in front of us. . . I saw that he had a bottle of alcohol in his hand. My throat was dry. I could not even scream. I could not even stand, it was as if the earth had gripped me. . . From one the soldiers became six. . . One of them gripped my hair. I held his feet, I remember begging him. . . I even bowed my forehead onto his shoes. He dragged me to the kitchen. My mother was already there. I screamed with all my energy. . . My pheran was torn and with that my whole life. (Batoool et al. 85)

Shutting eyes and ears to the shrill notes of shrieks of women, what matters to the populace is how army, whom they believe to be their guardian, chooses to act savagely at that particular moment. The reality of life in Kashmir is at variance. The sanitized official discourse is ruptured by the virulent attacks on the bodies of females in the valley. Dismayed by an insidious plan of search operations that completes with the rape of women, Durri explains that rape as an act of repression is beyond an acceptable response. The sub-human treatment of women, the sexual humiliation and systemic rape is viewed as ‘victory’ over the villagers for two reasons— by defiling the women of the enemy and destabilising their



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reproductive system, the army achieves authority and power; secondly, the experience scares and traumatises the whole community long enough to continue any resistance against the grain. Fear grips them to such an extent that the body fails to respond in the normal manner, and Durri complains of dryness of throat so much so that even under threat she could neither scream nor stand properly. The shock ‘overwhelms’ the victim, causing a numbing experience where the body and mind fails to function normally as Abram Kardiner describes:

When a person is overwhelmed by terror and helplessness, *the whole apparatus for concerted, coordinated and purposeful activity is smashed*. The perceptions become inaccurate and pervaded with terror. . . the sense organ may even cease to function. . . The aggressive impulses become disorganised and unrelated to situation in hand. . . The functions of the autonomic nervous system may also become disassociated with the rest of the organism. (qtd by Herman 35, italics original)

In such a situation she chooses to bow “her forehead onto his shoes” (85) and ask for forgiveness for the crime she did not even commit. It is evident that when a certain geographical territory and its denizens are identified as enemies, women bear the maximum brunt of conflict. They are easy targets of sexual violence and abuse because of their biological difference. Yet another compelling logic that acts as a catalyst for rapes is the vicious patriarchal ideology that permit misogyny and objectifies women as properties of men. The damage, sometimes in such cases, is so irreparable that the incident, as Durri says, “has become my life. No matter what I do, where I go, what I think, that night never leaves me” (Batoool et al. 85). The events that happened long back are permanently so etched on the mind that they refuse to depart even for a second. Though the family encourages her to discharge the burden from her mind and continue her life by marrying someone but she doesn’t feel fit, neither mentally nor physically, for the marriage. Such is the asperity of the event that not only does it exclusively target the body but also the mind. The trauma of the victim can be accessed through their behaviour as they seek seclusion from society. Durri’s experience can be explained using Erikson’s words:



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To describe people as traumatized is to say that they have withdrawn into a kind of protective envelope, a place of mute, aching loneliness, in which the traumatic experience is treated as a solitary burden that needs to be expunged by acts of denial and resistance. (186)

Tamana and Ufaq, the daughter-mother duo, also like Durri, substantiate the perpetual effect of the incident through their story. Ufaq recollects the premonitions of the impending danger when she hears “an unusual sound of noise” (82) coming from outside of their house. The site of men in uniform alarms Ufaq who rushes to her nine-months pregnant daughter Tamana, and the moment both of them are about to jump outside their threshold, the armed men enter into their room with the “zips of their pants already opened and they had clearly come with the intention of raping” them (83). The story of Ufaq-Tamana depicts a heartbreaking reality of mother-daughter’s mutual anguish. Ufaq confesses two things: one that she was caught and while raping her, the army men passed lewd remarks while inspecting her naked body with their torches; second as a consequence of rape by 8-10 men multiple times she fell unconscious. The “opened zips” of men testify how rape and defilement are inevitable and central to the narrative of war. What is significant here is that the soldiers choose to rape not individually but in groups. A unique characteristic that is attributed to the gang rape, especially in war, is ‘male bonding’ and a sense of ‘brotherhood’. It allows conscripted soldiers to escape from taking any personal and moral responsibility because the aim here is not only to draw sexual gratification but also to coerce and overpower the enemy in order to achieve demographical control both literally and otherwise through group solidarity. While armed men are unapologetically celebrating their victories by ogling the naked body and suffusing their leering gaze with sexual innuendos, Ufaq loses her consciousness because of the extreme pain and humiliation.

On the other hand, Tamana, is mistreated and raped in her advanced stage of pregnancy and she delivers a “baby with a fractured arm a few days after the incident” (82). The extreme insensitivity of this physical assault against an expectant mother does not trouble the conscience of armed forces that risks the life of both mother and the unborn child. The forced copulation obviously can cause placental damage of the mother and injuries to the child that



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may result in serious lifelong ramifications. However, the rape of Tamana and the fracture of the child's limb are both traumatic and symbolic. At the literal level, the fracture mangles the body of the child; it symbolically ruptures the personal as well as social bonds, damages the faith in the security forces and also metonymically fractures Kashmir from the rest of the country.

Rather than punishing the soldiers for their subversive conducts, the writers foreground the vanities of patriarchal structures that facilitate such behaviours by presenting rape as a cost-free recompense. The tragic gang rapes further certify that soldiers are indoctrinated and ready to carry out instructions fully. Judith Herman explains that "in order to escape the accountability of his crimes, the perpetrator does everything in his power to promote forgetting. "Secrecy and silence are the perpetrator's first line of defence" (8). Therefore, there is complicity even of the commanding officer, under whose charge these rapes take place. Through the battery signals to the soldiers, the officer instructs them to keep their "noises down during the rapes" (84) so that the operation not just completes smoothly and discretely but can later be rebuffed as a lie. That is the reason why, the NOC certificate is forcefully signed by the villagers that declare "there was no damage to any property, houses, men, or material during the search carried out in the village Kunan Babagund on 24th Feb 91. No property had been taken away, no women folk ill-treated or molested" (89). Even though women bear the brunt and suffer all their life, it is men who are considered to be victims for there are missives imprinted on the tortured bodies of females of their families. The traumas of females are underplayed as the society permits the rape culture which is composed of what Emile Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth, suggests:

a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women and presents it as the norm. (Buchwald, xi)



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The close perusal of all the episodes reveals that the rape here is not opportunistic but an organizational tactic adopted purposely to sully the entire community through violence on the women. Even the writers admit that “Rape has been used as a weapon of war and terror in Kashmir. Kunan Poshpora is just an obvious and blatant example of the sexual violence that is committed with impunity against women in Kashmir.” (Batoool et al. 4)

The ethical-moral order ostracise the raped women from the society. The double tragedy is that on the one hand the outsider perpetrates violence and abuses them physically and sexually; on the other hand their bodies are considered adulterated and hence not fit for the existence in their own community. The residents of Kunan-Poshpura stigmatise and bully the raped women for bringing shame to the villages. Though Kunan and Poshpora are not the only contentious zones in Kashmir, the entire State is witness to such nefarious crimes, but the women of these two villages suddenly become “inferior” and “other,” not belonging to their culture and society. Arifa, like all other rape victims of the Kunan-Poshpura, is perceived as a damned object that needs to be shunned or disassociated from her surroundings. She confesses:

we are seen as untouchables (‘pariah’). They (people of other villages) don’t allow us to sit with them or even to get close to them. It’s not only limited to schools and colleges, we are looked down upon by people everywhere and wherever there is some issue, people humiliate us. They tell us, your mothers and sisters were raped. (109)

In fractions, the relationships alter not only with their families but with their communities too. The society brands them as being impure and marks them as having damned bodies. In spite of the probability of rape that lingers in Kashmir, the women from other villages, instead of being empathetic vilify them as individuals who have voluntarily “slept with Indians” (Batoool et al. 109). Thus, the trauma for women is twofold; not only does the event change their lives but the rejection and mockery of women like Arifa compartmentalises them as shunned and inauspicious figures. This eventually restricts their movements and marginalises them. Such attitudes exclude women from being seen as normal human beings and conveniently assign them, as Laura S. Brown argues “to the category of less than human,



less than deserving of fair treatment” (103). The society illustrates the practiced blindness and the honour becomes the central point of her social expulsion as Seema Kazi reports:

The men of Kunan Poshpora lament the fate that befell their women; yet, when asked whether they would marry women from another village where women had been raped, they were categorical in their refusal; they would not marry anyone from the “village of raped women”. As one of Kunan Poshpora’s young men said: “*Yeh to izzat ka sawaal hai*” –it was after all, a matter of ‘honour’. (Kazi 158)

Cloistered within the confines of normative peripheries set out by patriarchy and imbibed by all, the victims often try to strike a balance between life and death. In doing so, their self-image crumbles and they lose their agency as Meenakshi Thappan elaborates how “the moral domain for women is always defined and policed by the Other. In a sense, woman’s body is often no longer *her* body but has been taken over by the community, of both men and women, to establish and legitimize its image in society” (6). Like many others, Hadiqa, too, is expelled from her home and hearth after her in-laws come to know about the mass- rape incident of which they were earlier unaware of and call such victims as the “daughters of raped villages” (Batool et al.113). By relegating such distressing moments as shunned- induces instances of profanity or sexual coercion, the society de-prioritizes her needs – both physical and emotional and renders her unworthy. The trauma of that act hangs heavily like a weary load of condemnation that she is unable to cast off. The dilemma at the heart of these traumatic narratives is the constant “oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crises of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of unbearable nature of its survival” (Caruth 7). The raped individuals get caught in the paradoxical situation of forgetting and telling their experience and the gender context makes it all the more difficult by portraying rape as a symbol of irrevocable damage without any possibility of recovery or survival.

II. Violence against Men:



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The evidence of both corporeal and sexual violence against women is found in plenty and there has been a general outburst to break the overarching silence regarding the violence against women. Physical violence, like being wounded, blinded with pellets and sometimes leading to death, is easily available in the rhetoric of Kashmir. But the grammar of sexual violence through innuendoes, leering, gazing at private parts, if not actual sexual exploitation of the men, even if sporadic, is pushed to a footnote to indirectly extend the main subject. This does not mean that such exploitation was limited to innuendoes and gazing; there have been cases in other narratives where incidents of sodomy etc. have been discussed like in Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator*. For the purpose of this paper, a choice has been made to present the case of unnamed narrator in one of the stories of *The Night of Broken Glass*. The book presents emotional anguish of men who are caught by security forces for breaking legal rules. The violence against men is often briefly coded as 'war between men' where they are either nationalist warriors or rebels but never are presented as victims. The discriminatory structure established by patriarchy fails to acknowledge the vulnerability of men despite their articulation of anxieties and traumas.

In contentious places, men are beaten, stripped naked and sexually assaulted with an intention to unsettle, feminize and silence them. The narrator of 'The Old Man in the Cottage' as discussed by Rather, was captured by Inspector Masoodi and Major S for lobbing a grenade at the major's cavalcade. Major S, who gets extremely flustered with the attacks from the locals, suspends the narrator by his feet in the prison cell. The narrator evocatively remembers the incident how the cause of *aazadi* had driven him to violence so much so that he felt:

my path was a long dark tunnel where the rocks exploded and tore open the walls to splatter blood onto my feet. At the end of the tunnel, as I marched forth, I saw the light of freedom, *aazadi*. (Rather 11)

As a consequence he was "stripped naked. . . hands tied behind (his) back" and beaten viciously with the major's belt until his limbs swelled and skin got a contused wound. Given the intention to launch an attack on the Major, it is no surprise that if he gets caught, he



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would eventually confront a dreadful fate. The madness with which Major S lashes the narrator with his belt explains the growing and uncontrollable frenzy in the valley that has now started to mirror itself in the actions of the major. The turning point is marked by the explosion of the grenade which along with the “smashing of the windshield” (11) could have fragmented the body of Major. The shock and fear of Major now gets transmitted in the maltreatment of the naked body. The army major’s extreme torture is also directed towards quelling the voices he believes that are working against him. Faced with fragilities of the body and the dangers that confront him, the narrator screams in agony and feels “the city was crying with me. The lake swelled, and the hills shattered to mound of ash” (11). The writer has cleverly used the motifs of tunnel and swollen limbs and swollen lake to suggest the ambivalences and motives of the narrator. The tunnel is suggestive of the darkness in the valley caused by the periodic eruption of violence. The narrator wishes to explode the rock and tear open the walls of tunnel so that he could eventually put an end to the equally dark repressive regime of Major S and his kinds. The ‘explosion’ whether it is of the major’s car or of the rock of the tunnel, suggests the attempt to destabilise power that makes locals passive subjects in their own valley. The attack on the car has given a fillip to a fresh phase of violence where the narrator is inextricably caught in a whirlpool of violence engineered by himself. His body and mind undergo a complete transformation; on the one hand, he possesses the indomitable strength to crush a major, on the other hand he helplessly becomes the victim of the powers that be. While his swollen limbs represent the physical agony; the swollen lake suggests the welled up emotions that he is desperately trying hard to hold back. Moreover, this ‘swelling’ is also indicative of the heightened hostilities between the authorities and the public at large.

Laura S. Brown rightly suggests that “Our culture is a factory for the production of so many walking wounded” (103) where she appeals to look beyond the wounds of body. The narrator here too observes the bruises of his body wounding his mind as well when Major S, burns his buttock with the tip of the Revolution cigarette that the narrator used to smoke. He feels “extreme humiliation and pain” when Major S points “his stubby finger at (narrator’s) anus and [takes] a long drag and [blows] the smoke” towards his anus uttering sarcastically



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“there goes the smoke of Revolution” (12). The hatred towards the narrator takes a new shade as there is aggressiveness; there is moral derangement, and sexual insinuations. The major chooses the word consciously as it refers equally to the brand of the cigarette as well as the revolution that people like the narrator believe they are waging against the State. He seems to be suggesting that both revolutions are nothing but smoke. While the experience of sexual humiliation of a woman is considered “within the range of human experience,” (Brown 101) the experience of a man doesn’t fit in the category, yet such an experience is traumatic to both as they both share a common feeling that involves threat to life and dignity and trauma achieves a social dimension when the wounds inflicted on an individual combine with that of a group. The insensitivity shown by Major S towards the narrator reinforces the corrupt political structures that are bent upon wiping Kashmiris as well as the tug and pull of democracy. The dream of *azzadi* is smashed by Major by his immoral conduct which then becomes difficult for the narrator to deal with.

The mental trauma of the narrator springs more from the sexual aspersions than from the physical tortures. The pain however is the outcome of same patriarchal constructions that seek to discipline the body of the female, through violence and abuse. The sexual signification of the male body provides an understanding that such violence is done purposely to reinforce the dominant hierarchies, and negotiate the relationships. Thus, the hyper-machismo of the armed forces complies with the gendered norms of dominance. Since war and violence are seen synonymous with masculinity, control and power, therefore “the acts of invasion, killing and violation are also masculinist . . . and the life of the soldier is characterised by these attributes including stoicism, phallocentricity, the domination of weaker individuals, and aspiration to heroic achievements” (Rowan 24). The writer exposes the myriad ways that the State uses to contain the enemy through physical and sexual abuse. At the same time, the army is immune and unsympathetic to the pains and traumas of the victim. David Luban rightly points out the dehumanizing aim of torture and affirms that:

The self-conscious aim of torture is to turn its victim into someone who is isolated, overwhelmed, terrorized and humiliated. Torture aims to strip away from its victim all the qualities of human dignity that liberalism prizes. It does



this by the deliberate actions of the torturer, who inflicts pain one-on-one, up close and personal, in order to break the spirit of the victim – in other words, to tyrannize and dominate the victim. (Luban, 1430)

The effects of the painful and traumatic episodes linger throughout the life as the narrator admits his loss of loquacity as an outcome of his time inside the prison. The trauma, as Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience*, analyzes is not just a “wound inflicted upon the body but upon the mind” (3) that affects the life of the victim forever.

Discussion:

By highlighting the vulnerabilities of both men and women, the narratives seem to doubt and question the strict established norms of patriarchy, masculinity and femininity. The texts that are impregnated with physical, sexual, psychological agonies of both men and women also diffuse the power equations and hierarchies that are usually made between the two sexes in moments of State/communal violence. Therefore, the anguished tales of sufferers—of both males and females—should be read as ‘co-texts’ rather than as ‘contexts’ because in war areas the violence is not directed against any particular gender. Though undeniably women suffer mainly but the agonies of men go unrecognised and their experiences are usually denied by both self and society. There remains an ethical lacuna within the body of literature while examining and understanding rape/sexual assaults of males. There is no single text that mainly focuses on the sufferings of men in Kashmir. On the other hand there is still a recognition and literary space for texts like *Do you remember Kunan-Poshpora?* that are entirely dedicated to women and their traumas. However, there is a slight acceptance and confirmation in this book as well that Kashmir is “unsafe not only for women but also for men. Women have undeniably been victims of sexual violence, but men have not been spared either. In Kashmir, animals are safer than human beings” (Batool et al. 67). If for women, the reproductive capacities are harmed and bodies ravished due to brutalities, for men too, their genitals are rendered sterile by physical and sexual assaults, hence marring the relationships as well as family life in both cases equally. The bodies of both male and female are liable to stigmatization and hence social ostracization seem imminent in both cases. Instead of



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upholding the stereotypical image of the robust and virile male, the narratives deconstruct to de-familiarize the existing parameters that define men to reconfigure the notions that surround them to accommodate other factors— political, economic, social— responsible for it. The violence is not just a corollary of war against one gender but can be triggered by “national and very localized issues; it is both public and private, individual and collective, political and sexual, normalized and extreme, set off by emotions and rational calculations and so on” (Elise, 20). Rather than attributing shame to the perpetrators, the writers expose the unscrupulousness of politics that circulates in the society that renders the victim shameless.

Since, the armed forces of a State undeniably are the condensate of power; their moral responsibility lie in providing protection in the name of law rather than indulging in amoral, heinous vengeful activities. The violent oppression and the loss of sympathy quotient, gets translated into retaliatory actions which become visible in anti-national demonstration engaging both civilians and armed forces in the vicious cycle of repetitions. The killing and custodial torture set off tremendous protests and Kashmiris of almost all the age groups across all genders display their vindictiveness by engage in stone pelting. Such responses to oppression and exploitation have been discussed by Feroz Rather in ‘The Old Man in the Cottage’, and Batool, et al. in *Do You Remember Kunan-Poshpora?* and also put forth the possible reasons of joining militancy.

The writers also poignantly draw attention to women’s roles during the nationalist movement, which usually get effaced under men’s leadership. Kunan Poshpora women have openly and publicly accepted their resistance and participation, albeit little, in the nationalist movement from “a simple curse or a kangri thrown at an armed officer trying to molest us to participation stone throwing, street protests, and mass funerals, to supporting the armed struggle and organizing and working in civil society to express our political opinions and affiliations” (4-5). The importance of roles; their innumerable sacrifices; their traumatic encounters during this revolutionary period often get wiped from the public memory as the state is male dominated rather male oriented. The writers have tried to rectify these omissions by bringing the dead and forgotten stories to life and have secured space for the voices of



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women in literature. Moreover, the inclusion of the roles of both males and females and their consequential traumas in the revolutionary periods reduces the weight from being it to be gender-oriented violence. It then acknowledges fear as a universal phenomenon and sees both genders as both victims and victimizers. Kashmir is wounded by ineffable acts of both individual and collective violence, where gender is not a site of difference. The issues discussed above are dealt rarely in literature and the writers demand that the Kashmir problems be inspected at a transitive level. These are more than just gender issues, something that are serious and grave and the outcome of which impairs the social life collectively. However insignificant they may seem to some but there is an urgent need to give literary space to the stories of both men and women, and they should be told repetitively. Arthur G. Neal, a social psychologist explains:

The narrative of traumatic events can never be told at once and for all. As historical circumstances change, the stories must be told and retold by each succeeding generation. The retelling of stories is in part based upon the excavation of new data about them with the passing of time. But, more important, stories take new meaning for subsequent generations as they rework their social heritage and confront new set of challenges. (Neal 9)

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