

**Representations of Peace and Conflict in Kashmir in Indian Mainstream  
Bollywood Cinema**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the representation of peace and conflict in Kashmir through the mainstream Bollywood cinema. In the early 1960s, the breathtakingly beautiful valley of Kashmir was a preferred destination for Bollywood's love and romantic narratives filmed in beautiful locations of Kashmir. Films like *Kashmir Ki Kali*, *Jab Jab Phool Khile*, and *Junglee* are some of the examples that were highly acclaimed and top-rated films of those times. These narratives changed from love and romance to conflict, foreign infiltration and terrorism in the late 1980s and onwards with films such as *Roja*, *Dil Se*, *LOC Kargil*, *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, and *Mission Kashmir*.

This research analyses the mediatized role of Indian cinema in Kashmir to understand the social, political, and artistic manifestations in each of these films. It further explores how each film characterizes the topic of peace and conflict with a particular emphasis on the way that each film narrative organization and aesthetic construction influence aspects of representation. The textual analysis of each pre-conflict and conflict film examines different approaches to narrative organization and the importance of integrating critical approaches that address questions of film style and interpretation.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Cinema is one of the most complex and powerful art forms in the modern world, with the capacity to influence human cognition (Mamdani, 2013). It is a diverse cultural practice which reflects a plethora of social, economic and cultural phenomena in modern societies. Thomas Edison introduced moving pictures to the world, but the Lumière brothers were the first to project films for audiences publicly. Cinema was born in Paris when the Lumière brothers held the first public screening of a short ‘actualité’, or non-fiction film, featuring workers leaving their factory in Lyons for the Société d’Encouragement pour l’Industries Nationale (Society for the Encouragement of National Industries) in Paris in 1895 (Ogden, 2018).

India received its first taste of cinema on July 7th, 1896 when the Lumiere brothers held a public showing at Watson Hotel in Mumbai (Goswami and Manju, 2013). Since then, cinema has had a significant influence on social, economic and political domains in India. Bollywood is a global face of Indian cinema, and it shares a unique relationship with Kashmir. Kashmir has been the leading filming destination for the Bombay cinema industry. Bollywood filmmakers have found different ways of telling stories about Kashmir and its people that have become part of the national experience. While Kashmir has had a significant place in art, literature, and poetry, scholars have not paid much attention to Kashmir’s depiction in Indian cinema beyond the notable work of Ananya Jehanara Kabir (Kabir 2006, 2009).

This study aims to explore the impact via mainstream Bollywood cinema of ‘images of Kashmir’. The goal will be to investigate how Bollywood cinema sketches the people; their narratives; the different facets of daily life; the visual imagery of beauty, serenity and violent conflicts; militancy; and acts of terrorism.

The research also aims to study how ‘interventions’ are used in mainstream Bollywood cinema to depict issues facing Kashmir, such as the demand for freedom from Indian occupancy. The term ‘intervention’ used herein refers to the introduction of a character or situation in a film that affects the narrative (see Barsam, 2007). From this perspective, this study endeavors to find answers to the following questions regarding the representation of Kashmir in Bollywood cinema:

1. What is the role of Bollywood films in the construction of representation about Kashmir and Kashmiris in India?
2. How do representations of ‘Indian-ness’ and national identity manifest themselves in these films?
3. How do Bollywood films portray the Indian government’s interventions in Kashmir?
4. How has Bollywood cinema addressed conflict through the representation of Kashmir issues?
5. How has Bollywood cinema addressed the issues of religion involved in India–Pakistan conflicts in Kashmir?

## 1.1 Indian Mainstream Cinema and Kashmir

Beyond its beauty, Kashmir has for decades been a place of seemingly endless conflict. It has been the site of unresolved if not interminable disputes and is a nuclear flashpoint between India and Pakistan. The territory was directly affected by the multiple armed confrontations between these two countries as they tried to exert their control over Kashmir (Sehgal, 2011). Apart from this, Kashmiris have been fighting for the right of self-determination recognized by the UN for many decades. The people of Kashmir suffered severe civil rights violations and militant conflicts throughout the decades after the introduction of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, or the AFSPA (Ahsan, 2017).

Over the years spanning these issues and conflicts, Bollywood has developed a particular interest in Kashmir. Kashmir (the province of Jammu and Kashmir), does not have its regional film industry, and Bollywood film industry has an intense, persuasive, and a universally recognized image across the borders. During the 1960s, Bollywood used the scenic beauty of Kashmir for its location to portray it as heaven on earth. However, with the political changes, the image of the valley in mainstream movies also underwent dramatic change. The films of pre-conflict era include *Kashmir Ki Kali* (Bud of Kashmir, 1964), *Jab Jab Phool Khile* (Whenever the Flowers Bloomed, 1965), and *Junglee* (Crazy, 1961), while the post-conflict days, when war and terrorism became the prominent aspect of the state, produced such timely films as *Roja* (Red, 1992), *Mission Kashmir* (2000), *Pukar* (Cry for Help, 2000), *Maa Tujhe Salaam* [Mother, I Salute You, 2002), and *LOC Kargil* (2003). All

of these films offer their unique takes on the territory through the portrayal of qualities and images meant for specific targeted audiences.

In the films from the 1960s to the late 1980s, Kashmir was a valley of love and honest human emotions. It is discernible in Shashi Kapoor's *Jab Jab Phool Khile* and Shammi Kapoor's song 'Yahoo...' from *Junglee*. The films of this period explored the scenic beauty of the territory such that the Persian poet Amir Khusru's description of Kashmir as a paradise on earth was made manifest. In later years, Bollywood continued this trend, depicting a Kashmir that exemplifies the old stone plaque of Shalimar Gardens in Srinagar, Kashmir, which proclaims, 'Agar firdous baroye zameen ast, hami asto, hami asto hami ast' ('If there is a paradise upon earth, it is here, it is here, it is here' [Ali 2011]).

From 1949 to 1989, Kashmir has been the central point of various motion pictures. Bollywood film stars like Raj Kapoor, Shammi Kapoor, and Amitabh Bachchan broke box-office records through movies shot in the vibrant green and snow-covered valley. The films shot in pristine areas of Kashmir capturing beauty on camera, recounting stories and portraying the message of adoration and peace. According to Rao (2010), young audiences of Hindi commercial films go to the cinema for action, good narratives, romance, and melodrama which constitutes the success of a film (Rao, 2010).

A film is often pushed into the category of melodrama when it has excessive sentiments and squeezes emotions out of the audience (Abrams and Galt, 2009). Melodrama, in this sense, was standard fare in the silent era, whether in

swashbucklers, Westerns, or crime films, and it remains a living tradition of contemporary film and television production (Ibid, 165). According to Thomson, moving image media as such are addicted to melodrama (Thomson 2003, 516-518).

In order to understand the context of films in India, attempts have been made to engage with the sociocultural contexts of Hindi films (Banaji, 2006). Famous Indian social scientist, Ashish Nandy (1995), contends Bollywood film as a spectacle, not an artistic endeavor. 'Thus, in the popular Bollywood film, when somebody has a change of heart, the change is dramatic and total. Such a person cannot be allowed to linger in a normative limbo, and the clues to such a change must be clear and well defined' (Nandy, 1995 p.89).

According to Ashraf (2015), the movies on conflict and fear-based oppression in Kashmir, are stories that are a long way from reality as the majority of them endeavors to inundate the audience with what it portrays (Ashraf, 2015). Tamim Baba observes that during the 1990s the motive behind shooting films in Kashmir changed drastically (Baba, 2011). It shifted from the portrayal of the location to a portrayal of the stories. In his opinion, the stories got distorted, locations (painted), characters (stereotyped), and situation (manipulated). The analysis of the films in later chapters will understand and explain the use of these adjectives to describe the position of Kashmir in an Indian film context.

The Bollywood producers who felt deficient without shooting romantic films (*Kabhie Kabhie* 1976, Dir. Yash Chopra) and love triangles (*Silsila* 1981, Dir. Yash Chopra) in Kashmir depicted it as the most unreliable place on earth. Many



filmmakers like Mani Ratnam, Vidhu Vinod Chopra, Piyush Jha, Santosh Sivan, and Rahul Dholakia took two directions of film form. The 'realism' (an interest in or concern for the actual or real, a tendency to view or represent things as they really are) and 'anti-realism' (an interest in or concern for the abstract). They took the (speculative or fantastic) to make films on Kashmir with a mix of the real and the fantastic (Barsam and Monahan, 2012 p.55). With the result, the audience was able to see films like *Roja*, *Mission Kashmir*, *Yahaan*, and *Lamhaa* based or shot in Kashmir.

From the film construction perspective, the decisions that shape the structure of the film appear to struggle with the explanations behind that particular choice. A film, when watched analytically, provides particular information about each of the significant formal components of the film. Textual analysis motivates the researcher to identify the attributes or measures of the depiction of messages, pictures, portrayals, and their broader social significance.

Popular cinema is unconcerned about either analyzing or showing the truth (Rehman, 2007). Purely commercial material and unadulterated nationalism make the cash. The majority of movies that depict Kashmir use rebellion or cross-border psychological warfare to attract the audience to the cinematic world. 'Nationalism' has become a selling point of high demand in the past two decades. There are a few filmmakers who have more realistic expectations from the success of a film (for instance, *Haider* and *Tahaan*). Movies like *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, *Roja*, *Lamhaa* indiscriminately follow their State. They see no wrong in the tactics followed by their country (Rehman, 2007).

The portrayal of people who fight for their fundamental rights as anti-nationals and terrorists in cinema (*Roja, Mission Kashmir*) has broken box office records. For them, the Indian State is ultimate, and every act of it has to be justified. Filmmakers have found that unfolding real-life scenario in Kashmir can easily integrate into one standard recipe of the Hindi movie.

The opinion on movies from Bollywood cinema with the backdrop of Kashmir varies from film to film. However, the portrayal of post-conflict Kashmir often served as a discourse on Indian nationalism. Over the years, the stories, locations, characters, and themes based on Kashmir transformed from *Kashmir Ki Kali* to *Mission Kashmir*, and the portrayal of Kashmir changed within Indian cinema. While in pre-conflict films Kashmir was portrayed as a beautiful and romantic dreamland, the films of the conflict period, like *Mission Kashmir*, portray Kashmir as a sinister, dark, and threatening place. The people of Kashmir in earlier films were rustic, pure, innocent, and uncorrupted. On the other hand, Kashmiris in the later films became dubious, cruel, and bloodthirsty.

The films on war and terrorism create an image of a situation, and in Kashmir, they have played a significant and influential role in molding perceptions of Kashmir.

### **1.1.1 Two Nations' theory and Kashmir**

More often than not the Kashmir dispute is based on religious differences (Sokefeld, 1997). One popular perspective squarely regards the conflict as a clash

between Hindus and Muslims—Pakistan is a Muslim state, India predominantly Hindu, and these two states fight for control of Kashmir. Similarly, the insurgency within Indian-administered Kashmir is an uprising of Muslim terrorists against benevolent Hindu governance. According to another, more sophisticated view, the Kashmir dispute is a conflict between religion and secularism, embodied in Pakistan and India, respectively. Here, Pakistan is considered a religious/Islamic state which, following the ‘Two-Nations-Theory’ (the ideology that Muslims and Hindus cannot live together and need two separate nations), was established as the homeland of the Muslims in South Asia, while India is a secular state which largely withstood the political meddling of religion.

Since 1947, India and Pakistan clashed over Kashmir because both opponents need Kashmir in order to support their underlying political ideology. For India, as a secular state, Kashmir is a Muslim majority province that demonstrates how, despite India’s overwhelming Hindu majority, it can accommodate Muslims within their secular framework. It is the ‘testing ground’ for the struggle between secular and religious politics (Behera 2002). For Pakistan, the fact that more than half of Kashmir remains under Hindu-Indian control is an anachronism, a thorn in the side of the Two-Nations-Theory. According to this view, Pakistan must ‘liberate’ the whole of (Muslim) Kashmir to prove the Two-Nations-Theory right.

### **1.1.2 The roots of Kashmir**

According to Godwin (1910), whoever owns Kashmir will also have access to River Indus and its tributaries in the east, where the melting glaciers regulate the water supply (Godwin, 1910). An exhaustive travelogue on Kashmir is compiled by Sir Walter Lawrence (1895), who specified a thorough account of the life of people in the region during the British occupation.

As described by Sir Walter, Kashmiri people from the beginning were known for their intrigue and lazy nature but are blessed with fabulous looks (Lawrence,1895). Notwithstanding the personal details, his account cannot be reckoned accurately because of the discernable cultural prejudice as he measured everything as per British standards that gave rise to certain inconsistencies.

In Hindu folklore, Kashmir hails from a place where the Hindu Goddess Sati is located. The earliest reference to the valley made in ancient Greek chronicles first show up in the works of Ptolemy Herodotus, and Hekkataio. The Greek records specified a location called Cashpherio or Cashpheria, which was later thought to be a distortion of Kashmir or Kashyaf-deface, as it was known in those days (Raina, 2013). History specialists have additionally discovered the Valley's mention in different Chinese records and even in Hebrew sacred texts. 'Kashmir is known to be the primary spot where Noah's relatives arrived after the great flood' (Hassnain, 2007 p.163).

Consequently, the religious centrality of the valley is comprehended for both Hindus and other major religions. To top it all, Kashmir is additionally home to the

Hazratbal shrine, which is said to hold a relic believed to be the hair of the Islamic prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.), which holds sentimental value for Muslims. The relic was reported disappeared on 26 December 1963. The Muslims in the region drove a mass protest to recover and return the relic to the place of worship (Verma and Narain 1998). The relic was recovered on 4 January 1964. The religion of Islam came to Kashmir around the Fourteenth Century, and before that time the official religions included Kashmiri Shaivism, Hinduism, and Buddhism (UNESCO, 1998).

Kashmir came under the Mughal Empire amid the control of Humayun in 1540 after his General Mirza Haider Dughlat waged a successful military campaign. Even though Kashmir was administratively under the territory of the Mughal Empire, it was never under direct rule until Akbar became the emperor in the year 1586.

Kashmir came under direct Muslim rule, with a population comprised of both Hindus and Muslims. The Mughal rule took after by the Afghanis, and later on, the valley went under the Sikh rule as a gift from the British to Gulab Singh Dogra for his assistance amid the Afghan war in 1841 (Gupte and Pranay, 1992 p.226). Dogra was Hindu and ruled over a population who were massively Muslims.

The makeup of Kashmir's population is a major contributing factor in giving rise to violence, and the final tension came to surface with the Swaraj (self-rule) movement by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, while Gulab Singh's great-grandson Hari Singh was the Maharaja. As the Swaraj faction gained motion and the British chose to leave India, the anxiety reached its peak when the Two Nation Theory (one Hindu, one Muslim) was passed. In 1947 India picked up autonomy; the Muslims

effectively overwhelmed the British and Indian specialists to frame the autonomous state of Pakistan.

After the Radcliffe Award had been passed, every single royal state was given the scope to consent either to India or Pakistan. It concurred that any state with a more significant part of Muslim populace would naturally agree to Pakistan, while a place with Hindu predominance will be granted to India.

Kashmir would have acceded to Pakistan, but Hari Singh, who had lost his protection from the British, was compelled to settle on a decision. For over two months, the state remained 'autonomous' until October 1947 when a massive number of tribesmen in Pakistan's North-West Frontier endeavored to lead a full intrusion. The Maharaja regarded it smarter to join India for his well-being. Pakistan promptly challenged his choice, and the newly independent countries waged their first war.

## **1.2 Representation**

This research intends to use Stuart Hall's politics of representation as the analytical tool for the investigation of the stories of Kashmir told through Bollywood's cinematic lens.

Stuart Hall, when addressing the question of representation, applied a 'circuit of culture theory' to explore the connection between the culture and representation (Gay et al. 1997). 'Culture is understood in terms of shared meanings and media is the biggest tool of circulation of these meaning' (Hall, 1997, 2). This focus on 'shared

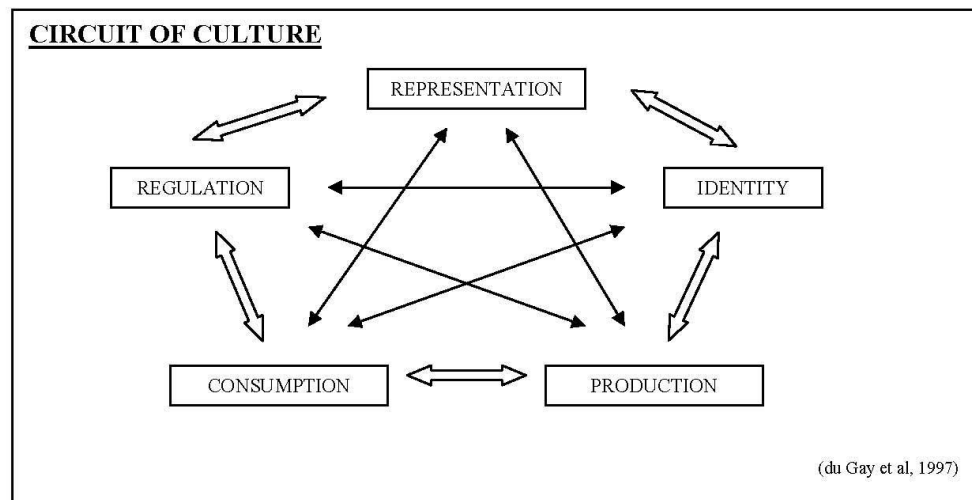
meanings' may sometimes make culture sound too unitary and rationalistic (Hall, 1997). As indicated by Stuart Hall there can be many issues that determine the significance of a 'portrayal', and more than one method for disentangling and speaking about it. Culture is about sentiments, connections, feelings, ideas, and thoughts. Representation involves the use of language, signs, and images which stand for or represent ideas, objects, and people. He further says that speculations or points of view help clarify how language is used to represent the world, be it reflective, intentional, or constructionist (Ibid, 1997).

The Reflective hypothesis of representation is that the language reflects the meaning of objects, people and events as they exist in the world. The Intentional theory of Representation expresses the meaning of the word as intended by the writer, painter or filmmaker in this case. The Constructive hypothesis of representation is that individual learner constructs significance in language to understand the world around them (Hall, 1997).

As per Stuart Hall (1997), the process that culture gathers meaning at five different 'moments' is the representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation.

1. Representation is the discursive process by which cultural meaning is generated and given shape.
2. Consumption, when audiences actively create meaning by using cultural products.

3. Production (Construction) is the process by which creators of cultural products instill meanings into cultural products.
4. Regulations are conditions of what is allowable or expected in a culture.
5. Identities are values that are never fixed but are multiple, culturally constructed meanings that evolve and change.



**Figure 1.2.1:** *du Gay et al'. (1997) – Model of the Circuit of Culture.*

What individuals communicate, why individuals communicate, how individuals communicate, and to what end individuals communicate are the first inquiries one solicits in a study of communication. The exchange of data and significance is the result of communication in the extensive variety of various settings; for example, with each other, distinctive social gatherings and subgroups, or with a vast group of onlookers. Topics with a diversity of meaning usually can have different understandings and representations.



Applying Stuart Hall's 'circuit of culture theory' the research aims to analyze how Kashmir and its culture reflect shared meanings, circulated through the language of Bollywood cinema, which is the most significant tool of circulation of these meanings.

Does the language of film express the view of its makers or is it the intended meaning (intentional) which constructs meaning through the language of film (constructionist) in Bollywood cinema? Does the portrayal of Kashmir in Bollywood films represent (or construct) the popular culture and belief?

### **1.2.1 Politics of Representation**

Stuart Hall breaks down the role of representation in images and discusses the role of cultures in representation. Hall argues there is no fixed meaning to any one image or an occurrence. The interpretation changes from person to person and is entirely dependent on historical and cultural context. Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* examines the process by which the West has 'Orientalized' the Orient and produced the collection of stereotypes, distortions, myths, and fantasies which the Occident (the West) has imposed in order to dominate it (Shabanirad and Marandi, 2015).

Said explains how individuals of the West started to see their Eastern partners on the premise of their skin shading, customs and culture; Westerners typically take a gander at them with a feeling of predominance that naturally misshapes their assessment of them. This feeling of predominance or ethnocentrism is instilled through the media. Prevailing press like radio, film, and TV influence a person's

recognition and are additionally in charge of fashioning the character of its watchers (Douglas, 1995).

### **1.2.2 Theories and perspectives**

According to Kellner Douglas (1995) since the beginning of consumer culture, individuals are encompassed by information that is decoded on both the cognizant and the subliminal level. Kellner's theories propose that the myths and symbols propagated through the media construct a common culture which is further appropriated by viewers, who then initiate themselves into the culture. Therefore, the media shapes ideas and has great educational value, which includes bringing awareness in the masses, as well as dictate what the audience should feel, want, and fear (Ibid, 1995).

In order to understand why meaning, language, and representation are such critical elements in the study of culture it is essential to understand how concepts and ideas translate into different languages and how language can be interpreted to refer to the world. Stuart Halls representation theory can be used to establish the translatability between the concepts and the language which enables meaning to pass from speaker to hearer, media to the audience (Hall, 1997).

### **1.2.3 Media and Islamophobia**

When the media presents content against certain racial groups and societies, the audience is naturally inclined to adopting the information being transmitted to them. One confirmation of this conduct lies in the uncontrolled Islamophobia responses that were rapidly spreading all around America and the Western world after the 9/11 terror attack on the World Trade Center (Hilal, 2012). The occasion of 9/11 has its importance not just in light of the fact that it highlighted an urgent requirement for more noteworthy security, it likewise conveyed serious criticisms and abuse to Middle Eastern Muslims, Muslims from different districts, and individuals with Arab or Oriental identities, under the pretext of collective responsibility (Cesari, 2009).

Orientalism is a critique of the Western texts that have represented the East as an exotic and inferior other by the stereotypes and images. Edward Said's Orientalism can be analyzed and discussed for dealing with the Western style of dominating, restructuring and having authority and control over Kashmir.

### **1.2.4 Agenda setting nature of media**

Agenda-setting proposes that the audience will understand the importance of any issue through mass media (McCombs and Shaw,1972). As indicated by McCombs, this hypothesis gives an insight into how media chooses to focus attention towards an issue and steer the thoughts of the audience in a particular direction. According to agenda-setting theory, the media filter stories based upon what they perceive as necessary, then gives the stories more column-inches in newspapers or

repeated presentation in broadcast news, thereby instilling in the psyche of an audience a sense of urgency or importance in the stories presented. According to Kellner, there is a need for the audience to dissect and question the stories that broadcast media delivers (Douglas, 1995).

However, the impact of news media falls short to that of films. As indicated by Graham Rossiter (1998), film and TV shows have a ‘developmental impact’ on the character of the viewer (Rossiter, 1998). The essential impacting factor that the media uses to influence audiences is the story. Rossiter has outlined that the idea of the story contains parts like the investigation of importance, analogies, images, sexual orientation, account, myth, class, a perspective of qualities and the systems of a business film. Along these lines, Cinema is a demonstration of portrayal in light of the development of reality roused by understanding (Jerenimo and Moreno, 2010). It presents us with images of things. Images can be mimetic distractions, and they cannot engage with our reason nor nourish our longing for truth (Nichols, 1991).

### **1.3 Subject of Kashmir and Cinema**

A similar rationale applies to the media portrayal of the Indian provinces of Jammu and Kashmir, which significantly affects how the general population sees the happenings inside that region. The Indian territory of Jammu and Kashmir does not have an organized film industry but relies on Bollywood movie producers who have discovered distinctive methods for recounting stories about subjects that are a part of the national experience (Kabir, 2009).

What does not take center-stage in most Bollywood films produced in Kashmir is the internal issues of Kashmir. The idea of its personality was named ‘Kashmiriyat’ by Kashmiris as they battle to frame their place, and have it perceived by individuals from the global society. An intriguing part of the true-to-life depiction of the locale is what transpired during the early 1960s of Bollywood’s productions in Kashmir. This vision of Kashmir seemed extravagant and luxurious, with practically no light shed on the idea of the real existence of Kashmiri individuals. The struggles of living in a disputed territory turned into the most loved subject in the movies of the 1990s.

From the mid-1960s until the late 1980s, there was hardly any discourse on the pressures in the Kashmiri locale until the 1992 film *Roja* was released. The film revolves around the couple Rishi and Roja in the middle of Kashmir’s conflict scenario. *Roja* demonstrated a radical change from the generally tranquil depiction of Kashmir to forceful components of viciousness, murdering, and kidnapping to the general public. It was especially fascinating because it did not concentrate on the border dispute but the internal conflicts including the demand for autonomy portrayed with elements of stereotype, bias, and viciousness towards Muslims.

Film projects like *Mission Kashmir* (2000) could not follow this path. It demonstrates that the militancy in the region is not just unfavorably affecting the Hindus, who constitute most of the populace, but also impacting the Muslims. The movie persistently shows the militant groups in a negative light by representing them as fear mongers who approve their cause utilizing Islamic beliefs.

The investigations of human psychology with regards to the view of various societies and mentalities, within the western audience, is, as of now, one-sided in its impression of identifying with the Orient, particularly in the case of Islam. As most films assign the identity of a brutal, anti-national oppressor to a Muslim character, Bollywood cinema contributes to the already existing Islamophobia and nationalist sentiments among Indian audiences. In *Roja*, terrorists set the Indian flag ablaze, and the hero writhes on the burning flag to put it out to symbolize his undying affection for his nation while the terrorists demonstrate their arrogance not only towards the nation but also towards human life.

The film *Fanaa* (2006) a love story set in the backdrop of militancy, showcases activists as people who took destruction as a tool against the country (Kohli, 2006). Therefore, Bollywood is often criticized for portraying a subjective interpretation of issues like Kashmir in ways that could affect the perception of the masses.

### **1.3.1 Real and Representation**

Bollywood has many boundaries, encumbrances, and motivation to satisfy in a single film, hence, to expect truth is too far-fetched (Prasad, 1998). An expanding consciousness of the ways that film does not just ‘signify’ similarly as it is not just a pragmatist ‘reflect’. Esthetic and formal operations must be comprehended and may frequently run counter to a want to announce crafted by fiction to be reasonable (Branston, 2000).

The representation of Kashmir through Bollywood movies is often one-sided. While they always portray activism under a negative light, they conveniently forgot to address the inhuman acts of the Indian army after the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, AFSPA. The constant conflicts have a history of transformation from a valley of adoration to the present ‘militant’ state. Kashmir’s beauty is no longer a subject of a beautiful story as it was a backdrop for romance, beauty, and youthfulness in the movies of 1960s, but today it represents political tension (Abbas and Zohra, 2013).

For over 60 years, India and Pakistan have fought over Jammu and Kashmir both on the battlefield and at the negotiation table. Though media often asserts religious tension to be the primary reason for the situation in Kashmir, it has more to do with the political and economic importance of the territory. The valley is not valued just for its beautiful scenery, but for the income, it generates through tourism. The valley is also crucial for the trade routes to central Asia. Whoever controls Kashmir controls the Indus river. Therefore, both India and Pakistan have a personal stake in acquiring dominion over Kashmir. Other than the physical war, Bollywood has been a mouthpiece of Indian government policies by playing a significant part in India’s psychological war to legitimize their claim over Kashmir.

#### **1.4 Third Cinema Intervention**

Third Cinema that initially rose in the 1970s turned into an official piece of the film studies educational modules in the 1980s. According to Solanas & Getino’s notion of ‘Third Cinema’ (1969), cinematic stories that pay little mind to the nation

in which it is delivered or which nation it takes as its subject is a cinema of socio-political and social study. Its method of creation and the roads of its dissemination and gathering are likewise solitary.

Cinema is one of the most popular mediums of communication in India. It can affect the viewpoints of people. For Indians, the Kashmir conflict is an issue of national interest and a nation like India, where communication between north and south does not take place due to many different languages and many more dialects, media plays a huge role in the exchange of information. In such a case, the representation through different forms of media becomes 'Truth' about the unknown. In the recent past, the media have represented Kashmir through the lens of conflicts and violence. In such a circumstance, it becomes important to consider Bollywood's representation of Kashmir and its people.

The thesis begins with a literature review in chapter two to explore the theory of representation and the theory of semiotics as these two theories are the bases of representation. The mediation of peace and conflict through films on Kashmir and the role of Hindi (Bollywood) cinema is to be analyzed through the history and ideology of Bollywood films. The success of the film industry has been its ability to adapt to the demands of the people and providing them with the stories that interest them (Roji, 2015).

The study also focusses on the audience's preference, of the success formula. It also provides a general layout of representation theory within film studies as well as the semiotics of Indian cinema narratives. Within this approach, the agenda-setting



theory is examined, and compared to see how the referent films are mirrored in society.

Chapter three establishes a detailed analysis of the theoretical framework of the thesis. Stuart Hall's 'cultural circuit' and systems of representation examines the importance of representation in studying and understanding the Bollywood films on Kashmir and the use of language, signs, and images which stand for or represent meaning. Ferdinand Saussure's Semiotic approach is applied to the study of signs in culture, and culture as a language to construct meaning and carry a message.

In Chapter four, the research deploys the textual analysis methodology to addresses the research questions regarding the influence of Bollywood films in the construction of perception regarding Kashmir and Kashmiris in India, and to understand 'Indian-ness' and national identity. The portrayal of Kashmir and Kashmiri's featured in Bollywood melodramas are also examined.

Chapter five includes the textual analysis of mainstream Bollywood cinema related to Kashmir. It differentiates 20 films into four categories for purposes of analysis; specifically, melodramas and beauty, melodramas and nation, melodramas and politics of representation, and melodramas and neorealism. It intends to look at the transitions in the representation of Kashmir from the 1950s to the present.

There are many perspectives on the conflict in Kashmir as there are voices. Chapter six discusses and examines the relevance of Third Cinema advocated by Glauber Rocha, Julio Garcia Espinosa, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino in the representation of Kashmir in contrast to the First Cinema and Second Cinema. The

resistant practices of Third cinema are neither homogeneous nor static; they vary over time, from region to region and, in the genre, from epic costume drama to personal small-budget documentary (Glauber, 1995). Their aesthetic strategies range from 'progressive realist' to Brechtian deconstructivist to avant-gardist, tropicalist, and resistant postmodern (Shohat, 2003). The intention is to understand the First Cinema representation of Kashmir in mainstream Bollywood movies and how Third Cinema can contribute as an alternative in changing the prevalent discourse.

Chapter seven gives the conclusion on the representation of Kashmir based on Stuart Hall's theory of representation, semiotic framework and textual analysis of the selected films. Third Cinema intervention is examined as critical theory and practice to tackle the stories based on the events which have happened in history and are essential to the people and the nation.

This research does not offer solutions for the social problem of conflicts, and it is not meant to do so, nor does it claim to have found answers to all the questions it raises, but it pushes research to a higher level for better understanding of the connections that exist in the area of knowledge of Bollywood films and Kashmir.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter identifies literature on Bollywood, the mainstream Indian cinema, to examine how it represents the Valley of Kashmir, its people, and its culture. Even though there is a significant amount of literature on Bollywood but minimal scholarly work in relation to Kashmir. This research chapter aims to develop a possible framework that can be utilized to address the issues of representation in detail. The cross-disciplinary structure will draw upon the critical ideas of representation theories identified through case studies.

Stuart Hall, while commenting on ‘representation’, (du Gay and Hall et al. 1997) connected the ‘circuit of culture’ to investigate the association between the way of life and representation. ‘Culture is understood in relation to shared implications and media is the greatest device involved in creating them’ (Hall, 1997 p. 1). ‘This ‘shared implications’ may once in a while influence culture to sound excessively unitary and subjective’ (Hall, 1997 p. 2).

Hall’s encoding/decoding model developed during his time at the British Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) and published in 1973 is considered a precursor to later circuit models developed by cultural theorists. Encoding/decoding as a primarily semiological device denotes the beginnings of a significant historical shift from the more common linear conception of message and exchange to introducing a complex structure of relations through the interlinking processes of articulation and discursive elements of production (Leve, 2011).

In any culture, there is a diversity of meanings about any topic and more than one method for representing it. Culture is understood here to incorporate sentiments, connections, feelings ideas and thoughts. The demeanor on a man's face 'says something' about who they are (identity), what they are feeling (emotions), and what group they belong to (attachment) along these lines outward appearances can be 'read' and comprehended by others. As a structure the Circuit of Culture can undoubtedly be usefully employed and adapted for an in-depth study of culture; however, there are no 'neat fits', and the beliefs and activities of consumers cannot be determined through analysis of the artifacts or behaviors.

The benefit of using this model of culture as a study guide is readily apparent. Paul Du Gay's comment that this is the circuit 'through which any analysis of a cultural text or artifact must pass if it is to be adequately studied' (du Gay et al., 1997 p. 3) seems like sound advice. If these 'moments', and the interconnections between them, are considered then all of the significant viewpoints into the construction of a cultural phenomenon appear to be potentially addressed.

Hall attempts to subvert the notion of representation as merely a reflection or distortion of reality. In his view, understanding representation as a kind of distortion of 'reality' consequently makes any work on representation one of measuring the gap between what one might think of as the true meaning of an event or 'thing', and how it is presented through language. Although he agrees that much good work does exactly this, Hall considers this notion of representation as too literal, one that assumes the existence of 'true' representation, as opposed to a distorted one. Hall's alternative claim then, is that representation has a constitutive role, that is, it makes

meaning while at the same time standing in for ‘reality’; that reality does not exist outside the process of representation (Belji, 2005).

These various ways of understanding ‘representation’ are critical and informative, enabling a far more insightful investigation of the processes in which it has a part. Representation has been connected with notions of a pre-existing ‘reality’, of being made to perform a particular function by producers and of fulfilling the role of both constructing and being constructed by language. The work of representation may be to highlight particularly preferred meanings and subjugate others; to limit the potential meanings or to extend the possibilities of understanding. The meaning collected from representation is never fixed, it is slippery, always shifting, and always caught up in a conglomerate of other possible meanings. The creation of a textual representation involves the constitutive roles of many possibilities: producer, creator, actor, model, fund provider, instigator, consumer, onlooker, researcher, potential customer, passers-by. We are continually assailed by textual representations and the meanings they convey. The process of creating and attempting to fix a particular message or meaning to representations is integral to the work of those whose job it is to build and maintain the value of a commodity.

Semiology in Saussurean tradition is the study of making meaning, the philosophical theory of signs and symbols. Ferdinand de Saussure’s study of signs and sign processes (semiosis) include, ‘indication, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication’ (Ferdinand, 1894). Semiotics analyses the structural relations, within a system, that function to produce meaning. Signs can be understood only with other signs within the system, and this

occurs, in the first instance, in two ways. A sign derives meaning simultaneously by what it is not and by what it is in combination with (Hayward, 2000).

From the beginning, Indian cinema has drawn stimulation from the styles, aesthetics, and semiotics of cultural forms that have followed one upon the other in India over the centuries, often mixing them in various ways during the process of evolution, into a vast cultural heritage (Dudrah and Desai 2008).

The conventional ideas emerging from Hall's issues of representation and using Saussure's semiotics is essential to investigate and clarify the complexities of the film viewing practice. Connecting critical ideas drawn from the collections of work can lay down a more nuanced comprehension of the portrayal of movies of Kashmir.

Bollywood cinema has played a significant role in creating representations of Kashmir through the narratives produced for the audience in India and the rest of the world. As the valley of Kashmir emerged as the bone of contention for three nationalisms, Indian, Pakistani, and the aspirant Kashmiri' (Kabir, 2009 p.1), the valley became an area of significant interest for India. The constant confrontations between India and Pakistan over Kashmir made the valley a conflict zone. Therefore, the Kashmir issue can be understood only from a historical perspective that takes into account its geography, political and social structures, and international relations (Kabir, 2009). Bollywood has a long history in the valley. Bollywood films experienced political changes along with the valley. It once represented beauty, but now it represents fear.

## 2.1 Academic literature on the History of Bollywood

Bollywood is one of the biggest film industries in the world. It plays a significant role in characterizing culture and custom across the nation's territory. The movies have always mirrored the financial and socio-political issues of the time. Author /writer Farrukh Dhondy understands Bollywood as (cited in Bose, 2007):

Bollywood uses a formula. In the beginning, the formula was with nationalism and just nationalism. Film inherited the task of becoming the discernible conscience of the nation. It was the defining medium for constructing what it meant to be an Indian. (Bose, 2007 p.35)

As the dominant media institution (Ganti, 2013) within India, the Bombay film industry plays a significant role in characterizing contradictions like 'custom/innovation', 'worldwide/nearby', 'Western/Eastern', and classes, for example, 'culture', 'nation' and 'Indian'. Bollywood is commonly referred to as 'Hindi mainstream cinema', even though the language 'Hindustani', which is one of the official languages spoken in most parts of India, is the simple mix of Hindi and Urdu language of North India and Pakistan (Ganti, 2000).

Indian film industry assumed a crucial part in pre-independent and post-independent India in rousing the majority and contributing to the national economy. It has been developing relentlessly after *Raja Harishchandra* released in 1913. Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, fondly known as Dadasaheb Phalke, is defined as the father of Indian cinema, and his debut full-length film was *Raja Harishchandra*, a

story from Mahabharata, ‘which demonstrates that as long as men remain good and true, they will ultimately triumph’ (Bose, 2007 p.50).

According to Desai & Dudrah, Indian movies concentrate on the fabric of the Society. ‘The financial, political and social procedures and discussions that affect the methods of creation and distribution overlap with expansionism, patriotism, and private enterprise’ (Dudrah and Desai, 2008, 4). Bollywood’s silver screen is the cultural and traditional industry of India. Movie producers have deployed the medium for their expressions, utilizing visuals and intertextuality to become the detectable voice of the country (Ibid, 2008).

## **2.2 Ideological significance of Bollywood**

Bollywood filmmakers favor subjects that interest the mass audience. Producers go for high box office returns by catering to broad sections of the general public with components of imagination, music, songs, and dance. Indian movie producers do not attempt to cover up the fact that ‘what is appearing on the screen is fiction, a creation, and fantasy’ (Benegal, 1995). Hindi movies are not worried about the inward life of the characters on the screen; they are more concerned about the inner life of the viewer. The characters do not create circumstances; the circumstances build up the characters.

The films on Kashmir comprise the same essentials of make-believe, probability, and convenience. Films like *Jab Jab Phool Khile* (1963), *Junglee* (1961), *Roja* (1991), and *Mission Kashmir* (2000) detailed the same Bollywood philosophy



that was promulgated by the earlier films. The films hardly cared to capture the realism of the situation of Kashmir; instead, the movies provided an overdramatic representation of the whole situation in Kashmir.

### **2.3 History of Bollywood films**

It was after Indian Independence in 1947 that the film business experienced huge changes and it was during this time that the modern Bollywood film formula conceived. Film themes changed from folklore and history to extreme social reforms. They often criticized social practices such as the dowry system, polygamy, and prostitution.

In the 1950s filmmakers like Bimal Roy and Satyajit Ray concentrated on the lives of lower classes, which until then was mostly ignored as a subject. The 1960s, motivated by social and political changes, as well as cinematic movements in both the US and Europe, gave India its own New Wave. Directors such as Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, and Ritwik Ghatak made films that gave rise to the 'New Wave Cinema', presenting a greater sense of realism and understanding of the common man. These films were different from escapist films or 'masala films', as they are known in India, the name comes from a mixture of spices in Indian cuisine. Successful actors of this era (Rauf, 2008) included Dev Anand, Dilip Kumar, and Raj Kapoor, and actresses like Nargis, Nutan, Meena Kumari, and Madhu Bala. Masala films mixed the genres of action, comedy, and melodrama, and included song and dance numbers in

picturesque locations, elements which became popular and are still used in most contemporary Bollywood films (Shah, 1981).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, romance and action films starred actors like Shammi Kapoor, Shashi Kapoor, Rajesh Khanna, Dharmendra, Sanjeev Kumar, Waheeda Rehman, Sharmila Tagore, Asha Parekh, and Tanuja. In the mid-1970s, romantic confections gave way to gritty, violent films about gangsters and bandits (Baba, 1989). This was the time when director Ramesh Sippy gave the nation the iconoclastic '*Sholay*' (1975). The internationally acclaimed film also clinched the title of 'superstar' for Amitabh Bachchan.

The cinema business has been rising relentlessly due to its effect in motivating and captivating the audience imagination and interest. According to Statista, India is the largest movie producer worldwide, releasing more than a thousand films each year (Statista.com). The movies have always mirrored the socio-political issues of the time. Amid the fringe war with China in 1962 (*Haqeeqat* 1962) and military clashes with Pakistan in 1948, 1965, 1975 and 1999 (*Upkar* 1967, *Hindustan Ki Kasam* 1973, *Border* 1997, *LOC Kargil* 1999) strived to support the morale of citizens.

In the 1980s several women directors such as Aparna Sen, Prema Karnath, Sai Paranjypte, and Mira Nair rose to prominence. Influential women-based films like *Umrao Jaan* (Dir. Muzaffar Ali. 1981), *Prem Rog* (Dir. Raj Kapoor. 1982), *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* (Dir. Raj Kapoor. 1985), *Khoon Bhari Maang* (Dir. Rakesh Roshan

1988) *Nache Mayuri* (Dir. T. Rama Rao.1986) *Roja* (Dir. Mani Ratnam.1992) and *Damini* (Dir. Rajkumar Santoshi. 1993) were big successes.

The 1990s was the period of mixed genres such as romance, thrillers, action, and comedy. Mid-1990s stories began to revolve around the Indian family system and values, seen in films like *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (Dir. Sooraj Barjatija.1994) and *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (Dir. Aditya Chopra.1995). The family focus became very popular and gave Bollywood a new league of romantic actors like Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, Shahrukh Khan, Akshay Kumar, and Govinda, and actresses such as Sridevi, Madhuri Dixit, Juhi Chawla, Kajol, Karishma Kapoor, and Raveena Tandon. Besides, this decade also marked the entry of parallel cinema, a film movement that originated in the state of West Bengal as a substitute to Bollywood cinema. (Ahmad, 1992).

In the 2000s the popularity of Bollywood extended around the world through the overseas market, foreign releases, and the explosion of multiplexes in big cities. Films like *Devdas* (Sanjay Leela Bhansali. 2002), *Koi Mil Gaya* (Rakesh Roshan. 2003), *Kal Ho Na Ho* (Nikhil Advani. 2003), *Veer Zaara* (Yash Chopra.2004), *Mission Kashmir* (Vidhu Vinod Chopra. 2000), and *Dhoom 2* (Sanjay Gadhvi. 2006) featured new actors like Hrithik Roshan and Abhishek, and actresses like Aishwarya Rai, Preity Zinta, Rani Mukherjee, and Kareena Kapoor. All these actors and actresses have played as Kashmiri character is in the films based on Kashmir and its conflict.

## **2.4 Bollywood films on Kashmir**

### **2.4.1 Two Nations theory**

Martin Sokefeld (2009) argues that the Kashmir dispute is based upon a religious difference between the Hindus of India and Muslims of India and Pakistan (Sokefeld, 2009). The rebellion within Indian-administered Kashmir is an uprising of Muslims against Hindu control. The fact that India and Pakistan were one state before partition also contributed to the application of 'Two Nations-Theory'. Pakistan is considered a religious/Islamic state which, following the 'Two-Nations-Theory' (Muslims and Hindus are two separate nations) was established as the homeland of the Muslims in South Asia, while India is a secular state which largely resisted the pull of religion-based politics.

India and Pakistan have clashed with one another over Kashmir to prove their opposing political ideologies are right. For India, Kashmir a Muslim majority province provides a litmus test proving that, despite its more abundant population of Hindus, India can accommodate Muslims within the framework of a secular state (Behera, 2002). For Pakistan, the fact that more than half of Kashmir remains under Indian (Hindu) control, is an affront to their advocacy of the 'Two-Nations-Theory'. According to this view, Pakistan has to 'liberate' the whole of Kashmir from India's control to prove the Two-Nations-Theory is right (Sokefeld, 2009).

The connection of Indian claims on Kashmir and the representations of Kashmir in Hindi cinema make regional and religious contestations over the national and secular account of history, culture, and politics. Jawaharlal Nehru's clarification

on viewing Kashmir as an image of India's secularism repeats in political rhetoric and scholarly works on the Kashmir debate. In this manner, the story and visual content of Kashmir holds an essential position in the Bollywood cinema.

Hindi cinema plays a significant role in determining the day to day political, historical, and social interactions happening inside the country (Rajadhyaksha and Willemen, 1999). Its portrayal of Kashmir is part of this role. From the 1950s to the 1980s. Kashmir has been the prime shooting location for Hindi films, making it practically the second home for Bollywood's movie producers. Kashmir's stories, locations, socioeconomics, religion, topography, history, legislative issues, writing, verse, and business, all had an impact in articulating Kashmir as key to the stories of belonging for Indians (wikipedia.org).

The relationship between post-colonial violence and post-colonial pleasure lies in the dynamics of modernity in the shots captured by the camera in movies of the 1960s (as the accomplishment of the film *Kashmir Ki Kali* and *Jab Jab Phool Khile* remind us) (Kabir,2009). Innovation in South Asia has its roots in the colonist experience. Change is not comprehended as a trans-verifiable class; instead, it works as shorthand for the creation, from the nineteenth century, ahead of new methods of subjectivity through advancement in mechanical propagation.

The political violence that started in Kashmir in the 1990s contributed to the development of films based on Kashmir which could accommodate violence and terror in its structure (Ibid, 2009). Romance in the valley was replaced with 'cine-patriotism' and gave it the image of a 'true to life battleground'. From the 1960s until

the present day, the Valley is exposed to the camera gaze like no other space in South Asia. Slavoj Žižek's explanation of the 'part of imagination in the economy of want' elucidates how this gaze has helped in developing the valley as the coveted space (Kabir, 2009).

## **2.5 Visual description of Kashmir**

As indicated by Sir Walter R. Lawrence, the Kashmiri town is beautiful, shaded by the 'unrivaled plane tree, walnut, apple, and apricot trees, watered by an unmistakable shining stream. When rain cools the air, hot ashes are put into the Kanger (the earthen pot) and snuck by the voluminous outfit (Pheran) which all Kashmiris wear' (Lawrence, 1895 pp 17-18). None of this finds space in any visual portrayal of Kashmir through Bollywood. According to Madhumita Srivastava, "the Kashmir problem has always been an issue of ethnic identity, the Kashmiriyat, and its resolution might be found in maintaining, restoring, and building up the Kashmiriyat in an acceptable framework in the larger freedom and political order" (cited in Kumar, 2010 p.15).

The vast majority of the Bollywood films about the Kashmir struggle are intended to build a 'dissident' national personality of Kashmir to popularize the ideology of national and anti-national based on religious philosophies (Bhat, 2015). It is done through assigning the anti- India and pro- Pakistan image of Kashmir and by displaying a selection of images, metaphors, and narratives from broader principals of mainstream culture to assemble them under 'Indianness' (Brosius,

1999). Media writings have deliberately influenced the audience to relate to the 'patriot' thought of the community.

Country and film are both modern elements having originated at the end of a progressive yet powerful process of social changes (Mir, 2008). While the country can follow genealogies of the illumination and judiciousness to innovation, a movie is an immediate result of the Industrial Revolution and mechanization that emerged from the Western world. In this way, it has turned into an inseparable part of an individual's' creative impulse, lived encounters, customs, and traditions. According to Sumita Chakravarty and Madhava Prasad, the country is the concern for two studies in Hindi cinema. Chakravarty sees Hindi film 'as a mediated type of national consciousness' (Chakravarty, 1993 p. 8), while Prasad finds Hindi film 'as an establishment that is a part of the continuing struggles within India over the type of state' (Prasad, 1998 p. 10). While there are significant differences in approach, both researchers dedicated significant attention to the questions of authority and law. Prasad's analysis of movies traced a movement over various periods followed by the subordination of the religion and inheritance to the State that gives a relevant framework for this study.

## **2.6 Bollywood: Cinematic manufacturing of Kashmiri identity**

In its endeavor to remake the state-focused and religion-focused nationalist culture, Bollywood heavily depends on stories and characters to spread the messages of patriotism and formation of the 'Motherland' and 'Mother India' concepts

(Thussu, 2008). Assembling the substance that fits into the trope of patriotism has become a trend in Bollywood during the last two decades. Bollywood started to produce film after film on this theme. In India film has been the most powerful and most mainstream social foundation (Thussu, 2008). In the past cinema contributed to ‘nation-building’ and supported anti-colonial movement while entertaining individuals of all sections of society (Ibid, 2008).

Even though Bollywood offers an extensive variety of research potential outcomes, this research intends to examine only the biased portrayal of Kashmir and Kashmiri. The film depiction of Kashmir and its people become essential in understanding ‘representation’, ‘stereotyping’ and ‘agenda setting theory’ as the devices of building the characteristics of Kashmiri. It will also help in looking at the endeavors to recreate the religion and region-focused patriotism with the intention to popularize ‘communal Kashmiri Muslim’ stereotype. In creating such images, Muslim is placed against the larger Hindu community, and the notion of ‘national’ links up with ‘Hindu’ (Banerjee, 2006).

## **2.7 Cinema and Representation**

Most insightful work on representation highlights practices to clarify the pertinence of representation to social investigations (Hall, 1997). The concept of representation connects meaning and language to culture and is a necessary procedure by which significance produces along with the exchange of information between individuals from a culture. It includes the use of language, signs, and images which remain for



or represent things. To clarify this association further, 'Hindi cinema has been a prime enunciator of Indianness and provides a powerful framework within which notions of collectivity and belongings articulate' (Rajadhyaksha, 1994 p.10).

A few researchers (Gellner, Hobsbaw and Anderson, 1983) have reasoned that in India, commercial Hindi films constitutes a 'nation-space' that propagates convincing modernists theories and patriotism which can impact the investigation of the cinema around the world.

These theories of patriotism have concentrated on various viewpoints like industrialization (Gellner, 1983), the invention of the past and its manufactured continuities to the present (Hobsbawm, 1990) and spread of print capitalism (Anderson, 1983). These theories of nationalism and national belonging have made it familiar to talk about the country as an invention, a development, and a social creation. These theories of patriotism bring into focus different types of mythmaking and propagation of national culture. It also opens up the investigation of Indian cinema as a quintessentially present-day organization for both constructing and unifying the country with notions of national culture, national community, and national identity.

## **2.8 Representation theory and Portrayal of Kashmir**

Theory of Representation refers to a process through which signs and images are used to pass on specific meanings. This word has signs and symptoms which claim to help those features of reality and represent them.

The investigation of media representation in the study of media, communication, and culture is critical. According to Richard Dyer's, the concept of representation in the media includes the 'structure that the mass media create from various aspects of fact such as people, places, objects, people, cultural identities and other abstract concepts. (Dyer,1999, 4). In this way, cinema as a means of communication with the depiction of its surrounding events presents a new world to its audiences, the world that begins from representation tenets of occasions. Pictures blend with objectivities and subjectivities that reestablish the world around, both experienced and seen (Bazin, 2007).

Kashmir Valley as a territory of desire itself seemingly typifies the mystery of country statehood-that, in Ranjana Khanna's words, is, 'constituted through the frontier connection' (Kabir, 2009). In any case, the relationship of aberrant lead between the sovereign territory of Jammu and Kashmir and British India convolutes this understanding (Khanna, 2003).

Khanna's argument that the 'idea of nation-statehood should be fundamentally reshaped is to survive without conceded (colonial) 'other' apparently encourages an 'Orientalism'- style connection between postcolonial India and the Kashmir Valley.

Kashmiri self-identifications as 'Muslim' opposite rulers identified as 'non-Muslim/Hindu/Indian', and the very demand for democratic rights, re-emerge as parts of a hopeful newness, whose strangulation is the result of the stiff-necked dream of non-modern Kashmir. In this way, even as Indians discover separation from the

possibility of Kashmir incomprehensible, Kashmiris discuss aazadi (freedom) and radiate bitterness toward one India, while being wholly disconnected within India of popular culture and its specialist discourses of representation and pleasure. This complexity is part of the schizophrenic subject position of the Kashmiri as a co-selected Indian citizen (Kabir,2009).

If in welcoming the camera to concentrate on the especially attractive Kashmiri frame, the Kashmiri characters depicted in films post-conflict can ‘toy with power’, playing the merciless terrorist as much as conspiring with reality, because this image destabilizes the camera's historic gaze on the alluring Kashmiri backdrop. Likewise, when the Kashmiri craftsman M.A. Mahboob paints a man with his camera, or famous Kashmiri artist Zahoor Zargar paints the peaceful excellence, they purposely interpret the camera's gaze on the valley through another visual medium and reinsert the Kashmiri eye into Kashmiri meta-discourse. The gaze of a non-Kashmiri has framed the Valley as a territory of desire, from one viewpoint and a point in time, and it has also taken on the role of transforming it into a terrorist state. It is by countering the prurient gaze and pushing back against representational claims to the Valley that Kashmiris endeavor to oppose the authority of the camera (Ibid. 2009).

As indicated by Hayden White, the ‘discourse is a genre in which the effort to acquire the privilege of articulation, with full credit to the likelihood that things may be expressed otherwise is preeminent’ (White, 1985 p.2).

According to Warrington, the urge to restrict the historian to the role of a fact checker arises from the fear that the recommendation can lead to changes that may not sell in the box office (Warrington, 2007). Money rules historical filmmaking, leading to the view that history itself is a 'story bin to be 'plundered' and a pliable commodity: 'If the test audience doesn't like the way the Civil War came out, maybe the studio will release another version for Alabama' (Ibid, 17). In short, the historical responsibility and the movie industry are incompatible.

## **2.9 Real and Representation**

Retold eagerly through the 1990s and the 2000s (*Roja* 1992, *Dil Se* 1998, *Kohram* 1999, *Mission Kashmir* 2000) this film recipe caught the Kashmir Valley in the amber of cinematic excess, thickened by consequent wistfulness. Accordingly, future Indian audience of Hindi cinema fashioned a dependable, if progressively tormented, association with that reaffirmed Kashmir space where, to cite Jawaharlal Nehru, 'exquisiteness rules and charm takes over the faculties' (Nehru, 1961, cited in Kabir, 2005 p. 590). It was with Mani Ratnam's *Roja* (1992) that for the first time put the 'Kashmir conflict issue' on a large screen (Mir, 2009). While Bollywood, for a long-time anticipated Kashmir as the eroticized scene of the mind in the social imagery of Indians, it was Ratnam's 'flashy story of guns and roses that kick-started a re-examination of Bollywood's complicity with the secret governmental issues of our desires' (Chakravarty, 1998, 209).

Violence and geopolitics, had it seems finally intervened within Kashmir's cinematic performance and reception. With the emergence of Kashmiri dissent in 1989, the Valley now offers a performance center for another 'cine-patriotism' (tales of patriotism), for the sentiment of the Indo-Pak war as opposed to that of beauty and romance (Kabir, 2009). Critics today refer to 'snow-capped mountains, serene lakes, and green fields' as an inference to misfortune, bringing out previous Hindi movies set in Kashmir as fictionalized past (the industry now being denied of a locale that could be utilized as a part of any film to make for a more enchanting moment). These implications communicated to the rest of the world that elegance and pristine beauty of Kashmir no longer exists. The camera brought in a hostile face of Kashmir filled with terror and uncertainty.

It was after *Roja* Kashmir received scholarly attention. Addressing complex contemporary issues of separatism in Kashmir and notions of Indian nationalism, *Roja* presents the story of a young Tamil cryptologist kidnapped by Kashmiri militants and his wife's desperate struggle to free him.

Ratnam builds up the striking contrasts between the northernmost and southernmost states in India. Kashmir, a land of incredible beauty and the primary location of the film, is a space inhabited by the Indian armed force and terrorists, who disrupt with the sound of their boots and automatic weapons its very essence. Tamil Nadu, home to the director, his performing artists, and his unique target audience is warm and welcoming. Its fields possess enterprising ladies in bright saris and its forests by impish heroines who steal fruits, unlike the Kashmiri backwoods which are the locales of war and weapons. The film's 'two beginnings' clarifies its

perspective; Kashmir in its present state is the 'Other'. From this, it takes after that those that live in Kashmir are also part of the 'Other'.

Since the film's portrayals of Kashmiris incorporate one Muslim daily paperboy, a couple of Muslim militants and a few pretty women and children wearing Muslim ethnic clothing, one is compelled to infer that this 'Other' (the act of 'Orientalizing') is Kashmiri Muslim (Benjamin, 2007). Tejaswini Niranjana argues that *Roja* celebrates another white-collar class that is particularly Hindu on a fundamental level with Hindutva in its spirit and does as such by reliably singling out Muslims. Its background score, editing decisions, and use of light all glorify Hindu ethnicity on one hand while belittling Muslim ethnicity on the other. She further points out that the rustic ethnicity of Rishi and Roja's wedding is in direct contrast to the blatant display of Muslim ethnicity seen through the dress of the Kashmiri activists and their constant praying... 'Their (Muslim) ethnicity uncovers them as anti-modern (therefore against national or hostile to Indian), bigoted and fundamentalist, while Hindu ethnicity as shown by the main heroes is simply part of the multifaceted nature of being Indian' (Niranjana, 1994 p.80).

Various reports from the audience around India suggest that the audience are most illustrative amid this scene of patriotic self-sacrifice into the visual pleasure of the rational observer. *Mission Kashmir* (2000) also tackles its attestation of 'Kashmiriyat' (the soul of the battle of the Kashmiris) in a family melodrama about a police officer who embraces the young child of terrorists he killed only to have the kid betray him when he grows up. Even though the film is devoted to Kashmiriyat, the movie producer appears to have a reductive perspective of Kashmiriyat. There is

nothing called local in the film. It is a story of armed force and aggressors battling each other. As indicated by Mridu Rai, 'selected cultural fragments from an envisioned past were gathered to construct Kashmiriyat that would attract both the Pundits (Kashmiri Hindus) and the Muslims' (Rai, 2004, 275) In *Mission Kashmir*, the mission is to demonstrate that India is the genuine proprietor of Kashmir (Ibid.2004).

Though various films are made on Kashmir, the vital association between Kashmiri Hindus (Pundit) and Kashmiri Muslims is never investigated by filmmakers. Kashmiri movies delineate the political structure that prompts a collective showdown in the Valley (Baba, 2011). The general population which settled in the valley for hundreds of years ago, became the casualties of communal politics, forced to kill each other. This imagery is used in films on a regular basis and is enthusiastically depicted in films without giving context for individuals to scrutinize the veracity of the imagery.

The textual analysis of the films on Kashmir forms the basis of the discussion on the real and representation.

## **2.10 Agenda setting theory**

Agenda-setting initially talked about in 1972, received more attention when focused on the role of mass communications in America's 1986 presidential race (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). The theory suggests that media, highlights and organizes a few issues to set up the news headlines on the front page, can impact

‘audiences’ considerations regarding that matter. Agenda- setting suggests that the audience comprehends the significance of an issue through the mass media. According to agenda-setting theory, the media filter stories based upon what they perceive as necessary, then gives the stories more column-inches in newspapers or repeated presentation in broadcast news, thereby instilling in the psyche of an audience a sense of urgency or importance in the stories presented. According to this theory, the media decides what occasions ought to be critical and conspicuous. The gatekeeping character of the selectors and creators of the press is an essential factor in agenda-setting.

Through Agenda-setting, media, particularly news and documentaries, can attract general attention regarding specific issues while overlooking others. Agenda-setting theory, however, is about more than topic selection. Agenda-setting proposes that the media's strategies for surrounding an issue, to some degree through the words used to portray them, can also be powerful influencers, and the role of recognized and known people who remark about the subjects adds additional credibility.

McCombs extended the theory in a paper by expressing two levels of agenda-setting. The first is concerned about what an audience thinks, while the second states that the audience does not only learn about the public affairs but also make assumptions about the importance of the issue through mass media (McCombs, 1997).



## 2.11 Third Cinema Theory

In the film system there are three kinds of cinema; first, second and third. First Cinema is essentially about consumerism; it is capitalist, inspired by money and profit. It commands attention in Hollywood, Bollywood, and Egyptian cinema (UK essays.com). Second Cinema, also called 'art house' or 'auteurist cinema' is a kind of cinema that is not driven by cash, it rejects Hollywood conventions to focus on auteur directors, yet does next to nothing to address the issues within undeveloped nations.

Third Cinema is certainly not hard to define, and it has become a type of cinema that attempts to show the truth from the perspective of the repressed and colonized using film as a counterpoint to the romanticized and fantasized notions of the 'Other' as represented in the First and Second Cinema. However, Third Cinema is a hard category to place many films. To explore the possibility of bringing the authenticity and reality in the stories of Kashmir one can use the Third Cinema in contrast to First and Second Cinema.

Popularized by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino (Solanas and Getino, 1969), 'Third Cinema' wants to let the audience be an active viewer unlike First Cinema, which is about being passive and provides a quick route to escapism. Third Cinema is complex and thought-provoking. The films are usually politically and historically motivated. Roy Armes (in 1987) defines 'Third World cinema' broadly as the ensemble of films produced by Third World countries, others, such as Paul Willemen (in 1989), prefer to speak of 'Third Cinema' as an ideological project, that

is a body of films adhering to a particular political and esthetic program (Shohat, 2003).

The objective of Third Cinema may be dogmatic, but it is not propaganda, or subversively telling people what to do, it is merely reproducing events which have happened throughout history and essential to the people and the country (Wayne, 2001). The task currently at hand is to find out if the conditions which will enable spectators to transform themselves into agents — not merely more active spectators, but genuine co-authors — are beginning to exist. We have to ask ourselves whether art is an activity restricted to specialists, whether it is, through extra-human design, the option of a chosen few or a possibility for everyone' (Espinosa, 1979 p.24).

## **2.12 Conclusion**

Bollywood has only produced stereotyped movies on Kashmir since the 1990s (Mir, 2008). Inquiry on these movies indicates how the mainstream media represents Kashmir and Kashmiri individuals. In most of these movies, Kashmiris is portrayed as fear mongers or fundamentalist Muslims whose ethics and morals are pre-modern and do not fit into modern notions of Western democratic society. There is a discernible change in the title of the movies, from *Kashmir Ki Kali* ('Bud of Kashmir'.1964), *Jab Jab Phool Khile* ('When the Flowers Bloom'.1965), *Henna* ('A Flowering Plant'. 1991) to the more violent titles like *Mission Kashmir* (2000), *Fanaa* (Destroyed.2006) and *Dhokha* ('Betrayal'. 2007). The adjustments in the titles imply the loss of purity and evolution of Kashmir as a hostile place.

Indian movies on Kashmir are predominantly nationalist, and like Indian folktales have a stereotyped ethical message (Razdan, 2010). A contention needs to become a myth. The hero needs to save the country, and the heroine needs to sing and move before a hundred bearded men who carry guns in hand and sticky smiles on their faces, intervene in the storyline. Motion pictures like *Hero, Life Story of a Spy* (2003), *Maa Tujhe Salaam* (2002), *Jaal-The Trap* (2003), and *Yahaan* (2005) make no difference to Kashmiri image. One can state that the intended interest group of these motion pictures is Indian and not particularly Kashmiri. Along these lines, such movies make sense to some and to the 'Others' they do not.

Although relatively small in number, independent directors and producers in the 'Third World' already played a role in Third Cinema film production: Anand Patwardhan (*War and Peace*, 2002), Ashvin Kumar (*Little Terrorist*, 2004), Saba Dewan (*Barf*, Snow 1997, Kabir Khan(*Forgotten Army*, 1999), Sanjay Kak (*Jashn-e-Azadi-How We Celebrate Freedom*,2007), Anwar Jamal (*Swaraaj-The Little Republic*, 2002), Gauhar Raza (*Inqilab – The Revolution*, 2008) in India; Fatima Rushdie, Aziza Amir in Egypt; Carmen Santos and Gilda de Abreu in Brazil have produced films on socio-political, and social issues. Despite its hegemonic position, then Hollywood and Bollywood still contribute only a fraction of the annual worldwide production of feature films. Third World cinema rarely features in big multiplex theatres and the global distribution of power still tends to make First World countries cultural 'Transmitters' and to reduce most Third World countries to the status of 'receivers' (Shohat 2003).

## Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

### 3.1 Stuart Hall and Practices of Representation

While there are aspects of this research that concentrate on one of the critical processes in Stuart Hall's 'cultural circuit' and practices of representation, the desire is to explain the importance of representation in studying Bollywood films on Kashmir and the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent meanings.

In order to understand the concept of representation and how it connects meaning and language to the culture, it is essential to look at different theories on how language is used to represent the world and looked at the *reflective*, the *intentional* and the *constructionist* approaches to representation.

In Bollywood cinema, does language reflect a meaning which already exists in the world of objects, people and events (reflective)? Does language express only what the writer, producer/director, and the cinematographer want to say, his or her personally intended meaning (intentional)? Alternatively, is meaning constructed through language (constructionist)?' (Hall, 1997 p.15).

Out of intentional, intended and constructionist approach, the thesis chose to explore the constructionist approach as it is has the most significant impact on cultural studies. Using the variant of semiotics, of the constructionist approach (Saussure.1880) and Michael Foucault's discursive model I have tried to apply them to different areas to analyze concepts of film and cultural studies in order to

understand how depiction of culture in the selected films contributes to forming a perception in creating an image of Kashmir. The face of one, the dress of the other, the name of third, and the voice from fourth, this is exactly how the director creates the new signifier. 'Visual signs and images, even when they bear a close resemblance to the things to which they refer, are still signs: they carry meaning and thus have to be interpreted' (Hall, 1997 p.19).

The general term used for words, sounds or images which carry meanings is signs (Hall, 1997). Signs are organized into a language which enables us to translate our concepts into words, sounds or images, to express meanings and communicate thoughts to other people.

Language is used comprehensively. The writing system, the spoken word, the visual images, whether produced by hand, mechanical, electronic, digital or other means are all used to express meaning. The non-linguistic language such as facial expressions, gestures music, also sounds function as signs. Codes fix the relationships between concepts and signs and also tell us which language to use to convey which idea and which concepts are being referred to when we hear or read with a sign. Audience learn the system and conventions of representation and how codes of language and culture, equip them with cultural 'know-how'. It also enables them to unconsciously internalize the codes and make them express certain concepts, ideas through their systems of representation – writing, speech, gesture, visualization, and so on – and to interpret ideas which are communicated to them using the same systems.

By arbitrarily fixing relationships between our conceptual system and our linguistic systems, codes make it possible for us to speak and to hear and to establish 'the translatability between our concepts and our languages' which unable meaning from *iconic* to *indexical* signs that stand for or represent certain concepts (Hall, 1997 p.22).

### **3.2 Saussure: Signifier & Signified, Form and Content**

Swiss Linguist, Saussure did much of his work on the social constructionist view of language and representation. He shaped the *semiotic* approach to the problem of representation in a wide variety of cultural fields. According to Jonathan Culler, Saussure's production of meaning depends on language, 'Language is a system of signs, Sounds, images, written words, paintings, photographs, function as signs within language' (Culler, 2002, 19).

Saussure analyzed the sign into two further elements, the form (the actual word, image, photo) and the idea or concept in your head with which the form is associated. He called the first element the signifier and the second as signified. Thus the '*sign* is the union of a form which signifies (*signifier*) and an idea signified (*signified*).

Saussure also insisted on the arbitrary nature of the sign and the signified. According to Saussure, signs do not possess a fixed or essential meaning. What signifies RED or the essence of 'redness' is not RED, but the difference between RED and GREEN. Signs are members of systems and are defined to other members of the

system, and the meaning of a concept or word is defined to its direct opposite.

It is interesting to note that the relation between signifier and signified, which is fixed by our cultural codes, is not permanently fixed (Saussure, 1960). Words shift their meaning, and every shift alters the conceptual map of culture, placing different cultures, at different historical moments, to classify and think about the world differently.

The underlying argument behind the semiotic approach is that, since all cultural objects convey meaning, and all cultural practices depend on meaning, they must work like language works. Not only words and images but objects themselves can function as signifiers. Kashmiri dress, pheran has a simple function to cover the body and protect it from cold weather, but pheran also double up as signs. They construct meaning and carry a message. In pre-conflict films on Kashmir, pheran was a simple, humble, traditional garment of both males and females in Kashmir whereas in post-conflict films it became a dress of a terrorist who hides arms and ammunition under the garb.

From the beginning, Indian cinema (has drawn stimulation from the styles, aesthetics, and semiotics of cultural forms that have followed one upon the other in India over the centuries, often mixing them in various ways during the process of evolution, into a vast cultural heritage (Dudrah and Desai, 2008). The Bollywood films on the subject of Kashmir are synonymous with amusement. Kashmir provides the backdrop, and its beauty signifies peace, tranquility, and love in Kashmir in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s through films like *Kashmir Ki Kali* (1964), *Junglee* (1961)

and *Jab Jab Phool Khile* (1965). However, a sizable number of films on terrorism in Kashmir emerged after the 1980s. The films have distinctive genres of documentary, drama, thriller, romance, humor, and irony. The narrative themes combine realism and fantasy and mix all the elements of storytelling in a theatrical format.

In *Kashmir Ki kali* (1964) the song sung by Sharmila Tagore and Shammi Kapoor ‘yeh chand sa roshan chehra, zulfoon ka rang sunehra. Yeh jheel si neeli ankhen, tareef karun kya uski jisne tumhe banaya (this moon-lit illuminating face, hair swirls the color of gold, the blue eyes from this lake is no secret. I deeply appreciate one who created you)’ is a famous sequence, when the romantic couple are in a decorative boat, surrounded by mighty mountains and serene blue lake. The couple is engrossed in the magnificent exquisiteness of Kashmir. The process of semiotics is evident in this song sequence, with the symbolic setting, costumes, and the body and facial movements that signify the love and romance, Kashmir is made into a place for honeymooners from India to consummate their love for each other. Shammi Kapoor, the hero, wears a garland around his neck which he at one-point twirls into the sky and it falls onto Sharmila Tagore, the heroine’s neck. The garland signifies the marriage between the two. In Indian weddings, a garland is exchanged during the marriage ritual to pronounce the couple husband and wife. The gestures of the body and facial expressions signify the first night after marriage where the woman, a coy seductress and the man, a dominant masculine provider perform the act of love.

In *Mission Kashmir* (2000), the fantasy is echoed in each song sequence, by consistently using the role-playing and constructed a representation of reality. The space between representation and reality becomes extremely narrow particularly in



two Hindi songs that have inserted lines from Kashmiri lyrics with their choruses, *Bhumbro* (O Bumblebee) and *Hrind poshmaal gindne drai lo lo* (O Intoxicated Ones, Poshmaal, Drunk [On Spring], has come out to play).

*Lamhaa, the Untold Story* (2010) starts with a text which explains the original cause of the rampant desolation in Kashmir, together with the number of lives lost in the prevailing conflict situation. The text expresses that possibly the significant loss has been to the Kashmiri Hindu who were forced to leave Kashmir. The semiotic devices compete for the audience's' attention. Five minutes into the film and it induces the concept of conflict being religiously motivated against Hindus, who are labeled the most vulnerable victims in the ongoing violence. There is, however, no mention of religious animosity against the Muslims of Kashmir and how they are marginalized and killed by the Indian armed forces.

In the following scene, Kashmiri Hindus are shown fleeing in a frenzy from their homes as stones are pelted at them. Seemingly, Kashmir is in turmoil, and religious antagonism is promoted by Muslims who live in Kashmir and are closely allied with Pakistan. A Muslim leader leads the prayers in a mosque in Srinagar, which is in the Pakistani territory of Kashmir and later, a boy reciting Islamic religious belief ('Allahu Akbar') blows up a car in the middle of the market.

Another film's narrative structure worth mentioning is *Tahaan* (2008). This film is the story of an innocent little boy too young to comprehend the situation around him. All he wants is his donkey that was sold by his mother to make the family's ends meet. For him, bringing his favorite donkey Birbal back home is his sole purpose in

life. The story is sweet and straightforward, but sometimes it becomes hard to narrate a simple story, and that is what has troubled Santosh Sivan, the director of the film, as he fails to sustain the tone of the film.

The opening scene of the film exhibits the powerful and unique image set against a moderate conventional Kashmiri instrumental. The audience hook is the beauty of the locale set against melodic background music to promote a rural state of mind. An incredibly interesting red smear shows up on the screen, it resembles the blood splatter of somebody who is shot. As the scene advances the red smear appears as a brush stroke and reveals that a painter is taking a picture applying the shading to his canvas. This shot is a metaphor for the Kashmiris, as the famed magnificence of the valley currently superimposed against a distressing clash that has been continuing for a long time.

The plots tend to be relatively clear and unsurprising; actually, the plot is thought to be of optional significance among the different elements of the film. As indicated by the creators of the plot themselves, it serves exclusively as a reason for the portrayal of feelings, and also the production of the scene (Thomas, 2008 p.27).

### **3.3 Looking at Bollywood Through Semiotic Glasses**

A typical Bollywood film script is seldom logical or reflective, nor do the audiences anticipate that it will be so. Thus, popular Hindi films are characterized by the famous Indian social scholar, Ashish Nandy as ‘anti-psychological’ (Nandy,

1981). Augmentation and divergence are essential to the characterization of the hero. There could be no room in this world for calm, quiet, or inconspicuously nuanced characters. Heroes in Hindi cinema have extremely articulated, regularly inordinate, identities that fall into very characterized generalizations. The audience promptly perceives the hero, the heroine, the miscreant, and the fool, and the performing artists wind up playing similar sorts of characters, to the degree of incarnating the attributes into the collective imaginings.

What is more critical for the audience is the ‘feeling’, and not so much ‘what’ happens or ‘how’ it happens, in juxtaposition to the aesthetic proposition of *rasa* (flavor) after that established Indian theatrics is based. The emotive effect of the film does not derive from uniqueness, but rather from the anticipated story advancement, and not so much from the plot but rather the regular progression of occasions bringing about an aggregate absence of authenticity.

The Hindi cinema goes love to see a similar film again and again, and it is precisely by this repeat value, that the film is built. The abilities of the makers and creators are measured on the rule that the way to the accomplishment of the film lies in the feeling, the discourse, the selection of performing artists, the music, and in the display (Ciolfi, 2012). Contemplating the parts of verbal convention Sheila Nayar observes that the Indian movies seem to come extremely close to summative knowledge, after which to draw and take motivation impeccably for music, verses, discourse, typical questions and characters, and even the plots (Nayar, 2004).

The movies on Kashmir post-1989 test rationale and play with reality in every

area of the filming procedure. The content is not composed, remembering the quintessence of Kashmiriyat – the way of life, social conduct, foundations, and procedures of Kashmir. The story structure demonstrates a kind of fragmentary structure. Development of the story does not incorporate up with a kind of pyramidal example. However, it instead utilizes a specific method, for example, flashback, thematic repetition, and bounces in time. As per the creators and makers of Bollywood (Thomas, 2008), the embodiment of this work of 'Indianization' lies in the route in which the plot builds up.

For instance, in *Roja* (1992) the hero, Rishi figures out how to change Liyaqat's mentality from evil to goodness through a dialogue 'Islam Ahinsa Nahin Sikhata' (Islam does not teach violence), looking for a conclusion to the insubordination by utilizing Islam as a weapon.

In *Mission Kashmir* (2000), the doctor who is treating a bomb blast wounded Inayat Khan, the Inspector General of Police for the wound inflicted by a bomb blast, says, '*Aaj Kal to Kashmir mein Fatwaon ka daur chal raha hai*', (these days Kashmir is governed by religious decree). This clearly imparts that Islam is about radicalism, and Kashmiri Muslims are religious zealots., In *Yahaan* (2005), the lead character, Aman, is going in a jeep, while having a conversation with the driver, he tells him, '*Panch Saal Ki Posting Mein Bas Ek Hi Baat Samjhaa Hoon, Kashmir Ki Baasha Hai Bندوق, Phir Wo Unki Ho Yaa Humari*', (In five years of my posting in Kashmir I have understood one thing. The language which Kashmiri's understand is the gun, be it theirs or our own.) This etymological content passes on a great articulation of Kashmir being an unsafe place, where individuals would hear you on gunpoint. It

represents Kashmir as the riskiest and dangerous place on the planet. In another scene, Rathore, a senior officer, tells Aman, '*Local people Se Bach Ke Rehna*' (Stay far from local people). The film is about Kashmiris, and the disfavor to them has been a standard endeavor.

In *Sheen* (2004), the Kashmiri Hindu character of Amarnath, played by Raj Babbar, refuses to go to the United Nations because of his injured daughter. His friend tells him, '*Amarnath, Tu Hum Sab Ki Awaaz Hai*', (Amarnath, you are the representative voice of our plight) and he then readily agrees to go. Here the director has proved his bias and lopsided approach by saying that he will go to Geneva to highlight problems of Kashmiri Pundits' whereas there is no mention of Kashmiri Muslims, who have lost so many lives and are still under the line of fire in the Kashmir conflict.

Another constraining element to the tale of Kashmiri movies is the way they concluded in the end; the determination of the contention must be a conventional consummation where the whole family is upbeat. Some other conclusion will enormously harm the accomplishment of the film. The hero needs to turn out triumphant similarly, as the social order repeatedly tends to be threatened throughout, to be re-built up, beating all odds a couple of minutes before the end of the film. Even in most current movies, the most multifaceted stories appear to discover determination regarding having a place with the long-established convention of upbeat end accomplished through divine intervention, at the same time disentangles a tangle of plans and misconceptions that had been assembling ineluctably all through the story.

*Junglee* (1961) *Kashmir Ki Kali* (1964) and *Jab Jab Phool Khile* (1965) are similar in many ways. In all three films, Kashmir is a place where the wealthy Indians go for recreation and fall in love with a Kashmiri. The location provides a beautiful setting for romance. It is an extended film set with Kashmiri characters and narratives being minimal or limited to the tourist visions of Kashmiris, which is either a houseboat owner or a tourist guide.

*Roja* (1992), *Dil Se* (1995), *Kohram*, *Hero-Love Story of a Spy* (2003), *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, *Zameen*, *Jaal the Trap*, *Fanaa* follow the concept of nationalism and Indianness of Hindi films. The early films' directors like Dadasaheb Phalke, who created the first feature film in India, *Raja Harishchandra* and actors came from the theater culture. After India gained independence in 1947, it had to create a national consciousness. The popular Hindi cinema played an essential role in building this idea of belonging to a nation and nationalism. The films are examined to understand how Bollywood cinema supports and strengthens the national spirit by placing India and Pakistan as binary opposites of which the former takes a superior position.

*Mission Kashmir* (2000) and *Pukar* (2000) are the two films that use signification, subject, and the symbolic order to clarify the masking of reality. The semiotic theory demonstrates how the image signifies the signifier. In both films fantasy echoes in each song sequence, which continually uses role-playing and crafted representations of reality. The use of balaclava and the fabric covered faces dehumanize the terrorists and portray them with no positive human qualities. The negative associations are established to justify the killing of the terrorist in the mind of the viewers. In *Mission Kashmir's* concluding crayon sketch shot, a game of cricket

between Khan, Neelima, Altaaf, and Sufi marks the ‘happily ever after’. *Mission Kashmir* endeavors to incorporate Altaaf, the Kashmiri kid into the family of Muslim father, the Hindu mother, and the ‘great’ Kashmiri Muslim sweetheart.

*LOC-Kargil, Sheen, Yahaan, Lamhaa, Tahaan, Sikandar and Haider* try to combine the elements of Italian neorealism by focusing on the stories of everyday people and the situation of Kashmir. Even though the filmmakers attempt to portray the most realistic story of the conflict, extreme violence, and torturing, they still shot their films on relatively high budgets with known professional actors. The political and social intentions of these movies are assessed by either their portrayal of given authentic/social substances or review judgments regarding the viability of their political issues. Instead, the political and aesthetic impact of such movies ought to be an immediate outcome of their capacity to rebuild discernment and to rejuvenate thought, even at the expense of customary methods of true to life articulation.

Meaning is not in the object or the person or thing, nor is it in the word. Hall's ‘systems of representation’, Saussure's semiotic approach and textual analysis research method is applied to Bollywood films to study the images of Kashmir, Kashmiri landscape, people and culture.

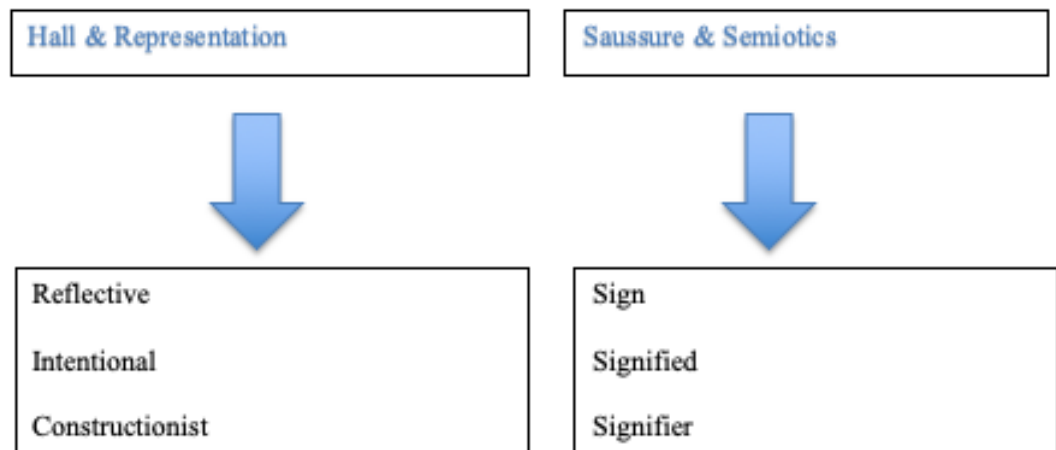


Fig 2 The Representative and Semiotic framework of Film Text

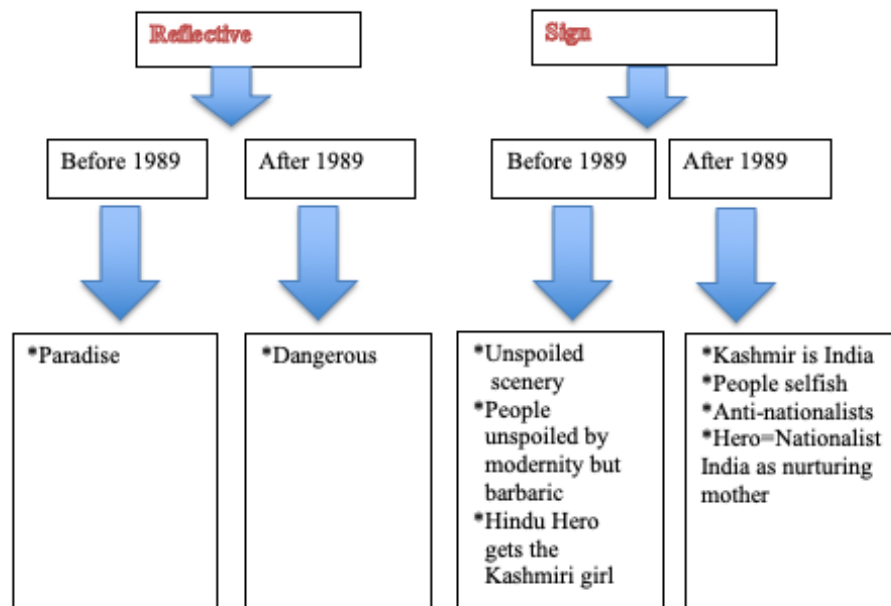


Figure 2.1 The Reflective Representation and Semiotic Sign of Film Text



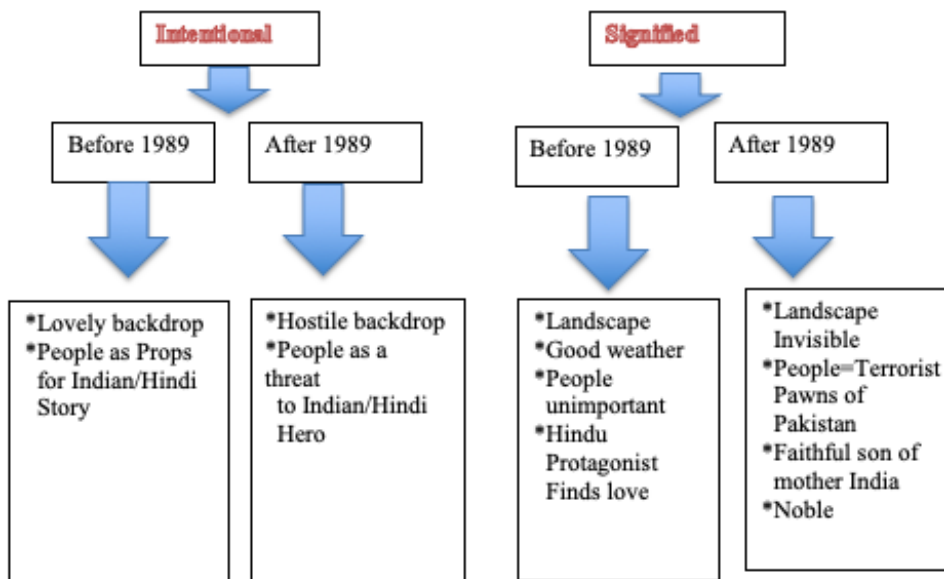


Figure 2.2: The Intentional Representation and Semiotic Signified Film

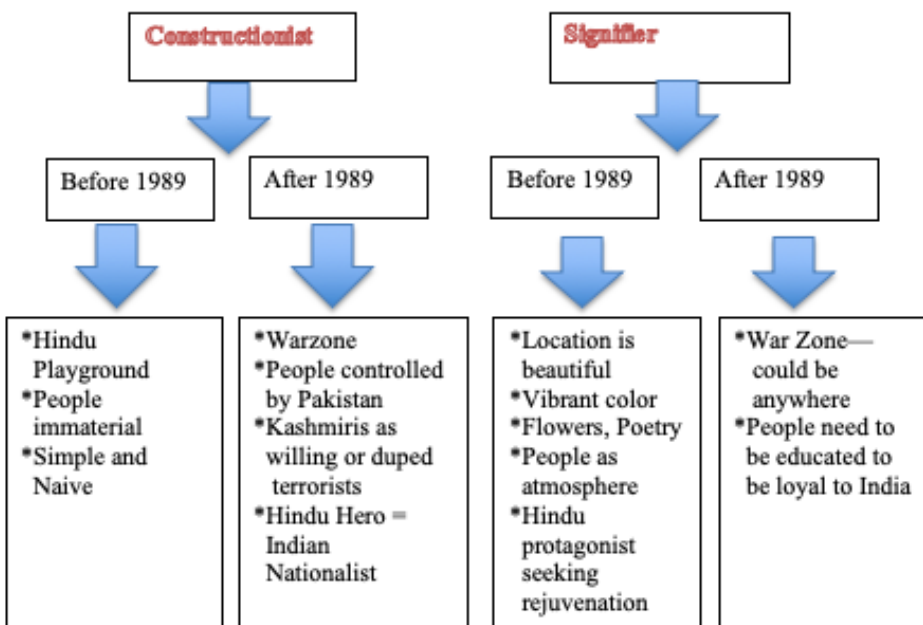


Figure 2.3: The Constructionist Representation and Semiotic Signifier Film

## Conclusion

The films on conflict and terrorism should reflect the great philosopher, Gyorgy Lukacs's idea that 'the social world is in process, and realistic art must 'uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately noticeable relationships that go to make up a society'(cited in Wayne, 2001, 35). Julio Espinosa's call for Third Cinema<sup>1</sup> To 'show the process which generates the problems' (Imperfect Cinema, 1978). Zizek's distinction among three types of violence: subjective, symbolic (as in language), and systemic helps clarify the 'Third Cinema' project (Jeffrey and Mehan, 2012). The 'Third Cinema' films' *raison d'etre* is the contact and the comment of the underlying economic framework of the sociopolitical system, the network of relationships that enable violence. The Indian mainstream or non-mainstream directors who want to make films about terrorism might well turn to the ethical practices, methodologies, and tools of 'Third Cinema'. The 'Third Cinema' would exhibit interesting narrative viewpoints, casting, genre-fusing, semantic genuineness, anti-anti-terrorist rhetoric, and realistic endings.

The film plots and characters adapt with the times, from deeply emotional characters of melodrama films in the 1960s to dangerous and ruthless characters in the 1990s and beyond. The conflict between innocence and villainy is pivotal, and it primarily reflects a constant struggle affecting the films' main protagonists, as seen

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<sup>1</sup> Third Cinema, also called 'Third World Cinema', aesthetic and political cinematic movement in countries (mainly in Latin America, Asia and Africa) meant as an alternative to Hollywood (First Cinema) and aesthetically oriented European films (Second Cinema). Third Cinema films aspire to be socially realistic portrayals of life and emphasize topics and issues such as poverty, national and personal identity, tyranny and revolution, colonialism, class, and cultural practices.

in *Roja* (1992), *Mission Kashmir* (2000), *Fanaa* (2006), and *Lamhaa* (2010). Given the complexity and socio-cultural sensitivity associated with this topic, a textual analysis research approach is deployed to examine the dynamics of film content and understand the receptive perception of Kashmir to study the representation of Kashmiris.

Unlike other Indian states like Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh, the state of Jammu and Kashmir do not have a professional film industry and, thus their representation depends on the machinations of Indian nationalist cinema. Bollywood filmmakers have different ways of telling stories about the state, which forms a part of the national experience, concluding the representation of Kashmir and its people through cinema. The researcher primarily uses textual analysis of twenty films based in Kashmir, which leads the reader to an identification of underlying perceptions and construction of the Kashmiri people, which can influence the opinion of India to the world audience. The textual analysis of the pre-conflict and post-conflict films on Kashmir makes to analyze the iconographic representation of Kashmir with relation to its geographical closeness to Pakistan, its affiliation with India, and the melodrama of loyalty to the nation. The textual analysis employs multiple perspectives, such as iconic analysis and semiotic analysis to study the role of Indian cinema in constructing the visual text of the beauty of Kashmir, the conflict between Indian and cross-border nations (Pakistan and Afghanistan), infiltration, terrorism, suicide bombing, extortion, and kidnapping. Such issues have a significant impact on how people perceive the happenings within that region. Therefore, it is essential to understand the

intricacies of the visual text and the relation between the organization of beauty and romance, family and nation symbols and stereotypes.

## Chapter 4 Methodology

When dealing with the questions of representation, there is a good reason to prefer a textual analysis approach as a way of gathering and analyzing information in academic research (McKee,2001). Following Alan McKee's guide to textual analysis, the study will focus on understanding the role films play in our lives and precisely how its messages participate in the cultural construction of our view of the world and what meanings audiences are making of films.

When we apply textual analysis to a film or a song, we are not trying to find the 'correct' interpretation of it because 'there is no such thing as a single, 'correct' interpretation of any text. There are large numbers of possible interpretations, some of which will be more likely than others in particular circumstances' (McKee, 2011 p.4).

While analyzing the films about Kashmir and Kashmiris, it is often tempting to interpret the text as being inaccurate, stereotyped or negative in some way and not showing the reality. Resting on the underlying assumption of textual analysis that there is no simple, single representation of reality against which one could measure the film story to find how accurate it is, it becomes imperative to understand how media texts are used in order to make sense of the world we live in.

Media textual analysis is a well-established research methodology and is used to analyze and study a broad range of 'media texts' (McNamara, 2005). As an approach to content analysis, and by defining media as 'texts' to be analyzed, the

method of textual analysis is the tool to analyze the selected films. Textual analysis is a data-gathering process for researchers who want to understand how members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of the world (McKee, 2003). Therefore, '[a] text is something that we make meaning from' (McKee, 2003, p.4).

Textual analysis is the only way to approach the film text, narratives and images of Kashmir propagated by mainstream Indian (i.e., Bollywood) Cinema. Given a large number of films based on Kashmir and Kashmiris and to find out the various aspects of representation the qualitative analysis of the data available on the subject applies in order to get insights into the ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research (Wyse, 2011). The quantitative analysis justifies by the number of films analyzed based on the following research questions:

1. What is the role of Bollywood films in the construction of representation about Kashmir and Kashmiris in India?
2. How do representations of 'Indian-ness' and national identity manifest themselves in these films?
3. How do Bollywood films portray the Indian government's interventions in Kashmir?
4. How has Bollywood cinema addressed conflict through the representation of Kashmir issues?
5. How has Bollywood cinema addressed the issues of religion involved in India–Pakistan conflicts in Kashmir?

In textual analysis, texts (from written to pictorial and everything in between) are interpreted by the researcher to understand how—for particular cultures at particular times—people make sense of the world around them. It can also help the researchers in examining the variety of ways in which it is possible to interpret the reality of their sense-making practices (McKee, 2003). Thus, this approach is deemed the most appropriate and productive method of analysis when addressing the stated research questions.

The study will employ Stuart Hall's 'circuit of culture' model for an in-depth study by textual analysis of the Bollywood films that meet criteria for analysis. The benefits of using this model of culture provide interconnections between the cultural text and the construction of cultural phenomenon through films. Textual Analysis also provides a more insightful understanding of 'representation' as a tool for investigating the distortion of reality. It will be helpful to draw on the discipline of 'semiotics' developed by Ferdinand Saussure. This 'science of signs' has been very influential in providing ways of analyzing the communicative system of films.

#### **4.1 Conceptual Framework**

Bollywood cinema has a long history, and it is considered to reflect Indian culture because the majority of India's inhabitants can relate to them (Bhatia, 2013). Bollywood's long fixation on the visual symbolism of Kashmir turned into an investigation of the political connection amongst Kashmir and the Indian Union after militancy emerged in 1989. The Kashmir conflict became an issue of debate for

directors and journalists as the relations with Pakistan became more complicated for India. This research intends to deploy concepts of film and cultural studies in order to understand how the depiction of culture in the selected films contributes to creating an image of Kashmir.

#### **4.1.1 Classical narrative structure and depiction of Kashmir**

Classical narrative structure or Hollywood narrative style is the most common narrative style used in mainstream movies (Cinematheque, 2012). It organizes the story in a three-act format of development, climax, and resolution (or denouement). Main characters, as well as significant conflicts, are introduced during the first act. Major complications enter the storyline during the second act, which is called development. The third act is a resolution, where the conflict reaches a dramatic confrontation and is ultimately resolved (Cinematheque, 2012).

Most Bollywood narratives use classical narrative style to tell a story. The commercial Hindi cinema is criticized for its exceptionally formulaic and stereotypical feature productions (Booth, 1995). The same formula works for stories on Kashmir. The hero as a protagonist is often thrown into the Kashmir conflicts. Nationalism and country come first is the main plot of the story. The hoisting of India's flag over the anti-nationalists served as the resolution for many major box office hits.



In traditional Bollywood film, the storyline centers on the protagonist. He or she has all the positive qualities. His or her character is close to 'ideal person' in mainstream movies which follow the classical narrative style (Cattrysse, 2010). The antagonist is often called the villain of the movie. He has dark negative qualities (Cook, 2012). The tension between the antagonist and protagonist serve as the major conflict of mainstream movies.

In the depiction of the Kashmir issue in Bollywood movies, nationalism is assigned to be the main sentiment of the protagonist. Movies like *Roja*, *Mission Kashmir*, *LOC*, *Kargil* are examples of such a trend. The hero is someone willing to die for the nation. In *Roja*, Aravind Swami in one scene tries to protect an Indian flag from burning in order to showcase the hero's love towards the nation. On the other hand, antagonists are cruel, brutal and have an intense hatred towards India. The protagonist, in most, cases is a Hindu character while the antagonist, a Kashmiri or Pakistani Muslim.

#### **4.1.2 Bollywood and nationalism**

The Indian producers chose to convey it through cinema and employ the tools of nationalism. Consequently, a string of movies was produced on the subject of conflict between Kashmiris and Indian armed force. (*Roja*, 1992 dir. Mani Ratnam); (*Mission Kashmir*, 2000 dir. Vidhu Vinod Chopra); radical debate (*Maa Tujhe Salaam*, 2002 dir. Tinnu Verma); cross-fringe revolt (*LOC Kargil*, 2003 dir. J.P Dutta), Pakistan and India relations (*Zameen*, 2003 dir. Rohit Shetty) partition issues

and Indian military in Kashmir (*Pukar*, 2000 dir. Raj Kumar Santoshi) were all addressed through these films. Furthermore, the films propagated a common notion that Kashmir exists because of India and Kashmir stays stable and peaceful as a result of the Indian security forces positioned in Kashmir. Such films additionally depict that adoration for country, patriotism, and nationalism is an image of being a ‘good’ Indian, while a Kashmiri looking freedom as being anti-national militants.

The Bollywood cinema likewise ‘constructed’ the character of Kashmiri and depicted him as a vicious and primitive individual. The narratives have come a long way from being sentimental movies (*Kashmir Ki Kali*, 1965 dir. Shakti Samanta) and an outflow of energetic advancement (*Jab Jab Phool Khile*, 1965 dir. Suraj Prakash) to the mounting political pressure inside Kashmir (*Roja* 1992, dir. Mani Ratnam; *Mission Kashmir* 2000, dir. Vidu Vinod Chopra; *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, 2002 and *Fanaa* 2006, dir. Kunal Kohli) and the portrayal of Kashmir requires consideration and research to investigate the depiction of Kashmiris in Bollywood films.

In *Roja*, militancy in Kashmir is the major theme. Islam is shown as an ideology that motivates Muslims in Kashmir to use violent, destructive means to fight for a separate homeland. The Muslim/Kashmiri characters depict dangerous human behavior. For example, when Rishi who is a Hindu asks the Muslim Kashmiri extremist if he would kill his family on his leaders’ command, he replies ‘yes’, Kashmir is more important than anything else, even his family. The representations of ‘Indian-ness’ and national identity manifest itself in *Roja*. *India Today’s* review on *Roja* said: ‘Mani Ratnam's '*Roja*' wins acclaim for its patriotic theme and good music’ (Jain, 2014).

In *Mission Kashmir*, the Kashmiri Muslims are shown fighting with the Indian establishment for the freedom of Kashmir. India Today's review said 'there is a symbolic moment in the film muddy, swampy waters swallow a golden lotus. Paradise lost? The moment is so brief that it has gone in the blink of an eye. Vidhu Vinod Chopra's film is a plea to regain that paradise - the pre-1989 Kashmir where he grew up and which he still considers home' (Jain, 2000). *Fanaa* is on the subject of Muslims' involvement in terrorist activities.

*Hero-Love Story of a Spy* (2003 dir. Anil Sharma) is about a Kashmiri Muslim terrorist group which prepares the nuclear material for a mass killing in India. The Muslim characters in negative shades. The Kashmiri, Muslim characters are shown in Kashmiri attire and depict the traditional culture. The story revolves around the same beat of presenting Muslims as terrorists. Freedom fighters of Kashmir are shown as agents of Pakistan and are a threat not only to Kashmir but to India as well.

In *Maa Tujhe Salaam* (2002 dir. Tinnu Verma), the anti-Pakistan angle is sharp, and it underlines and prepares the audiences for the partialities that are in the film.

The characters stereotypically resembling a particular real-life character gives more strength to the assumptions of the use of agenda setting in movies. The focus is to find out how Indian movies are constructing an image of Kashmiris on the success formula deeply rooted in the ideology of Bollywood films. According to M. Madhava Prasad, the ideology of Hindi cinema is about economics, the film form, and the mode of production. Filmmaker Kumar Shahani has commented: 'The biggest problem

seems to be that we are working within a capitalist framework and we do not have a capitalist infrastructure (Prasad, 1998). The analysis of the films in this research is critical for reading the Indian cinemas ideological production to establish political unity.

The Hindi cinema manifests through the subordination of all internal conflicts to the overall dominance of the political formation by the Indian government's interventions in Kashmir. The peripheral argument is that in modernizing state like India, the struggle continues to take the form of contestations over the state. Cultural production, too, registers this reality through the repetitive metaphorical dimension of the dominant textual form in cinema (Prasad, 1998).

The portrayal of Muslims in Indian movies creates one kind of character sketch for Muslims of Kashmir, Pakistan and India, and a different one for Hindus in India. In this study, the goal is to find out how Hindi cinema constructs an image of Kashmiris by using the usual success formula of successful Bollywood films, a formula deeply rooted in ideology. To understand the dominant textual form of Hindi cinema, the narrative structure and the organization of the elements within the structure needs to be understood.

#### **4.1.3 Stereotyping Kashmir in Bollywood**

While reviewing Bollywood cinema in Kashmir, representation through stereotyping is a common characteristic. Bollywood films' visual representations of

characters and circumstances present to an audience that 'x' or 'y' is a common trait among a specific group and that the entire group should be judged by these traits which, in most cases, are to be viewed negatively. Some effectively stereotype such features as a shade of hair, the shade of skin, and shape of the face particularly the nose, which is suggestive of being part of a specific group.

Bollywood has had an essential influence in the making of stereotypical generalizations about Kashmiris. Bollywood stereotypes may take a component, which is impacted or nuanced by circumstance, and present them to the audience as the reason for the group's behavior. For instance, in the 1990s the whole male populace of Kashmir was thought to be associated with terrorist activities. Most Indian producers are keen to create Islamophobia by demonstrating Kashmir as the lasting place where there is militancy without going into the historical backdrop of Kashmir and the facts about the current circumstance.

In Hindi films, the perceptions of Kashmir are all about Dal Lake, the Mughal gardens, picture perfect, mountains and springs, beautiful women and unshaven men (Mir, 2008). Kashmir's history and culture are distorted, and Bollywood films are blameworthy of stereotyping all Kashmiris either Hindu or Muslim. The dress, facial hair, and characteristics portrayed are not Kashmiri. Also, Kashmiri Muslims must offer prayer (namaz), to Allah, and wear a namaz top (prayer cap). *Roja* (1992), *Yahaan* (2005), *Mission Kashmir* (2000), and *Jaal-The Trap* (2003 dir. Guddu Dhanoa) all show activists performing namaz (prayer) with weapons alongside them.

The question is, who controls the distribution of such images, even if there is a grain of truth in them? Stereotypes are simultaneously categorized and evaluated. If a young man wears a beard, he is labeled a loner with some miscreant tendencies. A man wearing a prayer cap is a Muslim. If he is going to a mosque to offer namaz, he is considered a Muslim fanatical and a fundamentalist. Earlier Bollywood cinema aimed at a large, illiterate audience, but soon learned to communicate through quickly established visual tropes, and then through audio cues (e.g., leitmotiv).

Stereotypes and discourses often emerged from the theater. Common stereotypes include, characterizations, costumes, make-up, sets, and later voices and then through audio music, which are reduced into character portrayals like the academic/intellectual (putting on and taking off their glasses), the Mexican (moustache or unshaven; excitable; and associated with Latin music), the homosexual (limp-wristed-ness, luxurious dressing-gowns worn during the day), and so on (Branston, 2000).

Bollywood has its good and bad stereotypes that are easily recognizable. If the character is a Christian, his name will be Joseph or Anthony, and he will be a heavy drinker. All women (married with kids) will emerge from the kitchen holding a tray with food. Muslims characters are usually less educated. Muslim men chew betel leaf either pimps or the Mafia leaders. Tamim Ahmed mentions in his thesis ‘Muslims portrayed as terrorists and Kashmiris are either naïve or foolish, sometimes cunning, scheming, and cruel – all to fit a particular discourse’ (Ahmad, 2011).

The name 'Khan' is trendy in Hindi cinema. Most of the Muslims in Kashmir and rest of India have the surname 'Khan', which means Pathan, a person originated from Afghanistan. In Hindi cinema 'Khan' means terrorist and all Muslims are terrorist. Reference is here to a Hindi film *My name is Khan* (2010 dir. Karan Johar), in which the main protagonist uses this monologue in the film. 'My name is Khan, and I am not a terrorist'. Bollywood cinema has often been a significant force in triggering stereotypes. Kashmiri militants and they are shown praying every time before they attack troops or civilians (e.g., *Roja*, 1992) to give the image that Islam fuels violent tendencies. The Indian soldier, police, army officer, and intelligence personnel, on the other hand, is always a law-abiding statesman who will do anything for his country, clamp down every house to arrest, kill, or inhumanly interrogate any suspect that poses a threat in the name of security for the nation. All Indians are devoted and nationalist (e.g., *Haider* 2014 dir. Vishal Bhardwaj, *Lamhaa*, – *The Untold Story* 2010 dir. Rahul Dholakia), and every Kashmiri is a miscreant and anti-national. Armed forces, Hindus from India who fight the terrorists, are always shown to have better moral values than any of the Kashmiri characters.

In *Fanaa* (2006 dir. Kunal Kohli), Zooni, the female protagonist's father, Ali Baig, is often shown drinking alcohol in his house and Rehan, a Kashmiri freedom fighter, gives him company. In reality, alcohol is haram (forbidden), so this situation is almost impossible in any Kashmiri household.

In *Yahaan* (2005 dir. Soojit Sircar), Ada is pleased to have a pair of jeans and a T-shirt as she has never worn such clothes before. This representation is highly inaccurate as it is prevalent for girls to wear jeans and T-shirts in Kashmir. In another

scene, Ada is wearing a sari, which reveals some portion of her body. This is certainly not how girls in Kashmir dress.

Stereotyping is another area that plays an essential role in twisting the character portrayal of Kashmiris as naïve and easily excited or impressed by small things. In *Tahaan* (2008 dir. Santosh Sivan), the small boy is walking back home, and one tourist stops him and says: ‘Arre Kashmiri bacha kitna pyara hai...Ek tasveer kheechte hain is ki’, (Let us take a picture of this Kashmiri kid). The tourist asks the kid to smile, and the lad smiles showing his teeth. This scene represents Kashmiris as backward who are used by the people from the plains for entertainment.

As mentioned before, the problem of Kashmir is not about religion; it has more to do with the forced occupation and presence of Indian armed forces in the Kashmir valley. However, Indian Bollywood cinema has addressed the problem from the perspective of violence and militancy escalated by Pakistan. The good human stories that could give the historical perspective of the problem are not told, nor do Hindi films provide an insight into the problem so that the audiences can understand and relate to.

The stereotypes incite the emotional and patriotic sentiments of the Indian audience so that they see a miscreant, a militant and a terrorist in every Kashmiri. The stories have to rise above the politics of the nation and convey a viewpoint of ordinary Kashmiri so that the problems and aspirations of day-to-day life are communicated through unbiased narratives. The filmmakers have to leave the politics of Kashmir for politicians and concentrate on good cinema.



#### 4.1.4 Film and Realism

Bela Balazs (1884-1949), Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1958) and Rudolf Arnheim (1904) are the pioneers of realism who defended cinema as an art form, that goes beyond realism and realists. Furthermore, Siegfried Kracauer (1889-1966) and Andre Bazin (1918-1958) appreciate cinema just because it provides an exact representation of reality. Other film theorists developed their approach to realism in different areas and perspectives. Marc Ferro is perhaps the most notable film historian who acknowledges the importance of cinema as another source or means for analyzing society. Ferro states that ‘as a fundamental source of analysis of societies in the twentieth century no one doubts the value of films’ (Ferro 1975 p.5).

Ferro considers film pertinent on account of what it uncovers as well as a result of the socio-verifiable approach that it legitimizes. It is valid for some Bollywood recorded movies, for example, *Raja Harishchandra* (1912), *Alam Ara* (1931), and Bimal Roy's *Bandini* The Caged, (1963). Film directors like Satyajit Ray concentrated on the lives of the lower classes with his films; *Pather Panchali* (1955), *Aparajito* (1956), and *Apur Sansar* (1959). Mrinal Sen and Ritwik Ghatak offered new wave cinema in India. These directors' films contrasted from big commercial productions, which were generally idealist films, or ‘masala films’, a flavorful spice blend in Hindi regularly utilized as a part of Indian food. As per Ferro, film analysis does not need to include the totality of the work (Farrugia, 2002).

The methodological problem, in Ferro’s opinion, is how to detect reality using fiction. The viewer should observe the significant signs that may characterize a film

and place them together with the film's relationship vis-à-vis society: 'Discovering them, seeing how they agree or disagree with ideology'. The opinion is valid in the context of understanding films on Kashmir.

#### **4.1.5 Representation, and Reality**

As per Ferro, although fictional films are seen as imagination, it should not be seen as an 'expression of reality but as a representation of it' (Ferro, 1988, 81). Although this is an interesting statement, he fails to explain the clear distinction between cinema as an 'expression of reality' and a 'representation' (Ferro, 1988).

Bollywood cinema is not only based on both expression and representation of reality, but it is also the cultural industry of India (Nandy, 1995). According to R. Thomas filmmakers have deployed the medium of film to visualize intertextuality and become the discernible conscience of the nation (Thomas, 1995). Filmmakers say that the essence of 'Indianization' lies in the way the storyline develops, the crucial necessity for emotion and skillful blending and integration of songs, dances, fights and other entertainment within the film (Nandy, 1995). Bollywood film is a spectacle, not necessarily an artistic endeavor.

Hindi films structure according to the rules of melodrama, which require a universe divided between the right/morality and evil/decadence (Thomas, 1995). The construction of good and evil also needs to comply with the nationalistic agenda (Mishra, 2001). The emphasis of the film is on how things will happen, not what will

happen next on a good ordering, to be (temporarily) resolved rather than an enigma to solve through tight narrative denouement. This particular notion remains paramount in cinematic ventures.

Like all means of collecting and analyzing data, textual analysis has limitations and disadvantages; it limits to recorded information. As indicated by Cargan, the challenge of using a large amount of available data is pointed out as a significant difficulty in content analysis. Selecting the films for examination is perhaps the ‘most exacting and tedious activity’ and might affect the decision-making process (Cargan, 2007, 61).

While some scholars have suggested that media content analysis is quantitative-only (Nuendorf, 2002), others have argued against such an interpretation and discussed the possibility of qualitative content analysis (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). These arguments might depend on the definition of the content. For example, Neuman states that ‘the content refers to words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can communicate. The ‘text’ is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a medium for communication’ (Neuman, 2014). This study uses textual analysis to understand the narrative, plot, dialogues, pictures, music, and visual text of films about Kashmir.

The textual analysis seeks to understand the possible ways of embedding ideologies into the narrative. The ways of describing each film and its narrative plot reveal the perspectives that promote, and may at times serve, the carriers of particular ideologies. Social movements, whether political or religious, in seeking to legitimize

their ideology, deploy various means to appropriate wider social acceptability. According to the Glasgow University Media Group, 'ideology which defines an interest-linked perspective and the struggle for legitimacy to go hand-in-hand' (Philo, 2007 p.178).

Given the perception that films are authoritative, to be used by ideological movements in pursuit of social acceptability and wider recognition. Such interventions by various interest groups might lead to an ideological struggle, which may reflect in the film content. 'Textual analysis is meant to aid the research to study the role of the films in the ideological struggle' (Philo, 2007 p. 107) and how the representation of peace, romance, and conflict in Kashmir can embody different ways of understanding.

Through semiotic language and stereotypes, narratives reinforce ideologies which seek to take advantage of the history, conflict situation, and political interactions in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Representation refers to a process in which signs and symbols are made to convey specific meanings (Macnamara, 2006). The word has signs and symptoms which claim to support the aspects of reality and represent them. There were occasions where agenda setting views are put across in the film narrative through dialogue and visuals.

However, Philo argues 'the interests of ideology may remain the same, but its immediate content does not' (Philo, 2007 p. 108). So, arguing on the same lines, it is worth exploring whether these interest groups deploy such means changing the immediate content to fit in with the continually altering social circumstances and the

nature of the audience. The perception of setting in general, and more specifically to films on 'Kashmir dispute' with India and India's territorial dispute with Pakistan, become the critical business of the agenda, whether in political forums or the social context of Hindi films.

This investigation examines the depiction of Kashmir and Kashmiris in Indian cinema in the representation context. The principal goal of the study is to determine how Kashmir and Kashmiri Muslims show in Indian films and whether they get fair portrayal or not. Likewise, this examination inspects how peace and conflict in the Kashmir region gets a voice through Bollywood film. The literary examination and semiotic investigation of twenty movies that have been constructed or have a story concerning Kashmir are two exceptionally unmistakable methods for investigating Kashmir.

The argument becomes essential when investigating the possibility of the nationalistic and political groups that have shown such tendencies in the past by changing the language of their political discourse to fit in with changing social demands. For example, jingoistic rhetoric, which seeks to indict arch-enemy Pakistan for the unrest on the border or the frequent terrorist attacks in the country, eventually gets directed toward the Muslim community, specifically Kashmiris in India. This argument is meant to justify the Indian state's attempt to include Kashmiris in the cultural mainstream of the nation, as they are depicted being influenced by foreign (Pakistan) elements to fight for independence. Are the films based in Kashmir, therefore, a vehicle for transmitting such views to the audience? Cinema, while favoring a particular ideology, is generally reluctant to be seen as the mouthpiece of

any interest groups, as ‘the credibility of media, films in this case, and the legitimacy which it seeks for itself depends upon its claim to be even-handed and ‘fair’ in controversial areas’ (Philo 2007, 112).

Taking a cue from Philo’s suggestion, to maximize the usefulness of the available methods, the researcher has textually analyzed films with a focus on the specifics in visual and narrative signs, symbols, stereotypes and agenda setting in the film text. A qualitative approach that studies the context and adequately explains the meaning of the text helps any systematic inquiry which seeks to understand the media’s attempt to construct and manipulate the representation of Kashmir.

The survey of films based on Kashmir consists of 20 films with most recurrent themes and representational trends. The first key element is beauty and romance; this is a recurrent feature explored in films of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s to give the film a serene look and picture the songs in Kashmir to define love and romance with the beauty of Kashmir region/landscape. This trend is identifiable in the vast majority of melodramas about Kashmir. The critical element is a conflict which is a recurrent feature in films of the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s. Likewise, the demand for an independent Kashmir and the involvement and assistance of Pakistan in aid to Kashmiris is another recurrent theme in a clear majority of films. Of post-1980s films. In both these categories the themes of beauty, romance, innocence, and peace and as well as conflict, betrayal, revenge, terrorism, nationalism, and sacrifice are prominent and where emotions play a crucial role and representation is constructed to fulfill the set agendas.

## Bollywood Films on Kashmir

S. No.	Title of Film	Year	Director	Key Elements
1.	<i>Junglee</i>	1961	Subodh Mukherji	Love, Romance
2.	<i>Kashmir Ki Kali</i>	1964	Shakti Samanta	Beauty, Love, and Romance
3.	<i>Jab Jab Phool Khilay</i>	1965	Suraj Prakash	Love, Romance and Sacrifice
4.	<i>Roja</i>	1992	Mani Ratnam	Terrorism, Nationalism
5.	<i>Dil Se</i>	1998	Mani Ratnam	Beauty, Terrorism Nationalism
6.	<i>Kohram</i>	1999	Mehul Kumar	Terrorism, Nationalism
7.	<i>Mission Kashmir</i>	2000	Vidhu Vinod Chopra	Terrorism, Nationalism, Betrayal and Sacrifice
8.	<i>Pukar</i>	2000	Raj Kumar Santoshi	Nationalism, Betrayal, Love Romance

9.	<i>Maa Tujhe Salaam</i>	2002	Tinnu Verma	Nationalism, Terrorism, Revenge
10.	<i>LOC Kargil</i>	2003	J.P Dutta	War, Nationalism, Patriotism, Terrorism.
11.	<i>Hero-Love Story of a Spy</i>	2003	Anil Sharma	Nationalism, Patriotism, Terrorism, Love
12.	<i>Jaal the Trap</i>	2003	Guddu Dhanoa	Nationalism, Terrorism, Love
13.	<i>Zameen</i>	2003	Rohit Shetty	Nationalism, Patriotism, Terrorism
14.	<i>Sheen</i>	2004	Ashok Pandit	Terrorism, Conflict, Exodus, Betrayal, Love
15.	<i>Yahaan</i>	2005	Soojit Sarkar	Nationalism, Terrorism, Love, Romance, Revenge
16.	<i>Fanaa</i>	2006	Kunal Kohli	Nationalism, Patriotism, Terrorism, Love, Revenge



17.	<i>Tahaan</i>	2008	Santosh Sivan	Terrorism, Conflict.
18.	<i>Sikander</i>	2009	Piyush Jha	Terrorism, Conflict, Betrayal
19.	<i>Lamhaa</i>	2010	Rahul Dholakia	Terrorism, Conflict, Betrayal
20.	<i>Haider</i>	2014	Vishal Bhardwaj	Terrorism, Conflict,  Love, Romance, Betrayal, Revenge

The purpose of analyzing the selected films is to emphasize the representation of Kashmir and Kashmiris in popular Bollywood films, within the socio-political and historical contexts between the period of the 1960s and 2010s, as a location, a region and as an integral part of Indian Nation. Likewise, the image of Kashmiri as protagonists and antagonists and terrorists is investigated. By examining these films and comparing them with pre-conflict films (the 1960s-1980s) to post-conflict (the 1990s -2010s), this study intends to discuss both the differences and the similarities of the portrayal of Kashmir and Kashmiris. A film-maker who undertakes the task of transforming an idea/story into a script and then into a film controls a film's creative aspects and visualizes the script while guiding the technical crew and actors to fulfill that vision. The aim of this study is not to focus on the technical or production aspects, but on the story, the script, dialogue, and the various views, functions, and devices to

illustrate its meaning or messages. In the analysis, the intent is not to decode all the different possible signs that each film carries, but through examining the textual variation approach, the desire is to reveal the mechanics of the predominant themes and the representation of Kashmir and Kashmiri for the defined periods of focus, and as reproduced on the screen. For the convenience of understanding, the films have been sub-categorized based on critical and evaluative perspectives.

## Chapter 5: Textual Analysis Discussion

Bollywood is India's most powerful cultural and social indicator. The films on Kashmir do provide a glimpse into how the average Indian looks at Kashmir. This chapter will look at 20 Bollywood films to study the portrayal of Kashmir by Bollywood pre-and-post 1989. The political situation of Kashmir changed significantly after 1989. The films of Kashmir tried to accommodate these changes brought in by the political situation. This research tries to analyze the depiction of Kashmir, Kashmiri characters and use of dialogues in Bollywood films before and after 1989.

The study hypothesizes that Bollywood (Hindi) film industry has portrayed the biased picture of Kashmir in pre-and post-1989 films. Textual analysis is employed to carry out the analysis of 20 selected Bollywood films made on Kashmir from the 1960s till 2014.

The reason for selecting these films is that all these films on Kashmir try to address the situation of Kashmir at a particular time. The films made in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s show the beautiful romantic side of Kashmir while those after 1989 have tried to touch the 70-year-old conflict situation of Kashmir.

The representative analysis of the films has been categorized based on the content and Bollywood's approach towards Kashmir. It tries to study how the images that praise Kashmir's beauty in the films of the 1960s, the 1970s and 1980s shifted to the conflict and turbulence in the valley. It intends to understand how films shifted

from depicting innocence of Kashmiris to labelling them as terrorists. The researcher has classified the movies into four categories.

**Bollywood melodramas that address the beauty of Kashmir:** In *Junglee*, *Kashmir Ki Kali*, and *Jab Jab Phool Khile* Kashmir was nothing more than a setting for Hindi filmmakers. It was an extended film set with Kashmiri characters and narratives being minimal or limited to the tourist visions of Kashmiris, which is either a houseboat owner or a tourist guide. In all three films, Kashmir is a place where the wealthy Indians go for recreation and fall in love with the Kashmiri. The location provides a beautiful setting for romance.

**Bollywood melodramas that spread the idea of Nation:** *Roja*, *Dil Se*, *Kohram*, *Hero-Love Story of a Spy*, *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, *Zameen*, *Jaal the Trap*, *Fanaa* follow the concept of nationalism and Indianness of Hindi films. The early films' directors like Dadasaheb Phalke, who created the first feature film in India, *Raja Harishchandra* and actors came from the theater culture. After India gained independence in 1947, it had to create a national consciousness from thin air. The popular Hindi cinema played an important role in building this idea of belonging to a nation and nationalism. The chosen films are examined to understand how Bollywood cinema supports and strengthens the national spirit by placing India and Pakistan as binary opposites of which the former takes a superior position. The same screen that praised Kashmir's beauty shifted its focus to turbulence in the valley and

labeled the Kashmiris as terrorists.

**Politics of Representation in Bollywood's melodramas:** *Mission Kashmir* and *Pukar* are the two films that use signification, subject, and the symbolic order to clarify the masking of reality. The semiotic theory demonstrates how the image signifies the signifier. Fantasy echoes in each song sequence of both the films, which constantly uses role playing and crafted representations of reality. The use of balaclava and the fabric covered faces dehumanize the terrorists and portray them with no positive human qualities. The negative associations are established to justify the killing of the terrorist in the mind of the viewers. In *Mission Kashmir's* concluding crayon sketch shot, a game of cricket between Khan, Neelima, Altaaf, and Sufi marks the 'happily ever after'. *Mission Kashmir* endeavors to incorporate Altaaf, the Kashmiri kid into the family of Muslim father, the Hindu mother, and the 'great' Kashmiri Muslim sweetheart. This setting reflects a perfect vision of the common Indian country, but the agent component reminds us that this is just a fantasy.

**Bollywood melodramas and Neorealism:** *LOC-Kargil*, *Sheen*, *Yahaan*, *Lamhaa*, *Tahaan*, *Sikandar* and *Haider* try to combine the elements of Italian neorealism by focusing on the stories of everyday people and situation of Kashmir. Even though the filmmakers attempt to portray the most realistic story of the conflict, extreme violence and torturing, they still shot their films on relatively high budgets

with known professional actors. The political and social intentions of these movies are assessed by either their portrayal of given authentic/social substances or review judgments in regard to the viability of their governmental issues. Rather, the political and aesthetic impact of such movies ought to be an immediate outcome of their capacity to rebuild discernment and to rejuvenate thought, even at the expense of customary methods of true to life articulation.

## 1.1 Bollywood melodramas that address the beauty of Kashmir

### 1.1.1 *Junglee* (Wild, 1961, Dir. Subodh Mukherjee)



**Main Cast:** Shammi Kapoor as Shekhar, Saira Bano as Rajkumari, Shashikala as Mala

The movie starts with Shekhar, an uptight man from an aristocratic family, is

under the influence of his mother, who has disciplined him to the point that he is incapable of laughing and enjoying life. He puts on authoritarian demeanor in front of his coworkers and demands absolute obedience and adherence to the code of conduct in the office. His sister, Mala, is the black sheep of the family, who, unlike her brother, has learned to enjoy life and has even found love. Shekhar, on the other hand, is all set to marry a girl chosen by his mother, who comes from a family of royalty. However, since their mother has stringent standards concerning the spouses of each of her children, Mala's love affair is short-lived. When she sees that Mala is in a relationship with another, she immediately plans to move Mala out to Kashmir for a small period so she can forget about the guy and move on.

As soon as they arrive in Kashmir, Mala is depressed, and Shekhar is as uptight as ever. Shekhar runs into a girl named Rajkumari, who accidentally throws a snowball at him. He soon learns that Rajkumari is the beautiful daughter of a local doctor and is the polar opposite of Shekhar. When Mala tries to commit suicide after finding out she is pregnant with her lover's child, Rajkumari saves her and tells that she will save her from her family's wrath.

Shekhar and Rajkumari fall in love. Shekhar begins to change and starts to care for people. He goes back to his hometown as a changed man. Everybody welcomes the change, except his mother. Shekhar makes various attempts to get his marriage canceled.

He brings Rajkumari home and tricks his mother into believing that she is royalty. While his mother arranges the union, the real princess and her father confront

the mother. The mother becomes upset after she comes to know about the cheating the real princess, meanwhile, has ulterior motives of her own in marrying Shekhar. Shekhar convinces his mother of his love and the importance of happiness, and the movie ends on a sweet note with the entire family reunited around the addition of Rajkumari to the family.

### **Textual Analysis**

The movie was released in 1961 when Indian cinema was still establishing its niche in the international media as 'Auteurist'. In other words, they were trying to comply with Hollywood aesthetic standards. Therefore, the movies of the era focused primarily on the artistic side of cinema and captured the most apparent and poignant sentiment exuding from it, which is love (Athique & Adrian, 2012).

*Junglee* captures the scenic beauty of the valley to serve as the backdrop for the romance between the hero and the heroine. People run away from their routine and daily bashing to the cold mountains carpeted with lush green pine trees and the gushing streams. In '*Junglee*,' like its other counterpart in 1964 '*Kashmir Ki Kali*,' the hero of the film runs away from the shackles of the authoritarian mother, and through a holiday in Kashmir falls in love with a native Kashmiri.

Twenty-five minutes into the film we see the airplane carrying the main characters Shekhar and Mala land in Kashmir. The first few frames introduce the beauty of Kashmir through the shots of exotic locations., a stock formula whereby



the visual setting of the Kashmir valley becomes a signifier of romance. The camera shifts its lens from the landscape gaze to the hero and the heroine throwing snowballs at each other, suggesting a pure, naïve romancing where the boy meets girl, and they fall in love. This shot shows flowers blooming in the region, with droplets of water on the petals (*Junglee*,1961 Figure 5.1.1.1). The blooming flowers represent the romantic beauty of the area.



*Figure 5.1.1.1: Flowers blooming with droplets of water represent the romantic beauty.*

The blooming is a representation of the thriving life within the valley and the vibrant colors that engulf it. The snow-covered, rugged terrains are also an iconic feature of the valley, which shows a defining aspect of the climatic condition of Kashmir (*Junglee* 1961, Figure 5.1.1.2). The camera then shifts to the silhouette of the pine trees against the cloudy sky (*Junglee* 1961 Figure, 5.1.1.3), which further underlines and emboldens the beauty of the region, conveying a message of peace and tranquility in the surroundings.



*Figure 5.1.1.2: Snow covered, rugged terrains an iconic feature of Kashmir valley*

Finally, the fast-flowing rivers show the abundance and the freshness of the valley, as it shows the wealth of life-giving forces that the valley possesses. The real essence of the cinematography captures the liveliness of the environment, which is a lot different from the average city life. It tries to propagate a sense of purity and innocence, something which is scathed by the hustle and bustle of the fast-paced city life.



*Figure 5.1.1.3: Pine trees against cloudy sky.*

Therefore, the female protagonist falls entirely into the mold that the cinematography created for the character. She is innocent but chirpy, making her a loveable character and a force that finally changes Shekhar for the better (*Junglee* 1961, Figure 5.1.1.4). Despite Shekhar's domineering personality, Rajkumari has the

upper hand over him, evidenced when she forces him to buy flowers for his sick sister. It shows how beauty, innocence, and the positive energy of the valley can change the psyche and personality of an individual. Even though Rajkumari is mischievous, at the same time she has a heart of gold and does not mean harm to the individual she is tricking. The purity of the region is also reflected in its inhabitants, as Rajkumari not only endeavors to get Shekhar back, but also endangers her own life by accompanying him the rest of the way to the temple she had tricked into going to.



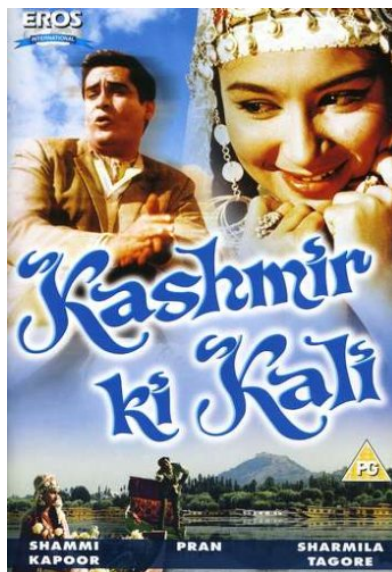
*Figure 5.1.1.4: Rajkumari and Shekhar meet in Kashmir.*

The snow is a metaphor for the valley, which shows that even though the climate can be cold, but the beauty is encouraged due to the warmth of the people there like Rajkumari. Shekhar turns a cold shoulder to his young sister, who is visibly distressed at the prospect of leaving her lover and going to Kashmir. When she argues ‘Kya main pagal hun jo Kashmir chali jaun?’ (Am I mad to go to Kashmir?), he carefully replies: ‘Dunya se sab log Kashmir jaate hain, kia sab ke dimag kharab hain’ (Everyone from around the world goes to Kashmir, are they all mad?) The coldness of Shekhar’s character melts when he goes to a place that has even a colder

climate, first time he encounters Rajkumari: a stray snowball brings them together. Therefore, the crisp warmth of Kashmir is a metaphor for the cold spite in city life, which makes it's extremely cynical and unwilling to laughter and joy.

*Junglee* is a romanticized version of Kashmir, which only conveys and juxtaposes the cynicism and negativity of the fast-paced city with Kashmir's raw and positive energy. Therefore, *Junglee* is an entirely neutral representation of Kashmiris and their culture. The scenic beauty invites the people to fall in love, because, just like its locations, the film exoticizes the people and acts more like an invitation for tourists to come and find love in the valley.

#### 1.1.2 **Kashmir Ki Kali** (Bud of Kashmir, 1964, Dir. Shakti Samanta)



**Main Cast:** Shammi Kapoor as Rajiv Lal, Sharmila Tagore as Champa, Pran as Mohan

Rajiv Lal played by (Shammi Kapoor) is the only son of widowed Rani Maa

(Mother). He often annoys his mother with his crazy antics. His mother tries to find a solution to sober him up and ends up heeding the advice of the house servant, Karuna (Mridula Rani) who suggests marrying him off to stop his immature antics. To avoid confrontation, he goes out drinking with his friends, and when his friends come to know of his ordeal, they suggest that he should run away – preferably, to their bungalow in Kashmir, which is scarcely visited by his mother and no one would know of his presence there. When Rajiv arrives in Kashmir, he discovers that the caretaker, Bholaram (Dhumal), has been profiting off of their estate by turning the property into a hotel for tourists. Rajiv tries to convince the guests that he is indeed the owner of the Bungalow, but cuts a deal with Bholaram, who covers for him in case there might be a snitch at the hotel. Therefore, Bholaram tells everyone that Rajiv is mad and believes that he owns the hotel. Hence, the charade continues, and Rajiv stays at the hotel.

The next day, Rajiv meets Champa (Sharmila Tagore), a local flower girl, and is smitten by her innocence and beauty. He is so mesmerized by her that he buys flowers from her for 20 rupees when they are priced at 5. So, she isn't scared off, and he tells her that he is not the owner, but the driver. They both start spending more time with each other and romance blossoms. However, Champa has a lot of personal problems that need to be tackled. For instance, Champa's father, Dinu, is indebted to the forest manager (Mohan), who had loaned him some money and insisted on marrying Champa if Dinu cannot repay the debt.

Things take a strange turn when Mohan discovers that Champa is not Dinu's daughter and starts blackmailing him so he can marry her. Champa falls for Rajiv but

turns back after she finds out that he is not the driver, but the owner of the estate. Champa feels betrayed and cuts off all contact with Rajiv. Rajiv has to go back home after he receives a letter from his mother that their house servant Karuna is very sick. He returns to find Karuna on her deathbed, who then reveals that Rajiv is not the true heir to the Lal estate.

Instead, Rajiv is the son of Karuna's destitute and alcoholic brother, Dinu, who sells his son off for a large quantity of alcoholic drink. Rajiv is taken in by Rani Maa, who later gives birth to a daughter, who is kidnapped by Dinu, who intends to kill her so Rajiv could inherit the estate by default. Rani Maa is devastated at the revelation, as she is told that her daughter was stillborn. It is revealed that Dinu did not follow through with the plan, as on the way he tripped and lost his eyesight. He decides to keep the girl alive. When Karuna is about to reveal the name of the girl, she passes away, and both Rani Maa and Rajiv are distraught. Rajiv, along with his friends Chander and Rani Maa, travel back to Kashmir to bring Champa. When Rajiv goes to their house, he discovers that Champa is going to marry Mohan very soon. Champa begins questioning her father, who lies at first, but upon seeing his real son, is unable to contain himself and embraces him. He tells Champa that she is not his real daughter and reveals the truth to her. Champa embraces Rani Maa.

Their happiness is short-lived as Mohan brings his goons to kidnap Champa and marry her. The goons take Champa and Rani Maa away, tie up. Rajiv manages to free himself and fights off his captors. He tells his friend to inform the police while he pursues Mohan on his own. Rajiv follows Mohan to his hideout and successfully stops the wedding ceremony. A fight ensues, and Mohan runs off, with Rajiv

following closely. However, the police arrive just in time to arrest all of his goons and soon break up a fistfight between Rajiv and Mohan and take the latter away. The film ends on a happy note, as Rajiv and Champa finally get married and live happily ever after.

### **Textual Analysis**

Just like the film's counterparts *Jab Jab Phool Khile* (1963) and *Junglee* (1965), *Kashmir Ki Kali* follows the escapist ideology contained in earlier films. The film scarcely attempts to capture the real situation of Kashmir. The movie uses Kashmir, just as a backdrop to a love story. The film puts the spotlight on the gorgeous valley of Kashmir while turning a blind eye to the gruesome reality that the lush green valley and snowy mountains hide. As Nagappan (2011) discussed in his book the escapist tactics the Indian film directors seem to employ in order 'to counteract the effects of fractured fantasies.' He believes that through this genre, directors try eliminating contradictions and finding harmonious solutions, which provide temporary relief from the grim reality of the valley (Nagappan, 2011).



**Figure 5.1.2.1:** Female protagonist embodies and personifies the cinematic beauty of Kashmir.

This escapism is evident in early films. In this movie, the protagonist Rajiv escapes his mother's tyrannical rule to find love in this valley. Therefore, the film's metaphoric escape is represented by the real flight of the character. However, the spectacular outlook on the valley establishes an eternal moral universe in the eyes of the viewers. By using rather simple and relatable problems concerning love and marriage, the film depicts clearly defined villains like Mohan and well-mannered heroes like Rajiv. The film reinforces the idea that good always overpowers the bad, and consolidates the idea that retribution exists for any ill that is committed by an individual.

The female protagonist embodies and personifies the cinematic beauty of Kashmir (*Kashmir Ki Kali* 1964, Figure 5.1.2.1). She is innocent and pure, and she is caught in the struggle between the hero and the villain, who has set his lecherous gaze upon her. Her dilemma is somewhat similar to the political conflict in Kashmir, where the valley tore between two countries who are always trying to make it a part



of their dominion (*Kashmir Ki Kali* 1964, Figure 5.1.2.2). However, the movie still does not create any clear parallels between the villain and hero to the real-life situation.



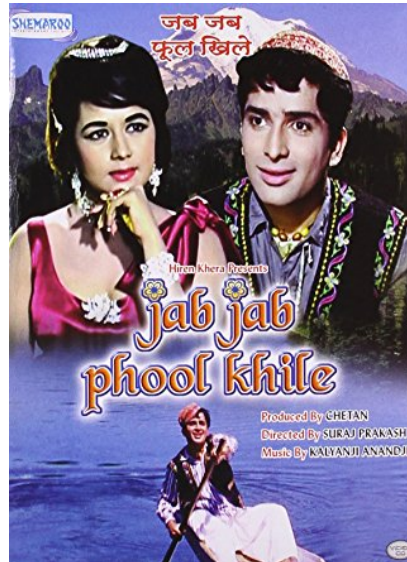
*Figure 5.1.2.2: Portrayal of purity and innocence.*

Therefore, the heroine's problem is merely a metaphorical representation of the actual situation. Moreover, the physical appearance of Champa is exactly like a traditional Kashmiri girl, which exoticizes women and the valley in general. The cinematography captures the fast-flowing rivers, which are synonymous with Kashmir, fully bloomed flowers that Champa sells for a living, and the boats that add to the beauty of Kashmir. Therefore, the artistic shots of the locations pay homage to the natural and serene beauty of Kashmir.

Besides the creation of a moral universe, the directors establish themselves as authors of this cinematic creation, which includes the artistic depiction of beauty (Athique, 2012). Some view the film as creative, with great shots of the picturesque valley, and metaphorically representing the plight of the region. However, the film's content falls short in depicting the real life of the Kashmiris and the real issues surrounding the valley. The film is an optimistic melodrama, which tells the rags to

riches tale of Champa and reinforces the idea that even Kashmir would have a turn of luck in a hero, who will save the valley from the destruction and violence that it is caught up in at the moment.

### 1.1.3 ‘Jab Jab Phool Khile’ (When the Flowers Bloom, 1965, Dir. Suraj Prakash)



**Main Cast:** Shashi Kapoor as Raja, Nanda as Rita

Rita meets her tour guide in Kashmir, Raja. He is a simple Kashmiri guy, optimistic and blessed with the immense love of poetry and music. Things don't go well between the two at the beginning of the movie, but late Raja ends up falling for Rita. Raja never confesses his love. He begins to miss her immensely and writes to her frequently. Rita visits Kashmir with her supposed fiancé, which breaks Raja's hearts. The bond between Raja and Rita irks the fiancé to the point that he tries to hit Rita only to be stopped by Raja, who confesses his love to her later.

Rita returns the feeling. Her father is upset at first but soon gives his consent,

provided that Raja tries to mend his ways to fit into their society. Raja does so, but after watching Rita's frankness with other men, he is unable to shake his jealousy off and confronts Rita. Raja explains that his traditions and customs cannot allow him to move on with the marriage and breaks it off with her. Rita later discovers her father's trick to get Raja out of the equation, prompting her to search for Raja. Both unite on a train bound for Kashmir.

### **Textual Analysis**

*Jab Jab Phool Khile*, like its counterparts, focuses on the beauty and romantic side of Kashmir. Due to the heavy restriction and relatively low public demand of political content in movies, the movie only focuses on the development of the two characters as lovers as they continue to run into each other in this beautiful valley. The movie was also filmed during a time when Bollywood was trying to make its mark globally by featuring exotic destinations in their films (Athique, 2012). 'Therefore, it only made sense for Indian cinema to showcase the real beauty of India, hopefully boosting tourism and appealing to the NRI (Non-Resident Indian) segment of the country' (Krenn, 2012, 21).

'Moreover, like *Junglee*, Indian cinema adhered to the French auteur theory whereby the director as an author of the work portrays and designs scenes as artistically as possible' (Athique, 2012, 45). Therefore, art in Indian cinema almost always conveys romance. The plot of the movie begins with the protagonist going to Kashmir to unwind herself in the gorgeous valley (*Jab Jab Phool Khile* 1965, Figure

5.1.3.1). She comes from a very affluent family in India, and her sophisticated ways contrast to that of Kashmir.



*Figure 5.1.3.1: Rita in Kashmir on a vacation.*

The class difference is made evident throughout the movie. Raja is an embodiment of the rawness of the beauty of Kashmir. He possesses honesty and truthfulness that is missing from the ordinary city life (*Jab Jab Phool Khile* 1965, Figure 5.1.3.2).



*Figure 5.1.3.2: Raja is an embodiment of the rawness of the beauty of Kashmir.*

Raja's resoluteness and honesty are reflected in his interactions with Rita., This trait of Raja underline the pride of Kashmiri in their culture, and like Lawrence's (1895) descriptions, they are people who won't submit to anyone regardless of their financial or social superiority (Lawrence, 1895). This attribute also becomes apparent

when Raja beats up Rita's fiancé for trying to use force on her. However, unlike Lawrence's perception, the Kashmiris in the movie are depicted as hardworking people who do not take tips from people and consider it very demeaning to their talent (Lawrence, 1895). It shows that Kashmiris are not greedy and have no real desire for worldly wealth.



**Figure 5.1.3.3:** Raja is fond of music and poetry, which is another sign of the exuberance of the Kashmiris, which romanticizes and exoticizes the people and their outlook on life.

Raja represents the qualities possessed by Kashmir that is missing in the city-based societies. He is the owner of a houseboat and often basks himself in the glorious beauty of Kashmir (*Jab Jab Phool Khile* 1965, Figure 5.1.3.4). He is also fond of music and poetry, which is another sign of the exuberance of the Kashmiris, which romanticizes and exoticizes the people and their outlook on life (*Jab Jab Phool Khile* 1965, Figure 5.1.3.3). Raja depicts freedom. He escapes from the tight clutches of Rita's family (*Jab Jab Phool Khile* 1965, Figure 5.1.3.5).



**Figure 5.1.3.4:** *Raja is owner of a houseboat and often basks himself in the glorious beauty of Kashmir.*

The cinematography emphasizes the scenic beauty of Kashmir, which is unscathed by human activities and standards. Even its rugged terrain has great physical appeal. The montage of the landscape of Kashmir acts as symbolic reference to the romance brewing between Raja and Rita and acts as a liberating force for both individuals. The green mountains against the snowy backdrop are also a sign of how life and beauty thrive in a region where the climate can be extreme. The film underlines the warmth in the area despite the iciness of the landscapes.



**Figure 5.1.3.5:** *Raja represents the qualities possessed by Kashmir that is missing in the city-based societies.*

When Rita is about to leave Kashmir, Raja presents her with a Kashmiri doll, which is a cultural symbol that tourists take with them as a souvenir (*Jab Jab Phool*

*Khile* 1965, Figure 5.1.3.6). This gesture signifies that he is giving not only a part of Kashmir but also a part of him. The gesture enlightens the audiences about the heart of the Kashmiris and their love. After Rita comes back, the blossoming romance does continue with Raja confessing his feelings in a garden surrounded by blooming flowers and fluffy white clouds in the background. This scene plays out the metaphoric title of the movie, ‘Whenever flowers bloom.’ After the confessions, Rita and Raja enter into a relationship, but they have to face the challenges of their different worlds. Raja visits her and tries to learn the ways of her society, but soon realizes that it is not the place for him. The segment propagates the idea that pretentiousness is incompatible with the innocence and traditions of the Kashmiris. His innocence cannot deal with the high-class fascist society. He leaves the luxury of city life to return home in Kashmir. He could not survive the ostentatious and harsh boundaries of Rita’s society.



**Figure 5.1.3.6:** *Raja presents Rita a Kashmiri doll, which is a cultural symbol that tourists take with them as a souvenir.*

Even though the movie ends on a happy note, it tries to understand how two worlds can exist together but function independently without overlapping. While there is a charm about city life, which draws Raja to Rita, the natural and humble

lifestyle of the Kashmiris cannot overlap with theirs. The locations in the movie provide a scenic take on the romance. Though the film does not address the geographical politics of Kashmir, it tries to explore and accommodate the social differences including mannerisms, traditions, and cultures.

## **Conclusion**

Kashmir caught the Indian filmmakers' imagination after the Eastman color was introduced in India in the early 1960s. There were only a few films shot in Kashmir in the black and white era. The introduction of color gave the filmmakers a chance to set their films in the scenic valley of Kashmir as compared to the dusty plains of India. Kashmir has been more than just a geographical area for Hindi filmmakers, it has been an idea (Rehman, 2007) and a subject, with more than 90 films having been shot in the valley. But more often, Kashmir has been nothing more than a setting for Hindi filmmakers. It is an extended film set with Kashmiri characters and narratives in these films being minimal, apart from a few exceptions. But the general rule was that Kashmiri characters were more or less limited to the tourist vision of Kashmiris. The most famous example has been that of a character actor, Mehmood's portrayal of Mamdu in *Aarzo* (1965). Mamdu was a houseboat owner and caretaker of the houseboat, where the leading character stayed while on holiday to Kashmir. Even in movies that have had main lead Kashmiri characters, like *Jab Jab Phool Khile* (1965) and *Kashmir Ki Kali* (1964), the portrayal of Kashmir was reduced merely to using the scenic beauty of the location. The lead



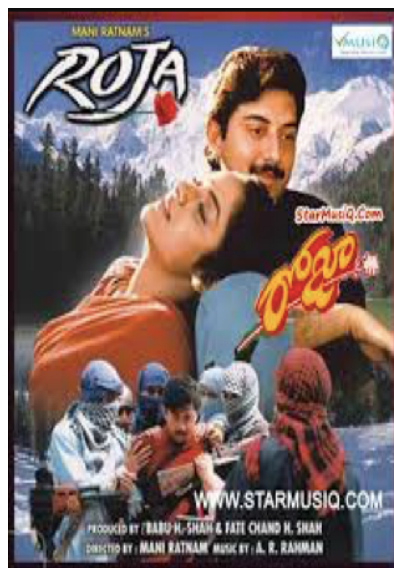
character in *Jab Jab Phool Khile* is a Kashmiri houseboat owner played by actor Shashi Kapoor. The story is of a poor boy, who is a boatman in Kashmir, and falls in love with a rich tourist. The lead character's religion is never shown overtly even though it is implied that he is a Hindu. The lead character is called Raju, short for Raj Kapoor, and a Hindu name. Traditionally boatmen of Kashmir, called Hanjies, are Muslims and there are virtually no Hindu boatmen.

The other prominent movie of the 1960s, set in Kashmir, was Shammi Kapoor's, *Kashmir Ki Kali*. The title role, the bud of Kashmir, as *Kashmir Ki Kali* translates into, was played by the Bengali actress, Sharmila Tagore. The whole cast is Hindu, including the lead actor and actress. Their names are Rajiv and Champa. The villain played by actor Pran is also a Hindu. A Hindu in this movie does not even represent a Kashmiri Pundit. Kashmir or Kashmiri culture was more or less again reduced to the scenic beauty for the set. In later films, especially those directed by Yash Chopra and Raj Kapoor, Kashmir was the place, where the Indian rich went for recreation and enjoyed vacations. Prominent examples include *Bobby* (1973) and *Kabhie Kabhie* (1976). Yash Chopra's *Noorie* (1979) was based entirely on Kashmiri characters. In *Noorie*, Yusuf Fakir Muhammad (Farooq Shaikh) is in love with the beautiful girl Noorie Nabi (Poonam Dhillon). The two are going to be married when one after another tragedy delays their marriage until a village rowdy (Bharat Kapoor), rapes and murders Noorie. This film was purely a family drama, and it did not show any signs of agenda setting. The Beginning of the 1980s saw Bollywood's obsessions with Kashmir's coming to an abrupt end. Kashmir was soon to become Bollywood's favorite subject again. But this time it was not the beautiful mountains and gushing

streams that brought them to Kashmir, but the sounds of blasts and gunfire, which formed the theme for several Hindi films.

## 1.2 Melodrama and the Nation

### 1.2.1 **Roja:** (Rose,1992, Dir. Mani Ratnam)



**Main Cast:** Arvind Swami as Rishi, Madhoo as Roja, Pankaj Kapur as Liaqat

A Kashmiri terrorist, Wasim Khan is arrested by Colonel Rajappa (Nasser) in Srinagar, Kashmir. In Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu a South Indian girl prays for her sister's (Vaishnavi) marriage proposal with Rishi Kumar (Arvind Swami) to get fixed. Vaishnavi gathers the courage to convey to Rishi about her love affair with the son of her aunt and requests him to reject her. Rishi agrees and asks for Roja's (Vaishnavi's younger sister) hand in marriage instead. The marriage takes place on the family's insistence, but Roja does not trust him. Roja is angry with Rishi for

rejecting Vaishnavi and marrying her instead. Feeling guilty Vaishnavi calls Roja and tells her everything.

Love starts to grow, and life is perfect for the couple. Rishi is a cryptologist working for the government of India. He is posted at an army communications center in Kashmir. Soon after landing in Kashmir Rishi is kidnapped by a terror group in exchange for the release of Wasim Khan, a dreaded terrorist. Roja finds herself pleading with politicians and the military for help. Language problem makes it even difficult for her. Rishi is held captive by a terrorist group led by Liaquat (Pankaj Kapur) and the Indian government is not willing to negotiate with the terrorists for the release of Rishi.

The rankled militants try to burn the Indian flag. Rishi risks his life to put out the fire showing his nationalist sentiments Liaquat's sibling gets killed by the Pakistan army while trying to cross the border for militancy training. This shakes Liaquat's convictions. Meanwhile, Roja succeeds in convincing the government to extend their help.

Against Colonel Rayappa wishes, the administration chooses to set free Wasim Khan in return for Rishi. Rishi does not have any desire to be utilized as a pawn in exchange for a terrorist. Rishi with the help Liaquat's escapes from bondage. On the other hand, Colonel Rayappa, Roja, and other armed force officers reach the exchange spot with Wasim Khan, but Liaquat does not appear. This influences Roja to believe that Rishi is dead. The armed force secures Wasim Khan up in jail. Rishi reaches the exchange spot after evading the terrorists. Liaquat catches up with him

and holds him at gunpoint. Rishi talks with Liaquat further and convinces him that his war is sinful. Liaquat has a change of heart, and he lets Rishi go and, he surrenders to the Indian Army. Rishi and Roja live happily ever after.

### **Textual Analysis**

The film was made in the Tamil first in 1992, then dubbed in other regional languages of India. A ‘metonymy’ is a figure of speech (James, 2009) in which a connected feature or impression is used to invoke an idea or represent an object. The visual montage used as a code (expressionist) to introduce the scenic and serene location of Tirunelveli is a metonymy of visuals used to invoke the idea that beauty of Kashmir is not confined to the mountains of Kashmir but is also found in the state of Tamil Nadu in India. The montage of visuals is similar to the pre-1989 films like *Kashmir Ki Kali*, *Junglee* and *Jab Jab Phool Khile*. In *Roja*, the introduction of Kashmir includes dark visuals, sounds of the army marching, and gunshots, again a metonymy. The director chose locations carefully to show many resemblances between Kashmir and Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu.

The film begins in Kashmir with the credits, which is white text on black background. As we read the technical credits, we hear the birds chirping, the sound of the army marching, gunshots, and the call for prayer. The call for prayer is important as later in the film Kashmiri militants are shown praying every time, they are about to kill people. The ‘synecdoche’ stands for the whole and signifies and suggests that the actions are related to a particular community and religion (Kaja,

1983).

*Roja* portrays a South Indian middle-class couple who found themselves in war-torn Kashmir. Roja and Rishi turn an official assignment into a honeymoon as Rishi is posted to Kashmir immediately after their wedding. They start their journey to the same old (the 1960s) Kashmir with breathtaking beauty, love, and romance in the mountains. Soon the audience realizes they are in Kashmir, but this Kashmir is different as the narrative shifts to danger. A new Kashmiri character appears, the terrorist whose ability to solicit from the audience an ambivalent fascination is dissipated by splitting him into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ versions.

Wasim Khan is a threat to the nation and the narrative. All the terrorists in the film have the surname ‘Khan,’ which is primarily a Muslim name with origins in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pathans also suggest a particular region and community. They cry, ‘We shall have our Azaadi’ in silence, which releases excess that escapes closure. Rendered subservient to the need for Roja and Rishi’s happy ending, the film’s terrorists nevertheless signify that something has changed forever in the Indian fantasy.

Roja’s return to this fantasy is thus a masked realization of the impossible return. A contemporaneous response to the violence in Jammu and Kashmir, the film marks cinema’s attempt to reclaim what was in the process of being lost to the national imaginary through Kashmiri rejection of the nation. Significantly, cinema’s renewed interest in Kashmir was catalyzed by the regional film industry, whose competition with Bollywood parallels political contestations between Northern and

Southern India. It also revives the power of cinematic Kashmir in developing a national identity. In staking a claim to a region geographically distant from Tamilnadu, and through mutual incorporation of the South Indian subject and the current political conflict, *Roja* mines the cinematic legacy of a pastoral Kashmir that perpetuates the Indian society.

The film's substantial investment in the metonymy of couple and nation is founded on its struggle to appropriate Kashmiri anger and exonerate State brutality. *Roja* invites audience across India to participate in overt collective fantasy as well as covert collective trauma. *Roja* plays out through varying degrees of self-consciousness the complex relationship between the political and cultural forms of representation in a less innocent age. The new 'pleasure and the nation' appeal, charmingly enacted through the hula hoops, tennis whites, and motor cars of the 1960s, may now appear dated, but the price paid for modern Indian created thereby has reappeared in the guns that accompany the roses of the post-1989 Kashmir film. *Roja's* affirmative politics reveal cinema's inability to tear itself away from the impact of Azaadi, made even more potent through its pairing with another lethal word 'jihad'.

The film is one-sided and partial in many ways. All terrorists shown in the film has the surname Khan. This gave the film an anti-Muslim tone. Kashmiri militants were shown praying every time before they are about to kill people. This image tries to relate Islam to terrorism. The film shows Indians as law-abiding gentlemen. Armed forces, who were Hindus, are shown to have better personality compared to Kashmiri characters. It shows by the end that Kashmiri Muslims are killed by Pakistani

militants but has forgotten to show the tyranny of Indian forces on Kashmiris. The film narrative also manages to change Liaquat's mind when Rishi who says, 'Islam Ahinsa Nahi Sikhata', which means 'Islam does not teach violence.' The impact of the remark is lessened due to it being made by a Hindu rather than a Muslim. This is because if he is not following Islam himself, his preaching's will not make sense to others.

After Rishi talks to the militant Liaquat, he takes off his Kashmiri cap. This seems as if the violent militant was finally humanized after he leaves behind his Kashmiri Muslim identity. Religion is extremely compassionate in India as a whole, so if Ratnam wanted to show that every religion is equal, he should have gone for a more balanced approach in which each side would have an equal number of good and evil characters. Kashmiri Muslims were unjustly depicted in this film. Not once in the film did Ratnam show how brutally Indian forces treat Kashmiri. The film flows from South India to Kashmir without telling the audience about the political conflict of Kashmir. The whole film talks about Kashmir as an integral part of India, without talking about the roots of the conflict.

At the beginning of the film, Rishi says 'Main Desh Mein Kahin Bhi Jaane Se Nahi Darta', or 'I am not scared to visit any part of the country'. This sentence may make Indians proud, but Kashmiris may have a different sentiment, raising doubts about the status quo of the state.

*Roja* fails to show the fact that the militants have no say in the government, which might be the reason for being what they are. It fails to tell the stories of

countless families who have lost young children in pointless raids by Indian armed forces. Had these actions been explained or justified to the audience, the blame would not have been put entirely on Kashmiri militants. If all the realities of life in Kashmir are shown in the film, maybe it would not be viewed as such a nationalistic film. Instead, Kashmir is portrayed as a place infested with militancy and virtually under embargo. The film tries to have it both ways, showing the Kashmir crisis but consciously not addressing the political subjectivity of the problem.

### 1.2.2 Dil Se (From Heart,1998, Dir. Mani Ratnam)



**Main Cast:** Shahrukh Khan as Amar, Manisha Koirala as Meghna, Preity Zinta as Preety.

The movie begins with Amar, an All India Radio correspondent, who is on his way to North- Eastern part of India from Delhi to cover the festivities in Assam. In



the same train, he meets a mysterious woman and instantly falls for her. Amar makes several attempts to start a conversation with her and all of them get dismissed until she asks him to get a cup of tea for her, which turns out to be a plan to get rid of him. She uses his absence to board the train along with a few men quickly.

As fate would have it, Amar meets the same woman again, but she denies knowing or meeting him. Amar begins to catch up with his assignment and interviews many people within the region. He comes across an extremist leader of a militant organization who tells him that the conflict situation in the North-Eastern state of Assam is the Indian government's fault. He tells Amar about the grievances of the Assam and further justifies the Assam resistance against the authorities to get a separate homeland. Even though the place mentioned in the film is Assam, but the conversation has indirect reference to Kashmir. Amar remains fixated on the woman and even mentions her on his radio show. Later in the same area, he meets her at the post office, where the audience are given hints about her links with a terrorist group that is planning for an attack.

Amar's attempts to get close faces stiff opposition from her, who hasn't even revealed her name to Amar. She discourages him and asks him to stop bothering her. Amar becomes embarrassed and apologizes to her when two men stop him. Amar initially believes that one of the guys is Meghna's husband, but later finds out that they are only her brothers and also that she is not married. Amar is motivated to go forward with attempts to pursue her. He runs into her at a local festival where police chase a suicide bomber., The bomber dies, triggering a major furor. To avoid capture, Meghna poses as Amar's wife, who is safe since he works for All India Radio.

Later on, Amar and Meghna board a bus to get away from Assam, which breaks down, causing them to continue the rest of the journey on foot. During this time, Amar takes the opportunity to confront Meghna. The argument escalates to the point that Amar tries to force himself on her, causing her to get a panic attack. Meghna suffers from rape trauma, as the Indian army raped her. By now, it is clear that Meghna has ties with the militant groups in Assam and she is working for them.

Meghna disappears the next day, and Amar becomes distraught, going back to Delhi to find out that Amar's parents have already found a match for him whom he accepts, knowing that he will not ever be able to find Meghna again. However, much to his surprise, Meghna shows up at his office and asks for a job. Amar believes that she has broken off her ties with the terrorist group. However, later we find out that not only is she working for them, but also is planning to be the suicide bomber on the Republic Day of India. Amar later becomes a prime suspect in the eyes of the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) when he chases down one of Meghna's brothers who had beaten him up earlier.

### **Textual Analysis**

Before probing in the content analysis of the film, it is essential to understand the context during which the production of the film took place. *Dil Se* came out when India and Pakistan already had their relationship under bad terms due to nuclear tests carried out by both countries, and territorial disputes that later culminated in the 'Kargil Conflict' of 1999.

Considering other works by Mani Ratnam on the subject of terrorism, *Dil Se* is entirely different because it focuses fundamentally on Amar's character and what he goes through, which according to Ahmed (2016), is known as the seven shades of love: attraction, infatuation, love, reverence, worship, obsession, and death (Ahmed, 2016). Unlike *Roja*, the film does not stigmatize any race or culture. The militants have no blatant affiliation, and even the character designs are in no way explicitly referring to Islam as the basis of terrorism. In *Roja*, the terrorist was not only demonized but also given so many elements of the Islamic culture that made it directly offensive to the community.



**Figure 5.2.2.1:** Terrorists, including Meghna are in a secret meeting pledging their allegiance to each other, they all are wearing green colored headbands.

For instance, when the terrorists, including Meghna, are in a secret meeting pledging their allegiance to each other, they do not sport beards or other Islamic signifiers, except for the green colored headbands, which are more of an implicit reference, overridden by the explicit message of the movie (*Dil Se* 1998, Figure 5.2.2.1). This directly contrasts with *Roja*, where Muslims' attire and mannerisms were deliberately assigned to the militants.



**Figure 5.2.2.2:** Meghna's character is melancholic rather than having any links to Muslims.

From the first encounter, Meghna's character is melancholic rather than having any links to Muslims (*Dil Se* 1998, Figure 5.2.2.2). She covers herself with a black shawl and looks uninterested in Amar's advances towards her. Moreover, her attire is supposed to give her a Kashmiri look. In one scene, Meghna even enters a Buddhist temple, which is a refreshing change for Indian Cinema, as directors are successfully moving away from depicting the Hindu-Muslim rivalry and are showing more aspects of other religions and cultures within India.

One of the most significant setbacks for *Dil Se* is that it flopped at the box office, despite the returns that *Roja* generated. This shows a trend within Indian audiences that they do not appreciate the context of Amar's actions, which are purely motivated by his love for the heroine. The only Indian aspect of his character is his profession. Therefore, the audience needs a robust, patriotic character to do this. In *Roja*, Rishi Kumar is not just a passionate lover, but he fervently loves his country. *Roja* was by far more successful than *Dil Se*, even though the former angered many members of the Muslim minority.

It seems that the audiences did not receive the character well nor his motivations. It can thus be understood that the filmmakers are profiting the most out of the conflict by making movies that generate patriotic reactions and feelings with the main characters filled with nationalistic sentiments. Amar's loyalty to Meghna interferes with his duties as a government servant, therefore, his loyalty as an Indian and as a government worker is questioned. *Dil Se* was a movie made in 1998, whereas *Roja* came out in 1992. It is essential to understand the context in which both films were made in order to have a greater insight while analyzing the causes of the audience reception. In 1992, significant levels of friction were building up between India and Pakistan, and a tense environment was also brewing in the West, as they were gradually becoming increasingly Islamophobic and associated terrorism and extremism with the followers of Islam. As words like extremism and fundamentalism were beginning to creep into Western rhetoric, India saw this as an opportunity to associate the militant factions in Kashmir with extremism, fundamentalism, and terrorism. Therefore, the representation of the Kashmiris was meant to be propaganda to cater to the government's agenda of demonizing the militants of Kashmir. Many non-government organizations remained objective and even testified in an Amnesty International Report of 1992 against the massive human rights violations and atrocities committed by the Indian forces in the region (Gupta, 2003).

The scenario established in *Roja* now makes more sense, as it demonized the Kashmiris, especially Muslims, and made the association that it was their religion that was ultimately making the Kashmiris aggressive. However, *Dil Se* was made a year before a full-fledged armed conflict between the two nations, the Kargil War.

During 1998, the nuclear tests conducted by both countries had deposited stains on their relationship. During this time, it was even more critical to reinforce messages of patriotism and nationalism.



*Figure 5.2.2.3: Meghna is a rape survivor.*

The movie also provides context to the animosity between the Kashmiri people. For instance, the movie talks about a rape survivor from the Kunan Poshpora incident, where the Indian army had allegedly gang-raped many women after a search and interrogation operation (Mattu, 2002). It is reported that women between the ages of 13 and 80 were raped and terrorized by soldiers (*Dil Se* 1998, Figure 5.2.2.3); however, there are still many discrepancies in the official records of the incident (Goldman & Gossman, 1991).

The film portrayed the issue from the perspective of Amar and how his love for a militant girl drives him towards his demise. There was political commentary in the movie, but very minimal compared to other movies directed by Mani Ratnam. The movie begins with Amar coming across a woman covered in a black blanket at the train station waiting for her train. The entire focus of the film is on the metamorphosis of his feelings for the heroine.

Shortly after his encounter with Meghna, Amar embarks on a train to Assam to interview people to find their opinion on the government and the general quality of life. While on his way to Assam, Amar performs the song ‘Chaiyya Chaiyya,’ which is an Urdu language song that hails a person’s love for beauty (*Dil Se* 1998, Figure 5.2.2.4). In one line, the song lauds Urdu as being a sweet language, which is spoken in Kashmir. The cinematography of the song truly captures the beauty of the place, and the lyrics try to put in context. The poetry in the song is flawless and reminiscent of the affinity for poetry, rooted in the Kashmiri culture.



**Figure 5.2.2.4:** Amar performing the song ‘Chaiyya Chaiyya,’ which is an Urdu language song that hails a person’s love for beauty.

Amar works for All India Radio. He travels around northern India to find the real perspectives and attitudes of the people in north eastern states in India. One exciting aspect of the film is that it has shed light on the ethnic population, unlike focusing and labeling all Kashmiris as Muslims, the film brings the indigenous population into the light and a broad mix of languages and dialects which are spoken there. Geographically, Assam shares a border with China; therefore, it is natural for the indigenous population to have facial features and attire slightly resembling Chinese culture. The following screenshot shows Amar talking to a native farmer,

who expresses his grievances with the government and feels like that the authorities have done nothing to safeguard his interests.



**Figure 5.2.2.5:** *The farmer's hat resembles the conical paddy hat that is closely associated with Chinese, indicating the influence of Chinese.*

The farmer's hat resembles the conical paddy hat that is closely associated with Chinese, indicating the influence of Chinese culture on the ethnic Assamese (*Dil Se* 1998, Figure 5.2.2.5). The similarity between Northeastern and Chinese cultures is made to stand out in the movie with Amar continuously teasing Meghna for her flat nose.

Even though Amar holds such a respected position in a reputed media body, even he is naïve and idealistic, as he risks his life to get an interview with the leader of a terrorist group. When his station manager tries to dissuade him, he replies that he is interviewing fellow Indians who are merely annoyed with the system and he needs to get to the bottom of it. He is blindfolded and taken through a forest, which is often used by militants to hide and train without being noticed by the authorities.

The meeting with the leader starts on a shaky foot as Amar assumes that the militants do not speak Hindi or English and is surprised to find out that they are more



cultured than he thought they were. Amar also comments that the militants look just like ordinary Indians, which underlines some of the discrepancies in the media portrayal of these militants. As the authorities were trying to win over support to keep Kashmir as their territory, the media often demonized them, portraying them as extremists, fundamentalists and backward.

The leader of the militant organization is a man of rational judgment and ample qualification. He presents his demands for an Independent state to Amar confidently and even intimidates him by saying: ‘We are not terrorists, we are revolutionaries.’ Implicitly, the film refers to China and Pakistan, the hostile neighbors of India, in aiding the militants in Kashmir and northeastern states of India. Amar brings forth the point that it is unreasonable to train young children into soldiers for terror activities. The conversation relates to the situation in Assam and other areas in the northeast; however, it juxtaposes against the backdrop of the many crimes and injustices that are inflicted on the Kashmiris over the years.

The injustice is highlighted even more when Meghna’s backstory comes to light. At first, it is implied that Meghna suffers from rape trauma syndrome, then later it is revealed that Meghna’s entire family was wiped out in a raid by the Indian forces when she was eight years old. Her parents were killed, she saw her sister being raped right before her eyes and was also brutally raped by the forces as a child. Meghna trained to become a militant to take revenge for the unjust treatment that she and her family received from the hands of the Indian army. The story reveals that Meghna is just one of the many militants trained to wreak havoc on the Indian government for the long list of inhuman deeds on them. In *Dil Se*, the terror groups have no religious

motivations to carry out these activities but are merely seeking justice and liberation from the central government.

### 1.2.3 **Kohram** (1999, Dir. Mehul Kumar.)



**Main Cast:** Amitabh Bachchan as Balbir Singh, Nana Patekar as Major Ajit

Major Balbir Singh performs an assassination attempt on the Home Minister but fails to kill him. He manages to escape from the scene of the crime before getting caught. Now convicted of Marshall law, Major Balbir goes out of sight, vanishing without any trace of his location. Major Ajit has appointed the task to capture or even kill Major Balbir to bring justice.

The film introduces us to Dadabhai, a man with a striking resemblance to Major Balbir, and army's prime suspect as the newly assumed identity of the culprit. Major Ajit disguises himself as a reporter to cover his actual identity and offers Dada Bhai

his services for an interview while trying to uncover his true identity. During this time, he meets a female police officer, Kiran, with a heart of gold, although corrupt at the core.

Just as Ajit is about to give up on Dadabhai, he admits that he is Major Balbir, and explains the reasons behind his deeds. Ajit supports Balbir in uncovering the true intentions of the Home Minister, and the duo embarks on a journey back. As a significant religious event is about to happen, the main villain of the story, a terrorist named Changezi, threatens to disturb the event while the Home Minister rises as a hero to fight him back. Both of them are working on the same plan of disruption, and it is up to both lead characters to stop them at all costs.

### **Textual Analysis**

*Kohram* revolves around the story of an Indian soldier accused of being a traitor after attempting to murder an Indian minister (*Kohram* 1999, Figure 5.2.3.1). On the funeral of his military fellow, Balinder Singh Sodhi misfires at Minister Veer Bhadra Singh, which results in Sodhi topping the hit list by the military.



**Figure 5.2.3.1:** Balbir Singh is an Indian soldier accused of being a traitor after attempting to murder an Indian minister.

Singh abandons his beloved family for the sake of his patriotism. He lives in a downtrodden town guise as a civilian (Dadabhai) living hand to mouth.



**Figure 5.2.3.2:** Indian Army during a training session.

The Indian Army then assigns Major Ajit Arya to capture Sodhi. Arya executes his duty and captures Singh. (Kohram 1999, Figure 5.2.3.2) The movie takes an interesting turn, revealing the crux of the plot. Singh justifies his treachery by illuminating the deep association between Minister Virbhadra Singh and Changezi, a notorious Muslim militant working for the liberation of Kashmir (Kohram 1999, Figure 5.2.3.3).



**Figure 5.2.3.3:** Minister Virbhadra Singh and Changezi, a notorious Muslim militant working for the liberation of Kashmir.

Changezi, as the name implies, is portrayed as a Pakhtoon/Pathan, who is a significant threat to India and Kashmir alike. Although it is never mentioned anywhere in the movie whether Changezi had direct contacts with Pakistan or Afghanistan, his character possesses the destructive nature of Pakhtoons who oppose the Indian state and its control over Kashmir. Changezi threatens Bhadra Singh to help him in freeing his four accomplices, who were captured by the Indian army (Kohram 1999, Figure 5.2.3.4).



**Figure 5.2.3.4:** Changezi threatens Bhadra Singh to help him in freeing his four accomplices, who were captured by the Indian army.

Minister Virbhadra Singh is bound to yield to Changezi demands, so he fakes the abduction of his daughter. Men wearing Salwar Kameez get off a van, and

ruthlessly drag the young lady in (Kohram 1999, Figure 5.2.3.5).



**Figure 5.2.3.5:** Men wearing Salwar Kameez (Islamic dress) get off a van, and ruthlessly drag a young lady in the car.

The maltreatment of women at the hands of these Muslim extremists is quite evident. The kidnapping gives Veer Bhadra Singh a chance to force the government to release Changezi four comrades. Inside the house, Bhadra Singh says that he cannot and will not let any harm happen to his daughter, but his statements to the media are contrary to what he proposes to the cabinet members. It is clear how manipulative politicians can be, as the hypocritical face of the Institute of politics is brought to light.

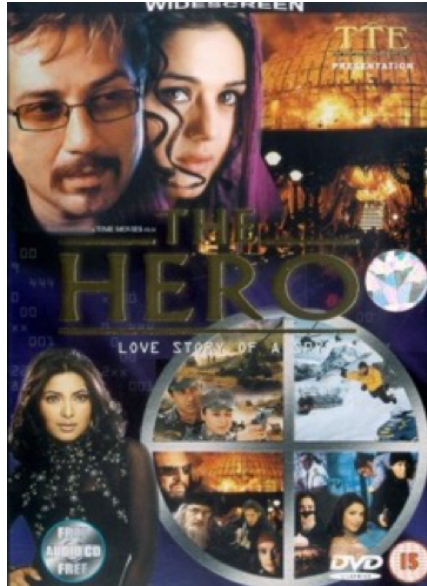
Changezi releases Bhadra's daughter, and she comes to know about the real identity of her father. Along with her, the Army officer whose funeral had been shown at the beginning of the movie go to Bhadra's farmhouse where he is spotted with a woman, indicating how the rulers enjoy their lives in utmost luxury.

Meanwhile, Changezi and Bhadra strike a deal which benefits both the parties. Changezi wants to stop the Hindus from performing the rituals in their shrine, and Bhadra is to be the first one to walk in despite the open threat. This would boost

Bhadra's image and reinforce Changezi's terror. But before the two could execute the plan, Singh and Bhadra are killed by Arya and Sodhi. Changezi's death is the death of a coward, which illustrates how bereft of courage these terrorists are.

*Kohram's* central theme never crosses the realms of Indian patriotism and India's internal politics. It still establishes the fact that Muslims are the reason for the unrest in Kashmir. According to the plot of the movie, their extremist activities create hurdles on the road to the restoration of peace. Moreover, the film sheds a negative light on Pakistan and hints their involvement in the attacks on Indian forces in Kashmir. The hatred for Pakistan became more explicit in the political context during the time the film was released, as it released during the Kargil conflict. Therefore, it is understandable as to why such propaganda made its way into the film and how the Indian army painted it in the hue of perfect patriotism and unshakable morale.

#### 1.2.4 Hero-Love Story of a Spy (2003, Dir. Anil Sharma)



**Main Cast:** Sunny Deol as Arun, Priety Zinta as Reshma, Priyanka Chopra as Shaheen,

In *Hero-Love Story of a Spy* Arun is an agent of RAW working for the Indian government to gather intelligence from across the border and to make sure that any plans against India stop at all cost. He deposes himself in a local village (Kashmir) in order to gather critical intel and trains a local girl Reshma to help him a spy. Both soon fall in love. Through Reshma's help, Arun can diffuse Pakistan's plans to build a high-powered bomb that target India. Pakistan Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) chief Ishaq Khan uncovers Reshma's identity.

Arun and Reshma return to India where they plan their wedding, but as the wedding day finally comes, their hopes and dreams are shattered when ISI launches



an attack on the wedding and takes away Reshma. Arun embarks on a journey to take down Ishaq Khan and his team on his own. His journey leads him to Canada where he disguises himself as a nuclear scientist and marries Shaheen, daughter of Ishaq Khan's associate, to gain a higher level of trust. He locates Reshma at his own wedding with Shaheen, leaving Reshma heartbroken, forcing her to leave and return to Kashmir. Arun successfully exposes Ishaq Khan's plans of stealing a nuclear bomb to the world and takes them down, but with a cost of losing Shaheen in the process. He then returns to his homeland, and then to Kashmir, to be with Reshma.

### **Textual Analysis**

Hero revolves around an Indian spy who works in Kashmir (*Hero-Love Story of a Spy 2003*, Figure 5.2.4 1. Ishaq Khan is shown sharing a table with a Kashmiri jihadi leader, Maulana, who demands his loyalty (*Hero-Love Story of a Spy 2003*, Figure 5.2.4.2). The dialogues exchanged between the two articulate the close association of the Pakistani military with the extremist, jihadi groups operating in Kashmir to liberate it from Indian domination. The focus is on the attainment of nuclear weapons by these groups from Pakistan. Ishaq Khan, who represents the Pakistan intelligence agency (ISI), agrees to facilitate the accessibility to the Pakistani nuclear weapons for the Kashmiri jihadis. Maulana repeatedly reminds Ishaq of the Kashmiri sacrifices to maintain chaos and upheaval in the Indian-occupied Kashmir.



*Figure 5.2.4 1: Arun is an Indian spy who works in Kashmir.*

The plot progresses seamlessly. Like any other Indian movie concerning Kashmir, Kashmiris are shown freedom thirsty. There are men with untamed beards and caps who lecture the masses about the need for action to acquire freedom. Freedom here is linked with Kashmir's association with Pakistan. The biased plot is propagated further when Batra aka Arun Sharma arrives in Kashmir as an Indian who wishes for nothing but the welfare of its people. Throughout the movie, Kashmir is referred to as Paradise.



*Figure 5.2.4.2: Kashmiri jihadi leader, Maulana.*

The movie includes a scene where a religious leader encourages the listeners against the Indian Army. Arun politely talks to him about how worse things will be if the words were against the Pakistani army. The Indian army, here, as compared to

the Pakistani forces, claiming that the latter are intolerant and violent to act.

Arun falls in love with a Kashmiri maiden, Reshma, whom he later trains and deploys as a spy at Colonel Hidayat Ullah's place in Pakistan (*Hero-Love Story of a Spy 2003*, Figure 5.2.4.3). Reshma's residence and the livestock she rears depicts the limited scope for occupation in Kashmir.

Ishaq, who according to the media is in Islamabad's jail, is roaming free with Colonel Hidayat Ullah and his allies. It is assumed that Pakistan has little or no control over its detained criminals, who will go to any extent to harm India.



**Figure 5.2.4.3:** Reshma, a Kashmiri girl spying for India.

Reshma is caught spying for India. She flees without a scar. Arun and Reshma are about to tie the knot when their marriage is interrupted by a blast in the venue, separating the two. The fatal explosion in their ceremony by Ishaq Khan paints a horrifying picture of Pakistani Muslims, who would not hesitate from killing for the sake of their plans. Reshma loses her legs but is saved by a Pakistani family who is aware of her story (*Hero-Love Story of a Spy 2003*, Figure 5.2.4.4). Benevolence on the part of the family expresses the positive side of the Pakistani people. To protect

Reshma from her foes, the Pakistani parents ask their son to take Reshma to Canada for better treatment.



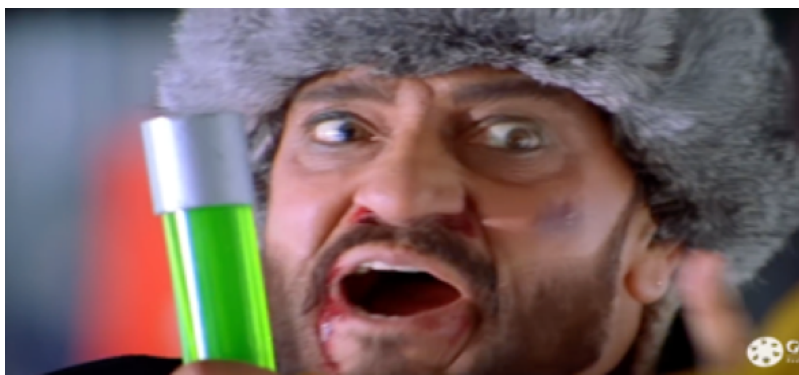
**Figure 5.2.4.4:** Reshma loses her legs but is saved by a Pakistani family who is aware of her story.

Upon her arrival in Canada, Reshma finds out that Arun is alive. Fortunately, the doctor appointed to cure Reshma's paralysis is the daughter of Ishaq Khan's financier in Canada, Mr. Zakaria. Ishaq Khan and his team, adamant about achieving their goal, travel to Canada where they hire nuclear scientists to work for them. Batra disguises himself as a nuclear scientist and starts working with them to know about their intent. Ishaq and his associates have contacts with Muslims from different parts of the world who will help him in his mission. He dials various numbers, and one of them is a Palestinian receiver who guides them about the nature of the nuclear material and other data. It is alarming how Muslims help Ishaq with his evil plans, raising questions about their claims of peace by Islam.



*Figure 5.2.4.5: Ishaq Khan, and his allies take over a train to terrorize the passengers.*

On the revelation that Wahid Khan is Batra, Ishaq Khan, and his allies take over a train to blackmail the Canadian government (*Hero-Love Story of a Spy* 2003, Figure 5.2.4.5). Muslims terrorize the passengers and show no mercy to the children and the elderly. This scene tends to punch up the perception that Muslims are terrorists, with scarcely any regard for life. Ishaq Khan demands their safe exit from the train and no further action in return for the safety of the passengers. Batra comes as the savior and frees the innocent from Ishaq and his group. Batra kills all of them, and Ishaq is forced to swallow his nuclear product (*Hero-Love Story of a Spy* 2003, Figure 5.2.4.6).



*Figure 5.2.4.6: Ishaq Khan is forced to swallow his nuclear product.*

### 1.2.5 **Maa Tujhe Salaam** (Mother, I Salute You, 2002, Dir. Tinnu Verma)



**Main Cast:** Sunny Deol as Major Pratap, Tabu as Sonia Khanna, Arbaz Khan as Albaksh

Indian military officer, Major Pratap Singh (Sunny Deol), is posted in Kashmir. With the help of local men, he is successful in blocking an infiltration attempt by the terrorists.

The film at that point presents a man named Lala. Lala is an effective and powerful man. In the latter part of the movie, it is revealed that behind the drapes, he is a Pakistani operator who helps in getting the trained militants across the border through the passage in the mountains known just to him and his men. In the winter season, the climate conditions end up noticeably unfit for the area's inhabitants, who move to different spots to survive. Lala exploits the unforgiving climate for anti-

national exercises.

Lala has a loyal henchman, Albaksh (Arbaaz Khan). Albaksh is an uneducated person who works as a slave for Lala. Albaksh was orphaned when young and therefore had great respect for Lala, which is why he is ready to crush the slightest hint of opposition to Lala.

Captain Sonia (Tabu), a military intelligence officer, gets the information about Lala and Albaksh's anti-national activities and deploys Major Pratap to Zhonabad. Meanwhile, Albaksh discovers Lala's activities and is remorseful at what he was doing. He opposes Lala, but it only makes matters worse as Lala frames and brands Albaksh as a spy and terrorist. The police arrest Albaksh, but he manages to convince Pratap that he is on their side now.

Subsequently, Major Pratap and Albaksh decide to take Lala out. The authorities do not approve of a full-armed attack against the enemy, but Pratap reaches Zhonabad and decides to fight the battle alone with the help of Albaksh and the local people. Lala is defeated and crushed, and Pratap hails as a hero along with Albaksh.

### **Textual Analysis**

The film engages the audience with anti- Pakistan sentiments from the start. The film begins off with a caption with a voiceover, with the words superimposed on the screen in gold: 'Doodh maangoge toh kheer denge, Kashmir maangoge toh cheer

denge' If you request Milk, we should give you pudding, however if you request Kashmir, we might pulverize you (*Maa Tujhe Salaam* 2002, Figure 5.2.5.1). The line is rough and conveyed in terrible taste, which depicts Kashmir as a question that is under the authority of India and suggests that whoever tries to remove it from India will be smashed. It is totally from the viewpoint of the proprietor and dehumanizes the general population of Kashmir, who are distorted in the film.



**Figure 5.2.5.1:** Words superimposed on the screen in gold: 'Doodh maangoge toh kheer denge, Kashmir maangoge toh cheer denge' If you request Milk, we should give you pudding, however if you request Kashmir, we might pulverize you.

The beginning monologue continues as the narrators compare the line of control between India and Pakistan, which is as red as blood. The comparison invokes the images of violence and gore that have been surrounding Kashmir ever since the dispute started. A montage of the beautiful sky and snowcapped mountains of Kashmir, which have become iconic in their rights, follows the monologue. The camera pans around and moves to the Indian flag, and then we are introduced to the main protagonist of the film.





**Figure 5.2.5.2:** Major Pratap plays the protagonist, who takes a handful of soil and kisses it.

Sunny Deol plays the protagonist, who takes a handful of soil and kisses it (*Maa Tujhe Salaam* 2002, Figure 5.2.5.2). This entire sequence shows that the soil of Kashmir is considered to be a part of India, despite the ongoing conflict, which labels the region as disputed. The scene audaciously claims that Kashmir is a part of India, and therefore, soldiers love it and protect it as their own home.



**Figure 5.2.5.3:** Soldiers using Indian soil sent by their parents to them to rub on their foreheads as the ultimate sign of reverence for their country.

The movie portrays the Indian army as nationalists who love their country more than anything. The blatant show of love is exemplified by soldiers using Indian soil sent by their parents to them to rub on their foreheads as the ultimate sign of reverence for their country (*Maa Tujhe Salaam* 2002, Figure 5.2.5.3).

While the Indian soldiers are the epitome of filial piety and patriotism, the antagonist, Lala, is a selfish traitor who carries out his heinous activities for personal gain. He bargains with the supposed leader of the Pakistani armed forces (*Maa Tujhe Salaam* 2002, Figure 5.2.5.4). This juxtaposes the good and bad as the plot thrives by demonizing the opposing party. The militant fraction in Kashmir is portrayed as primitive and ruthless. They want independence not because of any justified or concrete purpose, but because they lust for power.

The exchanges between Lala and his Pakistani accomplice demonstrates this idea. Lala demands an independent Kashmir, which is why he is siding with the Pakistanis. However, his demand is not for the sake of the people. He makes it clear that he is fighting for an independent Kashmir because he wants to become the Prime Minister of the independent Kashmir. The Pakistani leader looks visibly shaken, implying that he is just agreeing to his demands for the time being and has no real intention of getting Kashmir independence. The film sheds a negative light on to the antagonists ripping them of humanity or any other noble characteristics.



**Figure 5.2.5.4:** *Lala, a selfish traitor carries out his heinous activities for personal gain.*

The movie showcases Pakistan as the primary reason for unrest in Kashmir,

blaming them for funding and arming militants. A green box containing ammunition and the Pakistani symbol, the crescent, and a star, create the association in the minds of the viewers that all acts of terrorism have links with Pakistan (*Maa Tujhe Salaam* 2002, Figure 5.2.5.5). Even in this scene, the schism between India and Pakistan reinforce the animosity between the people. For instance, in the scene where Pratap is talking to another officer, the line of control between India and Pakistan is carefully placed right behind in the background. The red line signifies the constant struggle of the Indian army to keep the rebels at bay, while also denoting the fearlessness of the Indians, who guard their country with the utmost valor and courage.



**Figure 5.2.5.5:** *A green box containing ammunition and the Pakistani symbol, the crescent, and a star.*

The movie lacks any real conviction in the depiction of Kashmiris and showcases them as primitive. Moreover, Lala is shown to be a typical tribal man who is merely abetting Pakistani forces. He is illiterate and uses primitive tools. Even in an advanced era, Lala's men are riding horses, and despite Lala's influence and help from Pakistan, they do not have easy means of transportation. Therefore, the representation at some points can be considered as downright ludicrous and factually incorrect.

In another sequence, a young Kashmiri man, representing the Hindu faction, questions Lala's authority. The man bravely stands up to Lala and questions him as to why he is using the earning of the region for his agenda. In response, Albaksh beats the man unconscious, thus showing blind allegiance of the Kashmiris to the militants. The film reduces the Kashmir issue to a 'Muslim Problem', rather than a problem for the whole of Kashmir. The Hindu segment of the population is shown as righteous and learned, whereas the Muslims are merely acting this way due to external influences. The film can thus be called heavily biased and inaccurate with details.

Another sequence which seems to defame Islam and Muslims implicitly is when Albaksh realizes that he had been fighting for the wrong people and apologizes to the man he had beaten up earlier. He requests their prayers to help him fight against Lala, and the Hindu man brings a dish used for the worship of Hindu deities, carrying incense sticks and flowers. The man blesses Albaksh and hugs him like a brother. This whole act seems like a denunciation of Albaksh's religion as he joins forces with another religion, which turns him into a changed man and on the supposed right side of the law. This scene signifies Albaksh's transition into enlightenment, as he sees the truth now.



**Figure 5.2.5.6:** *Idol of Hanuman, the Hindu god of strength, a symbol that the movie is trying to create by associating Hinduism with peace and love.*

After the ritual, Albaksh tearfully hugs the man and his son, and in the background, is the idol of Hanuman, the Hindu god of strength, and his presence is a massive symbol that the movie is trying to create by associating Hinduism with peace and strength, whereas the religion of Islam is the one dictating the antagonists (*Maa Tujhe Salaam* 2002, Figure 5.2.5.6).

Another inclusion of Hindu deities comes in later scenes where enemies surround Pratap. He invokes the Hindu deity of strength and successfully destroys the enemy. The film tries to view the Kashmir conflict as a war between righteous Hindus and inhuman Muslims. Throughout the film, only Indian soldiers are shown wearing uniforms, whereas the Pakistani army wears civilian dress that makes them look more like militants than decent soldiers. Moreover, the movie misrepresents Kashmiris and the Pakistani army by showing the concept of Jihad in an erroneous light. The word jihad means 'struggle,' whereas when the Pakistani forces are about to clash with the Indian forces, and they scream 'Jihad', instead of the actual battle cry called 'nara-e-takbeer', which is what Muslims scream before going into battle.



**Figure 5.2.5.7:** *Pakistani flag is hoisted atop a small shrine.*

The Indians are shown as noble as ever, and even in their deaths, they are glorified as martyrs. The scene shows their bodies covered in the Indian flag as Pratap mourns their loss. Conversely, there is a scene where the Pakistani flag is hoisted atop a small shrine by a young boy after Albaksh is captured (*Maa Tujhe Salaam* 2002, Figure 5.2.5.7).



**Figure 5.2.5.8:** *Albaksh represents the enlightened man who now knows the truth and expresses his hatred and disregard for Pakistan.*

Albaksh eyes the flag with great spite as it is brandished in front of him, and in the background, the instrumental version of Pakistan's national anthem can be heard. Albaksh represents the enlightened man who now knows the truth and expresses his

hatred and disregard for Pakistan (*Maa Tujhe Salaam* 2002, Figure 5.2.5.8). His animosity for Pakistan is so intense that in the scene where he finally kills Lala, he calls him ‘Pak se milke iss zameen ko na paak karne wale’. Pak is a Farsi/Urdu word which means ‘pure’, and the word is the shortened word for Pakistan, which means land of pure. Therefore, the rough translation of the dialogue is that Lala joined forces with Pakistan and tried to taint Kashmir.

While the Indian soldiers hold the Indian flag high (*Maa Tujhe Salaam* 2002, Figure 5.2.5.9), the film dramatically disrespects the Pakistanis, their culture, and even their flag to the point that Lala is killed over the Pakistani flag, which is lying on the ground.



*Figure 5.2.5.9: Indian soldiers hold the Indian flag high.*

The movie contains hate speech in the form of dialogues against Kashmiris. It disregards their actual reasons for demanding a separate nation and instead portrays the conflict as one man’s desire for power. The film glorifies the Indian army and their endeavors in dealing with the conflict, while the actual issue is far more multifaceted than it is shown. The antagonist falling dead on the Pakistani flag while the dead bodies of his accomplices surround him is a clear sign of hate and bigotry in Indian cinema, which tries to impose the idea that Kashmiris are manipulated and



are made to demand a separate nation by Pakistan. The movie also caters towards supporting Islamophobia around the world. Therefore, the film cannot be considered an accurate representation of the real issues, which stands unresolved to this day.

#### 1.2.6 **Zameen** (Land, 2003, Dir. Rohit Shetty),



**Main Cast:** Ajay Devgan as Colonel Ranvir, Abhishek Bachchan as Jaydev

The film takes its inspiration from a real incident that happened with the Israel Defense Force (IDF) in 1976 in which the PLO and German Group Revolutionary Cells held 102 people hostages. The film begins with authorities actively pursuing the dangerous terrorist Zaheer Khan. Colonel Ranvir Singh leads the operation, and Zaheer is taken into the Indian army's custody. Meanwhile, militants from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir are working with ISI (Inter-Service Intelligence) and the Pakistani army to infiltrate Indian Kashmir. ISI reveal a list of their agents who are active in



India and have taken up mundane jobs to carry out their heinous crimes.

Jaydev Malhotra works for the Anti-Terrorist squad in Mumbai which has recently stopped arms smuggling attempt by an ISI agent. The weapons are later revealed to be from the same battalion which is under the supervision of Ranvir Singh. Ranvir realizes that there is a traitor amongst them, and as soon as he gets his suspicion on one of his subordinates, he is poisoned and killed.

Ranvir Singh and Jaydev were assigned to the same group to crack terrorist cells in the country. Both of them already share a history, as they once fought side by side in the same battalion, but Jaydev could not handle the bloodshed and soon quit the army. Therefore, Jaydev and Ranvir have their fair share of differences. In the meantime, the terrorists are actively working on their plans to exert pressure on the Indian government to release Zaheer. One of the ISI agents' bribes two police officers at the airport to allow terrorists to board a flight from Mumbai to Kathmandu. One of the passengers is Jaydev's fiancé, who works as a flight attendant along with Jaydev's foster father.

The terrorists forced the pilot to fly to Kazan, which is in the Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Armed militants surround the plane once it lands. The authorities begin their talks with the officials in Pakistan to try and convince them to send the Pakistani army or allow the Indian army to enter the region to rescue the hostages. The police and army work closely to find out the traitor in Ranvir's battalion who had been supplying the terrorists with ammunition.

However, soon Ranvir and Jaydev come up with a plan to rescue the civilians

and apprehend the terrorists. Jaydev and Ranvir come out victorious from that fight and manage to capture Zaheer again.

### Textual Analysis

In the very beginning, two of the most successful singers in India, Shaan, and KK, sing a patriotic song lauding the efforts of the army to keep the country safe (*Zameen* 2003, Figure 5.2.6.1). As Shaan and KK walk toward the camera, various clips play in the background, reinforcing the real agenda of the film, which is to arouse patriotism and increase support for the Indian armies and their endeavors to keep the nation safe. A conference of politicians is called to discuss the terrorist threat to India; the militants are targeting not just temples, but mosques as well. Therefore, the movie consolidates the idea that the objective of the terrorists does not spring from religion.



**Figure 5.2.6.1:** Singers, Shaan, and KK, sing a patriotic song lauding the efforts of the army to keep the country safe.

Immediately after the song, the scene shifts to the snow-covered valley of Kashmir, but the background score reiterates the approaching danger. The music and

the scenic beauty are contradicting with each other, but the director is trying to establish the morbid reality that is now associated with Kashmir.



**Figure 5.2.6.2:** *Indian Air forces carrying out their operation of pursuing a notorious terrorist.*

The scene then shifts to an army camp in Kashmir where Indian forces are carrying out their operation of pursuing a notorious terrorist who goes by the name Zaheer (*Zameen* 2003, Figure 5.2.6.2). The movie establishes a secular approach to the issue of Kashmir by mentioning that the terrorists are defiling both temples and mosques. However, the name of the terrorist is an Islamic one, and most of the terrorists are Muslims, aided by a country that was also established on religious grounds, Pakistan (*Zameen* 2003, Figure 5.2.6.3). Therefore, the agenda of the movie is to differentiate between the Muslims of India and the Muslims of Pakistan, as it tries to address the conflict as national not religious. Therefore, the movie slanders Pakistan and the Kashmiris in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.



*Figure 5.2.6.3: Notorious terrorist Zaheer.*

The film follows the same formula that is common in Indian movies that assigns terrorists with Inhuman characteristics. This can be seen in the following exchange between Zaheer and Ranvir, where the latter tells him: ‘Humaray desh mein kutte ko marne ki permission nahin hai’, which translates to, ‘In our country, we are not allowed to kill dogs’ (*Zameen* 2003, Figure 5.2.6.4). This establishes the idea that terrorists are seen as degenerates and low-lives that deserve no positive human sentiments or emotions.



*Figure 5.2.6.4: Zaheer threatens Ranvir and tells him that ‘this is my land, and here we are allowed to kill dogs’*

This contrasts with what Zaheer tells him around the end when he is released to be united with his friends. Zaheer threatens Ranvir and tells him that ‘this is my land, and here we are allowed to kill dogs’. Even though the dialogue is delivered out

of spite for Ranvir, through the Dutch tilt of the camera and the desaturated colors of the scene, one can say that it depicts a very sinister aspect of the Pakistanis and Kashmiris in the occupied area.



*Figure 5.2.6.5: Muzaffarabad, capital city of the Pakistan-administered Kashmir.*

The scene then shifts to an old village, Muzaffarabad, which is the capital of the Pakistan-administered Kashmir (*Zameen* 2003, Figure 5.2.6.5). It implies that the village is the hideout for terrorists who try to infiltrate to India.



*Figure 5.2.6.6: Vehicle with Pakistani flag on its doors.*

A car drives inside the village which has the Pakistani flag on its doors, and afterward, a man in a military uniform exits the car along with another companion (*Zameen* 2003, Figure 5.2.6.6). The image signifies the association of terrorists with

Pakistan. They are assigned the role of planting terrorism in the country for personal gains. There is no back-story attached with the terrorist to give the viewers the context for the unrest in Kashmir. The terrorists are portrayed as an extension of the Pakistani army, implying that the authorities in Pakistan are manipulating the people in Kashmir under their jurisdiction as they train them to infiltrate and act as agents for the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan.

The men are ordinary village folks who carry guns. They are briefed about their mission, which will start when they reach India. The military officer and companion explain their role and tell them to let them know about the people who will be aiding and abetting them in their mission.

The people shown as ISI agents are normal people with ordinary jobs, but behind the curtains, they are trained spies who are involved in secret missions (Zameen 2003, Figure 5.2.6.7). Pakistan has enough funds to keep their terrorist cells and spies operating in India. They even reveal that they also have a spy working as a top official in the Indian army.



**Figure 5.2.6.7:** ISI agents are normal people with ordinary jobs, but behind the curtains, they are trained spies who are involved in secret missions.

The ISI spies are subjected to intense training that helps them conceal their identity in public, but they are weak characters who lack conviction in their mission as the interaction between Fareed, an alleged ISI spy, and Jaydev shows that the former is intimidated and dominated by Jaydev's presence.



*Figure 5.2.6.8: Nobility as quality associated with soldiers.*

The films reinforce the perception that views valor the nobilities as qualities associated by soldiers and cannot be attained by terrorists (*Zameen* 2003, Figure 5.2.6.8).

The movie treats the Pakistani army and militants as the same entity without making conscious attempts to distinguish between the two, showing only one person in a military uniform, who is supposedly the one leading the militants against India. The rest of the terrorists are shown wearing Kurta Salwar, which is the traditional clothing of Pakistan. The background score for Pakistanis sounds very Middle Eastern in its tune, which further tries to pave their association with the Orient, emphasizing their cultural links with Islam.

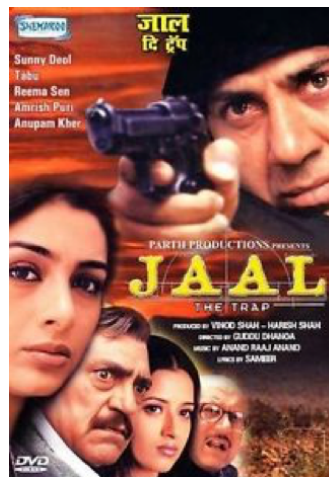
In the final chase involving Zaheer, Ranvir and Jaydev 'Vande Mataram' is played in the background, highlighting the patriotic element and again juxtaposing



the valor of the Indian forces against the cowardice of the terrorists and Pakistanis, who are annihilated in the following scenes.

In conclusion, the movie is not an accurate depiction of the real tension surrounding Kashmir. The film is a homage to the Indian army, glorifying their efforts in dealing with terrorists and militants in Kashmir. The film provides no real insight into the reasons for Kashmir conflict and merely reduces the whole issue to Pakistan's terrorism in the country to gain strategic advantage. The film does not talk about the unfair practices of the army, which has been the subject of many debates and has also led to many petitions filed by the human rights organizations operating in the region (Goldman & Gossman, 1991). Therefore, the film is a biased and reductionist representation of the actual issue.

### 1.2.7 Jaal: The Trap (2003, Dir. Guddu Dhanoa)



**Main Cast:** Sunny Deol as Ajay, abu as Neha Pandit, Reema Sen as Anita



*Jaal: The Trap* is a 2003 action drama that tells the story of an Indian man, Ajay, who becomes a stake for the terrorists after the love of his life is captured by a Kashmiri terrorist group. He fights his way through to save her, but only to find out that he landed himself in a bigger conspiracy.

Kaul family, consisting of four members: Major Amrish and his spouse Sudha, a daughter, and a son named Ajay who live in Kashmir. Ajay meets Neha Pandit who is a widow, however, he is not deterred by this and tries to convince R.K Sharma, her father-in-law, to bless them as a couple. After the approval of R.K Sharma, when Ajay and Neha were about to start a new life, Neha gets captured by a terrorist group led by Junaid Afghani. In exchange for Neha's freedom, they want their accomplice released. They also demand Ajay hand over Anita Chaudhary, daughter of Bhagwat Chaudhary, the home minister of India.

To get Neha Pandit back, Ajay now has to abduct Anita Chaudhary for the terrorist group. He flies to New Zealand where Anita lives under the supervision of Ajay's father with tight security. During his time in New Zealand, Anita falls in love with him. Ajay uses her feelings to lure her out of security and then hands her over to the terrorist group. Later, it is revealed that Neha is a terrorist as well and was using Ajay to get her husband, Naveed Rabbani out of jail. Ajay manages to escape from them and makes a plan to turn the table.

Ajay gets hold of Rabbani who was to be released in exchange for Anita and handcuffs him to a train. The film has a happy ending with Ajay killing the terrorists and Anita killing Neha. The Indian forces capture Naved Rabbani.

## Textual Analysis

The film *Jaal: The Trap* is a propaganda movie. It is biased with nationalistic sentiments and Islamophobia. This stigma could be one of the reasons for the poor performance of the film in the box office. ‘The opening shot shows a man slowly wriggling his hands cuffed behind his back. The movie does not even take a second to establish a power dynamic, immediately giving a perception to the viewer that it is about hierarchy in the society, a hierarchy both financial and moral. An image of a man in handcuffs usually elicits the perception of guilt, crime, and moral depravity. Even before knowing the character or the variables of the individual, this small detail is likely to create a compelling and most likely negative image of the man that is shown on screen’ (Sijil, 2005, 34).



**Figure 5.2.7.1:** *The handcuffed man assigned with stereotypical Muslim man characteristics such as wearing the traditional Salwar Kameez.*

The handcuffed man is assigned with stereotypical Muslim man characteristics such as a beard and wearing the traditional Salwar, Kameez, and a cap usually worn by Muslims (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.1).



**Figure 5.2.7.2:** Stereotypical Muslim man characteristics such as a beard and wearing the traditional Salwar, Kameez, and a cap usually worn by Muslims.

The man in traditional Muslim attire is kneeling in front of the authority (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.2). The positioning of the character is degrading and dehumanizing at the same time. The character, even though he is in handcuffs, does not show any emotions. Thus, the composition of this particular frame shows domination and superiority over the culture that the character is supposedly portraying. The most exciting thing about the whole sequence is the exchange of dialogues between the officers and the Muslim man. They ask him about the motive or objective of the terrorists. To all their questions, the handcuffed man, Naveed Rabbani, replies with one word: Jihad. The word, often demonized by Western media is, associated with Muslims, which, according to extremist ideology, is the struggle against harsh elements in society. Terrorist organizations then and even now use jihad to justify some of their atrocious acts and missions they carry out. He lacks emotions on his face and talks about killing Indian officers and refers to his people as martyrs. The scene strips terrorists from human emotions and depicts biases towards, Muslims and Kashmiris.

The terrorists are showcased as uneducated and belonging to remote villages.

A man is shown running across a group of children who are reciting the Quran, which is the holy book of Muslims (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.3). Interestingly, the very next scene is that of young men carrying guns while exclaiming ‘Allah Hu.’



*Figure 5.2.7.3: Group of children reciting the Quran.*

‘Allah Hu’ is how Muslims invoke their God, and in the following scene, as the messenger continues running the young men, who are presumably being trained to become terrorists, chant God’s name while carrying their guns. It is the most obvious way of associating violence with religion because in one-part children are reading the book and the very next scene shows them training to use guns. These children are brainwashed by their holy book to carry out terrorist activities, and they are conditioned explicitly to engage in violent behavior. Thus, the movie portrays its version of Islamophobia.

The messenger finally reaches Junaid Bhai and tells him that their plan for kidnapping the home minister’s daughter in New Zealand has failed. Junaid Bhai, who is still not being shown upfront by the camera, hears the news and immediately an ‘Azaan’ is heard, which is the call for prayer according to Islam. The man wears the Muslim cap, which symbolically shows him donning or initiating himself into a

violent cult (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.4). The entire sequence has explicit references to demonizing not just the terrorists as individuals, but the culture and even religion, which is identified as a root of their violent and irrational militant behavior.



**Figure 5.2.7.4:** *The man wears the Muslim cap, which symbolically shows him donning or initiating himself into a violent cult.*

The snowcapped mountains indicate that the film is set against the backdrop of the Northern areas, where Kashmir is. There is no explicit mention of the valley, but in many ways, the terrorists identify themselves with the region and its people.



**Figure 5.2.7.5:** *The camera zooms in on Junaid Afghani, further underlining his cultural background and religious affiliations.*

The camera zooms in on Junaid Afghani, further underlining his cultural background and religious affiliations (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.5). The

movie then shifts to the main protagonist, Ajay, who is established as a patriot through his introduction song. There are recurrent images of and references to Hindu gods and goddesses, which again reinforces the idea that Indian culture and Hinduism, as the predominant religion of India. Contrary to the depiction of Islam in the movie, Hinduism is associated with love, honor, and bravery. One part of the song that stands out is the part where the hero holds up a blade and slides his hand over it, a sign that they are not afraid to use force and violent means to combat anyone. Therefore, the image of Indians is juxtaposed with the militants, who are opposites.

The entire song is performed in front of a big crowd (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.6).



**Figure 5.2.7.6:** *Ajay, the protagonist is established as a patriot through his introduction song.*

The motive of the militants is never fully explained while the motive of the Indians for engaging violence is portrayed as self-defense. The crowd around the performance of the actor shows conformity and unity with the ideas promoted by the song. It implies that all Indians work by the same principles of love, peace, honor, and valor. Ajay exhibits these virtues when he first meets Junaid Afghani. The dominance and superiority of the Indians is established through their ways of

interaction with the public and even the colors used.

Ajay wears a shiny red jacket, whereas militants wear dull colors like black, blue, beige, and gray (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.7). The color red shows dominance, strength, virility, and passion, whereas the dress code of the militants is primitive and assigns them passive identities. These speculations of dominance reinforce when Ajay punches the terrorist and threatens him instead.



**Figure 5.2.7.7:** *The color red shows dominance, strength, virility, and passion, whereas the dress code of the militants is primitive and assigns them passive identities.*

The terrorist passively takes the blow and holds his men back from shooting or touching Ajay under the pretext that he has bigger plans for him. Junaid Afghani threatens Ajay by giving him a glimpse of their inhumanity by throwing Neha's brother out of the helicopter to his death. He then proudly comments: 'Hamaray usoolon mei apne maqsad ko hasil karne ke liye kisi ka bhi khoon karna jaiz hai', which means that according to their rules, they are allowed to kill anyone and everyone in order to obtain their objective. Therefore, for them killing someone is not a big deal. The terrorist's cruelty and inhumanity are juxtaposed with Ajay's fearlessness and uprightness.



Despite the constant emphasis on the morality of Indians, it is interesting to note that the significant irony in the movie as Ajay still fooled a girl to reunite and save the love of his life. The hero's endeavors to save Neha overshadows the fact that he decides to not just aid and abet terrorists, but also to cheat an innocent girl, jeopardizing her life in the process (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.8).



*Figure 5.2.7.8: The hero's endeavors to save Neha.*

Ajay's image as a patriot shatters, and it is difficult to sympathize with the character's struggle due to the superficiality of his objective and a lack of farsightedness. Besides Anita, Ajay also betrays his father and uses his influence to capture the girl and produce her in front of the terrorist. The choices made by Ajay raises questions about his moral standing. Though Ajay has a backup plan of saving both the girls, his plan flops when Neha reveals herself. Therefore, the movie while reinforcing the image of an Indian man as strong and sturdy, also establishes the character as just weak and easily manipulated. Neha gives Ajay a cold-blooded stare when she reveals that she is not Neha Pandit, but the wife of the terrorist Naved Rabbani, who was shown earlier in the custody of the police.





*Figure 5.2.7.9: Nusrat's (Neha) betrayal proves to be a significant setback for Ajay.*

Nusrat's (Neha) betrayal proves to be a significant setback for Ajay, and he nearly loses his life (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.9). The bargain for Naveed Rabbani is made, and in the next sequence, the authorities escort the terrorist outside the jail. As usual, he shows no emotions or remorse and continues to walk to his freedom. There is little in the movie that can help the audience to sympathize or empathize with the characters, which is why it fails to propagate any strong message (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.10). There is no backstory of the terrorists that can further elucidate why they chose their path.



*Figure 5.2.7.10: Neha with her partners.*

As the film was supposed to show the triumph of the righteous hero and how he made amends for his nation single-handedly, he tricks and annihilates the

terrorists. Despite his feelings for Neha, he overpowers her, and Anita shoots her dead. (*Jaal: The Trap* 2003, Figure 5.2.7.11). The reason why Anita is chosen over Neha or Nusrat could have signified the elimination of competition and reinforces the dominance of Indian culture over the culture of the militants.



**Figure 5.2.7.11:** *The power dynamics reflect through colors. Anita is wearing a white top, whereas Neha is wearing a black shirt with a green shawl.*

The power dynamics reflect through colors. Anita is wearing a white top, whereas Neha is wearing a black shirt with a green shawl. The green is a color for Muslims and black generally holds negative connotations.

The film showcases terrorist and militant factions in India as mere objects that are only rebelling in the name of their religion, fighting against a country that has not wronged them in any way. The bias is visible and, the point of view is completely one-sided in raising the issue of Kashmir.

### 1.2.8 Fanaa (Destroyed, 2006, Dir. Kunal Kohli)



**Main Cast:** Aamir Khan as Rehan, Kajol as Zooni, Tabu as Malini Tyagi

*Fanaa* is a love story set in the background of militancy. Zooni, a blind girl falls for Rehan, a tourist guide. Rehan gets killed in a bomb blast. Zooni retains her eyesight and gives birth to Rehan's child. Later in the movie, it is revealed that Rehan is still alive and he is a terrorist. She crosses paths with him again while Rehan is working on a secret mission. Zooni is unable to recognize him but is still attracted to him. Torn between love and national duty, *Fanaa* explores how political views can destroy relationships. Zooni Ali Beg, played by Kajol, is a visually impaired Kashmiri girl who is traveling for the first time without her parents to Delhi. Her dance group accompanies her, for a performance during the Republic Day ceremony. In Delhi, she meets Rehan Khan (Aamir Khan), a tour guide, who shows interest in her. Even though her friends warn her about his character, she still falls in love with Rehan. Zooni spends her last night in Delhi with Rehan. The next day Zooni is on a

train going back to Kashmir. Rehan comes to send her off but, both realize that they cannot leave each other and decides to get married. Zooni undergoes surgery to regain her sight. She later comes to know that Rehan got killed in a bomb blast.

The movie later reveals that Rehan is part of a militant group fighting for an independent Kashmir. As they are hot on the group's trail, they surmise that the bombing for orchestrated by one of their members who had been studying the place for a long time, equipping him with the knowledge of planting the bomb in such a precise location. As they trace the mastermind's footsteps, the narrative changes to Rehan's perspective, revealing that he had been the perpetrator this entire time. His meticulous planning is shown through a flashback as he befriends and murders a security guard, fakes his death to avoid detection. The audiences also find out that Rehan loved Zooni but gives her up due to his real identity.

The film jumps forward seven years, and Rehan is working on another dangerous IKF mission. Rehan's mission is to infiltrate into the Indian army camp and get hold of a trigger to a nuclear bomb, which is with the terrorists. Only the trigger is required to make the ammunition operational. Rehan steals the trigger, but by this time Malini has already figured out his plan and dispatched forces to apprehend him. A chase ensues, and Rehan escapes. However, he is severely injured. He somehow makes his way to a cottage to seek help; the resident of the cottage is none other than Zooni. She takes Rehan in, not knowing that he is the same man she fell in love with seven years ago. Zooni lives in the cottage with her father and her seven-year-old son, whose actual father is Rehan. Rehan gets close to the entire family, and his feelings for Zooni reemerges. Zooni also is attracted to Rehan, but

she remains silent about it.

Eventually, Rehan reveals that he is not only the man Zooni loved but also the father of her child. Zooni is hurt but later on, admits that she cannot live her life without him. She decides to legitimize their relationship, and Zooni's father subsequently' conducts their marriage. Everything seems to go well for the family until Malini publishes a report, with details of Rehan. Zooni's father stumbles upon the report and confronts him about it. Zooni's father gets killed by Rehan during the confrontation. Rehan's behavior around the house becomes even more suspicious, and when Zooni asks him about her father, he downplays it.

Rehan later kills the officer who discovered him. Zooni watches a news report and realizes that Rehan is behind all the murders. She steals the trigger and takes her son to the security post where she finds only blood. She leaves a message for Malini on the radio for help. Rehan tries to convince Zooni to hand over the trigger to him and manages to take the trigger from her, but she runs after him to stop and shoots him. Malini arrives with reinforcements just in time to save Zooni and her child. Rehan dies in Zooni's arms and is buried right next to Zooni's father. In the closing scene, Zooni sits with her son in front of the graves. Son asks her if his father was wrong? He did what he thought was right, she replies. Both of them profess their love for Rehan and leave.

## Textual Analysis

The movie opens with a montage of serene sights, encapsulating the scenic beauty of Kashmir. The frame dissolves to a variety of locations in Srinagar and the tune of the song ‘Sare jahan se achha’ (Better than the Rest of the World) playing in the background.



**Figure 5.2.8.1:** *A man rowing a Kashmiri canoe defines the feature of the region.*

The visual of a man rowing a Kashmiri canoe defines the feature of the region (Fanaa 2006, Figure 5.2.8.1). The scene then dissolves to the thick pines that punctuate the beauty of the valley (Fanaa 2006, Figure 5.2.8.2). However, all these identifying spots of the region superimpose against an Indian patriotic song.



**Figure 5.2.8.2:** *Thick pine trees punctuate the beauty of the valley.*

The song is a tribute to the beauty of India and having played against a mix of scenes showing Kashmir's beauty, serves as an affirmation that Kashmir belongs to India, setting an emotional mood that invokes nationalism within its viewers (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.3). The sequence contains a scene of an army van driving by. The placement of the visuals legitimizes the perspectives that view the army as the peacekeepers of the valley.



*Figure 5.2.8.3: Serene sights, encapsulating the scenic beauty of Kashmir.*

Another scene shows birds flying over a mosque. This places religion as another integral part of the region (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.4).



*Figure 5.2.8.4: Birds flying over a mosque.*

The movie then shows a group of Kashmiri children singing a song and saluting

the Indian flag (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.5).



*Figure 5.2.8.5: The Indian Flag.*

This shot again reinforces the idea that the general population, including the youth, have a great love for India and are happy being a part of the nation (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.6). This scene intends to target the sense of nationalism in the audience. The beginning is indeed a perfect tribute to the valley, and initially, it seems that it is ultimately trying to overlook some of the apparent discontent and disturbance in this calm and serene valley.



*Figure 5.2.8. 6: Children singing a patriotic song.*





*Figure 5.2.8.7: Zooni salutes the flag in the wrong direction due to her visual impairment.*

Then enters the heroine of the film, Zooni, a blind Kashmiri girl, who salutes the flag in the wrong direction due to her visual impairment (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.7).

From this point on, it is evident that Zooni loves her country a lot, a trait that she obtained from her parents. Her father gives a cryptic message about making the right choice, alluding to the choice that the Kashmiri have to make between India and Pakistan. He muses that it is easy to distinguish between right and wrong, but when one has to choose between two right choices, that is the real dilemma. This statement represents the choices India and Pakistan for Kashmiris, deeming both countries right in their respective stands. Compared to previous productions on similar issues, it is interesting to note that this movie did not demonize their neighbor and rival nation, Pakistan.

Instead, the film attempts to portray the issue entirely to a Kashmiri problem, as opposed to a general conflict between two conflicting countries. This diplomatic stand may also be the result of the ongoing affairs between Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and General Musharraf in the year 2006. There were many efforts to

improve the relations between the two countries including the launch of bus service between Amritsar and Lahore during the period. The British had also started a massive pen pal campaign to spur a dialogue between the citizens of each country (Maclean & Eltringham, 2014). Moreover, the two choices do not take into account the third solution demanded by the Kashmiris, which is explained in the later part of the movie. Zooni's mother shares her opinion that it is essential to follow the heart and make decisions accordingly. Even though the statement is then used to allude to matters of love and finding a suitable match for Zooni but given the nationalistic opening of the film. These dialogues evoke a mutual love and patriotism amongst viewers for India, who may make their conclusions regarding the issue based on their sentiments.

Filmed in the picturesque locations of Srinagar, *Fanaa* underlines the scenic beauty with various references to fairy tales and a firm belief in a fairy-tale-like romance, which is evident in the doe-eyed heroine. The love between Zooni's parents is an embodiment of an ideal romance, which is set against the grim backdrop of the political crises in Kashmir. The idealism of Zooni and her parents underline the romantic nature of the Kashmiris, and the references to Zooni's Shahzada (Prince) also aim to add a small element of fantasy to the story. This is what *Fanaa* fundamentally focuses on, which is the romance between Zooni and Rehan, the situations they go through along with the political situation of Kashmir.

In order to further understand the regional depiction in the movie, it is pertinent to have a sound insight into each character. The main protagonist is Zooni, a blind Kashmiri girl, who is blessed with highly supportive parents, who do not just

encourage her to participate in a dance show held in Delhi but also to find the love of her life. Both her mother and father are exuberant and have a romantic take on life, which also has a profound impact on Zooni's general outlook on life. The heartwarming relationship between Zooni and her parents is an excellent example of how vivacious Kashmiris genuinely are. Their resilience is remarkable even in the face of many troubles, both social and political.

Moreover, despite being from an Islamic background, the depiction of Zooni's family is entirely different from the conventional portrayal of Muslim families in Bollywood cinema. Furthermore, the family is also shown to be unaffected by the political circumstances in Kashmir. Zooni lives a peaceful life away from all the violence and misery present in Kashmiri society. As Zooni and her friends make their way to leave for Delhi, an Indian soldier guarding the station reinforces that the Indian army is the one maintaining law and order in the region, allowing people like Zooni and her friends live a life that is untainted from by violence.

Zooni's mother always gives her hope of finding the man of her dreams and even writes little verses for her. She tells her what to say when she finds the one., It translates to translates to 'If my breath finds shelter in your heart, my life will be annihilated in your love'.



**Figure 5.2.8.8:** Zooni's mother always gives her hope of finding the man of her dreams and even writes little verses for her.

Those were the parting words of her mother as Zooni embarks on the train to Delhi (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.8). Although the verse carries a deep message of love, it is also bleak in the sense that the speaker wishes to remain alive in the heart of their loved ones, even if their physical self-destroys in the process. Therefore, from these lines, one can easily make out the dark undertones in the later part of the film. Moreover, this scene reflects the handful of people who have managed to escape the sadness and anguish present in the Kashmiri society and shows the real optimism that the news media has failed to highlight.



**Figure 5.2.8.9:** Zooni embodies all these aspects of an average Kashmiri girl and Rehan is a tour guide from Kashmir.

More importantly, Zooni's family tries to create a commonality by showing

that an average Kashmiri family is no different from the families' in other parts of the country. Even though there may be much bloodshed, some people still manage to survive without letting anything dampen their spirits. Zooni embodies all these aspects of an average Kashmiri girl (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.9). Rehan is a tour guide from Kashmir and is a heart rob, a romantic at heart who manages to melt every girl's heart with his poetry. Poetry is as an essential cultural motif, as literature and poetry are vital part of the Kashmiri identity. Kashmiri poetry dates as far back as 5000 years. Historians have acknowledged the critical role played by the Kashmir valley in the disciplines of art, culture, and philosophy, resulting in the enrichment of Kashmiri prose and poetry (Bhatt, Padamshri, Kaul, Dhār, Shalia). Kashmiri poetry has often been most active element of their identity as it carries a strong romantic and mystical essence and often underlines topics about divinity, existence, love, and mortality. Rehan manages to attract Zooni with the power of his words, and soon romance blossoms between them.

As Zooni's purpose in Delhi is to perform on the Republic Day, she sings a song lauding the beauty and diversity of India. The song is titled 'Desh mera rangeela', which translates to 'My country is colorful', which again reinforces the idea that Kashmiris love India and everyone celebrates its diversity (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.10).



*Figure 5.2.8.10: Zooni sings a song lauding the beauty and diversity of India.*

On the other hand, Rehan's is often showcased as a flirt indicating that their romance will not last due to Rehan's inability to commit. This is also a different portrayal of Kashmiris, who are shown as traditional, but Zooni and Rehan seem to be moderate as they have no qualms spending a night together and consummating their relationship. Even when Zooni becomes an unwed mother and starts raising her son, there is no opposition from her family: it seems that the relationship between her and her father is perfect.

Religion is a part of the Kashmiri ideology, but not the driving force behind all aspects of their life. Therefore, the movie attempts to break down the stereotype prevalent about the Kashmiris that they are radical fundamentalists or extremists. However, in a twist of fate, Rehan and Zooni end up together and plan a marriage soon after eye surgery. As Rehan sends off Zooni to the operation theater, a newsflash shows that the IKF (Independent Kashmir Federation) have bombed an area in Peshawar, Pakistan, and have sworn to continue wreaking havoc until both Pakistan and India relinquish their claim over Kashmir.



**Figure 5.2.8.11:** Bomb blast happens, which supposedly kills Rehan.

This is the first time the movie openly talks about the ongoing turbulence in the region and tries to manage the stance by denoting that the terrorists aim to target not only India but also Pakistan. Therefore, their prime motive is to achieve autonomy. Shortly after that, a bomb blast happens, which supposedly kills Rehan (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.11). However, Rehan was the one who orchestrated the attack and was merely posing as a tour guide.

Zooni mourns Rehan's loss, the story's point of view shifts to that of Malini Tyagi, an Indian Intelligence agent who has managed to link the terrorist attack to Rehan. During some of the scenes showing the agents at the Intelligence Bureau, there is a short outburst of anger from a fellow agent in the Intelligence Bureau which opposes IKF's goal, which is to achieve a nation separate from Indian and Pakistani influence. In his exchange with Tyagi, he clearly states that a referendum does not make sense in Kashmir, because during partition the Maharaja sided with India, even though the region was a Muslim majority. Although it seems that Malini is more sympathetic to the Kashmiri cause, she does not say anything to support their cause outright and works to tighten national security. Despite democratic injustice, Malini tries to do what is best for her country's interest. This is also true for Zooni, as she is

a patriot who wishes to do what is best for her country, even if it means sacrificing the one, she loves in the process.

On the other hand, Rehan is a master of disguises as he manages to infiltrate the Indian army stationed around Srinagar to steal a trigger. The final piece IKF needs to activate the deadly nuclear weapon. Even though he confessed that he fell for Zooni, he merely dismisses her as someone that weakened him. Rehan's ruthlessness can be identified through the massacre he executes in the camp. It portrays separatists as people who work for their selfish motives and disregards human lives to achieve this. Rehan embodies traits similar to animals through the way he instinctively draws his gun on Zooni for survival and the way he betrays many of the people who had taken him as their close friends during his infiltration missions (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.12). However, throughout the film, Rehan's character is portrayed in a more sympathetic light as he is shown to be just another individual who is captured and manipulated by the system.



**Figure 5.2.8.12:** *Rehan embodies traits similar to animals through the way he instinctively draws his gun on people*



Rehan is one of the many people who is trained from a very young age, brainwashed and then raised as livestock to serve the insurgent organization's objectives. There is a sense of urgency in Rehan's demeanor, who believes that after doing this final mission for the IKF he will be able to lead a normal life with Zooni and his son. However, things sour as Zooni's father finds out that Rehan is an IKF agent and decides to hand him over to the authorities. The encounter takes a complicated turn when Zooni's father points a gun at Rehan and openly brands him as a traitor, saying that he feels proud of serving his country by killing a terrorist, even though he is his daughter's husband (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.13).



**Figure 5.2.8.13:** *Zooni's father points a gun at Rehan and openly brands him as a traitor, saying that he feels proud of serving his country by killing a terrorist, even though he is his daughter's husband.*

Rehan accidentally kills Zooni's father in self-defense and intentionally kills another officer who sees him. Rehan has no choice but to do this for the safety of him and his family. However, Zooni also serves her country by shooting Rehan but cries and takes him in her arms.



**Figure 5.2.8.14:** *Rehan and Zooni are examples of two star-crossed lovers who are unable to meet because of their differing political views.*

Zooni thinks he did what he thought was right. Therefore, the movie articulates that both perspectives are right, and it is dependent upon the individual to make a decision worthwhile and not go after worldly desires. Rehan and Zooni are examples of two star-crossed lovers who are unable to meet because of their differing political views (*Fanaa* 2006, Figure 5.2.8.14). The movie reinforces nationalism in people and makes them root more for the Indian government.

Zooni's character as a disabled woman, who did not know much about the conflict initially, becomes strong enough to stand up against the person she loved for her country. The film does not refer to the resentment and problems of Kashmir and instead works on the assumption that despite a handful of people, the general masses are entirely at peace and have no real troubles in the region. Therefore, the film provides a lopsided view of Kashmiri society that does not take into account other factors irking the Kashmiris besides the referendum that never happened. It solely focuses on the IKF as a power-hungry organization that wants autonomy to enjoy infinite power within the region. The film fails to portray some of the atrocities committed by both India and Pakistan in their attempts to make the valley their own.

## Conclusion

The concept of Nationalism in the Indian film industry is a highly debatable topic. Hindi Cinema often portrays India as superior to every other nation. If it is Pakistan, India is shown superior militarily, and if it is the west, India is depicted superior culturally and so on. Hindi films also follow patterns in stereotyping the characters. *Roja*, *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, and other films associated terrorism with Islam. Filmmakers create an excessive patriotic Muslim character (preferably female) to counter the non-patriotic Muslim character (male) to change the feelings of a Kashmiri to prove 'one people one nation theory.

Most genres of film making can be said to generally follow the framework of films as set out by the film theorists. Marxist film theory (Deshpande, 2004), is one of the oldest of film theories. As per the Marxist film theory, Hollywood cinema aims to drive its audience towards supporting capitalism. A similarity can be identified in Bollywood as well when it comes to the topic of Nationality or Nationalism in films. It has resulted in framing some notions that have contributed towards setting an agenda, which somehow stereotypes Kashmir in Bollywood films, as McCombs & Shaw (1972) in their theory of agenda setting described.

Media (cinema in this case) has predictive power that if people are exposed to the same media, they will feel the same issue is essential. Those films have made people handicapped; people watch these films with a stereotyped image of Kashmir in mind.

'Militancy in Kashmir' as a topic has always attracted Indian filmmakers.

Filmmaking is an expensive proposition, and the commercial aspect of Bollywood films has made filmmakers look into the profit margin of the investors. The filmmaker may try to cover some issues of Kashmir, that has an open ending, but as one has to keep national interest at the top, they choose to deviate from the subject of national interest and give priority to the Nationalism. An example of such a case film is film *Fanaa*, where the director tried to show that Kashmir needs freedom from both India and Pakistan. However, in the end, the protagonist's wife turns out to be a patriotic person who kills her husband to save her nation.

There are many people, who watch a film for entertainment purposes, but a particular section of people relates to these films and the issues highlighted in them. The literature review and historical facts have identified that a film has sure politics, an agenda and a definite effect on the audience? So, the way the films present the image of Kashmir; the people will take that only into account. It does not matter if it presents a clear and transparent image or not.

### **1.3 Melodrama and Politics of Representation**

#### **1.3.1 Mission Kashmir (2000, Dir. Vidhu Vinod Chopra**



**Main Cast:** Sanjay Dutt as Inayat Khan, Hrithik Roshan as Altaf, Preity Zinta as Sufia Parvez

Inayat Khan (Sanjay Dutt), the Senior Superintendent of Police lives in Srinagar with his wife Neelima (Sonali Kulkarni) and his son Irfan (Yogin Suri) One day; his young son has an accident while playing and is taken to a hospital. He is lying in the hospital bed, but no doctor attends to him as a fatwa (religious pronouncement) is instigated by the leader of a terrorist group forbidding doctors from treating police officers and their families.

Khan's pleas turn futile as the doctor's refuse, saying they are willing to die rather than letting the terrorists kill their families. His son Irfan succumbs to his injuries, and Khan swears to put an end to the threat of the terrorist in Kashmir.

After finding out that the group of terrorists is taking refuge in the Dalgate area of Srinagar, Inayat Khan sets out the fire and kills them along with an innocent family who was forcibly sheltering the terrorist. Altaf survives the shooting, but he is severely traumatized by seeing his parents and sister die in front of his eyes. He stares

at a police officer who killed his family but is unable to see his face as Khan is wearing a balaclava.

Inayat Khan's wife Neelima having lost Irfan and feeling sorry for Altaf, attempts to persuade Khan to adopt the boy. Khan, reluctantly agrees, feeling extremely repentant for killing Altaf's family.

Altaf loves to draw, and he keeps himself busy with sketches and paintings. Many times, he sketches a picture of the man wearing the balaclava who killed his entire family, as this image is engraved in his memory.

Months later, He realizes that Khan is the one who killed his parents. Altaf runs away to join the militant organization in Pakistan led by a Pathan leader Hilal Kohistani (Jackie Shroff) who brainwashes him into thinking that he and his men are fighting for the Kashmir freedom and working to liberate the territory from Indian occupation. Altaf becomes a trained terrorist, and he is made to believe that whatever he is doing is according to Islamic principles.

Time passes, Altaf is a trained terrorist and is assigned the task of completing 'Mission Kashmir,' a plot made by an unnamed terrorist organization that involves killing the Indian prime minister. His mentor Hilal Kohistani directs Altaf's hatred towards Khan (who is now the Inspector General of Police). Altaf crosses the border to reach Kashmir. He reaches Srinagar and visits his childhood sweetheart and TV personality Sufiya Pervez and plans to use her to execute Hilal's plot to blow up the TV tower of Srinagar. He attempts on Khan's life but fails and, in the process. Khan recognizes him and begins tracking him down. Neelima shows her discomfort,

resulting in the fallout between Khan and Neelima.

Sufiya also learns of Altaf's mission and breaks off her relationship with him, feeling betrayed, though she knows that the tragedy has made him what he is. Neelima secretly meets Altaf, who tells her about his plan of killing Khan. Altaf once again tries to kill Khan by planting a bomb in Khan's briefcase. Neelima falls victim to it instead of Khan.

The fight to get each other becomes more intense as both have nothing to lose now. Finally, Khan finds the information regarding mission Kashmir after being able to destroy one of Hilal's hideouts. He realizes that the plot is not to kill the prime minister but to destroy a Mosque and trigger communal violence and the attack on TV tower was with the objective to spread the false plan. Hilal intentionally does not reveal to Altaf what Mission Kashmir is, realizing that Altaf would not support it and would endeavor to stop it. Sufi communicates Altaf's photograph on TV as a feared psychological oppressor, and Altaf escapes to a swampy nook to prepare for the launcher.

In the meantime, Khan with his men catches Hilal, But Altaf already left to go forward with the plans before they reached. Khan acts wise and offers to arrange with Hilal by enabling him and his men to proceed forward with Mission Kashmir in return for Altaf. He shows Hilal that he is more occupied with revenge for Neelima's death rather than serving his nation. Seeing that Khan's scorn of Altaf is deserving of a Pathan's obligation, Hilal acknowledges the arrangement, and to guarantee no other error will be made; Khan obliges Hilal to the rocket hideouts.

Hilal and Khan reach the marshes, Altaf begins assaulting a fatigued Khan to avenge his family's murder. At the same time, Khan uncovers to him the original objectives of Mission Kashmir, expressing that Kashmir will transform into hellfire. Having had enough of listening in to him, Altaf attempts to shoot Khan in the head. As Altaf battles to do it, the memories of Neelima was holding him back. Altaf decides to keep the plan of revenge aside and helps Khan to prevent Hilal and his men from targeting the sacred shrines.

While things are going to end, Hilal tosses a bomb to divert them before getting shot to death by Altaf, allowing Hilal's men to get ready to blast the sacred places. While Khan battles back by shooting a few terrorists to death, Altaf makes up for himself by claiming a rocket launcher and utilizing it to decimate alternate bombers and execute the rest of the terrorists, saving the shrines. Eventually, Altaf gets shot in the chest, and he falls into the marshes. Khan at that point bounces in and securely conveys the oblivious Altaf to the shore, dodging the blast of the forts caused by Altaf demonstration of recovery.

### **Textual Analysis**

Filmed a year after the notorious Kargil Conflict, the film was already walking on eggshells as it tried to shed light on an issue that is very crucial and central to the people of India and Pakistan. The title of the film, '*Mission Kashmir*,' comes on screen with the sound of gunfire and the text dissolves into smoke; the film opens in Dal Lake with the shot of a small boat (Shikara) with mountains in the backdrop, poised on the lake's tranquil waters. Within a few seconds, the still image turns into



an explosion in the Dal Lake.



**Figure 5.3.1.1:** *The Shikara blows up, the colors of the fire rush outward to fill the screen.*

The Shikara blows up, the colors of the fire rush outward to fill the screen (*Mission Kashmir 2000* Figure 5.3.1.1). The image juxtaposes the explosion with the serene scenic beauty of the region. The visual associates the scenic beauty with the visuals of militants and the army men fighting each other for a political gain.

It gives a syntagmatic connotation signifying the life of Kashmiri people, establishing a relation between beauty and chaos to symbolize how this fiery conflict engulfs the entire Valley. Even as the Shikara is burning, there is another Shikara in the farthest end of the screen frequently moving in the waters, showing how life goes on in Kashmir in spite of tumultuous events every day. The camera draws back, showing the same mountains and the lake, though now irrevocably changed. The opening credits begin to roll, white letters dissolving into the smoke-like effects, even as a voice chants on the soundtrack ‘Dhuan, dhuan, dhuan, hi dhuan (smoke, smoke, nothing but smoke)’. According to Barthes (1967) photographic signs depend upon the mediation of the exact copy and are unreliable without it. According to Silverman (1983), this argument has profound implications for understanding both the subject

and the symbolic order. This entire credit roll sequence symbolizes how Kashmiris are going out in smoke. The music compliments the visuals and adds to the symbolic depiction. Analyzing *Mission: Kashmir* in light of Saussure's theory of semiotics identifies the usage of an arbitrary symbol, which is smoke and then superimposing it with the beauty of Kashmir, to establish the notion that the region is being defiled because of the political turmoil. The primary purpose of this connection is to highlight metaphoric destruction of beauty and conventionalization of the relation between the two terms, not their similarity (Silverman 1983).

Later on, the audience hears the sound of uniformed men with heavy boots racing across the jetties and rickety wooden platforms. Freud's theory of condensation makes the most significant amount of sense in this context, as the movie is an amalgamation of the positive and negative aspects of present-day Kashmir (Freud, 1913). The superimposition of beauty against a backdrop of brutality and violence, which establishes in the first scene of the film also invokes other concepts such as the theory of displacement, which is a psychic channeling of negative sentiments onto positive. For instance, according to Silverman (1983) underlining Kashmir's beauty, after showing a series of violent incidents, is a reaffirmation that the director of the film is merely trying to mesh all the ideas together and weigh the natural beauty of the region against the destructive conflicts in the area. The image of Kashmir as an unsafe place created in the first few frames explains the theory of condensation and displacement as there is a transfer of psychic intensity from an unacceptable element to an acceptable one, wherein a new signifier is formed. The soundtrack stresses the image to locate the cinematic syntax at the level of shot to

shot relationship.

As one soldier reaches the end of the jetty, his senior officer, played by Sanjay Dutt stops him as he was about to walk into a trap using an improvised explosive device. Sanjay Dutt, now established as Special Superintendent of Police (SSP) Inayat Khan, rescues him, risking his own life and the platform blows up in another explosion. Thus, *Mission: Kashmir* dramatically introduces juxtaposition of ‘what is’ with ‘what has been’ or even ‘what might have been’. It presents representations through which Kashmir is seen, remembered, and then forgotten.

While in the hospital with his injured son Irfan, Inayat gets to hear from the doctor ‘Aaj kal to Kashmir mein Fatwo ka daur chal raha hai’, meaning, these days everybody is issuing religious decrees. Fatwa has been issued by a militant chief named Malik-ul-Islam for not giving any medical assistance to police and security forces. This scene associates the Kashmiri Muslim community with extremist and inhuman stereotypes. Malik, while staying overnight in Dal Lake with a family on the gunpoint, talks to the houseboat owner while having dinner ‘Khana to accha hai, meri mohabbat mein pakaya hai ya bandook ke darr se?’ It means if she has cooked food with love or fear? This again portrays freedom seekers in a negative light, as they are shown terrorizing and exploiting the native Kashmiris with guns and other arms. The face of one person, the dress of another, the name of a third, and the voice of the fourth, this is exactly what the director does to bring the new signifiers (the militant – the bad Kashmiri guy) into the already existing innocent, pure, shy Kashmiri perception of the audience. Thus, it introduces them to a new face which has many different contradicting elements. This new face is ruthless, malicious, and

mean, a person who does not spare his community. Though in other Indian patriotic films, Indian soldiers also do similar things to the so-called enemies, they are portrayed under the light of positive, heroic, nationalist sentiments. This representation is different from the image of 1960s films where Kashmir was a symbol of love and romance. The sign and the signifier have changed from Love to Hate.

In the next scene, we see a small boy, Altaf, engrossed in sketching the mountains surrounding the Dal Lake, upon which his houseboat anchors. This image shows how young children remember Kashmir as a valley with lakes and mountains through paintings, as it's hard to envision the beauty in its present form. His childish attempts of 'representing Kashmir' are interrupted by the police raid, led by Inayat Khan, on his houseboat, where the militant Malik-Ul-Khan has taken shelter. Altaf's entire family gets killed in the shootout between the army and the militants by Inayat Khan. This scene conveys a connotative meaning, a metonymy to invoke an idea or represent a situation; in this case, a condition of insecurity and fear. Though subtle, the film here tries to tell, that the police officer has committed a crime by killing an innocent family.



**Figure 5.3.1.2:** Man's face covered by a black balaclava.

Khan tells his wife about the incident, and she endorses the action, saying ‘Agar me tumhari jagah hoti toh main bhi yehi karti’, meaning, If I were in your place, I would have done the same. The act is further justified when Khan and his wife, Neelima adopt Altaf. Through Altaf’s painting of a man’s face covered by a black balaclava (*Mission Kashmir 2000* Figure 5.3.1.2), the movie signals the conflicts that are yet to come. We hear his furious scribbling with crayons before we see him sitting amid hundreds of his new creations. This repeated image is a psychosomatic imprint of the moment when Khan clamped shut Altaf’s mouth, even as his family fell to a hail of bullets.

Altaf’s paintings are used to portray the conflicting images of Kashmir. Even at the end of the police raid, the camera focuses on Altaf’s sketch of a Shikara sinking slowly into the water. A disappearing remnant of his pre-raid life, it contrasts with the only post-raid pictures that Altaf can make. His sketches of the lake represent the innocence ‘before,’ and his sketches of the masked man represent the shattered innocence ‘after’ –the explosion. But it is only with the knowledge of after, the before becomes meaningful. Hence, *Mission Kashmir* is mainly retrospective and

melancholic. It uses the present to understand the past as a different, happier time, but those memories also connect to the present, making it impossible to enjoy it.

Khan attempts to make everything right through Altaf, even the loss of his son Irfan, but the hatred towards the man who killed his family does not permit this change to take in Altaf. Irfan, the same age as Altaf, had succumbed to injuries sustained after a fall because of Malik-ul Islam's fatwa. Altaf enters the Khan family to replace Irfan. He gets Irfan's clothes, Irfan's room, and Irfan's favorite biscuits. But as suggested by the different place at the dining table he is assigned, there remains a melancholic misalignment between the loss and its replacement.

Neelima sings a lullaby to Altaf, whose sleep is filled with nightmares of the sound of gunfire and the sight of the masked man. Irfan re-enters the same bedroom window through which he had fallen to his death. In a dream sequence, he plays with Neelima, teases her, sings to her, but ultimately disappears through the same window. Before he goes, he passes a cricket ball to the sleeping Altaf who sits up in bed to catch it. This symbolic relay anticipates the importance of cricket as a familial and national bonding game of harmony. The game of cricket makes him forget his past, and he finally calls Khan Baba (Daddy).

In the film's concluding crayon sketch shot, a game of cricket between Khan, Neelima, Altaaf, and Sufi marks the 'happily ever after'. But as Mission Kashmir attempts to integrate Altaaf the Kashmiri boy into the family of Muslim father, the Hindu mother, and the 'good' Kashmiri Muslim girlfriend, it tries to mirror an ideal vision of secular India. But at the same time, the film and the representation remind

us that the image is just a fantasy. The crayon sketch image of the family in bright colors gives a visual of 'xeno-realism' of the Indian Bazaar art, which keeps the dream sequence and its happy ending (the relay of the cricket ball) firmly in the realm of fantasy. The text on the crayon sketch reads 'For my children (Vidhu Vinod Chopra.2000) Isha and Agni, and for all the children of Conflict – may they dream without fear. May they someday rediscover that valley of love that I grew up in, that haven of harmony, that paradise called Kashmir'. These are the feelings of the director of the film who was born and brought up in Kashmir.

Fantasy repeats in each song of the movie, which uses manufactured false representations of reality. The gap between representation and reality opens up particularly in two songs that insert lines from Kashmiri lyrics with their choruses, 'Bumbro' (O Bumblebee) and 'Hrind posh maal gindane drai lo lo' (O Intoxicated Ones, Poshmaal, Drunk [On Spring], has come out to play). Both songs are inserted into the film through television producer Sufi, a woman whose childhood dream of organizing programs has finally come true with her job in Doordarshan, a national television channel. 'Bhumbro' signifies a moment when Altaf returns to Srinagar after completing the militancy training, across the Line of Control (LOC), the border that divides India and Pakistan, and encounters Sufi, his old playmate again.

Stumbling into a performance of 'Bhumbro' with Sufi on the stage, he is mistaken as one of the male dancers. Altaf slides easily into this role, revealing his true self to Sufi during the performance. Pointing to the henna on her palms, Sufi sings, 'All other colors are false, only the color of henna is the truth', The visual represents a xeno-realist use of the set and lighting. Highlighting the distance

between the militant and the innocent boy, the songs present the gap from Sufi's perspective.



**Figure 5.3.1.3:** Hilal Kohistani a rebel fighter and a mastermind for *Mission Kashmir* is willing to sacrifice millions of human lives to fulfill his desire of harming India.

Hilal Kohistani is a rebel fighter and a mastermind for *Mission Kashmir* willing to sacrifice millions of human lives to fulfill his desire of harming India (*Mission Kashmir 2000* Figure 5.3.1.3). Hilal is the most threatening terrorist, who uses people for his means in the name of holy Jihad. He is threatening not only by his actions but also with his looks and the attire he wears. These signs are used to represent the negative qualities possessed by the character. This is rightly pointed out by Saussure in 'Subject of Semiotics' (Silverman, 1983) which says 'Indeed the sign itself is a relational entity, a composite of two parts that signify not only through those features that make each of them slightly different from any other two parts but throughout their association with each other' (pp.5-6). The image of the character describes the concept which that signifier evokes. Another image that is presented is of Kashmiri being misused and brainwashed to kill innocents in the name of holy Jihad. Bollywood has always shown that Muslims don't have a sense of identity and cannot differentiate between good and bad. They are always inspired by the bad.



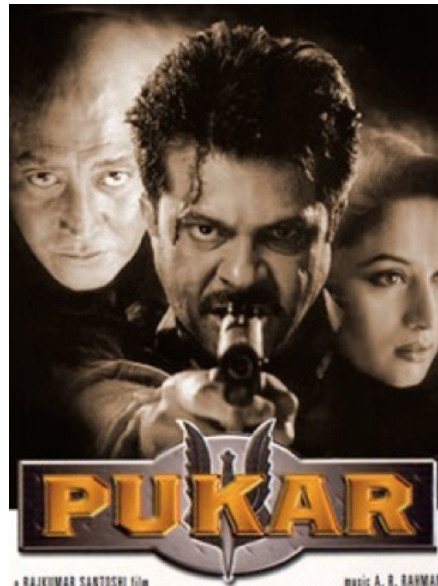
In *Hrind Poshmaal*, the images of Kashmir captured by Sufi for her production contradicts with the scenes of Altaf directing a terrorist strike against the Srinagar TV tower. As Khan and his officers rush to evacuate the Mughal gardens in anticipation of the explosion, they disrupt a children's outdoor painting competition. The artwork is used as a representation of innocence until Altaf starts to paint the killer of his parents. This impossibility of closing the gap is portrayed using the song 'Sochon ki jheelon ka shehar ho' (Imagine a City of Lakes), which marks Sufi's rejection of Altaf as a terrorist. The song begins after the sequence of Altaf staring at a sketch of the lake. Again, the colors shift to lurid hues of bazaar art, and the houseboat deck shades into a studio even kitschier than that of *Hrind Poshmaal*. Although Alaaf and Sufi attempt to reclaim their childhood setting in orange sunset and red Chinar trees, the closing refrain from *Bumbroo* by children dancing in stimulated snow confirm the futility of fantasy.

*Mission Kashmir* uses signification, subject, and the symbolic order to clarify the masking of reality. The semiotic theory demonstrates in the images, and the image signifies the signifier. During the song sequence, Socho ki jheelon ka Shaher hae 'think this is a world of the dream just try and see it through my eyes' with Altaf and Sufi on a shikara in a lake, his old nightmares interrupt the fantasy of love both visually and aurally. The image of the masked man and the boy on the Shikara, the dense smoke. The song's abrupt ending (a panoramic view of Srinagar and Altaf's capitulation 'this is a world of dreams; I have seen it through your eyes) momentarily reconciles their different ways of understanding but also exposes its fragility.

The film thus admits its stake in affecting this reconciliation in the form Altaf's

inability to see Sufi's world of possibilities. The other images and signifiers are deployed to define Sufi's vision of Dal Lake and the mountains as seen from a shikara. Her promise to return Altaaf to the shikara of his childhood establishes her role as a custodian. Mission Kashmir's intertextuality reminds the audience of a shared cinematic experience. The assimilation of the violence into a more amenable narrative; explicating Altaaf's desire for Azaadi (freedom) as his anger towards Khan. The movie tries to convey that this anger if defused, will reunite Indians and Kashmiris into one family. As we have noted, the closing crayon sketch undermines the happy ending, whereby Altaaf rejects militancy and joins the Khans with Sufi by his side, proving that love in Kashmir remains a construct, a fragile hope that unites and compels a long history of Bollywood's vision of the valley. (Kabir, 2009). The Bombay film translated the image of Kashmir as the 'eroticized landscape in the social imaginary of Indians' and 'as a place for honeymooners and lovers' into a symbol of 'purity and unspoiled nature.' The film ends with Sufiya and Khan caressing injured Altaaf, symbolizing the good Indian security forces humanizing with the Kashmiri chap.

### 1.3.2 Pukar (2000, Dir. Rajkumar Santoshi)



**Main Cast:** Anil Kapoor as Jaidev, Danny Denzongpa as Abrush, Madhuri Dixit as Anjali

A major political figure in India, while on his way to a temple, is captured by a fierce terrorist called Abrush. The army assigns Major Jaidev Rajvansh and his fellow officers the task to rescue the legislator and catch his kidnapper, Abrush. The terrorists are in the list of 'wanted' for several crimes. Jai and his team finally manage to complete the operation and returns home as a national hero. He then takes a vacation from the forces to go back to the place where he grew up. Anjali, his childhood friend, is in love with him and uses this time to make him fall for her.

Pooja Mallappa, the new Miss India, meets Jai in a party and they both fall in love. Jai's parents are with the impression that he likes Anjali, but as they find out he loves Pooja, they confess it to Anjali. Anjali wants revenge for being rejected. Abrush takes advantage (via the said 'kidnapped' politician, who is hand in glove with Abrush.

Together they plot to destroy Jai's reputation and life.

Anjali desperately wants Jai and is tipped to steal certain important secret documents regarding Abrush's movement from prison to prison. Jai is found guilty and declared a traitor and court-martialed. Pooja leaves him due to family pressure. Jai, firm to prove his innocence hunts down Abrush. Anjali realizes her mistake and tries to thwart Abrush's plans and helps Jai to prove his innocence.

However, Anjali gets kidnapped by Abrush, who discovers that Abrush is planning to carry out a significant bombing during an event during a show that the Indian government is to conduct. A fight ensues, and Jai overpowers Abrush. Finally, Jai rescues Anjali and forgives her, and both of them get married in the end.

### **Textual Analysis**

Before getting into the portrayal of Kashmir in the film, it is essential to understand the background of the events that had transpired before the film's release. *Pukar* released in 2000, which is just a year after the Kargil conflict in Kashmir, whereby Pakistani troops had claimed a part of Kashmir, which led to a full-blown armed conflict. Therefore, the news media propagated a lot of anti-Pakistan sentiments to their audience. Throughout the movie, there are many propaganda elements and recurring motifs that try to influence viewers' opinions (*Pukar* 2000, Figure 5.3.2 1)



**Figure 5.3.2 1** *There are many propaganda elements and recurring motifs that try to influence viewers opinion.*

In the beginning, there is no real information provided about Abrush beside his notoriety. Abrush is not a Muslim name, which makes it safe to say that the movie was not demonizing or branding Muslims as terrorists (*Pukar* 2000, Figure 5.3.2.2)

However, there are various cues in the film that attach beastly and non-human traits to the terrorists. For instance, in the scene where a man with his face covered with the shawl abducts the minister is seen sliding down a slope, shooting and killing all the soldiers except the minister. The fact that a cloth covers them dehumanizes them to show that they have no positive human qualities and are animals. Therefore, in the mind of the viewers, the association is established; since terrorists aren't human and are a threat, killing them is justified and the right thing to do.

They carry weapons far superior to the ones with the officers, which helped them in annihilating the unit that was accompanying the minister.

The scene of carnage is carried out by Abrush himself, who threatens the army unit by telling them that he already knows of their plans to take him out. An actor of Tibetan origin named Danny Denzonga played Abrush's character. His Asian

features make him look northeast Indian, and there are few clues given about his culture or nationality in the film. However, even though there is no reference to his background, it is clear that Abrush uses a very formal tone, which is similar to Urdu and wears an attire similar to those worn by Kashmiris and Pakistanis.



*Figure 5.3.2 2 Abrush is not a Muslim name, which makes it safe to say that the movie was not demonizing or branding Muslims as terrorists.*

The cruel nature of Abrush is brought to light again with this scene when he bites one of the officer's hands to free himself from his grip (*Pukar* 2000, Figure 5.3.2 3).

The soldiers do not resort to such techniques on Abrush and only indulge in hand-to-hand combat. This reinforces the notion of superiority of the Indian forces and creates the idea that the troops are more cultured and decent than the terrorists. In this scene, just the facial expressions of Abrush are enough to give the sense of what the director was trying to convey about the personality of Abrush, which is pure evil, beastly, and ruthless. In the following scene, Jai manages to overpower Abrush. Even when both are engaged in intense combat, Abrush still manages to ask Jai to name his price. To his proposition, Jai responds: 'Wardi nahi pehni hoti toh tujhe yahin zinda dafna deta', which translates to, 'Had I not been in a uniform, I

would have buried you alive here'. In the earlier scenes, the film established behavioral superiority, but this scene tries to impose the moral superiority of the Indian forces as well. Abrush had no qualms about buying a person's loyalty, even when he is choked. It shows that they lack conviction or virtuosity to carry out their mission on their brains and brawn alone, which is why they buy their way out.

The film designed the capture sequence, similarly to how hunters close in on their prey. Considering the number of soldiers who came to Jai's aid, it further underlines how dangerous Abrush is in the eyes of the forces.

After Abrush's capture, Jai comes home, and his Hindu mother greets him, whereas Abrush's religion is unknown. The involvement of the protagonist in his prayer establishes the idea that his moral superiority comes from spiritual or divine energies. The film industry often uses religion and traditional storytelling techniques to underline the goodness of the character and strengthen him in the eyes of the audience. Many Greek myths and fables also used religion in this way, whereby the hero is often shown to have deep religious involvement, which later helps him accomplish many of the impossible tasks or trials he comes across in his adventure. However, the adversaries are not just restricted to Abrush and his team alone, but even to some of the officers and Indian civilians (Lina, 2013).



**Figure 5.3.2 3:** *The cruel nature of Abrush is brought to light again with this scene when he bites one of the officer's hands to free himself from his grip.*

Another interesting thing about the narrative is that it does not speak of Abrush's past and does not discuss his motivation or objective behind the terror attacks, while Jai's involvement in his profession comes from the love for his country and other traits that are viewed positively by the society (*Pukar* 2000, Figure 5.3.2 5)



**Figure 5.3.2 4:** *Abrush is a mere Pakistani agent wreaking havoc in the region of Kashmir.*

It is evident that the Kargil conflict was between India and Pakistan. Moreover, Abrush is a mere Pakistani agent wreaking havoc in the region of Kashmir (*Pukar* 2000, Figure 5.3.2 4). The exchange between Jai and Abrush is full of anti-Pakistan sentiments. When Abrush boasts about his achievements and the destruction he has caused in India, Jai responds by insulting and mocking not just size of Pakistan, but also tells him that Pakistan begs for international aid to import weapons from other



nations to carry out their attacks. Moreover, he even takes a shot at their masculinity through the dialogue ‘Burqa pehen ke larte ho, mard ho toh samne aao’, which means that Pakistani forces hide behind veils and cannot fight face to face. This entire exchange is intended to incite hatred for Pakistan. It is derogatory both on national and intrinsic levels.



**Figure 5.3.2 5:** *Jai’s involvement in his profession comes from the love for his country and other traits that are viewed positively by the society.*

Another interesting thing to note in this exchange is that often war and fights are associated with masculinity. Therefore, it seems that they often glorify the concept of war. Furthermore, the movie boils down the issue of Kashmir to India and Pakistan, implying that it is not the Kashmiris who have problems with the Indian authorities, but the problems are created by their neighboring country, which has a vested interest in the valley. Even though both countries have their political agenda and interest in the valley, the opinion of the Kashmiris is not touched upon by the film, and therefore provides a very biased view on the real issue and serves only as propaganda that is meant to influence viewers’ opinions and mask the reality of the situation.

Further on in the movie, one of Abrush’s companions negotiates with a corrupt

politician and makes it clear to the audience that the terrorists have used their funds to buy the loyalty of the politicians. Despite the conditions, the politicians have no qualms selling themselves for money and jeopardizing millions of lives (*Pukar* 2000, Figure 5.3.2 6)



**Figure 5.3.2 6:** *The politicians have no qualms selling themselves for money and jeopardizing millions of lives.*

The film tries to tone down their explicit hate speech against Pakistan by having a Muslim officer in the unit, Captain Hussein, who is loyal and the only person who believes in Jai's innocence. Even though the movie makes very hateful remarks about the Pakistani army and the country in general, the film does not make any reference to religion. Instead, it focuses on Indo-Pak rivalry as a political conflict, as opposed to a religious one.



*Figure 5.3.2 7: Abrush's open hatred and animosity towards India is unexplained, and his history is left without being discussed.*

Abrush's open hatred and animosity towards India is unexplained, and his history is left without being discussed (*Pukar* 2000, Figure 5.3.2 7). Even though he is an international terrorist who is supposedly from Pakistan and works in tow with the Pakistani army, he is neither shown as a soldier nor in a military uniform. Instead, Abrush looks like an ordinary man who just happens to be the most notorious terrorist in the world. People usually hold soldiers in high regard, so perhaps Abrush was never depicted as a soldier because his motives and methods are considered too vile compared to that of a soldier.

Abrush claims that 'Is dafa jaan nahi, tumharay mulk ki aan lene aaen hain', which means he is planning on not taking lives, but to destroy the image of India, in front of the world.

While Abrush is explaining his devious plan, which is to bombard the Town Hall, he uses a beard and wears a Karakul hat as he tries to impersonate the Town Hall caretaker. This hat is associated with the first governor-general and founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The cap is an icon in Pakistani tradition, which is synonymous with the country's founder to the point that it was named the Jinnah Hat.

The fact that Abrush wears this hat while demonstrating his plan associates the icon of the leader with a terrorist. Therefore, the sequence also underlines the deep-seated resentment against the Pakistani leader, who led the separatist movement in 1947.

The anti-Pakistan sentiment becomes even more pronounced through Jai's exchanges with a Pakistani officer over a phone call, where he openly insults them. The Pakistani flag pokes into the frame from the bottom-left corner, which makes it more evident that the actual agenda of the film is to reiterate India's dominance over Pakistan, be it social, political, or moral. The most intriguing of the dialogues used is: 'Kargil ka ek pathar nahi hila sake, Kashmir ke saib khane ke khwab rakhte ho', which means that you couldn't move a single stone in Kargil, and you dream of eating the apples of Kashmir. This line is enough to convey the idea that the region is caught between two parties who are trying to claim the region for their benefits. The perspective of the Kashmiris is omitted, and instead of promoting diplomacy, the movie bluntly glorifies war, and in one-part challenges Abrush and Pakistan, saying that if they ever go into a full-fledged war, it will only take India seven days to annihilate the nation. *Pukar* has no extravagant scenes showcasing the beauty of the region and instead focuses entirely on Jai's life and how he proves his innocence.

The film tries to propagate the idea that Kashmiris themselves have no issues with India, but it is foreign agents like Pakistan, who are assigning terrorists like Abrush to capture and invade the region from India. The movie's approach is reductionist as it tries to single out the involvement of Pakistan as the cause of the conflict over Kashmir. Released during a time when support was needed to boost India's nationalism, the film's content is pure propaganda and does not serve its

purpose of shedding light on the actual problems that are plaguing Kashmir.

## 1.4 Melodrama and Neorealism

### 1.4.1 LOC-Kargil (2003, Dir. J.P Dutta)



**Main Cast:** Sanjay Dutt as Jaidev Rajvansh, Saif Ali Khan as Anuj Nayyar, Akshay Khanna as Balwan Singh

*LOC-Kargil* is a war drama based on the actual events of the Kargil conflict, where the armies of Pakistan and India clashed for supremacy. It witnesses the struggle of the Indian army to take back ownership of Kargil amidst the deaths and destruction rained upon them by the enemy.

The Indian army struggles with the crushing, burning, and killing by ruthless enemy forces, and face the fierce wrath of Mother Nature's cold at Kargil. The enemy is with the advantage of being on the top of, raining hell from above. But the soldiers

don't give up, and even with death surrounding them, keep marching upwards, and make sure no sacrifice would be in vain.

The soldiers are stuck in Kargil between the mountains, facing death from everywhere, and are traumatized as their emotions are drenched away into the ice while they miss their families and loved ones. But it is their love for country and rage to avenge their fallen comrades, and they force the enemy back to where they came and wins the war.

### **Textual Analysis**

Amidst the snow-capped mountains of Kargil, bleeding corpses of Indian soldiers lie helplessly (*LOC-Kargil 2003*, Figure 5.4.1.1). Indian troops present themselves to their ordinate; he refers to the enemy as mice which have crossed the border. One of the soldiers assures his commander that he shall 'Crush the mice and hurl them back across the line of control.' The parable of mice used by the Indian military for its enemy represents the lack of regard for the lives.



**Figure 5.4.1.1:** *Amidst the snow-capped mountains of Kargil, bleeding corpses of Indian*

*soldiers lie helplessly.*

The breathtaking summits of Kargil have been remarkably focused. The camera moves arbitrarily to accentuate the rise and fall of the panorama. It is a metaphor of peace and serenity, which is later disrupted by a wave of chaos and hostility, in the form of ash and smoke from a blast.

First Indian troops and now Indian civilians are victims to the infamous Kargil conflict. Allegedly, intruders from Pakistan crossed the LOC and entered the victimized village to carry out their malign, fatal plans (*LOC-Kargil 2003*, Figure 5.4.1.2). Within five minutes into the movie, the villain is revealed, leaving nothing inconspicuous about the thoroughly biased film plot. It is deduced that the foreign forces came bare and were feeding on what is in store in the Indian bunkers. The sense of superiority housed by the Indian military is quite palpable, and the opinion is naturally tilted in favor of the Indians.



**Figure 5.4.1.2:** *Intruders from Pakistan crossed the LOC and entered the victimized village to carry out their malign, fatal plans.*

Following these events, the Indian army calls a meeting in which one of the officials resorts to entering Pakistan to cut off all the main routes and supplies to hold back the Pakistani force. The instrumental commander disapproves of the plan as it

is not for them to violate the sovereignty of its neighbors. The stark prejudice against Pakistan stems out of the conversation; the Pakistani force break the Line of Control, while the Indians deem it to be immoral. The Indian army is adorned in a gleaming halo. The montage later reveals the motive of the transgressing Pakistani purpose; Pakistanis intend to enter and recapture Kashmir via Kargil, and India should stop them by all means possible. Men dressed in the characteristic Pakistani attire plant bombs under a rusty bridge but are fired upon and caught by the Indian troops. The men are laden with arms, but the Indian soldiers are men of great courage who fear no death.



*Figure 5.4.1.3: Indian troops reinforce their morale as the fear of war augments.*

After a series of shell attacks by the Pakistani forces, Captain Anuj detains a few freedom fighters from Kashmir. He explains how none of them knew who commanded them and provided for their activities. It depicts how most of the terrorists are puppets at the hands of a few evil geniuses, which in this film are Pakistani military officials. Throughout the movie, Indian troops reinforce their morale as the fear of war augments. (*LOC-Kargil 2003*, Figure 5.4.1.3) The patriotism and unity of the soldiers are unmatched and commendable.

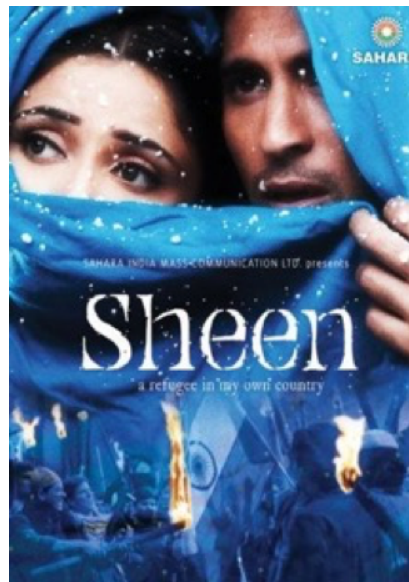




**Figure 5.4.1.4:** *LOC Kargil is an example of how dear Kashmir is to Indians who would gallantly go through all uncertainties to protect it.*

LOC Kargil is an example of how dear Kashmir is to Indians who would gallantly go through all uncertainties to protect it (*LOC-Kargil 2003*, Figure 5.4.1.4). A single conquest of Kargil would have decided the fate of Kashmir, which yearns for liberation, yet, Indians made sure that their grasp on Kashmir won't loosen.

#### **1.4.2 Sheen** (Snow,2004, Dir. Ashok Pandith)



**Main Cast:** Raj Babbar as Pandit Amarnath, Tarun Arora as Mannu, Sheen as Sheen

*Sheen* is a 2004 drama thriller directed by Ashok Pandit which tells the story of Pandit Amarnath, a Kashmiri Hindu who is a teacher at a local school, who suffers along with others of his community at the hands of the mujahidin who have vowed to 'cleanse' Kashmir from Hindus. His daughter, Sheen, is his only solace as he has to choose between the land he so dearly loves and the lives of the ones he loves.

Mujahidin have taken over Kashmir with the aid of Pakistan. Hindu pundits, who are in the minority, are being regularly targeted and have to live through life-threatening circumstances. With the general masses united against the terrorist forces, Pandit Amarnath is adamant about saving his Kashmir from further destruction. In the end, his words win against the weapons of the Jihadis while the real face of the Mujahidin is unveiled, which is contrary to the teachings they claimed to follow.

### **Textual Analysis**

In the beginning, the credits roll on a background marked with fierce flames, and a voiceover speaks of optimism and a return of peace to a land marred by war and chaos. The narrator articulates how the plight of Kashmir and its natives is genuinely an issue worthy of pity and concern



**Figure 5.4.2.1:** Scene features a mosque in Kashmir, showing how Islam is the predominant religion and an eternal part of Kashmiri culture.

The first scene features a mosque in Kashmir, showing how Islam is the predominant religion and an eternal part of Kashmiri culture (Sheen 2004, Figure 5.4.2.1) A bearded Muslim man is returning to Kashmir with his Hindu companion (Pandit Amarnath), who remembers his daughter, Sheen, as he observes the snow-laden view (Sheen 2004, Figure 5.4.2.2). The friendship between Hindus and Muslims belonging to Kashmir is solid.



**Figure 5.4.2.2:** A bearded Muslim man is returning to Kashmir with his Hindu companion (Pandit Amarnath), who remembers his daughter, Sheen, as he observes the snow-laden view.

A man entices his Kashmiri natives, middle-aged men, and young boys, to fight for their country. His aids carry heavy ammunition. He tells them to be Mujahidin to earn money, weapons, and other luxuries. The film portrays how some influential

Muslims in Kashmir instigate the natives to start a riot by twisting the principles of Islam. Islam is again being used to give birth to unrest and chaos in Kashmir in a Bollywood movie. The culprits are mostly Muslims. Astoundingly, this jihadi doesn't favor Pakistan but is sternly against it. He critically demeans both India and Pakistan and stresses the need for money and ammunition to conquer whatever country one wants. Kashmiris' quest for freedom from either of the two nations is quite vivid.



*Figure 5.4.2.3: Mujahidin's repeatedly coerces a gathering to throw out 'Hindu Pundits,' giving the issue a tinge of religious intolerance.*

However, in the next view, Pakistani flags can be seen in the dark background as a recorded voice lectures these men over the necessity of revolting and uprising against Indian forces. The montage now reveals not only an Islam-inspired brainwashing but the direct involvement of Pakistan in funding and nurturing these malign, antagonist forces. He repeatedly coerces this gathering to throw out 'Hindu Pundits,' giving the issue a tinge of religious intolerance (*Sheen 2004, Figure 5.4.2.3*). There are constant references to the help of Allah for the Mujahidin, which rather scars the essence of Islam and reinforces the stereotypical, terrorist image of Muslims.

In the local post office, a Kashmiri comes to return a loan of 70 rupees to a

Hindu Pundit who rebukes him for calling it a debt, as there is no such formality between friends (*Sheen* 2004, Figure 5.4.2.4). Kashmiri Hindus are described as peace-loving, generous natives. This serves to contradict the notion held by Jihadis, who are adamant about forcing these pundits out of Kashmir.



**Figure 5.4.2.4:** *In the local post office, a Kashmiri comes to return a loan of 70 rupees to a Hindu Pundit who rebukes him for calling it a debt, as there is no such formality between friends.*

After his departure, the Kashmiri rolls down a wired bomb right outside the post office. At this point, one might effortlessly assume that the misery of Kashmir is multi-layered, with dominant streaks of religion and politics. The affection and hospitality of the Hindu Pundit towards the Kashmiri had no impact on his evil plan to blow up the post office (*Sheen* 2004, Figure 5.4.2.5).



**Figure 5.4.2.5:** *The Kashmiri had actually come to plant a bomb in the post office.*

Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus attend the funeral of the pundits killed in the terrorist activity. Religious unity isn't extinct in Kashmir but is alive in the lower strata and the general public who do not engage in violence. Every Muslim in Kashmir is not a foe of those who live with him. The evil action of one individual does not speak for the rest of the community.

The orphan of the Pundit, who also is the lead male role, is supported by a Muslim Kashmiri who takes him to a wealthy native for shelter (*Sheen* 2004, Figure 5.4.2.6). He expresses his concern as there are only a handful of Hindus in Kashmir who aren't capable of supporting this young man. The closely-knit society of Kashmir is independent of any religion. It can easily be deduced that Kashmiris want freedom, but not from one another. No religion and no ethnicity can separate them as they live through tribulations. Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs are equally victimized.



**Figure 5.4.2.6:** *The orphan of the Pundit, who also is the lead male role, is supported by a Muslim Kashmiri who takes him to a wealthy native for shelter.*

Later in the movie, it is revealed that the forces working against the peace in Kashmir are Taliban when a school is closed down with a note pinned up to the trunk of a tree. The letter says that all schools will become Madrassas, where only religious education is taught (*Sheen* 2004, Figure 5.4.2.7). The bigoted ideology of the Taliban

policies along with the fact that Madrassas are where extremism is bolstered and fed. The opposition toward modern education shows the conservative and extremist nature of Muslims and the Taliban. The already inadequate literacy rate in Kashmir will debilitate by the general discord and external interference.



*Figure 5.4.2.7: Pandit Amarnath reading the letter says that all schools will become Madrassas, where only religious education is taught.*

Pandit Amarnath rushes to the local police station, which has a portrait of Gandhi hanging on one of the walls. The police officer shows no signs of vexation and refuses to act. The religious intolerance demonstrated by a few vulnerable groups of the Kashmiri society now has some ground.

Hindus of Kashmir gather to address the problem that comes their way as they become increasingly insecure with the threats of the Taliban. One of them blames Muslims for the lack of safety of their mothers, wives, and daughters (*Sheen 2004*, Figure 5.4.2.8). The movie establishes the possessiveness and feeling of guardianship for the natives of Kashmiris for their women.





**Figure 5.4.2.8:** *Blame on Muslims for the lack of safety of their mothers, wives, and daughters.*

When Amarnath cuts his speech and tells him these people aren't Muslims but are Pakistani puppets who are enemies of their country. The conversation draws an excellent picture of how Pakistan gets the blame for the lack of regard for Hindu lives and Kashmir's sovereignty. Loads of arms and flags of Pakistan may lead one to link Pakistan with Kashmir's anguish. Hindus are confined to their homes as the Taliban celebrate their mission with seamless firing

The insurgency and violence compel the Hindus of Kashmir to wind up their belongings and migrate (Sheen 2004, Figure 5.4.2.9).



**Figure 5.4.2.9:** *The insurgency and violence compel the Hindus of Kashmir to wind up their belongings and migrate.*

The maltreatment and physical abuse of the Indian army at the hands of the



Taliban, whose sole objective is the restoration of peace, is displayed. Again, the uprooting of order is attributed to the rebels funded by Pakistan, who acts as the major obstacle in the path of the Indian army in leading to a harmonious Kashmir.

Human rights workers embark to Kashmir to look into the issue of the Hindu expulsion. The UN works arduously to protect human rights violations in the terror-plagued Kashmir. When questioned about the compulsion to leave, Amarnath denies all reports of forceful Hindu banishment (*Sheen* 2004, Figure 5.4.2.11). It tells us about the mostly menacing situations Kashmiris face because of these terrorist groups.



**Figure 5.4.2.10:** *Amarnath denies all reports of forceful Hindu banishment to the human rights workers.*

Hindus who refused to leave Kashmir are forced to live in camps in the outskirts of Kashmir, which speaks to the plight of the Hindu minority amidst of the Mujahidin.

The Indian police officers deployed in Kashmir sexually harass Sheen while she stays at the Hindu camp (*Sheen* 2004, Figure 5.4.2.11). One can attribute the inappropriate behaviors of forces toward the Kashmiri women by both the ongoing war of occupation and lack of rights. The fact that women in Kashmir are victims of

sexual abuse by the Jihadis and the armed forces is not concealed.



**Figure 5.4.2.11:** *The Indian police officers deployed in Kashmir sexually harass Sheen while she stays at the Hindu camp.*

When the atrocities by these extremist groups cross all humanly limits, Pandit Amarnath labors to get his community's voice heard at official forums (Sheen 2004, Figure 5.4.2.12). He speaks at an international conference and cites the world's failure to look at Kashmir's issue as a grave one. There are stark differences in the world's reaction to the murder of an American and the killings of Kashmiris, almost daily. The movie summarizes that the agony of Kashmir is the same for a Hindu Kashmiri and a Muslim Kashmiri, and each one of them suffers without ever being listened. Those working against Kashmir might be religiously motivated, but there are no barriers based on any religion, caste, or ethnicity that serve to divide Kashmir, which suffers collectively.



**Figure 5.4.2.12:** Pandit Amarnath labors to get his community's voice heard at official forums.

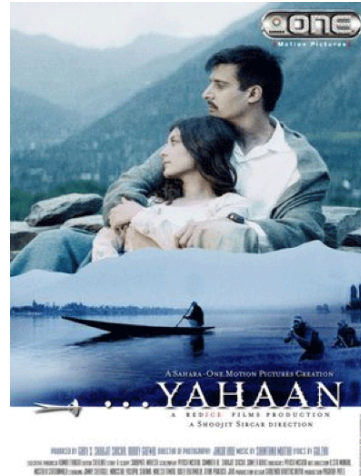
The movie ends when one of the Jihadis rapes the sister of his fellow and kills him in the end (Sheen 2004, Figure 5.4.2.13). That's when the victim's brother questions his sanity and asks himself the authenticity of jihad. He transfers the blame to the name of Islam for being extremist. The agenda of these primitive men is far from the true spirit of Islam, and so was their mission.



**Figure 5.4.2.13:** One of the Jihadis rapes the sister of his fellow and kills him in the end.

Sheen is a heart-warming tale of love and unity in the war-enshrouded Kashmir. It expresses the multi-layered turmoil, which has devastated Kashmir, with very little religious prejudice. The film takes a rather neutral approach, except when it comes to the depiction of the terrorist groups. The plot sticks to the theme of Kashmiri unity and leaves a thought-provoking message of what life is actually like in Kashmir.

### 1.4.3 **Yahaan** (Here, 2005, Dir. Soojit Sircar)



**Main Cast:** Jimmy Shergill as Aman, Minissha Lamba as Ada, Yashpal Sharma as Shakeel

*Yahaan* is a 2005 war, romance drama filmed in Kashmir. Perils arise as a young army officer, Aman who falls in love with a Kashmiri maiden, Ada. Ada's brother, Shakeel, dawns upon them. Ada is now caught up in a situation where she has to fight her brother for her lover Aman, whose life is at stake. Shakeel is a Kashmiri journalist whose printing house has been burned down by the Indian army, and later his friend is shot dead by the same. With a traumatic life, Shakeel is easily enticed by Al-Sami, the leader of a jihadi organization, and he joins hands with him against those who took away his freedom.

Ada, Shakeel's sister, falls in love with an Indian soldier, Aman. Despite repeated warnings from the locals, Aman couldn't help falling for Ada. When the Indian army captures Al-Sami, Aman leads from the front. In retaliation, Shakeel gets his hands-on Aman and his comrades. Learning of the disappearance of her swain, Ada goes on a quest to find him, ultimately ending up in Shakeel's den and saving

Aman from Shakeel. The army learns of Aman's close association with Shakeel's sister and accuses him of being a traitor, leading to the issuing of the orders for his court-martial.

Meanwhile gets the attention of a private media channel to get justice for Aman. Angered by her bold step, the militants blow up Ada's home and lay siege to a mosque, making the worshippers captives. They demand the release of Al-Sami and refuse to negotiate with anyone expects Aman. Aman risks his life and enters the mosque only to be brutally beaten by Shakeel. Al-Sami is released and plans a secret operation. Ada's interview is aired and heard by everyone in the mosque, including Al-Sami. Al-Sami takes Shakeel along, but before he could make it to the destination, he is shot in the eye by Aman.

### **Textual Analysis**

The movie starts with the scene where a Muslim Kashmiri journalist, Shakeel is shown working in the charred remains of his printing house. In the very beginning, the film establishes the condition of Muslims in the war-plagued valley of Kashmir. The dialogue between Shakeel and his subordinates depicts the mindsets of the natives; when Shakeel asks one of the men about the new shirt he has gifted him, he asserts that a new shirt is only worth wearing on the day they attain their long-yearned freedom. With the worn-out machines squeaking, Shakeel relates Kashmir's weak and desperate condition to the over-used man-operated machines.



**Figure 5.4.3.1:** *A young girl, with her head wrapped in a light-colored scarf, peeks through her barred shutters at the sight of the soldiers.*

Shakeel is startled when he finds out that a worker has been concealing a gun and scolds him for owning any ammunition and immediately asks if he has been in contact with one of the jihadi insurgents, namely Majid (Yahaan 2005, Figure 5.4.3.2).



**Figure 5.4.3.2:** *Shakeel is startled when he finds out that a worker has been concealing a gun and scolds him for owning any ammunition.*

The Indian army makes its way to Shakeel's press house. Shakeel, with his companions, jumps down the window to flee the scene. The sudden fear instilled by the approach of the Indian Army reflects the fact that for Muslims in Kashmir, the army symbolizes terror. The printed papers lying on the table of the abandoned printing house read about the betrayal of trust by the agencies operating in and against

Kashmir.

The Indian soldiers chase Shakeel and his partners through the meandering, decrepit streets of Kashmir, which are bereft of any human or animal. The scene implies how desolate the paradise on earth could be; perhaps a curfew had been imposed while this happened. A young girl, with her head wrapped in a light-colored scarf, peeks through her barred shutters at the sight of the soldiers tailgating the men; her innocent face is expressionless as she merely looks at them as if it wasn't something new to her (*Yahaan* 2005, Figure 5.4.3.1).

The Indian army guns down one of the three men, Irfan, and chase the other two. A man in a van stationed across the bridge invites Shakeel in, reminding him how his denial to the offer might get him dead. Shakeel jumps on the truck and escapes.

The van leads Shakeel to a dark, confined place where men wearing the traditional Muslim attire are busy in several different activities. They arrive at a camp that trains Kashmiris to stand up and strive for their freedom. Once again, like any other movie of this sort, stereotypes formulated for extremists and terrorists have been reinforced by the portrayal of the rebels with beards and Islamic apparels. The head of the organization, Al-Sami, holds a sentimental discourse with Shakeel, provoking him against the slavery they have been put in, and the people responsible for it.

Al-Sami entices him to join in his uprising against the people who could only be fought by guns and tanks and not by intellect and ink. Surprisingly, this scene

captures the most widely held notion of the Islamic concept of Jihad, which is used to brainwash Muslims. An Indian soldier held captive by Al-Sami, who seems brutally tortured, is dragged amidst the men and shot in front of Shakeel to help him comprehend what Al-Sami meant. The presence of a very young Muslim boy and Al-Sami's consistent coercing for insurgency sketches a vivid canvas for the viewer that the concept of Jihad is used as a pretext by Muslims to cast terror and spark a revolution, punching up the conventional idea of Islam promoting contumacy, especially against the non-Muslims.

Furthermore, it supplements the idea that the Muslims of Kashmir are adamant in fighting for their freedom, without supporting the idea of joining either India or Pakistan, not just for the sake of liberty, but because they deem it to be their obligation. The conversations educe the minds and existence of the people of Kashmir, who decipher oppression not only as something they are subjected to but as a perpetually disseminating disease that is potent enough to endanger their generations to come.

Six years later, a virile Indian captain, Aman, is deployed to head an army regiment (*Yahaan* 2005, Figure 5.4.3.3). Aman enters the besieged valley without a trace of anxiety or apprehension, unlike the people whose very land he just joined. His retrospect of the Kashmir he knew 15 years ago shows how drastically things have changed in the area known as Paradise on earth. It illuminates the fact that circumstances have only deteriorated for the people of this land, and Kashmir has lost its glory with time owing to the troubles of its occupancy. As soon as Aman arrives, the higher officials command him to reply to a bullet with a bullet, that there



is no other rule in this land but to shoot without any hue of human empathy.



*Figure 5.4.3.3: Aman, is deployed to head an army regiment.*

They are at liberty to do what they like amongst themselves and enjoy absolute freedom, save interaction with the natives. In a vale where the indigenous people are deprived of the fundamental right to live and move as they want, these soldiers are free enough to choose their names and stick to their culture and values.

A veiled woman (Ada), who was labeled an ‘informer,’ is encircled by a group of armed soldiers, with her belongings lying scattered on the road (Yahaan 2005, Figure 5.4.3.4).

The veil, again, accentuates the influence of Islam on the people of Kashmir and their strong beliefs. While Aman is captivated by ‘Ada’s charm, she gestures at him to notice his vehicle’s flat tire. Ada shoves away one of the weapons and proceeds on her way. Ada represents the women in Kashmir – dauntless.

When she gets her hands on a pair of jeans and flaunts it outdoors, the women of her town eye her with awe, so exotic was the apparel. Most of the women shown in the movie are an epitome of Eastern culture and Islamic values (Yahaan 2005,

Figure 5.4.3.5).



**Figure 5.4.3.4:** *A veiled woman (Ada), who was labeled an ‘informer,’ is encircled by a group of armed soldiers, with her belongings lying scattered on the road.*

Women in Kashmir, like any other Islamic society, are ordained to shield themselves from the eyes of male strangers. There are glimpses of the specified norm in *Yahaan* too, but the women have also shown a certain degree of freedom.

The movie rationally focuses on the maltreatment of children, by the army and also by the freedom fighters. Both having left indelible marks on their minds, the latter being the consequence of the former. Aman meets Ada’s mentally impaired sister, who happens to be adopted, in his camp one day.

From a friend, he learns that the girl isn’t a Muslim, but is a Hindu whose whole family had been shot dead by the Indian army in Kashmir. By this, some of us can easily deduce how the oppression in Kashmir might not only be religiously biased. The impact of the mishap on the young girl was so substantial that she ended up being mute and mentally challenged. Despite the stark differences between the girl’s and Ada’s religion and culture, Ada’s family sheltered the young girl and became her family. The stereotypical image of Muslims being unwelcoming towards other

religions and their followers is successfully dissolved by Ada's unconditional love for her adopted, Hindu sister.



**Figure 5.4.3.5:** Most of the women shown in the movie are an epitome of Eastern culture and Islamic values.

The movie takes a turn when Aman and his soldiers capture a group of terrorists, one of them being Abdul Sami. Abdul Sami happens to be 'Shakeel's mentor. He wears the traditional Muslim dress and the look of a holy saint, who instigates his disciples for an uprising against the Indian rule.

A Kashmiri bazaar is focused upon, where men and women are shown to represent their dearly held culture of Salwar Kameez and Niqaab.



**Figure 5.4.3.6:** Impact of the explosion didn't only fall upon the Indian soldiers but is also shared by Kashmiris.

A van speeds through, and the door slides to reveal Ada's brother, Shakeel, sitting in it. Shakeel wears a Muslim head covering, resembling his mentor. He gestures at one of his disciples, who sits in a rickshaw and heads toward an army jeep, which explodes on collision. He is a suicide bomber; whose obvious target was indeed the soldiers. He succeeds in blowing it up, and Shakeel drives off as soon as his mission is accomplished.

Men and women run in a frenzy, calling out for their loved ones amidst the fire, while the soldiers invade the location (*Yahaan* 2005, Figure 5.4.3.7). A man repeatedly hollers a name 'Abdullah! Abdullah!' showing that the impact of the explosion didn't only fall upon the Indian soldiers, but was also shared by Kashmiris, who lost their lives and their dear ones while fighting their alleged enemy (*Yahaan* 2005, Figure 5.4.3.6).



**Figure 5.4.3.7:** Men and women run in a frenzy, calling out for their loved ones amidst the fire, while the soldiers invade the location.

It can easily be deciphered that the movie billows how Jihadis are a menace for both non-Muslims and Muslims, instilling fear and skepticism into the hearts of viewers. Smoke saturates the aura as babies' cries abound. Ada is bleeding and bruised, owing to the impure motives of her brother. The scene accentuates a Jihadis

psychology of total abstinence from any affection and sympathy when it comes to fighting for the sake of the Jihadi ideology. Emile Durkheim terms it as an altruistic suicide.

Indian soldiers carry the wounded and the lifeless, which emphasizes the ‘good’ side of the Indian army, who in the end is the savior of both Hindus and Muslims alike from Jihadis and freedom fighters in Kashmir. It can be taken as a metaphor of how the Indian Army has a certain obligation to clean up the mess created by Muslim extremists and terrorists.

Ada’s father serenely prays and supplicates to Allah, asking for his help in a situation so vexing.



**Figure 5.4.3.8:** Shakeel’s involvement with the Jihadis leaves his father shattered and his mother in a whirl of disbelief.

His son’s involvement with the Jihadis leaves him shattered and his mother in a whirl of disbelief (*Yahaan* 2005, Figure 5.4.3.8). Here, the movie shows that not every Muslim endorses violence and uprising. Shakeel’s father announces how Allah will never forgive him for his brutality, showing a positive image of the Muslims even when a few from their religion transgress. One very important point reduced in

this movie is that not every Muslim is responsible for the evil minds of a few Muslims. At times, Muslims suffer more at the hands of these fanatics.

The army directly encounters the insurgents, but the insurgents take captive the Indian soldiers, including Aman. In their confinement, the Indian soldiers are warily thrown jugs of water to drink from, which is the precise opposite to the treatment of the locals by the Indian army as shown in the movie.

Ada decides to look for Shakeel herself. She is turned down by most of his companions but continues to delve for his station. Shakeel and Aman face one another. Aman asks if he could solve a 55-year-old problem within a day. This reply speaks for Kashmiris who are struggling to be free, handing the whole responsibility to the Indian government in 1947. At this point, the movie transpires to be what most of the Bollywood movies of the same sort are; Aman tells Shakeel that he is speaking the language of the other side, that is, Pakistan.

Shakeel negates him by saying that he speaks for Kashmir. He reminds Shakeel of how the Indian Army came to Kashmir's aid when Pakistanis came to harm the chastity of Kashmiri women. The sequence depicts biased history we are taught every year, in every class, naturally calling for a dispute. It is established that India has always been Kashmir's guardian. The blame for the insurgency and unrest is effortlessly put on India's rival country.

When Shakeel is about to shoot Aman, Ada enters and shields her love from her very own brother, startling him at her affiliation with the soldier he deems as the enemy.

The Army officials now decide to court-martial Aman on the grounds of his association with Shakeel.

During their hideout, Ada asks Aman if he had been amidst the shrilling of guns and explosions of booms back in his town (*Yahaan* 2005, Figure 5.4.3.9). Kashmiris have lived in so much insecurity that a peaceful day is unusual.



**Figure 5.4.3.9:** *Ada asks Aman if he had been amidst the shrilling of guns and explosions of booms back in his town.*

Learning of Aman’s maltreatment, Ada decides to take things into her own hands, breaking the gender stereotype vital for Islamic women.

Ada moves from pillar to post to gain somehow a voice for her love and the truth she knew. A woman, dressed in Muslim attire, reminds Ada about the weakness of her gender and the insults she is going to face with the news about her affair with Aman (*Yahaan* 2005, Figure 5.4.3.10). This shows how some women, especially the elderly, living in a patriarchal society can be an exponent of gender discrimination and gender oppression against women themselves. When everything fails, Ada’s adopted sister asks her to write a letter to the Indian Prime Minister. Kashmiris are shown to be keen advocates of Indian supremacy over India, completely concealing

any feelings of resentment amongst the natives, except for a few handfuls of bigots, whom the plot accuses of being affiliated with the ‘the other side.’

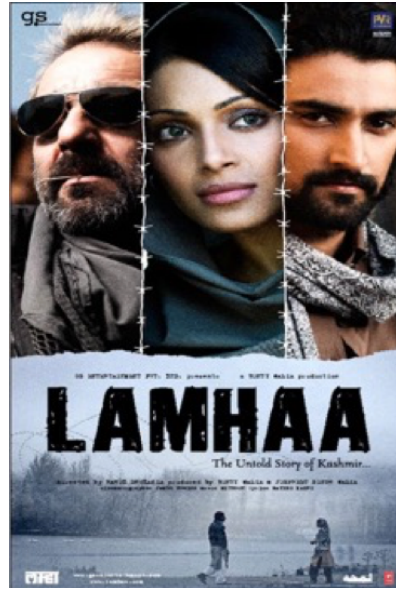


**Figure 5.4.3. 10:** *A woman, dressed in Muslim attire, reminds Ada about the weakness of her gender and the insults she is going to face with the news about her affair with Aman.*

The movie ‘*Yahaan*’ tends to stick to its genre of love and romance while accusing Pakistan of the misery of Kashmir. The Indian army is shown determined to work for nothing less than a peaceful Kashmir, which is threatened by those whom the Jihadis take along to brainwash and learn how to speak up against the unfair Indian rule. The movie didn’t do very well in the box office, mostly because the story was fairly predictable. However, the film shows that not all Muslims are extremists. The general, pitiable condition of Kashmiris is remarkably captured and leaves us with a message that love can bring an end to the war.



#### 1.4.4 Lamhaa (Moment, 2010, Dir. Rahul Dholakia)

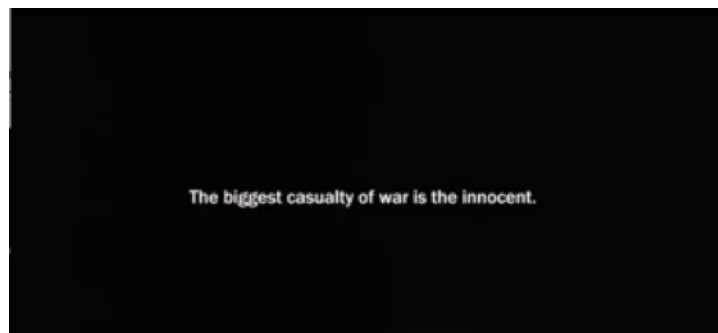


**Main Cast:** Sanjay Dutt as Vikram, Kunal Kapoor as Aatif, Bipasha Basu as Aziza,

*Lamhaa* (Moment) is a 2010 action thriller directed by Rahul Dholakia. It revolves around the story of an Indian military spy who infiltrates terrorist hideouts in Kashmir to locate the terrorist leader responsible for killing innocent people. He understands that it's not only the terrorists threatening the sanctity of Kashmir and its people, but also large corporations, politicians, and even some army officials. An organization generates massive cash flow, benefiting the power-hungry politicians and even military and intelligence officials belonging to Pakistan and India alike. Realizing the imminent threat and its long-term effects on Kashmir, Indian military intelligence sends its top spy Vikram, disguised as a Kashmiri Muslim, to investigate and locate the culprits behind the militants.

## Textual Analysis

The movie has the same content that uncovers the fundamental reason for the regular hopelessness of Kashmir, together with assessments of lives lost in wars which yielded practically no positive outcomes. The material explicitly suggests that the biggest misfortune has been to the Hindu pundits who live in Kashmir. Five minutes into the film, it is recommended that the wars are religiously partial towards innocent (*Lamhaa* 2010, Figure 5.4.4.1)



*Figure 5.4.4.1: Biggest casualty of war is the innocent.*

Two Indian authorities exchange information about a man (Rauf) wearing usual Pakistani attire who is blamed for being a ‘deal maker’ for Indian politicians. This focuses on the ideological and religious make of the danger; one can without much of a stretch expect it to be Islamic and Pakistani. The scene changes and focuses on the return of the protagonist, Vikram, who recollects the early days of Kashmir in 1989 (*Lamhaa* 2010, Figure 5.4.4.2). To take down the villains, Vikram infiltrates enemy-infested locales, including a mosque, and pushes onward to uncover the truth, while making sure that he can complete his mission. A bearded man (Chaudhary) recites the Holy Quran when the Indian Army attacks his abode and opens fire at him.

A girl, wearing a scarf, cries ‘Abu!’ as her father is gunned down in front of her eyes.  
(*Lamhaa* 2010, Figure 5.4.4.3).



*Figure 5.4.4.2: Vikram, recollects the early days of Kashmir in 1989.*

The motive for the killing of a Muslim isn't clear, but it does introduce the viewer to the religious nature of the shooting and the plot to follow. The view changes to depict the on-going struggle and protests, the spearhead of which is again a Muslim cleric who calls on his supporters for freedom. Rose petals are showered on him as the locals show their reverence to this bearded man. The leader declares the Indian army as his foe, and the one responsible for the killing of Chaudhary. A scene is included where bullets are fired at men wearing white, resulting in a shot where they lie in blood on the floor. At this stage, one might either assume the Muslims striving for freedom are extremists who deserve brutal treatment at the hands of the army, or one might think of the Indian army as a categorically oppressive squad of people. The objective of the violence isn't visible yet, but it does paint a religious hue: the loss suffered by the Kashmiri Muslims. Another scene showcases a Kashmiri Muslim woman is in her house with two of her male family members when Indian soldiers slam open the door and drag along the men, paying no heed to the woman's cries.



**Figure 5.4.4.3:** *A girl, wearing a scarf, cries 'Abu!' as her father is gunned down in front of her eyes.*

The woman's hands are violently shoved away by the soldiers with no regard. Kashmiri women, who happen to be staunch Muslims, are depicted in their veils under the Islamic context of piety. The woman tries with all her might to free the men from the cruel grasp of the soldiers, which speaks for the relatively equal participation of Kashmiri women in the war against their misery.



**Figure 5.4.4.4:** *Head of a Madrassah continuously instigates the children to flee to Pakistan and to train with all their heart and mind.*

A voice-over emphasizes how the Russian defeat in Afghanistan boosted Kashmiri morale.

The man previously shown to head a protest is now a mentor for pupils, punching up the notion that Madrassas are hubs of extremism. The instructor tells his

student to go to Pakistan for the sole purpose of training, as the Indian army can no longer be restrained using stones and pebbles. The plot becomes quite discernible with the Madrassah in charge continuously instigating the children to flee to Pakistan and to train with all their heart and mind, comparing it to the learning of the verses in the Quran (*Lamhaa* 2010, Figure 5.4.4.4)

Later in the film, Kashmiri Hindus are shown leaving their homes, with stones thrown at them by a mob of young Muslim boys. Kashmir is trapped in a turmoil of religious resentment, which is being endorsed by Muslims who live in Kashmir and are closely allied with Pakistan. In another scene, a boy reciting the Quranic verses blows up a car in the middle of the market (*Lamhaa* 2010, Figure 5.4.4.5)



**Figure 5.4.4.5:** *Boy reciting the Quranic verses blows up a car in the middle of the market.*

The movie tries to show that, Pakistan is the epicenter of all the violence happening in Kashmir. Partially speaking for the plight of the Kashmiri people, *Lamhaa* bolsters the perception that Islamic terrorists and Pakistani-funded guerrilla fighters are mutual forces against the long-yearned harmony in Kashmir, which work to hinder the strenuous efforts of Indian troops for the restoration of peace. One can identify the stark tilting of the cleverly concocted plot in favor of Hindus.

The cleric's adopted daughter is an overly active component of her father's anti-Indian propaganda. Despite the veil, she busts into a terrorist's house and splits his throat after a heated argument (*Lamhaa* 2010, Figure 5.4.4.6)



**Figure 5.4.4.6.:** *Aziza, the cleric's adopted daughter is an overly active component of her father's anti-Indian propaganda.*

Contrary to the popular misconception about Muslim women, Aziza represents the modern Kashmiri woman for whom no obstacle is potent enough to stop her from achieving what she thinks to be right.

The plot unfolds, and the montage shows Kashmir's multi-layered problem. Every part of Kashmiri society is a spin-off of a larger conspiracy, with people from every part of the community involved in various militant activities. Almost everyone is an informer, and this sketches a very close-knit Kashmiri society with a intense yearning for liberation.

A man who is seen asking Indian soldiers not to let Hindus do any provoking acts during Diwali to avoid consequences is hailed by the children with the chants of 'Here comes the Lashkar.' Kashmiri children too are fed the image of Lashkar as a savior, and the man shouts at them, showing him as the one who instigates these

young minds (*Lamhaa* 2010, Figure 5.4.4.7). As Lashkar has already been elicited as a terrorist, militant organization, it is no surprise that these bearded men are depicted as the vanguard of a rather peace-menacing movement.



**Figure 5.4.4.7:** Kashmiri children are fed the image of Lashkar as a savior, and the man shouts at them, showing him as the one who instigates these young minds.

Unlike how the Jihadis treat children, Vikram has quality time with the Muslim boy he lives with, depicting how his beliefs do not interfere with his social conduct (*Lamhaa* 2010, Figure 5.4.4.8). Madrassah is pictured, which is divided into various compartments. In one chamber, the pupils recite the Kalimah Tayyibah, and in the other, they are trained for militancy.



**Figure 5.4.4.8:** Vikram has quality time with the Muslim boy he lives with, depicting how his beliefs do not interfere with his social conduct.

The connections are stark, which again label madrassas as the training centers

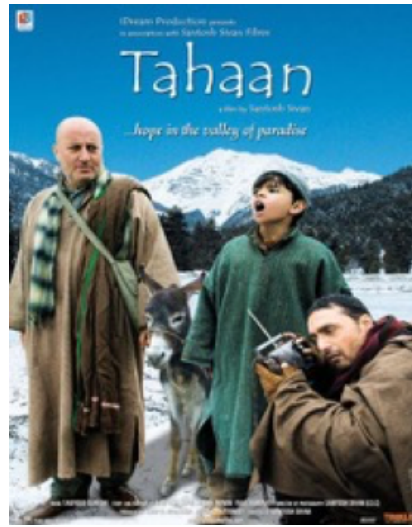
for terrorists and depicts their evil manipulation of children. This gives the idea of Muslims being terrorists. Women who haven't met their husbands owing to the war, children who haven't met their fathers and incomplete families bereft of hope are captured with utmost perfection in *Lamhaa*. Camps are erected, and life is shown as a relic of existence only. The trials and tribulations that Kashmiris bear are sketched.

A native, Atif, competing for the election, addresses his people, quoting that they have been trapped in an 'appealing jail', and not 'paradise on Earth'. The Kashmiri sentiment flows richly, depicting how Kashmiris have suffered to a war that isn't even theirs. Rauf sees Atif as a threat to his mission and later gets him imprisoned. The slogan of freedom isn't welcome by the antagonist organizations in Kashmir. It is now clear that these terrorist organizations are linked with Pakistan. 'Peace in the Valley is trouble for our mission' says a man dressed as a Muslim militant. By this statement, it can be deduced that the unrest in Kashmir is planted to benefit a few Jihadi organizations, justifying the presence of Indian troops in Kashmir.

*Lamhaa* shows the dark side of Kashmir, articulating the fact that the problem in Kashmir is multi-layered in its truest essence. Despite all this, *Lamhaa* tends to confirm the gloom and melancholy which stands still between the hills, enveloping the entire Valley. The movie is biased against Islamic beliefs and the concept of Jihad. This is one of the reasons why the film was banned in the Middle East, Pakistan, and some parts of Kashmir, due to the biased approach to sensitive issues in Kashmir.



### 1.4.5 Tahaan (2008, Dir. Santosh Sivan)



**Main Cast:** Purav Bhandare as Tahaan, Rahul Bose as Zaffar, Anupam Kher as Subhan

*Tahaan* is a drama about the titular character, who is a young boy who shares a strong attachment with his donkey. But the mother sells his donkey to repay a loan. The story revolves around Tahaan's efforts to get the donkey back in a region that is marred by terrorist activities. The film starts with Tahaan, a Kashmiri boy living with his mother Haba, grandfather, and sister Zoya. Father went missing three years ago. The family still waits for his return. Soon into the movie, Tahaan's grandfather dies, leaving the family with nothing but financial problems. The family is unable to pay the loan back to the local money lender and is subsequently pushed further into crisis when all their assets, including Tahaan's pet donkey Birbal, is taken away as compensation for an unpaid loan. While the rest of family has passively accepted the troubled situation, Tahaan is determined to bring his pet donkey back home.

After saving money through various means, Tahaan approaches the

moneylender only to be told that Birbal has been bought by an old man named Subhan Dar, who later went across the mountains. The boy's father went missing across the same mountains three years ago. Tahaan decides to go in search of Subhan Dar. He finds him and is hired to guide Birbal, and as payment, he will get Birbal back later on. But upon completing his task, Tahaan neither gets Birbal nor any other amount. Subhan, rather than doing as he promised, gifts Birbal to his eight-year-old nephew.

Tahaan goes home, disappointed by the events. On his way, he finds Idris, a teenager who further discourages Tahaan, telling him that his efforts will not suffice to get his pet donkey back. He agrees to help Tahaan rescue Birbal in exchange for a favor. He asks Tahaan to carry a package across the mountains on his way. Idris hands a grenade over to Tahaan and says that at the right time, he will receive further instructions.

Tahaan goes through a checkpoint safely with the package and grenade undiscovered because the soldiers knew Subhan Dar was a trusted man. Tahaan, about to perform a militant act with his grenade, removes the pin but immediately changes his mind and throws the grenade into the river, harming no one. Subhan Dar's nephew, who has Birbal, hands it over to Tahaan. Tahaan's father also emerges from the same building that Tahaan was meant to destroy with the grenade, but in the end, he is not only reunited with his donkey, Birbal, but his father as well.

## Textual Analysis

*Tahaan* is set in the picturesque backdrop of Kashmir and tells the story of a little boy who has lost his Donkey and is too innocent to comprehend the situation around. The story is told from a boy's point of view. For him, bringing his favorite donkey Birbal back home is the sole purpose of his life.

The story is direct and sweet, yet there are a few issues with the film, the soldiers are individuals of character, unassuming, mindful, and quiet.



**Figure 5.4.5.1** Red mark shows up on the screen and resembling a blood splashing when somebody is shot. As the shot advances, the splash appears as the brush stroke and looks as painting using the shade.

The opening theme shows artistic and theoretical images set against a moderate conventional Kashmiri instrumental music. It holds the beauty of the place. One inconceivably fascinating sequence is a red mark that shows up on the screen and resembles blood splashing when somebody is shot (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.1). As the shot advances, the splash appears as the brush stroke and looks as painting using the shade. This whole shot is an allegory for the Kashmiris, as the famous magnificence of the valley is presently superimposed against bleeding strife that has been continuing for a long time. Notwithstanding, it is still up to the individual's'

point of view and their decision whether to get involved in the contention to make significantly greater red smears, or they can pick a superior way and safeguard their humanity for advance. The opening subject is likewise a symbolic portrayal of the decision that Tahaan confronts at the end: he could have either slaughtered the whole gathering of individuals alongside his dad or could have taken a superior way by not obliterating the trust of the experts on standard regular folks (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.2).



**Figure 5.4.5.2:** Tahaan is a small boy who has lost his Donkey and is too innocent to comprehend the situation around.

From the beginning of the movie, there is an active artistic element present in every single frame. For instance, Tahaan's grandfather takes on the role of a mentor for the protagonist and his older sibling, Zoya (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.3). He tells the children stories and ignites artistic appreciation in them as he asks them to look closely at a carpet that he created to identify or understand the abstract colors and patterns that he had woven into it. The children look closely and are unable to understand the creation of their grandfather, which is a symbolic reference to the people just enjoying and hailing the superficial beauty of the valley and not taking a minute to understand the turmoil hidden behind the beautiful façade. The scene also

shows the poetic and cryptic nature of the Kashmiris, where all their behaviors and words have a hidden meaning behind them.



**Figure 5.4.5.3:** *Tahaan's grandfather takes on the role of a mentor for the protagonist and his older sibling, Zoya.*

Therefore, throughout the movie, many cues underline the old saying that nothing is what it seems. The film begins with Tahaan fervently looking for his pet donkey, which is initially unspecified as Tahaan is only shown calling out for Birbal (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.4). He calls out to him in the beautiful valley until Tahaan realizes that despite the area's beauty there is something sinister lurking about. The camera pans to showcase the scenic beauty of the snow-capped mountains, but the background score adds an eerie feel to the surroundings that makes the protagonist run away.



**Figure 5.4.5.4:** *Tahaan is determined to bring his pet Donkey Birbal back.*

The underlying tone is further emphasized in a later scene when Tahaan goes to another village. In the distance, he hears gunshots as he looks around, perplexed (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.5). The beauty of the valley masks the ugly reality of political and territorial conflicts. Tahaan's innocence and undying love for his donkey make him venture into the territory when his grandfather enters and rebukes the child for not paying heed to his command and walking in the danger zone in search of a donkey.



**Figure 5.4.5.5:** *Tahaan goes to another village. In the distance, he hears gunshots as he looks around, perplexed.*

The advice shows that elders have tried their best to keep the younger generation unscathed by the disaster, protecting them at all costs. However, Tahaan's innocent love for his donkey is a representation of the innocent people in a

heartlessness society, a society where the clashes between two forces have left little or no respect for the sanctity of human life. In that same region, there is a boy who loves his donkey dearly, an animal who may or may not reciprocate the feelings. This reflects the intrinsic nature of the people of the valley, who are loving and nurturing, trying to preserve the human element in their psyche.



**Figure 5.4.5.6:** *The children are dressed in attire resembling that of the terrorists. They have their faces colored for beards as they hold toy guns.*

The involvement of the forces is also included at the beginning of the movie. Tahaan walks to an army camp, and he explores the area as if he is wholly accustomed to army officers conducting drills and marching to their posts. It shows that the military surrounds the valley to the point that their activities are now just an ordinary occurrence.

Tahaan is a typical Kashmiri boy who comes from a devout Muslim family. His mother goes to shrines and prays ardently while Tahaan watches. This shows a strong cultural link with religion and shows that religion is still indeed a dominant part of the Kashmiris' lives. However, it does not necessarily mean that all Muslims support bloodshed but are indeed as ordinary as people living in other parts of India as well, who share the same sentiments and emotions.

Tahaan's involvement with religion is also shown when he can't get Birbal back. He falls on the snow and prays for his donkey, and then continues with his journey.

However, certain scenes still stereotype Muslims, showing younger generation has internalized such stereotypes. After Tahaan goes in search of the man who got his donkey, he asks a bunch of kids to ask Subhan Dar's whereabouts while the kids are playing their version of cops and robbers. The children are dressed in attire resembling that of the terrorists. They have their faces colored for beards as they hold toy guns (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.6).



**Figure 5.4.5.7:** *The children pretend to fall on the ground as the other kids shoot them. This entire sequence sheds light on a grim reality with children mirroring the behavior of adults, by internalizing the violence and death that have engulfed the valley.*

The children pretend to fall on the ground as the other kids shoot them (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.7). This entire sequence sheds light on a grim reality with children mirroring the behavior of adults, by internalizing the violence and death that have engulfed the valley. This behavior can be further vouched by Bandura's experiment which explains how children learn violent behaviors and usually emulates and imitates older individuals. Therefore, the violence in their play is an exact representation of how the violence in the region affects the youth and their mindset.



(Fontaine, 2012, 38)

The aggression and negativity of the region surface in the young through their play, whereas the older generation is as cynical and apathetic as ever. This is revealed when Subhan Dar talks to Tahaan and sardonically retorts that he named his pet donkey after the great minister of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, while the current ministers are doing nothing (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.8). Tahaan, who is only eight, is unable to understand the reference, showing just how much anger the Kashmiris have against authorities.



**Figure 5.4.5.8:** *Subhan Dar talks to Tahaan and sardonically retorts that he named his pet donkey after the great minister of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, while the current ministers are doing nothing.*

On his way home, he sees a couple of tourists outside his house. One of them says, 'Arre Kashmiri Bacha Kitna Pyara Hai. Ek Tasveer Kheech Hain Iss Ki', translated let's take a picture of this Kashmiri kid. They ask Tahaan to smile. Though the scene seems reasonable on the surface, it shows Kashmiris as backward and exoticized by people of the West, making them an object of entertainment, undermining any real value they have.



**Figure 5.4.5.9:** People, especially young ones, are frisked and caught by armed troops, which is threatening and horrifying.

*Tahaan* shows how people, especially young ones, are frisked and caught by armed troops and this has been presented with some impact-full music, which is sometimes threatening and horrifying too (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.9). Local militants use the young Tahaan for smuggling ammunition, who promises him to help him get his donkey back (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.10). This may leave a negative image on the audience, who might think that kids in Kashmir are being used for smuggling weapons and are not checked by troops, which creates fear for the place.



**Figure 5.4.5.10:** Local militants use the young Tahaan for smuggling ammunition, who promises him to help him get his donkey back.

The militants even take Tahaan to their hideout (*Tahaan 2008*, Figure 5.4.5.11). They clean their guns, and suddenly Tahaan asks them, ‘Kya Main Isse

Chala Sakta Hoon?’ which means if he can use the gun. One replies, ‘Ye Bachon Ka Kaam Nahin, Magar Mard Chala Sakta Hai’, meaning it is not made for kids to play with: only a brave man can use guns. The scene gives the impression that it is normal for people in Kashmir to use weapons. Such views bound to disturb the minds of viewers, creating a bad image of Kashmiris to the outside world.



*Figure 5.4.5.11: The militants also take Tahaan to their hideout.*

This also shows how people associate violence and guns with virility and masculinity and use them as a pretext to lure a naïve boy into helping them in their heinous mission. The mysterious Bhabha asks Tahaan, ‘Ye Pahad, Yeh Jungle Kis Ke Hain?’ meaning, who owns these mountains, jungle, and waterfalls? He would ask the same to all he would meet, and they would reply, ‘These belong to God’, but Idress, the local militant, tells him, ‘Ye Sab Hamare The, Ab Nahin Rahen, Ab Sab Ghulam Hain, Sab Karza Hai Hum Pe’, which roughly translates to, ‘This was once ours, but not anymore. They are slaves and a liability to us’—a well-scripted dialogue, which communicates so much. However, a typical reaction could be that the director is explaining how evil is cultivated among the children of Kashmir.

*Tahaan* is the only film that shows some of the real culture, traditions, and life

in rural Kashmir. Zikr is something which only saints do when they listen to praising of Allah. But Kashmiris are unnecessarily shown doing Zikr all the time, even when they are listening to folk music and love songs.

There is a heart-breaking shot showing the burnt houses of Kashmiri Pundits with no inhabitant living in them. It depicts the pain of Kashmiri Pundits who have lost their ancestral homes, whereas houses of Kashmiri Muslims, which were burnt in different encounters, have not been given any space. The film overall shows the bias and prejudice of the director, who has only shown the Kashmiri Pundit part of the exile and not what a Muslim Kashmiri still lives with. *Tahaan* has an abrupt closing. In the end, Subhan Dar gives Birbal back to Tahaan on the request of his grandson, and in a strange twist of events, Tahaan is also reunited with his estranged father.

*Tahaan* represents how naïve boys are lured into committing heinous crimes and trained to become militants. They are manipulated by gunmen who know their weakness and use them accordingly to get what they want. Tahaan is just one of the naïve boys who almost got himself embroiled in a bloody conflict. However, not all people have the same luck or fate as Tahaan, and some children end up becoming mere pawns for the terrorists. The film does not have much propaganda, but it does highlight the way young men are promised material wealth and a sense of masculinity so that they are more amenable and can be used for terrorist activities.

Tahaan's character is the epitome of innocence. The movie also reinforces the idea that terrorist and militant ideas are not the cause of religious or cultural

affiliations, but the result of the choice one makes. For instance, Tahaan could have easily blown up the building and claimed the lives of many in the process, but he instead chose a better path that helped him in not only achieving not only his goal but also find his father. Overall, Tahaan tops the list of films produced to date that revolves around the rural life in Kashmir. Tahaan is a brilliant piece of cinema by director Santosh Sivan.

#### 1.4.6 **Sikandar** (2009, Dir Piyush Jha)



**Main Cast:** Parzan Dastur as Sikandar, Ayesha Kapoor as Nasreen, Sanjay Suri as Mukhtar Masoodi, Madhavan as Col.Rajesh Rao

*Sikandar* is a 2009 action drama directed by Piyush Jha. The titular character is a teenage boy who finds a gun and gains the confidence to face his fears, while not

realizing that the power is corrupting him and making him into what he seemingly stands against. Set against the backdrop of the Kashmir issue, the film shows how the region is tarnished and divided by politicians, army, molvis, and militants, while the local community suffers attacks and fears all the men with power. As the story unveils itself, it becomes quite clear that Sikandar might be the only solution to the most significant problems. Events of the film take place in the beautiful valley of Kashmir, home to a sizable Muslim community, but has turned into a conflict zone. The military and political presence express their mutual interest in eradicating the militants while still having conflicts of interests.

Amid both happiness and chaos, teenager Sikandar is introduced living with his aunt and uncle as he has lost his parents to militants. Sikandar is an ideal good boy, a good football player, helpful and peace loving, but bullied by the opposing football team players. He gets his hands on an abandoned pistol. Having the gun makes him feel confident and bold enough to face his fears without realizing that the power is manipulating him.

Sikandar is manipulated by the militants and trained to use the gun and is also brainwashed to be a weapon himself. But fate has a different plan. Soon things spiral out of control as Sikandar is forced to make choices that are not his, and as the authorities begin to connect the dots, the final revelation brings us to the climatic ending with Sikandar making the ultimate choice while drenched in the lies of religion, politics, and defense.

## Textual Analysis

The screen lightens up with breathtaking glimpses of Kashmir Valley with cloudy but pleasant skies over the lush green mountains. All the while names of actors appear on screen with every change in scenery. A song with soft music plays in the background, giving viewers a positive vibe.

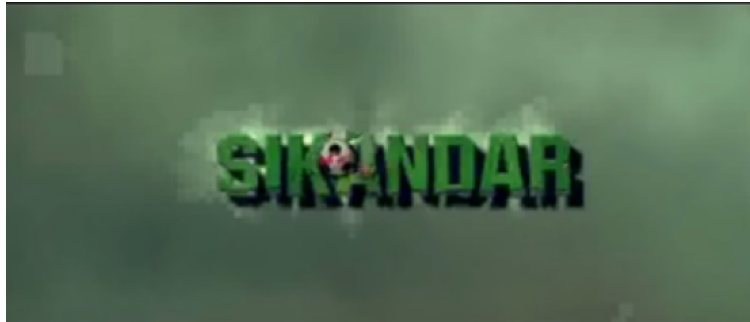
The song continues, and we see children's school, which quite strikingly resembles a mosque. Children pour out of it as if they have just finished their school routine, bags over their shoulders, and heads covered with small religious caps for boys and sashes for girls. The scene is positive with children talking while walking toward their homes, beautiful traditional architecture in the backdrop. The cast and crew credit keep rolling in (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.1).



**Figure 5.4.6.1:** A song with soft music plays in the background, giving viewers a positive vibe. Children talking while walking toward their homes.

As a kid kicks a football, the song is interrupted with an explosive blast on the screen, with the sound of rubble, wind, and debris in the background, and the title ‘Sikandar’ appears on screen, setting a darker tone to the film contrary to its previous positive depiction(*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.2). This also expresses the end of

opening credits, therefore ending a prologue to the story.



**Figure 5.4.6.2:** *As a kid kicks a football, the song is interrupted with an explosive blast on the screen, with the sound of rubble, wind, and debris in the background, and the title 'Sikandar' appears on screen.*

Upbeat music returns expressing yet another scene of joy where boys are playing a local football match in broad daylight under the backdrop of yet another green mountainous region (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.4). The lead protagonist (Sikandar) plays on the field while showcasing his expertise in the game. As the tone of the music changes, we realize that he is considered a threat by the opposing team and they act by any means to stop him, hence using foul-play tactics to injure him. As the game ends and the crowd leaves, a girl comes to help the protagonist, but he refuses to take her gesture and joins his fellow players. The music had gone silent by the end of the scene.





**Figure 5.4.6.3:** *The dark, mutilated ground is torn apart by the militants, and the leftover remnants express that it was a place of celebration.*

The scene once again switches to a darker score, and we see the impact of the explosion. The dark, mutilated ground was torn apart by the militants, and the leftover remnants express that it was a place of celebration. (Sikandar 2009, Figure 5.4.6.3). An Indian army officer goes through the rubble and picks up a finger, which may have once belonged to a child. His face expresses emotional sensitivity. Local Muslim politicians approach him, and the change in music and scene direction communicates a confrontational mode. Both use metaphors to express their anger toward each other, and somehow it is quite clear to see that the politician has a soft corner for the militants responsible for the bomb blast.



**Figure 5.4.6.4:** *Boys are playing football match in broad daylight under the backdrop of yet another green mountainous region.*

They talk about their pasts, and over a painful detail, the music swings to a

sorrowful tone. Sikandar remembers his parents who were killed by militants, but no flashback is shown, only the sad facial expression of the Nasreen. They find a gun lying on the ground. Sikandar wants to investigate it, but the Nasreen ignores it and moves along. Soon afterward, he joins her while expressing that she was right, and he has ignored the gun.

The next scene starts again with an open road, Sikandar returns perhaps to his home after the school, and he is alone now. Sikandar then retrieves the gun that he picked up in the morning. He acts like an action hero and makes poses with the gun while only making gun sounds from his mouth. The tone and music suddenly halt, as quite predictably, Sikandar finds an animal and accidentally shoots it. He runs away, and the camera focuses on the dying animal while expressing the consequences of firing a gun. (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.5). After a brief glimpse of a military base, we are taken inside the office of the Colonel. He and his subordinate have a Kashmiri with them, clearly a Muslim, who has just been offered tea, but the Colonel slaps him on the face. While the Muslim screams of being innocent, he is dragged by the other officer to another room out of the line of sight. As the Colonel sips his tea, we hear a gunshot, perhaps depicting that the Kashmiri has been shot dead.



**Figure 5.4.6.5:** *Sikandar finds an animal and accidentally shoots it. He runs away, and the camera focuses on the dying animal while expressing the consequences of firing a gun.*

The scene opens into another part of the beautiful valley, where a one-armed man carries wood toward his shed. The sun has set, and the evening sky expresses a bit of gloom—the scene shifts to yet another football match where Sikandar is leading the crowd with his exceptional performance (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.6). As one of the opposing team members tries to tackle him from behind, with an intent of a foul, he is stopped by his fellow teammates and Sikandar successfully secures a goal. His team wins, and he gets a definite nod from the coach. Nasreen shows up and expresses his victory as a man's job, and they both laugh gleefully. Sikandar and Nasreen once again walk joyfully toward their homes (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.7). A song spurs in the background depicting a blossoming romance. As they sit, Nasreen curiously asks Sikander how he was able to control his opposition, and Sikandar shows her the gun. She is disappointed and walks away. But Sikandar seems to be content with his decision. The next scene, with a rocky ground and a stream meandering downward. A man sits on a rock waiting, while the man from the hut appears from the side, clearly coming toward the waiting man. As he joins his team of five fellows, he is greeted with 'Assalam-o-Alaikum,' blatantly expressing all of them as Muslims. Their leader expresses their plans to be successful shortly with

some big change coming, to which everyone responds with ‘Insha-Allah,’ another example them as Muslims of great faith. The leader hides his arm and holds out a gun and kills the man who was waiting. Through dialogue expresses that he is looking for the informant (perhaps referring to the last scene with the Muslim politician), and he only killed the man unjustly to give an example; the militants have their agenda, and they are unjust and self-righteous to the core.



**Figure 5.4.6.6:** *The scene shifts to yet another football match where Sikandar is leading the crowd with his exceptional performance.*

The next scene starts with a pleasant scene of the valley, an unlikely way of setting the mood, as the film switches between moods a little too frequently, forcing the audience to change their emotions rapidly. Sikandar helps his aunt with laundry while he says he wants to fulfill all her wishes. She asks for a washing machine, and Sikandar becomes somewhat sad, clearly expressing his lack of resources to accomplish such a deed. In the coming scenes, Sikandar tries to get a washing machine, and in panic, uses his gun to scare off the shop owner.



**Figure 5.4.6.7:** *Nasreen shows up and expresses his victory as a man's job, and they both laugh gleefully. Sikandar and Nasreen once again walk joyfully toward their homes.*

As Sikandar walks home, he is followed by the three football players, who are now interested in joining Sikandar, believing him to be a militant. Sikandar denies his involvement and uses the gun to scare them away. Sikandar tries to throw the weapon away but before he could, the leader of the militants appears. He was observing Sikandar for some time (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.8). He looks like a friendly person and offers to help Sikandar avenge his father's death by becoming a 'Ghazi,' or militant.



**Figure 5.4.6.8:** *Sikandar tries to throw the weapon away but before he could, the leader of the militants appears. He was observing Sikandar for some time.*

The scene unfolds into a song targeting Muslims ('Allah hoo Allah hoo' as the song opener goes). Multiple shots of the militant leader, Zaheer, show him teaching Sikandar how to handle the gun (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.9).



**Figure 5.4.6.9:** *Sikandar denies his involvement and uses the gun to scare them away.*

Next, at a mosque where prayer is coming to an end, the politician goes inside to meet the Imam. He wants help from Imam while expressing the Indian army's promise of peace if the bombing would stop. But Imam, even though a man of God, do not want to be involved in the matter and chooses to stay neutral. Sikandar is prepared to do anything to get his prize, as the militant leader has brainwashed him into believing that shooting an apple, a bottle or even a human head is the same when it comes to claiming the real reward. He is no longer a kid who is interested in going to school. Nasreen notices all these changes.



**Figure 5.4.6.10:** *The politician enters and requests the colonel for prayer and burial for the dead, him being human.*

After an argument with Zaheer, Sikandar kills him. Sikandar runs back to school where he confesses it to Nasreen in an empty classroom.

Army officers investigate the area for a clue when their colonel turns over Zaheer's dead body. A look of triumph crosses his face.

The politician enters and requests the colonel for prayer and burial for the dead, him being human. (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.10). The army officer disagrees by recounting crimes committed by Zaheer, but he lets the Muslim politician do his bidding.

Inside the mosque, the politician meets the Imam once again, who was updated about Zaheer's status earlier. The politician requests the Imam to direct people to avoid retaliation and react with peace, but the Imam denies the support as he believes that people would want revenge for Zaheer's death (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.11).



**Figure 5.4.6.11:** *The politician requests the Imam to direct people to avoid retaliation and react with peace, but the Imam denies the support as he believes that people would want revenge for Zaheer's death.*

Sikandar runs through the forest over a small rocky plain; the music turns into an uplifting hymn while the sunlight brightens up the scene, expressing a positive note as Sikandar raises his arm to throw the gun into the running stream. He is ambushed by the three football players, led by Ijaz, who take the gun from him and then beat him up. Sikandar is awake but heartbroken as Ijaz and his gang goes away.





**Figure 5.4.6.12:** *Ijaz and his two friends are lying dead on the ground in their blood. Ijaz is still holding Sikandar's gun.*

The next scene opens up into a street of the same area, where Sikandar and Nasreen follow a small crowd of people, gathered together to see something unusual. Ijaz and his two friends are lying dead on the ground in their blood (Sikandar 2009, Figure 5.4.6.12). Ijaz is still holding Sikandar's gun. As military vehicles reach the crime scene, people leave immediately while Sikandar tries to get the gun but fails as the military captain asks him to go at once with a warning.

The military arrives at school and tries to identify Sikandar and Nasreen. Sikandar panics and tries to hide his face in plain sight, but the captain confirms to the colonel that he can't identify the kids they are looking for. Upon the suggestion of Nasreen, Sikandar leaves school by faking pain in his stomach.

In a dark room, the army takes action. They interrogate a man at his home while going through his stuff and identifying illegal items. The man is a Muslim and a militant sympathizer, but also very much scared of the army. He spills everything he knows about Sikandar to the army and even his connection to Zaheer.

Back home, Sikandar sits on his bed. His aunt brings him milk, which he does



not want to drink, pretending to have a stomach ache Army officers are now at the door for Sikandar, but his aunt lets him escape indicating that she is also a militant sympathizer (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.13). Her dress shows she is a local housewife and probably uneducated compared to Sikandar's uncle.



**Figure 5.4.6.13:** Back home, Sikandar sits on his bed. His aunt brings him milk, which he does not want to drink, pretending to have a stomach ache.

Sikandar's football team is practicing on a beautiful green ground. Nasreen looks for Sikandar among the players but can't find him (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.14). He sees her as he hides behind trees, out of sight. He expresses to her his fear of getting caught, and she believes that his only option is to seek help from the Molvi (an expert in, or teacher of Islamic law) of the mosque, a clear sign that the motives of Molvis are not expressed in line with authorities. But Sikandar is afraid he might be caught, but Nasreen volunteers to help him reach his destination. She asks Sikandar to hide in an old abandoned water tank.



**Figure 5.4.6.14:** *Sikandar's football team is practicing on a beautiful green ground. Nasreen looks for Sikandar among the players but can't find him.*

On the next day, Nasreen makes him wear a burqa and helps him in reaching the mosque disguised as a woman.

As soon as Sikandar enters the mosque, a Molvi stops him, exclaiming that girls are not allowed inside a mosque (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.15). This is one of the many misinterpretations of women in Islam expressed wrongfully in the film, as there is no such restriction in the religion. Sikandar removes his burqa to reveal himself, and hands it over to the Molvi along with the bag that Nasreen gave. He then walks through the mosque where a lecture is taking place. He goes straight into the room behind the main hall where the Imam sits. They instantly recognize Sikandar, the Imam expresses his anger for his killing of Zaheer, but the senior Molvi interrupts him and assures Sikandar that they will protect him.



**Figure 5.4.6.15:** *As soon as Sikandar enters the mosque, a Molvi stops him, exclaiming that girls are not allowed inside a mosque.*

A bomb blast interrupts the meeting, destroying the door of the room. All three people in the room fall, but they get up immediately. The Molvi who had held the burqa and bag for Sikandar enters the room, now limping and severely injured by the blast. Before he passes out (probably dead), he conveniently points his finger toward Sikandar and blames his bag for the blast. Sikandar denies his involvement, and without saying where he got the bag from, he dashes out of the room into the main hall, which is now strewn with broken furniture, rubble, and dead bodies. Sikandar escapes.

The politician is told that the bomber was Sikandar, who has fled the scene. At one point, the colonel asks the captain about the girl seen with Sikandar. The captain does not remember the girl much, but he says her eyes are ‘sparkling and innocent,’ perhaps traits girls normally do not project. His unique description gives the colonel some sort of major clue. Back at the Mehndi, the song continues. The politician introduces Nasreen to male guests as his daughter that he dearly loves. At this very moment, Sikandar regrets coming to Nasreen. He runs back toward the jungle into total darkness.

On the next day, Sikandar wakes up and looks around, daylight streaming inside the hut. There is no one outside and he is alone. To his surprise, a similar gun waits for him at a rock in front of the hut with an image, which is perhaps the same image the colonel and the captain were looking at. We are never shown any close-up of the image.

In another beautiful backdrop of Kashmir, a car speeds up on a road adjacent to the river (*Sikandar* 2009, Figure 5.4.6.16). In the back seat the politician and his now revealed daughter sits. The politician encourages his daughter for her act of bravery, but before he ends his dialogue, a shot is fired at the vehicle's tire and it spirals out of control. The two passengers come out of the car, the politician checking his daughter for injuries. Both are unscathed.

Sikandar turns out to be the shooter, and as he confronts them both, he aims the gun at the politician, who is still filled with villainous confidence and boasts about his successful plan of using him. But before Sikandar can do anything else, Nasreen comes in front of her father, and her father praises Nasreen's willingness to sacrifice herself for his cause. The scene does not last long, though, as Sikandar drops to the ground, lowering the gun, in a stance of giving, proving his claim that killing Zaheer was an accident and he is not really a killer. Nasreen walks up to him, grabs the gun and quite predictably shoots multiple times at her father. With a daunting and surprised look on the face, the politician finally falls to the ground. The army arrives at the scene and the kids are let go, considering that they were manipulated and used by the prime villain for his own motives.



**Figure 5.4.6.16:** *In another beautiful backdrop of Kashmir, a car speeds up on a road adjacent to the river.*

Although the films touch a very sensitive subject, but fails to execute successfully due to the following reasons:

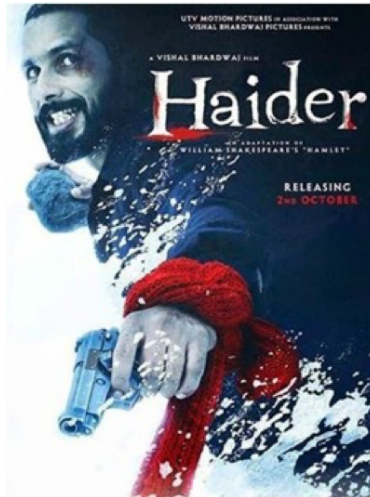
There are no Hindus shown in the community, but the authorities deputed (police and army) are all Hindus. They are honest to the core, clearly creating a biased approach.

The film expresses a lot of discontinuity in many aspects, such as rapidly changing from a tragic scene to a fun-filled environment, missing opportunities to engage in any emotional attachment with the viewer. The film seemingly depicts the manipulation of children of Kashmir by the terrorists but creates no connection whatsoever between the terrorists and the children. All children (male only) are merely fascinated by the gun Sikandar found. Even Zaheer's role seemed useless in this perspective as Sikandar had already started terrorizing his enemies.

The plot is too convenient to be a one-sided affair, and portraying Kashmiris as people who have sympathy for militants even though they are terrorizing the locals. Only Sikandar's uncle is expressed as a fair and educated citizen; the rest do not seem

to even to, realize most of the things going on.

#### 1.4.7 Haider (2014, Dir Vishal Bhardwaj)



**Main Cast:** Shahid Kapoor as Haider, Tabu as Ghazala Meer, Shraddha Kapoor as Arshia, Irfan Khan as Roohdaar, Kay Kay Menon as Khurram Meer

*Haider* is set in 1995 during the time of the Kashmir conflict when a surgeon named Hilal Meer agrees to carry out an appendicitis operation for the head of a terrorist faction. To stay undetected, he operates on the leader at his home, despite his wife, Ghazala's, protests. Soon after, during an army raid, Meer is charged with the crime of aiding and abetting terrorists. A police operation takes place at his house, and subsequently the leader of the pro-separatist group is taken down. Meer, who get involved in this conflict, is also taken away for interrogation. To kill any other militants who might be hiding in his home, his place is bombed.

Some days later, Meer's son, Haider, returns to Kashmir from his university and is deeply troubled by various questions regarding his father's disappearance. When he reaches home, he is surprised to find his uncle, Khurram, courting his mother instead of showing any signs of distress. Upon seeing his mother's calmness regarding the situation, Haider decides to take matters into his own hands and starts looking for his father in numerous police stations and camps. His fiancé, Arshia, a journalist, accompanies him.

He is bereaved of all hope, as all his endeavors fail to give him any answers or leads to his father's whereabouts. Arshia runs into a strange man called Roohdaar, who claims that he might have some useful information for Haider. They make an arrangement to meet, and it is revealed that Roohdaar works for the pro-separatist faction in Kashmir and was an inmate in the same prison facility where Haider's father was held. Roohdaar convinces Haider that not only did he know his father, but his father was also a victim of his brother, Khurram's, betrayal, who is now romancing his mother. Hilal was killed in the facility, and Roohdaar sole purpose of meeting Haider is to avenge his father's death, which was his dying wish.

Haider becomes distraught after finding all this out and becomes mentally unstable. His strange behavior alarms his mother and uncle. His uncle later finds out about his meeting with Roohdaar. He tells him that the man responsible for his father's death is actually Roohdaar. Torn between the two accounts, Haider does not know who to trust and divulges his misery to Arshia. He tells her that Roohdaar gave him a gun and wants him to kill Khurram. Arshia unwittingly tips her father off, who warns Khurram and makes arrangements to send Haider off to a mental institution.

Haider is unable to kill his uncle, but his real intentions are exposed. He is ordered to be killed, but escapes and asks Roohdaar for help, who advises him to come to Pakistan to get trained. Haider agrees, and before crossing borders, he calls his mother to inform her, who requests to meet him one last time.

When Haider meets his mother, he finds out that she was the one who tipped Khurram regarding the terrorists hiding in Meer's house. However, she had not known that Khurram was an informer for Indian military. She asks Haider to shoot her, but he refuses to do so, telling him that her life is her punishment. Arshia's father finds Haider and points his gun toward him. Suddenly, Haider turns around, shoots him in the head, and escapes.

Unable to cope with the death of her father at the hands of Haider, Arshia loses her mind and commits suicide. Ghazala finds Roohdaar number in Arshia's diary and calls him. Haider is instructed to go to a graveyard where his father was buried, which is his pick-up point from where he will be taken to Pakistan. Haider comes to terms with the universal phenomenon of death and philosophizes about this bitter truth about life.

The next day, a funeral enters the graveyard for the burial, and a green cloth over the casket shows that the funeral is that of a woman. Haider, unaware of Arshia's death, sees her brother at the funeral, and it dawns on him that Arshia has passed away. Arshia's brother informs Khurram and lunges at Haider. A fight ensues, which ultimately leads to Haider killing her brother as well. A fierce gunfight begins.

In the meantime, Ghazala and Roohdaar also reach the fight scene. Just at the



moment when Khurram is about to fire a rocket to kill Haider, Ghazala intervenes and convinces Khurram that she can talk to Haider and get him to surrender. Her efforts fail as he tells her that he cannot die without avenging his father's death. Ghazala says that vengeance only results in vengeance and this destructive cycle is endless. But Haider does not understand and refuses to step back from his task. Ghazala cries and kisses Haider, and steps outside the house to confront Khurram and his men. She reveals that she has been wearing a suicide vest.

Haider and Khurram run towards Ghazala, but she pulls the pins of the grenades, resulting in a big explosion. The impact kills the rest of the men and causes Khurram to lose his legs, leaving him on the brink of death. Haider is shocked and mourns his mother's death as he circles around the area of the explosion only to find scattered remains of his mother and the men the blast had killed. He sees Khurram trying to crawl away from the location and goes to him in order to avenge his father by shooting him in the eyes, as per his father's wish, but his mother's words come to his mind, telling him 'vengeance only results in vengeance', and he hence opts to leave Khurram. He begs Haider to be killed and to be free of the burden of guilt while Haider walks away.

### **Textual Analysis**

*Haider* is based on *Hamlet*, which itself is an intense revenge drama with many political undertones. *Haider* is set against the backdrop of the Kashmir issue to underline the political scandals, controversies, and conspiracies that happen behind

the scenes. Before taking the larger picture of the Kashmir issue into perspective, it is important to understand how each Shakespearean character is translated into the Kashmiri or Indianized version of the character. The titular character Hamlet is translated into Haider, a handsome young man who returns home from university to find out more about his father's disappearance (*Haider* 2014, Figure 5.4.7.1).



**Figure 5.4.7.1:** *Haider*, a handsome young man who returns home from university to find out more about his father's disappearance.

He is a well-educated man with great philosophical insight into questions regarding life, death, and afterlife. Haider's mother Ghazala represents Gertrude, his uncle Khurram represents Claudius, and Arshia, Haider's love interest, is Ophelia.



**Figure 5.4.7.2:** *Roohdaar* represents the ghostly apparition of Hamlet's (*Haider's*) father.

The political turmoil in Kashmir provides the basis for the power struggle

between three parties within the region. One is the Indian government, the second is the neighboring country Pakistan, and the third are the insurgent groups who are fighting for a separate nation. Haider's father is a neutral individual who gets caught up in the violence that further spirals down due to his brother's deception, which was motivated by Khurram's lust for political power in Kashmir. Roohdaar represents the ghostly apparition of Hamlet's father (*Haider* 2014, Figure 5.4.7.2). His presence in the movie was to neutralize the supernatural element in the original play but is preserved in the film with the mysterious nature of the character that has a fantastic insight into mysticism and other things of a spiritual nature. His role also emphasizes the rich poetic culture of the Kashmiris and the region's contribution into mysticism.

In this particular scene, Hilal and Roohdaar talk about Roohdaar's individuality and the all-encompassing nature, which is very similar to that of the soul. In other words, Roohdaar represents the soul of Kashmir and its identity. His character shows why it is necessary for Kashmir to have an independent status. While talking to Dr. Hilal, he calls himself 'Lafani,' which means 'immortal.' He says these lines while he is completely battered and tortured by the Indian military. This symbolizes that even though external forces have greatly marred Kashmir by the intense violence, the true spirit of the Kashmiris will never perish.



**Figure 5.4.7.3:** *Roohdaar says that the authorities were using a brother against a brother, the intelligence agents cook up another plot to fight the militants by planting fake militants and getting them to do horrific things, who are then killed by the authorities.*

His idle chatter causes Hilal to question whether he is Shia or Sunni, which are the two principle sects within Islam. To his question, Roohdaar replies that he is a river and the trees, he is Sunni and Shia and even a Pandit. In this particular dialogue, Roohdaar identifies himself with not just the natural elements of the land of Kashmir, but also the main groups of people present. Kashmir's population consists of Sunnis, Shias, and Hindus, which means that Roohdaar symbolizes the voice of all the Kashmiri people, not one single group, which is primarily shown to be Kashmiri Muslims who want a separate state. Therefore, a mere ghost in Hamlet's universe is given much more depth in the context of Kashmir conflicts. Even in the composition of this scene, the feel and setting are quite mystical with one bright light over the head of two characters' heads. As Roohdaar shares his wisdom with Dr. Hilal, the single bright light symbolizes enlightenment.



**Figure 5.4.7.4:** *The authorities treat Kashmiris as a bunch of people who they can merely condition to love India by making them chant pro-Indian slogans, which is a derogatory act to showcase the superiority.*

Roohdar's character eventually drives the plot to the climactic point as he narrates the reality behind the atrocities of the government and some of the staged executions by the militants to defame them on international media. The film shows that not only was media used as a tool to crush the spirits of the Kashmiri separatist faction, but the following scene shows Roohdar standing resolute as the Indian officers force the apprehended militants to chant 'Jaihind' which means 'Hail India.' The Indian authorities impose their values and implement a false sense of patriotism and love towards a country for which they hold no feelings. The authorities treat Kashmiris as a bunch of people who they can merely condition to love India by making them chant pro-Indian slogans, which is a derogatory act to showcase the superiority (*Haider* 2014, Figure 5.4.7.4).

Roohdar also reveals how the authorities defame the militants and their cause for their propaganda to win over the opinions of the masses. As Roohdar says that the authorities were using a brother against a brother (*Haider* 2014, Figure 5.4.7.3), the intelligence agents cook up another plot to fight the militants by planting fake militants and getting them to do horrific things, who are then killed by the authorities.

It puts the government's fight against militants in a positive light, and in a way justifies for the torture of militants. This shows psychological warfare being carried out by the authorities and puts a lot of question marks on the behavior and treatment of people. The movie makes a bold and controversial statement on the behavior of its own country of origin and confronts the situation from a separatist leader.

This scene shows fake militants carrying out a fake execution. There is shot in which a man disguised as a militant is seen fixing his clothes before shooting an innocent man. This shows that the entire scenario is fabricated and designed to put Kashmiris in a negative light. The mere act of the man fixing his clothes shows that he wishes to be portrayed as Kashmiri as possible so that the audiences watching him would immediately associate the Kashmiri culture with violence. It is a systematic destruction of Kashmiri values to keep the region disputed. During this scene, Roohdaar says through a voiceover: 'Unhoun ne Kashmir pe huay har zulm ko maat de daali', which roughly translates to, 'They defeated every single atrocity that the Kashmiris suffered'. The dialogue is a proverbial statement by Roohdaar, which means that the moves by the authorities superimposed the injustice that the Kashmiris suffered, and these fabricated pieces of news were brought to the limelight instead.

Even though Roohdaar's screen time is limited, his character is able to brief about the real situation and provides context for the hero, Haider's, adventure. Kashmir was caught up in the middle of a vast political conspiracy that had caused even the people to question the legitimacy of its existence. Haider chants protests against the authorities, asking 'Hum hain ke hum nahin,' which translates, to 'Are we, or are we not?' Kashmiris are sick and tired of their status as a disputed region,

and they want an identity of their own.

This awareness of the people about the situation is also represented through Haider's insanity as he addresses the crowd regarding the blatant betrayal that they all are suffering at the hands of the authorities. He narrates this injustice to the group through the story of a bank robber who robs a bank and opens an account in the same bank, using the money he just stole. Thus, the Kashmiris are being fooled by the authorities who are using the same blood of the Kashmiris to incite war amongst the people. Kashmir is not just a victim of the Indian police but is caught up in a tug of war between India and Pakistan, who completely ignore the wish of the people in their attempts to gain dominance over the region.

Religion plays a marginalized role in the movie and is shown to be a part of the Kashmiri culture. Haider's family is affiliated to fundamental principles of Islam. For example, Haider's father asks Roohdaar to take a message to his son, asking him to avenge take revenge on his brother, and leave his mother to be judged by Allah, the word of God for Muslims. This is faith in divine retribution and justice, and Islam is not shown as a trigger of violence amongst the militants. Unlike other movies, which usually associate the religious standing of the militants as a basis for their violent behavior, Haider makes the audience to sympathize with the militants. Islam is shown to be a principle part of the overall culture of the Kashmiris, not just the militants. The characters show a strong connection to religion through their behavior.

For instance, even though Khurram is not a positive character, he prays. Haider also shows his respect to religion by not shooting Khurram while he prays (*Haider*

2014, Figure 5.4.7.6). Because Muslims believe that people who are killed while praying are given the status of martyrs, Haider did not want him exalted to that level. So, it can be concluded that the movie does not contain any religious propaganda or agenda to influence people's opinions of Muslims, who make up the majority of Kashmir.



**Figure 5.4.7.5:** *Death is treated as an absolute part of human life, and Haider muses about the frailty of the human body that it disintegrates when it is buried and fuses with the Earth to create other elements.*

The film also includes a philosophical discussion on the subject of death, in the form of a short song. This is also based on a fundamental principle in Islam, whereby every Muslim is supposed to remember death and try to regulate his actions accordingly (*Haider* 2014, Figure 5.4.7.7). Death is treated as an absolute part of human life, and Haider muses about the frailty of the human body that it disintegrates when it is buried and fuses with the Earth to create other elements (*Haider* 2014, Figure 5.4.7.5). They talk about how the ultimate aboard for every form of life is death; every man will have the same fate regardless of his race or physical appearance.





**Figure 5.4.7.6.:** *Even though Khurram is not a positive character, he prays. Haider also shows his respect to religion by not shooting Khurram while he prays.*

Despite the grim tone of the film, various songs and scenes praise the scenic beauty and culture of Kashmir. The song ‘Bismil’ is a summary of his father’s suffering due to his brother’s betrayal (*Haider* 2014, Figure 5.4.7.8). The song features the vibrant folk dance of Kashmir and percussion musical instruments that Haider dances along to. It underlines the lighter side of Kashmir, apart from the bloodshed and violence, and shows the richness of Kashmiri culture, which is not just restricted to dance, but also includes music, theatre, poetry, and storytelling. The following scene shows the upbeat dance, inspired by a mix of Kashmiri folk dance moves.



**Figure 5.4.7.7:** *The film also includes a philosophical discussion on the subject of death, in the form of a short song. This is also based on a fundamental principle in Islam, whereby every Muslim is supposed to remember death and try to regulate his actions accordingly.*

In the bridge of the song, Haider says ‘Kashmir ke paani ki tasveerein, khulti zanjeerein taqdeerain’, which means that Kashmir’s water has the power to unlock chains and change fate. In the final verse, Haider claims that the one who has died will come back and avenge the real perpetrators. At this point of the song, the background dancers sing the verse in a chorus along with Haider, which shows solidarity and unity amongst the Kashmiris (*Haider* 2014, Figure 5.4.7.9). The verse is a promise that the Kashmiris will unmask the real criminals who are committing the atrocities and liberate its people.



**Figure 5.4.7.8:** The song ‘Bismil’ is a summary of his father’s suffering due to his brother’s betrayal.



**Figure 5.4.7.9:** In the final verse, Haider claims that the one who has died will come back and avenge the real perpetrators. At this point of the song, the background dancers sing the verse in a chorus along with Haider, which shows solidarity and unity amongst the Kashmiris.

Unlike the movies made on Kashmir before Haider, women have a stronger

position in this film. Even though the movie has a majority of its cast male, and even though Haider's love interest meets her demise before the movie reaches the end, the character of Haider's mother is written to be stronger than the mother in Hamlet. In the play, Gertrude unknowingly drinks the poisoned drink meant for Hamlet, but in Haider, Ghazala willingly bombs herself to absolve the guilt of getting her husband caught. She also tells Haider that pain of watching one's child die is huge (*Haider* 2014, Figure 5.4.7.10). It can also be surmised that Ghazala chose the path in order to not suffer the pain of watching her son die.



**Figure 5.4.7.10:** *Ghazala willingly bombs herself to absolve the guilt of getting her husband caught. She also tells Haider that pain of watching one's child die is huge.*

She leaves Khurram mutilated and kills the remaining men. Haider is maddened by the loss of his mother but is also torn between his mother's advice to abandon his lust for vengeance, which only breeds vengeance and his father's death wish.

However, in the end Haider chooses to honor his mother and leaves Khurram to die on his own, who later begs Haider to kill him as he walks on.

Against the political troubles of the region, Haider represents the average Kashmiris who get embroiled in these political propagandas in the name of vendetta.

It carries a deeper message for the masses to have a clear sight of their goals. Haider's war against his uncle is symbolic for the fight between the insurgent forces and the forces of Pakistan and India. The spirits that Haider fights are the spirits of Kashmir. He fights so that he can preserve Kashmir and liberate it from the greedy clutches of its neighbors. Therefore, through this individual battle, Haider is a commentary on a bigger issue on the international level. The Kashmiris are still fighting for their identity and are waiting for their voices to be heard.

## Chapter 6: Third Cinema and the Issue of Kashmir

Third Cinema is a cinema of socio-political and cultural studies that disregards the nation in which it delivers or which nation it takes as its subject (Wayne, 2001 p.3). The term 'Third Cinema' displays its basis in the notion of 'Third World', which refers to the nations whose economic and political structures form as a consequence of the confrontations with colonial and imperial powers. The Third Cinema that evolved out of the 'Liberation Theology' movement in Central and South America in the 1970s turned into a significant aspect of the educational modules of film studies in the 1980s. Argentinian movie producers and film critics, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, proposed the organization of cinema into First, Second, and Third Cinema in their now-acclaimed paper *Toward a Third Cinema* in 1969. According to their manifesto the 'First Cinema' is the Hollywood production model that idealizes bourgeois values to the passive audience through escapist spectacle and individual characters, the 'Second Cinema' is the European art film, which rejects Hollywood conventions but centered around individual expression of the auteur director and the 'Third Cinema' is aesthetic and political cinematic movement in third world countries.

This chapter examines the relevance of Third Cinema as an option in the representation of Kashmir with the First Cinema and Second Cinema as presented by Solanas and Getino (1969).

## 6.1 Third Cinema

Solanas and Getino (1969) wrote how it appeared to be unrealistic to endeavour to create films about decolonization in the colonized, neo-colonized, or settler countries. Principally, cinema is close to a consumer entity, and it is set up to showcase, delight, and engage. As indicated by Solanas and Getino in *Toward a Third Cinema*, even though films are the most valuable tool of communication, the commercial cinema only satisfies the ideological and economic interests of the producer, ‘At best, films succeeded in bearing witness to decay of conformist values and taking the stand concerning the social injustice. As a rule, films only dealt with effect, never with cause; it was the cinema of mystification or anti-historicism’ (Getino and Solanas, 1969, 108). The First Cinema failed to liberate itself from the pressure of cost and economics, thus facing obstacles all the way. In contrast, Second Cinema manages to get into the commercial circle as the ‘art’ and the ‘individual expression’ of the auteur director. However, to overcome the situation and continue to produce and reach the public it is essential to address the questions posed by Solana and Getino about Third Cinema.

According to Wayne (2001), Third Cinema has pioneered common and democratic working practices. Further, the limitations within which Third Cinema operates is squeezed between money control—which dominates production, distribution, the

exhibition—and state interference. ‘In extreme instances of danger or crisis, Third Cinema...has pioneered ‘guerrilla filmmaking’<sup>1</sup> (Wayne, 2001 p.3).

Espinosa describes Third Cinema as ‘imperfect cinema’, ‘If art is substantially a disinterested activity and we are obliged to do it interestingly, it becomes an imperfect art’ (Espinosa, 1979 pp. 24-26). He also took a proactive role concerning First Cinema (dominant, mainstream) and Second Cinema (art, authorial/auteur); rather than discarding these forerunners; he pursued to transform them and develop their sublimated potentialities (Espinosa, 1997 p. 84). As a result, it has become difficult to find a film that belongs solely to one of the three types of cinema as they are mostly hybrid. Some films even change their genres as the contexts change.

Third Cinema films reflect Gyorgy Lukács’s idea that ‘the social world is in the process and that realist art must ‘uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society’ (Wayne, 2001 pp.35). This anticipates Espinosa’s call for Third Cinema to ‘show the process which generates the problems’ (1997, 81). Žižek’s distinction among three types of violence: subjective, symbolic (as in language), and systemic helps clarify the Third Cinema project (Žižek, 2008). It thus, becomes evident that independent or non-mainstream directors who make films about terrorism might well turn to the ethical practices, methodologies, and tools of Third Cinema (Žižek, 2008).

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<sup>1</sup> Guerrilla filmmaking refers to a form of independent filmmaking characterized by low budgets, skeleton crews, and simple props using whatever is available.  
[www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9780080548784](http://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9780080548784)

## 6.2 Cinema, Violence and Terrorism

The telecast of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York was broadcast on various news channels across the world and substantially influenced the audience to change the way they look at cinema violence. The audience initially perceived the images of 9/11 as if they were special effects from a movie until the reality of what they were seeing was recognized. The impact of the 9/11 attacks further created courses in film studies with titles such as 'Critically Reading and the War on Terrorism' (Long Island University), 'Post-9/11 Cinema: A Cultural History of the Present' (University of Illinois), and 'Alienation, Revolt and Terrorism' (University of Alabama). Ruby Rich, in an essay titled, *After the Fall: Cinema Studies Post-9/11* (2004), summarized this impact succinctly:

The events of 9/11 have rendered inadequate the theoretical approaches and analytic habits on which film studies as a discipline has relied for the past several decades. Readings in successive schools of scholarly engagement...so close textual readings, in general, can yield points of synthesis and areas of relevance for fresh approaches in this time of critical destabilization of categories. The profound shift in global power structures, our modern anxieties demand new methodological tools and significant critical reinvention from any who claim to be cultural theorists of the post-9/11 image universe (p.110).

The terror attack of 9/11 brought a significant shift in cinema studies and resulted in Third Cinema films being more prominent within the discipline in general and terrorism-themed films in particular. Though not all Third Cinema films deal with



fear-based oppression, still, a large number of movies about psychological warfare fall under the classification of Third Cinema.

### **6.3 Politics of Identity and Culture**

The narrative strategies of Bollywood cinema in general, and in the context of Kashmir, have given birth to broader questions of identity and culture, nation, citizenship, (re)presentation and reality. Hall's perspective on representation is applicable to the framework of Hindi cinema in that, the 'prominence of culture as a crucial site of political contestation and power play' is nearly omnipresent (Hall, 1997). The cinematic imagination of Bollywood cinema helps to construct, support, and circulate hierarchies based on communalism, religion, caste, and gender (Khan, 2009). Further, the narratives and specific ideology of Bollywood cinema identify serious cultural contestations about the current national narratives. In this context, Shahnaz Khan (2009) discusses that the reinforcement of Indian traits and *Hindutva* (an ideology seeking to establish the hegemony of Hindus and the Hindu way of life) ideologies through cinema, and the legalized hierarchies as everyday practices assists in the formation of a strong opinion; this opinion resonates through global distribution, release of Bollywood films and even video piracy (Khan, 2009). The Indian culture and identity presented through cinema continue to gain ground among the Indian diaspora. The circulation of Hindi cinema to the Indian diaspora around the globe and the depiction of Hindu religion, religious rituals, devotion, glamorous traditional marriages, and the Bollywood-style song and dance sequences, has given a tremendous boost to the cinematic culture and identity. The trend that started with

the 1995 film, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (The Big-Hearted Will Take Away the Bride) which became the highest-grossing Bollywood film overseas, opened the gates for Indian films to release worldwide. Many recent films based on Kashmir, such as *Haider* (2014), *Fitoor* (2016), *Fanaa* (2006), *Lamhaa* (2010), and *Mission Kashmir* (2000), became commercial successes worldwide.

The issue of Kashmir as a disputed territory is political, social, cultural, and economical on the one hand, and is related to personal stories of violence, turmoil, and unrest on the other. After analysing the relevant Bollywood films based on terrorism and violence in Kashmir, it is clear that the mainstream cinema misrepresents the issues associated with Kashmir through fictionalizing the narrative and commercializing the life and situation in Kashmir; nothing looks real, no imagery gives the feeling of a true story. The conflict in Kashmir is presented in the films to contextualize the narrative shift from the 1960s to 1990s, from carefree and straightforward to complex and dangerous situations. According to Humra Qureshi (2004), there is hardly any mention of the insurgency, unrest, and the demand for human rights and the challenges imposed by the Indian army, which has killed thousands of people across the region of Kashmir (Qureshi, 2004).

The presence of the Indian army with special powers such as an Act of the Parliament of India, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act<sup>2</sup> (AFSPA) That grants

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<sup>2</sup> According to the AFSPA, in an area that is proclaimed as ‘disturbed’, an officer of the armed forces has powers to:

1. After giving such due warning, Fire upon or use other kinds of force even if it causes death, against the person who is acting against law or order in the disturbed area for the maintenance of public order,
2. Destroy any arms dump, hide-outs, prepared or fortified position or shelter or training camp from which armed attacks are made by the armed volunteers, or armed gangs or absconders wanted for any offense.

special powers to the Indian Armed Force. AFSPA has taken scores of innocent lives and rendered many children orphans and women widows. There is another section of women who are addressed as half-widows because their husbands have gone missing and there is a lack of information about their whereabouts, whether they are dead or rotting in some jail after extreme inhuman third-degree torture (Umar, 2013). Hundreds of instances are available about innocent Kashmiris being strip searched and humiliated. Moreover, as discussed by Raman (2008), the record of the Indian security forces in Kashmir has been categorized by arbitrary arrests, torture, rape and extrajudicial killings which routinely go unchecked and unpunished (Raman, 2008). Human Rights Watch<sup>33</sup> 2006 has documented many of these excesses, both by what it terms an abusive Indian army as well as by militant groups but none of these instances find space in the Bollywood narratives.

This brings the researcher to the belief that if the stories of Kashmir and Kashmiris have to be shared and justice has to be provided to the identity and

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3. To arrest without a warrant anyone who has committed cognizable offenses or is reasonably suspected of having done so and may use force if needed for the arrest.

4. To enter and search any premise in order to make such arrests, or to recover any person wrongfully restrained or any arms, ammunition or explosive substances and seize it.

5. Stop and search any vehicle or vessel reasonably suspected to be carrying such person or weapons.

6. Any person arrested and taken into custody under this Act shall be made present over to the officer in charge of the nearest police station with a least possible delay, together with a report of the circumstances occasioning the arrest.

7. Army officers have legal immunity for their actions. There can be no prosecution, suit or any other legal proceeding against anyone acting under that law. Nor is the government's judgment on why an area is found to be disturbed subject to judicial review.

8. Protection of persons acting in good faith under this Act from prosecution, suit or other legal proceedings, except with the sanction of the Central Government, in the exercise of the powers conferred by this Act.

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Watch is a non-profit, non-governmental human rights organization made up of roughly 400 staff members around the globe. <https://www.hrw.org/>

existence of the problem, the path represented by Third Cinema to tell these stories seems an appropriate option. Thus, the researcher takes the route of a dramatized documentary to make the situations alive and real. *Battle of Algiers* (1966) even after 50 years of its making is a relevant film and a perfect example of being as true to the actual happenings as a morning newspaper. There are narratives that certainly help to not only inform, influence, and educate, but also challenge extreme views. Thus, this chapter focuses on the narrative tactics of post-1989 films and the role of Kashmiris in the ambit of Indian national narrative promoted by these films. The analysis supports the view put forward by other specialists who indicate that Hindi cinema validates the nationalist agenda, which integrates the ideal upper middle-class Hindu male as a good citizen and the Muslim male as the violent other (Khan, 2009). In movies such as *Fanaa* (2006), *Hero-Life Story of a Spy* (2003), and *Jaal-The Trap* (2003), the role of a Muslim character centres on being anti-nation and anti-humanity. The narratives in these films formulate nationalism and promote belonging to the upper-class Hindu caste as the traits of an ideal citizen and downgrade the religious differentiation. Moreover, the Hindu character is depicted as ensuring that the Muslim character is regulated and reformed to fit in the Indian national setting.

*Fanaa* symbolizes Muslims, as racialized minorities, who challenge secular democratic goals of the Indian state. In *Fanaa*, Rehan's character reflects a Muslim man in a manner that validates violence and sexuality influenced by 'Orientalism' (Said, 1979). In *Fanaa* the cinematic narratives give neither the antagonized bad Muslim men nor the reformed good ones a chance of revival. However, for Muslim women there is hope as evident in Zooni's case, the blindness and patriotism position

her as a 'safe' Muslim Indian. This is emphasized in the opening shots of the film as she salutes the Indian flag, singing the nationalistic song 'Saray Jehan say accha hai Hindustan hamara' (Our Hindustan [India] is the best of all places in the world). Women can easily create a space for themselves within the nation (Khan, 2009). The choices she makes for herself not only confront the Muslim patriarchies but also open the chances of her submission to *Hindutva* patriarchies as in the grading scheme, Muslims fall way behind Hinduism. The reasons for the Muslim man's rage, however, are mostly personal and one-dimensional, while the systemic nature of discrimination against his community in India is rendered opaque or denied.

There are indeed as many perspectives on the conflict in Kashmir as there are voices, and several documentaries and short narrative filmmakers like Raina,<sup>4</sup> Ashwin,<sup>5</sup> Also, Bashir<sup>6</sup> are conveying their stories in the face of heavy odds with greater intent than ever before. Though they are up against many viable and logistical challenges, the films set in or about Kashmir are witnessing a palpable surge. Raina says, "There are many Kashmir films made at the same time. The overall impact of these different attempts could, in the long run, contribute a lot to changing the prevalent discourse" (Chatterjee, 2013, p.1).

A majority of the films based on Kashmir are big profit-making investment ventures for the audience who identify with Kashmir solely through films. The anti-Kashmir impulses among the Indian masses are created through non-realistic sequences of fragmented narratives with exaggerated referential content. Such

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<sup>4</sup>Ajay Raina, Filmmaker of Kashmiri Origin.

<sup>5</sup>Ashwin Kumar, maker of the widely talked about feature-length documentaries, *Little Terrorist* (2004) *Inshallah Football* (2010) and *Inshallah Kashmir* (2012)

<sup>6</sup>Aamir Bashir, 2010. Actor and Filmmaker of Kashmiri Origin, maker of *Harud* (Autumn, 2012)

referential interpretations work as propaganda to sell false information to those who cannot access the reality and ‘internal evidence’ from Kashmir. Bollywood is a source of encouragement for filmmakers to make films on Kashmir for profit and entertainment. Hence, movies like *Mission Kashmir* played a crucial role in re-shaping the idea of post-1989 Kashmir. For instance, based on the assumptions of *Roja* (1992) and *Mission Kashmir* (2000), many non-Kashmiris formed the image of a terrorist in Kashmir as the one who looks lethal, kidnaps, and kills people.

Further, though the films like *Jaal-The Trap*, *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, and *Hero-Life Story of a Spy* claimed to be stories about Kashmir, they were nothing but stories about violence, kidnappings, and killings; full of biases and prejudices. The human stories that lay beneath violence were never reported, says Gigoo.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, Saibal Chatterjee says that ‘Films on Kashmir and Kashmiris will certainly help not just to inform, influence and educate, but also break the cycle of prejudice’ (Chatterjee, 2013 p.1). Wayne notes that: ‘Third cinema is a political film about much more than politics in the narrow sense’ (Wayne, 2001 p.1). It is a cinema of social and cultural freedom which needs a much more fundamental and pervasive transformation. If cinema has to make a reasonably modest influence, it too must feel the heat of such alterations, not only in the narratives but also in modes of production and reception. Third Cinema is such a cinema, or at least it is as close as we can get to a cinema with such profound transformations (Wayne, 2001).

The analysis of First Cinema films on Kashmir and its interactions that has been twisted to meet the nationalistic agendas and change the ‘image and

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<sup>7</sup> Siddhartha Gigoo, Novelist, Poet and Filmmaker, produced *The Last Day* (2013), a 13-minute film on the plight of a Kashmiri family.

representation of Kashmir’, both for Bollywood, the common masses, media houses and potential tourists (Bhat, 2015), caused the researcher to believe that the most modest contribution to political and social narratives on Kashmir is through Third Cinema, such as documentaries and short films like *Insha ’Allah Kashmir* (2012 dir. Ashwin Kumar) and *Little Terrorist* (2004 dir. Ashwin Kumar.), *Harud* (2010 dir. Aamir Bashir) or *Jashn-e-Azadi* (2007 dir. Sanjay Kak).

Through the mode of exploring the critical reception and selective appropriation of ideas of the films on Kashmir, it is argued that it ultimately fails to transform its First and Second Cinema components into the service of informing and communicating the real face of the reality; therefore in such a judgment, Third Cinema needs to assess what is at stake, politically, socially, and culturally (Wayne, 2001).

A majority of the pre-1989 Bollywood movies that have either been ‘shot in Kashmir’ or are ‘about Kashmir’, hardly represent any constituent of Kashmiri identity – be it culture, dress, cuisine, music, or language. The idea of representation of ‘Kashmiri’ was first seen for the first time in Shakti Samanta’s film *Kashmir Ki Kali* (1964), which was followed by Suraj Prakash’s *Jab Jab Phool Khile* (1965) and Manmohan Krishna’s *Noorie* (1979). It was Manmohan Desai’s *Roti* (1974), to replicate the Kashmiri traditional dress pheran (a long gown), and a headscarf (traditional Kashmiri head cover for women). Apart from being jingoistic, the filmmakers mixed the dress and culture of Kashmir which further distorted the essence of real Kashmiri characters (Bhat, 2015).

The only film that can be claimed to be close enough to Kashmiri culture (*Kashmiriyat*) is *Haider* (2014). *Haider* emphasizes and expresses many first semantic and non-linguistic identity symbols (Bhat, 2015). It is Bollywood's first film on Kashmir which has decisive Kashmiri language expression '*hata 'ye mou 'ji*' (oh mother!). This is not simply Kashmiri linguistic expression and declaration of identity, but an expression of pain, grief, and suffering. The frequency of its usage has increased more than any other phrase in Kashmiri language; ignoring the variation in age, gender, caste, and religion, the Kashmiri women and men—who are both old and young and belong to Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh religion—all have unpleasant memories associated with this expression. The expression '*hata 'ye mou 'ji*' in *Haider* is followed by the sound of '*azaan*' (call for prayer) in a typical Kashmiri accent in the background. Further, in the film, Tabu, a teacher in a school has a typical Kashmiri accent. The consequences of this identity assertion entail many flippant and serious narratives. In addition to verbalization of phonetic personality expressions, *Haider* struggles to resonate numerous other unmistakable Kashmiri character images like *baand-pather* (Kashmiri society theatre), *wanwun* (conventional Kashmiri marriage melodies), instruments like *tumbakhnaari* (a run of the mill Kashmiri instrument utilized only by ladies), *Sarangi* and *rabaab* (Kashmiri violin), *kehwa* (exceptional customary green tea), *pheran* (the customary Kashmiri clothing), *samavaar* (metal compartment generally used to bubble and keep tea hot), *karakuli* (a triangular cap made from sheep fur), *rista* (a well-known Kashmiri cooking of meatballs in a searing red sauce), *chai paila* (conventional Kashmiri cups for tea), and which no other Bollywood motion picture has featured until this point.



## 6.4 Politics of Nationalism

The official discussion of Indian patriotism framed during the Nehru years of the 1950s draws on two unique conventions; the first perspective includes, the possibility of a Third-World internationalism that empowers through the decolonization of much of Asia and Africa after World War II, and the one moulded by the curious exigencies of the Cold War condition. The second perspective includes a secular nation-state that was coded as Hindu and was formed as much by the standardized religious oratory of Gandhian patriotism. The Partition and the making of the province of Pakistan as a country for South Asian Muslims additionally directed the ‘Hindu-ness’ of the post-Partition Indian state. In this sense, mainstream Indian patriotism, ordinarily related to Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress Party. As the official belief system of the postcolonial state, it mirrors a liberal patriotism that underscores a mainstream formative and statist approach. In addition, it displays a standardization of Hinduism inside a standard state (Lankala, 2006).

Hindutva often enters into an oppositional position with Islam and is characterized in non-mainstream terms as a translation of religion in a secular country. The way the Muslim minority is voiced in Hindi cinema, and India’s association with its predominately Muslim neighbour Pakistan, form significant parts of this uneasy and confused process. The movies such as *Gaddar*, *Ik Prem Katha* (2001 dir. Anil Sharma) and *Maa Tujhe Salaam* (2002 dir. Tinu Verma) are included in this category.

The Muslim rule of India, the partition of British India into the nation states of India and Pakistan, and the continuous uprising in Kashmir serve to help remind Hindutva supporters that the enslavement of Muslims is integral to the acknowledgment of their perfect world. In addition, cinematic narratives utilize important events to over-characterize Muslim people as a terrorist risk from inside. Socially built ideas of religious groups compare a solid, misled, Hindu personality against a disgusting Muslim one, the last observed as a transplant and a trespasser (Zine and Taylor, 2014). For instance, in *Fanaa* (2006), Zooni sings, ‘Sare Jehan se accha Hindustan hamara’ (Our Hindustan [India] is the best of all places in the world). Her parents encourage and gently direct her body and nationalism to the Indian flag, signifying a role for Muslim parents as a responsibility of serving the nation. As her mother redirects the visually challenged Zooni toward nationalism, the film directs the intervention for the blind women to post-operation Zooni, when she is no longer blind to service the dominant nationalist culture (Khan, 2009). Culture is similar to that showcased in the movie, as post-colonial thinkers remind us, negotiates, creates, and employs power-based discursive strategies.

In another unique situation, Mamdani (2004) has talked about the refinement between the depoliticized great Muslim and the terrible obsessive one who challenges the present state of affairs (Mamdani, 2004). These remarks propose a third technique in *Fanaa*. The terrible Muslim challenges the Indian nation while the appropriate one safeguards it and, by affiliation, the Hindutva venture. Further, accounts about the Muslim man’s elevated and crazy sexuality are assembled to depict the flirt Khan, who is acquainted with the audience in Delhi.

Further, Muslims are often exhibited as a danger in Hindi cinema both internal, as in *Fiza* (2000), and in complicity with external adversaries, as in *Mission Kashmir* (2000) and *Roja* (1992). In *Fanaa's* rendition of the happenings in Kashmir, Rehan Qadri, and the group he belongs to is portrayed as the main wrinkle in the untainted existence of the Beg family. The years of contention, which have decimated a significant part of the state framework, and the brutality and human rights violation (a component of normal daily existence in vast parts of the state), are alarmingly absent. The absence of security is possibly the reason that a significant number of the Kashmir locations of the film were shot in Poland.

The dearth of knowledge into foundational and state savagery in Kashmir eludes audience's attentiveness from any requirement for fundamental change. The contention in *Fanaa* is customized to the malicious activities of a few misguided terrorists. Individual misguidedness is presented as the reason for Rehan Qadri's outrage, rendering his difficulties with the state generally one-dimensional. The true to life account drives us to the main decision conceivable: Qadri is an unsafe insider—the terrible Muslim that Mamdani (2004) distinguishes—who brings Islamic religious patriotism into the general social circle. All things considered, he challenges the predominant adaptation of patriotism, Hindutva, and its common face in the state, and should be brought under control.

## 6.5 Politics of Representation

The creative ability of Kashmir transformed from a sentimental ‘*idyll*<sup>8</sup>’ in pre-1989 Hindi Films, to a tragic ‘*Antigone*<sup>9</sup>’ post-1989 because of the First Cinema. The post-1989 story totally changed the persona and representation of Kashmir into a country of male violence for the Bollywood masses, media houses, and potential travellers and tourists. Kashmiris started to be addressed as either aggressors or fear-based oppressors and terrorists or sympathizers of activists who overpowered the beautiful perspective of mountain peaks and verdant valleys. The stereotyped representation is clearly visible—Kashmir as a geographic location is about peace, love, and sentiment, while the Kashmiri people (especially the men) are presented as brutish, violent and as foils to the Hindu heroes.

Bollywood’s representation of Kashmir was also supported by some one-sided print and electronic media houses, who were against the association of Kashmir with ‘aatankwaad’ or terrorism. In this way, post-1989 Kashmir became a stunning scene in which artistry and brutality mix into one cinematic spectacle. Representations of political, ideological, and religious strife as well as physical hardship, permeate the post-1989 record of Bollywood’s portrayal of Kashmir.

Mani Ratnam’s Tamil-dialect (dubbed in Hindi) political dramatization *Roja* (1992), was Bollywood’s first experiment tracking post-1989 Kashmir. *Roja* was the first in Ratnam’s set of three movies that portrayed human connections against the backdrop

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<sup>8</sup> Idyll is an ‘extremely happy, peaceful, or picturesque period or situation, typically an idealized or unsustainable one’.

<sup>9</sup> *Antigone* (441 BCE) is a Greek tragedy by Sophocles that accounts the story of the aftermath of a decree made by King Creon after the two brothers, Eteocles and Polyneices, died fighting each other in the Thebes civil-war.

of politics (the other two are *Bombay* (1995) and *Dil Se* (1998)). These were followed by Vidhu Vinod Chopra's activity spine chiller dramatization *Mission Kashmir* (2000). When viewed in light of Vishal Bhardwaj's final film *Haider* 2014 (an adaptation of *Hamlet*), in his trilogy of adapted Shakespeare plays (the other two include *Maqbool* (2003) and *Omkara* (2006), adaptations of *Macbeth* and *Othello* respectively) also co-located in Kashmir.

Post-1989 Kashmir's personality transformed from a houseboat proprietor and tour operator to a (suspected) militant. Indian masses have an ability to comprehend the political and historical discourse of Kashmir which—for the most part—is exploited by Ratnam and Vidhu Vinod Chopra in their films. Soojit Sircar's *Yahaan* (2005), and Kunal Kohli's *Fanaa* (2006) are the first Bollywood motion picture where the hero gives up his life for a reason other than love/romance. It semiotically delineates that Kashmir is more than a beautiful location, and beneath the outward vestiges of tranquil scenery, it possesses individuals who have greater issues to determine than romance in snow-covered mountains and lush green valleys. Keeping pace with Bollywood's usual nationalistic drum-beat, it likewise propagates how the hero, a Kashmiri vacationer, turns into an aggressor and stretches out his reach from Kashmir to Delhi. Such a portrayal of Kashmiris by Bollywood may be a motivation to influence the general population of India to consider Kashmiris differently—as a threat. Indians may be hesitant to cooperate, engage, or believe a Kashmiri Muslim who mixes with Indians outside Kashmir, be it on buses, trains, or even to get rented accommodations.

Further, the story of the Kashmir conflict includes many sub-stories which have been stifled for quite a while. Ashok Pundit (a Kashmiri Pundit) featured one of the urgent sub-narratives of the Kashmir conflict—the difficulty of Kashmiri Pundits in his film *Sheen* (2004). He explains the adventure of a Kashmiri Pundit from his home in Kashmir to a displaced refugee camp in Jammu. Rahul Dholakia's *Lamhaa* (2010), fearlessly exhibiting the evidence of Kashmir history, features another vital sub-narrative and an emotional issue of the contention—the situation of ‘half-widows’ (the spouses of vanished men who do not know whether they are alive or dead). The film sets out to break the ice on this issue by portraying the Indian armed force in Kashmir as clearly guilty of making half-widows endure the arrests and disappearances of their husbands as well as the cruel and dishonesty responses of those in charge of the pleading of the wives for information as to the whereabouts of their husbands. Among one of the numerous courageous scenes, it demonstrates how the border is opened up to give militants a chance to sneak in for money. It also shows how the Indian government has neglected to lead a free and reasonable discretionary process in Kashmir. However, though these films did great business in India and overseas, they were not accepted in Kashmir as all stories were actually alien to the reality of life in Kashmir (Bhat, 2015).

## **6.6 Politics of Beauty**

The pre-1989 Kashmir (as a topographical space) was recognized as a pornotopic land with rich green valleys, snow-covered mountainous peaks, houseboats, Dal Lake, fresh streams, and springs. Apart from showing Kashmir as an

admired beauty myth, Bollywood played a crucial role in [re]presenting it as a romantic geographical spot, commanded by its beautiful scenery. A movie was treated as incomplete if it did not have a song or two shot in the lush green environs, dense forests, or along the heavenly streams of Kashmir. A touch of Kashmir guaranteed success for the movie at the box office. The film units would camp from months together in Kashmir to complete their assignments. *Junglee* (1961), *Kashmir Ki Kali* (1964), *Janwar* (1965), *Phir Wohi Dil Laya Hoon* (1963), *Laat Sahib*, (1967), *Mere Sanam* (1965), *Dil Ne Phir Yaad Kiya* (1966), *Bairag* (1976), *Khoon Pasina*(1976), *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976), *Karma* (1986), *Mausam* (1975), *Aap Ki Kasam* (1974), and *Bobby* (1973), are some of the films which have been wholly or partially shot in Kashmir. The box office blockbuster *Betaab* (1983), was shot almost exclusively in a small valley on the Pahalgam-Chandanwari road. The valley is now called Betaab valley and is a well-sought-after picnic spot in Pahalgam.

The Oberoi Palace Hotel (today's Grand Lalit) was the action centre of all the film units who visited Kashmir. Poets and lyricists would spend months in Kashmir to conceive romantic songs for the movies. The green lawns and snow-clad mountains are witnesses to scores of romantic songs which are visualized during three decades of filmmaking (1960–1980). The evergreen song of the sixties, 'Aey phooloon ki rani baharoon ki malika' in *Arzoo* (1963), showcases the exotic lawns of the Oberoi and the Mughal gardens. The romantic song 'Yeh saman saman hey yeh pyar ka' in *Jab Jab Phool Khile* (1964) was shot on the deck of a houseboat on the Dal Lake in the evening hours. This song was an instant hit and became synonymous with the romantic beauty of Kashmir. 'Kitni khoobsurat yeh tasweer hai, yeh Kashmir

hai' in *Bemisal* (1982) is just another poetic expression of the beauty and Bollywood's love for Kashmir. However, with the onset of militancy in the early 1990s, Bollywood deserted Kashmir and pursued a nationalist (propaganda?) agenda. While Kashmir became entangled in increasing miseries and misfortunes, Bollywood found alternate locations and forgot Kashmir as if it never existed. Consequently, Kashmir and Kashmiris became loathed and demonized. The print and electronic media played havoc with the image of Kashmir. Nasir Ahmed (2015) observed in the *Kashmir Post* that the miseries of Kashmiris were described as cruelties, and misfortunes as political crimes which were a matter of national policy.

Bollywood returned to Kashmir in 2000 with a different agenda; they assured that they would portray Kashmir's pain—but, in fact, did the opposite (The Hindu 2000). The comeback movies were used as a medium to glorify the armed forces and malign the character of Kashmiris; Bollywood believed the demonizing of Kashmiris and Pakistanis while venerating military would garner enormous commercial benefits as well. Hence, more and more films started being made about Kashmir, with or without actually shooting them in Kashmir. Films like *Mission Kashmir* (2000), *LOC Kargil* (2003), *Fanaa* (2006), *Yahaan* (2005), *Lakshya* (2004), *Shaurya* (2008), *Lamhaa* (2010), *Sikander*(2009), and *Maa Tujhhe Salaam* (2002), fell in line with the collective conscience of the country and complicated 'on-the-ground' realities of Kashmiris, while glorifying the Indian Army. The echo of soothing waters and the refreshing fall of delicate snow was supplanted by gunshots and bomb blasts. Likewise, the tranquil grazing of sheep in verdant fields and wildflower covered



glades was supplanted by platoons of uniformed men with deadly weapons (Bhat, 2015).

Probably the only exception to this trend was the movie *Haider*, which tried to portray Kashmiris as victims and as terrorists. However, the film did not do well across the country—depicting the truth about Kashmir was branded as a betrayal within India. The filmmakers and the writer were branded as anti-nationalists and sympathizers of terrorists by various columnists, film critics, and the general public. Rahul Dholakia of *Lamhaa* also broke the age-old catchphrase from ‘Welcome to Kashmir, the most beautiful place in the world’ to ‘Welcome to Kashmir, the most dangerous place in the world’.

Perhaps not their beauty, but rather their individuality is honoured and placed in contrast to the damaging wide angle or long focus view favoured by photographers and filmmakers to sensationalize the mass (Douglas, 2012).

## **6.7 Politics of Reality**

The Bollywood films on Kashmir in one way or the other depict the governing and the governed groups within the Indian nation-state (Kabir, 2013). It is argued here that post-conflict films on Kashmir circumvent the Indian centralized and representative framework, influencing factions currently alienated within that framework to work towards a successful politics of bargaining to claim their rightful place within the nation. Kabir also argues that the policy of negotiation between the majority (Hindu) and minority (Muslim) interests are articulated in religious terms through the expression of Indian popular cinema (Kabir 2013). In the Indian context,

a lighter sense of minority exists among religions (Basu and Kohli, 1998). Through the political speech, the term has become equated with Indian Muslim and freighted with the semantic and ideological baggage attached to that particular identity (Kabir,2006).

Following the Independence of India, ‘Bombay cinema provided both a container for shaping a sense of ‘common thicker we-ness’ and a mirror in which its audience viewed its likelihoods, desires, and dreams’ (Chakrabarty, 2008). In this cinematic fantasy, one kind of India never found representation whereas the other kinds were represented and misrepresented with subtleties and sometimes brashness in engaging the audience. The 1990s signalled a more intensive conceptual engagement from Indian cinema, especially from regional directors, to try and represent the plurality of controversial issue of Kashmir and relate it to power, cultural modernity, nationality, and state formation.

The delicate intricacy of the subject of Kashmir resulted in Bollywood cinema falling in love with the subject of violence and terrorism as it provided wider discursive ideas of storytelling. Filmmakers successfully demonstrated a degree of partiality that denigrated and reflected all Kashmiri Muslims as terrorists with loyalty to Pakistan. It is not going too far to say that the Kashmir conflict has initiated its very own distinctive genre, complete with recognizable visual tropes and a formula for mainstream cinema success. In the mid-1990s, the rising popularity of separatist ideology (as exemplified in the political gains made by the BJP, see Ahmed 2015) played a part in fuelling the jingoism of many big-budget Kashmir-based films like *Border*, *The Hero: Life Story of a Spy*, and *Mission Kashmir*. Many of these present

a conservative morality play in which Kashmiri militants and insurgents are demonized as terrorists, hell-bent on seeing that Kashmir remains in the hands of Pakistan.

In *Mission Kashmir*, Malik, a dreaded militant, while staying overnight in Dal Lake with a family at gunpoint, talks to the houseboat owner while having dinner: 'Khana to accha hai, meri Mohabbat mei pakaya hai ya bandook ke darr se?' Malik was asked if the woman had cooked his food with love or fear? This depicts a negative image of freedom seekers as they are shown consuming food and living by the gun and cultivating hatred for Kashmiris. The face of one, the dress of the other, the name of third, and the voice from fourth, this is exactly how the director creates the new signifier. A bad Kashmiri guy into the already existing clean, pure, shy Kashmiri perception of the audience and introduces them to a new face made of many different elements. In *Tahaan*, the plot revolves around a young boy Tahaan whose father is missing and acts as a sign of permanent subjugation faced by Muslim families in Indian-controlled Kashmir. The film highlights young boys in such extreme partisan situation are vulnerable to manipulation by militants for political ends and how the future of the whole generation has been negotiated purely to further a dreadful political cause although Santosh Sivan infers that the Indian army is in truth responsible for the unlawful custody of Tahaan's missing father, the concluding moments of the film blame both the militants and the army for worsening the lives of people of Kashmir.

The Kashmir story surely has many realities. Getting to the heart of the truth is the big challenge, feels writer-director Siddhartha Gigoo, who was forced by

political unrest to leave Kashmir as a teenager in 1990. He grieves that the conventional cinematic representation of the conflict has assumed the form of a sort of entertainment – a continuous struggle for visual spectacle and bombastic song bites. The Valley has been out of bounds for most filmmakers ever since revolutionary violence erupted there, sparking a massive Kashmiri Hindu (Pandit) exodus. However, while both the security forces and extremists continue to perpetrate violence in Kashmir, several independent screenwriters and directors are turning the cinematic spotlight on the plight of the people of the Kashmir Valley on both sides of the conflict. ‘The media is driven by biases and preconceptions. They are instructed to report only on violence. The human stories that lie underneath the violence go unreported’, says Gigoo, whose *The Last Day* (2013) a film set in the refugee camp, was part of the ‘Kashmir Before Our Eyes Film Festival’ in Hyderabad in 2013. This shows the complicated nature of the truth that these filmmakers are driving at irrespective of their viewpoints. Kashmiri filmmaker Iffat Fatima states that ‘[in] Kashmir, the truth stares you in the face... [It is] a political problem outstanding for the last 70 years screaming for a just resolution. It is the obfuscations and denial that create complexities’ (personal communication, 2015). She further adds that both narrative and documentary films are emerging from the region. It is at best only a trickle at the moment, but it has the potential of turning into a movement of sorts. ‘These films’, says Fatima, ‘are relevant documents of struggle and a valuable account of personal narratives and images that get torn apart by violence, undermined by erasure and substituted by official versions’ (personal communication, 2015). She quotes Milan Kundera to emphasize the important role

that storytelling can play in keeping the dialogue within and between communities: ‘The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against oblivion’ (Chatterjee, 2013). Fatima, who made *Where have you hidden my New Crescent Moon?*—a documentary about an aging Kashmiri woman whose son goes missing—admits that it is never easy filming in the Valley.

There is a lot of media attention in Kashmir, which has resulted in certain performative media practice. The challenge is to break through that. Of course, there is also the risk of confrontation and conflict with power in different forms. My crew and I were detained several times (Fatima 2009).

The Third Cinema is politically committed; it is also a cinema crucially interested in the process by which people become politicized. The dialectics of First and Third Cinema are such that while they often converge on similar material, they diverge in their treatments of that material. Furthermore, it explores the dialectics between Second Cinema and Third Cinema via the cinematic figure of conflict. The significance of conflict and terrorism resides in the social structure depicted wherein lies the secret of terrorist (revolutionaries?) as the favourite hero, both historically and as they recycle in mass popular culture. It is crucial in defining the cinematic terrorist to distinguish them from the miscreant or gangster.

From the beginning, Third Cinema was understood, by Birri<sup>10</sup>As a dialectical transformation of First and Second Cinema, and not a simple rejection of them (Wayne, 2001). Commercial cinema has been successful in winning its audience by

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<sup>10</sup> Fernando Birri is an Argentinian filmmaker and theorist. He is considered by many to be the father of the new Latin American cinema. Birri was born in Santa Fe, Argentina. [www.cinematropical.com](http://www.cinematropical.com)

any method. Further, the ‘cinema of expression’ uses the best methods and scorns the mass audience; this also cannot be supported. Thus, the contradiction between art and industry is resolved clumsily, except for the ‘select minority’ who make up the audience of the ‘cinema of expression’, for whom such a solution is perfectly satisfactory (Wayne, 2001).

Bollywood films on Kashmir allow closeness to social, historical, and traditional specificities of the Kashmiri people without the director having any first-hand knowledge or experience of Kashmir, its culture, and the way of life (Kashmiriyat); even the production team is non-Kashmiri. This makes more sense than situating the film as an Indian film about Kashmir, which is authentically not Kashmiri. *Mission Kashmir* does give a location geographically for Kashmiri, but it also gives the audience some clue to the cultural influences on the film.

*Mission Kashmir* received mixed responses at the time of its release. The movie won numerous awards at the international film festivals, but it was also disapproved by critics, writers, and filmmakers for being a dominant cinema and not sufficiently revising the language of the medium. Therefore, it is imperative for filmmakers to engage much more radically with questions of form, with the language of cinema, its aesthetic strategies, its signifying practices, and to interrogate the politics of those formal operations (Harvey, 1980). These are all valid and indeed urgent questions that need to be addressed through the vital component of Third Cinema. The failure of Bollywood is its inclination to move from a self-conscious examination of form for the purpose of ‘<sup>11</sup>Social intelligibility’ to a celebration of

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<sup>11</sup> The phrase social intelligibility refers to the ambition of making the social world more lucid, understandable. [www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com](http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com)

form for its sake. 'Whenever a film-maker of any age or background is ready to place his cinema and his profession at the service of great causes of the time, there will be the reincarnation of new cinema' (Rocha, 1997 p.61).

### **6.8 All Alone and Lonely**

When the idea to produce documentary film '*All Alone and Lonely*', about the orphans and widows due to years of conflict in the Kashmir Valley took shape it was approached with passion and commitment as a filmmaker who constantly plays with a variety of ideas (Akhtar, 2009). This idea came about while on a visit to an orphanage to donate some money and clothes. The young orphan boys were playing, but the loneliness, writ large on their face. The voice of their thoughts and emotions needed, ears. A 25-minute documentary took two years to conduct the research, meeting orphan children in various orphanages, interviewing officials from NGOs, as well as widows and orphans.

During the making of the film, the challenge was to get involved in their stories. Spend much time talking and understanding the psyche of the women and children impacted by the conflict that has been rendered destitute and homeless. There are believed to be over 100,000 orphans and widows and represents a significant threat to the economic and social structure and stability of the state (BBC News 2010). The children suffer most severely, and their living conditions have become worse with no systematic or continuous support for them. The only option is an orphanage.

*All Alone and Lonely* showcases the lives of displaced women and children, and how they are desperately trying to piece together their shattered lives and change the face of Kashmir by bringing peace. The documentary's primary aim was to raise awareness of the number of orphans in Kashmir.

This research considers New Cinema is a definition that sets apart from the commercial industry because the commitment of modern cinema is to untruth. The documentary films that focus on social and constitutional issues, conflict, position of women, children, religion and destitution are present-day Third Cinema, which is the political cinema and Parallel Cinema<sup>12</sup>. Parallel Cinema of India is Third Cinema revisited, and it has its ramifications in the modern cinema. The similarity and difference between Parallel Cinema of India and the documentary films discussed are only in the visual style and composition. They draw more attention to the manufacture of the film rather than targeting a 'faultless' exposition of the story. Both documentaries and Parallel Cinema are less worried about offering spectacle and glamour cultivated towards a social realist approach of the subject.

The Third Cinema scholars approach modern cinema with a very particular viewpoint (Guneratne and Dissanayake, 2003). They also acknowledge the profound belief that Indian popular cinema needs to be seriously studied and examined. Indian cinema is now approaching analytical maturity and the time has come to explore

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<sup>12</sup> Parallel Cinema is a film movement in Indian cinema that originated in the state of Bengal in the 1950s as an alternative to the mainstream commercial Indian cinema, represented especially by popular Hindi cinema, known today as Bollywood. Inspired by Italian Neorealism, Parallel Cinema began just before the French New Wave and Japanese New Wave  
Found on <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books>



various routes to gain a greater understanding of Indian popular cinema and to categorize lines of inquiry that need to be pursued.

As this study probes the visuals and experiential aspect of third cinema, there needs to be a focus on issues of swiftness, displacement, discord, and incitement brought about by the cinematic images. The various cultural dislocations precipitated by changes in the living environment underscore the societal meanings contained in Indian popular cinema. As Marshall Berman remarks, what is thought-provoking about modernity is the composite ways in which human beings become both objects and themes of the modernizing process (Berman, 1983). Popular cinema in India suggests how Indian moviegoers become both objects and themes of the processes of cultural modernization. Ashish Nandy notices that traditional film provides the moviegoers with the social groups to make sense of their lives (Nandy, 1998). In this regard, Nandy's positioning of the image of the slum as a way of troping Indian popular cinema is exceedingly suggestive. First, the slum reinvents the reminisced village in a new appearance and resuscitates the old community ties in new forms. He says that slums may even have their 'representation of classicism'. It is, of course, not classicism as textualized by ancient expositors of the Sanskrit age. It is what classicism is when adapted and transformed to suit the imperatives of a modernity and mass markets. Second, slum dwellers create their own culture out of the jumble of experiences available to them as well as the way distinctive time periods and cultures are telescoped and, in the manner, diverse communities, ethnicities, and worldviews are combined and interanimated informs a vital understanding of urban slum culture. Nandy goes on to say that:

Both processes are conspicuous in the popular film—the remembered village and the compacted heterogeneity between strange neighbours. That is why the popular film ideally has to have everything—from the classical to the folk, from the sublime to the ridiculous, from the terribly modern to the incorrigibly traditional, from plots within plots that never get resolved to the cameo roles and stereotypical characters that never get developed (1998, 31).

## **6.9 Fields of Inquiry**

Paul Willemen asserts that Third Cinema filmmakers Nelson Pereira dos Santos, Ousmane Sembene, and Ritwik Ghatak have refused to oppose a simplistic notion of national identity or of cultural authenticity to the values of colonial or imperial predators. Instead, ‘they have started from a recognition of the many-layeredness of their own cultural-historical formations, with each layer being shaped by complex connections between intra- and international forces and traditions’ (Willemen 1994 p. 178). To understand the type and implication of Indian popular cinema, the examination of its lineage is necessary. As already discussed in the ideology of Hindi Cinema, Indian cinema drew upon the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, which form the basis of Hindu religious belief. The following important cultural force that needs to be explored is the vibrant, European-influenced Parsi theatre of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The other cultural force that invites close attention is the classical cinema of Hollywood; for example, eminent filmmaker, Raj Kapoor was an admirer of Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Laurel and

Hardy, Buster Keaton, and the Marx Brothers. It was Chaplin who appeared to have stirred his deepest comic imagination. In a number of notable films, he was able to indigenize the screen persona of Charlie Chaplin in a way that charmed a large segment of the audience (Dissanayake, 2003). Also, Indian film directors and producers were deeply enthralled by the temptations and potentials of the musicals (Dissanayake, 2003). The pace of the films, the quick cutting, newer forms of presenting dance sequences, and the camera angles that are viewed in Indian films are a direct result of MTV. Mani Ratnam's films, *Bombay* (1995) or box-office hits like Ram Gopal Verma's *Satya* (1998) and Karan Johar's *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998) bear testimony to this new trend. One reason for the mass appeal of cinema has always been a clever mixture of entertainment and technology. Therefore, it is hardly astonishing that modern film directors in India associated with popular cinema are seeking to create newer connections between technology and entertainment; thus, initiating rare paths of desire and pleasure (Dissanayake, 2003).

As film scholars reconsider Indian popular cinema, they also need to pay close attention to the concept of national film culture. Historians of Indian cinema have tried to define the advent of a national film culture regarding totalizing concepts such as nationhood, authenticity, and indigenesness. However, in more recent times, the idea that it is more fruitful to talk of popular 'cinemas' rather than one popular cinema has met with increasing consent (Dissanayake, 2003). This is partial because today it is not only Bombay-Hindi cinema that matters; during the past two decades, popular cinemas associated with the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala have also begun to claim large segments of the audience. In this regard, it is

not only the distinctive identities of these popular regional cinemas that are significant but also the endless interactions that take place between and among them (Dissanayake, 2003). This phenomenon is not confined to the South where there are common linguistic individualities, but it extends to the North as well; for instance, Mani Ratnam's Tamil language films have been dubbed into Hindi and have enjoyed wide popularity. This trending growth needs to be examined afresh in the context of 'nationalism' or national film culture and (re)emerging regional identities as well as exchanges and reconfigurations among them.

Though not within the purview of this study, efforts are required to reconsider Indian popular cinema and further work towards formulating newer frames of understanding. Film specialists need to focus on a number of important areas of study. The cultural performativity and mass participation outside the confines of the written or published word is crucial to the understanding of the significance of the public sphere. Hence, because of the nature of British colonialism in India, Indian cinema becomes an important cultural institution associated with the public sphere, (Dissanayake 2003).

The textual poetics of popular Indian cinema demands attention as until recent times, Indian cinema was judged according to the norms and conventions of realism. The European art cinema, most notably neo-realistic films, were seen as useful yardsticks in critiquing Indian cinema (Dissanayake, 2003). Also, the art or parallel cinema in India was realistic and worthy of serious analysis while popular cinema, which was largely non-realistic, was regarded as 'fake'. However, in recent years, once it was established that realism is just another convention in cinema and that

there are other ways of assessing films, the limitations of a realism critique of Indian cinema began to show their shortcomings (Dissanayake, 2003). Therefore, the long-held notion that Indian cinema was the other of the West began to lose force, and critics realized the importance of understanding the aesthetics of Indian cinema from within its broader frameworks. The award-winning *Salaam Bombay* (1988, dir. Mira Nair), which was an intense investigation of child destitution and abuse in Bombay, was jointly funded by the NFDC (National Film Development Corporation), the UK's Channel 4 and a Paris-based organization. Mira Nair, an Indian by birth, studied in the USA at Harvard and worked with US-based documentarists, Richard Leacock and DA Pennebaker. Her initial film was somewhat a creation of the worldwide artistry circuit, and her equally successful *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) is even more so.

Some useful work concerning recent trends is done by cultural analysts like Ashish Rajadhyaksha (2003), Geeta Kapur (2000), and Anuradha Kapur (1993), who focus on traditional Indian aesthetic forms as a means of mapping some of the representational strategies of popular cinema. Geeta Kapur, for instance, suggests a reassessment of the frontality of popular Indian films. According to her, 'Frontality of the word, the image, the design, the formative act, yield forms of direct address; flat, graphics, and simply profiled figures; a figure-ground pattern with only notational perspective; repetition of motifs in terms of 'ritual play'; and a decorative *mise-en-scène*' (Kapur, 2000 p.249). Similarly, Anuradha Kapur observes:

Frontality of the performer vis-à-vis the spectator...enables among other things the relationship of erotic complicity. Now frontality has several meanings in the open theatres of earlier times, but perhaps a

set of altogether different meanings come about with the construction of proscenium theatres, which is where Parsi companies performed. In open theatres frontality of the performer indicates a particular relationship between the viewer and the actor. Turning the body towards the spectator is a sign that there is in this relationship no dissembling between the two; the performer looks at the audience, and the audience looks at the artist; both exist – as actor and audience – because of this open contact. (Kapur, 1993 p.92)

Wimal Dissanayake describes the concept of *rasa*<sup>13</sup>, Which demands consideration as the first emotion associated with each sequence in a play or a film. Further, in the context of film communication, the delivery of the agency upon the viewer also values analysis (Dissanayake, 2003). The emphasis on the listener, the reader, and the spectator is a distinctive characteristic of classical Indian models of communication, as is evidenced in works such as Bhartrhari's *Vakyapadiya* (Sastri, 1934). These distinct aesthetic norms represent pathways in Indian popular cinema that have not yet been effectively explored.

Likewise, there is a need to examine the various ingredients that form Indian popular cinema and are measured as a way of assessing their artistic significance. It would not be inaccurate to say that Indian popular cinema is a complete cinema that

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<sup>13</sup> A *rasa* (Sanskrit: रस, Malayalam: രസം) literally means 'juice, essence or taste'. It also connotes an ancient *concept* in Indian arts about the aesthetic of flavor. The *rasa theory* is mentioned in Chapter 6 of the ancient Sanskrit text *Natya* the goals of *theatre* is to empower aesthetic *experience*, deliver *emotional rasa*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09681220108567307>

is led by narrative, spectacle, humour, action, song, and dance combined to present a wholesome cinematic experience and reinforce the moral status quo. In seeking to construct a poetics of Indian cinema, it is of the utmost importance that we pay close attention to the signifying potentialities of each of these ingredients and the way in which they construct and contest familiar discourses.

The overwhelming connection between popular films and the political culture of India must be investigated in greater depth for constructing newer frames of understanding. In the context general and cinema in India, there is a vital connection between cinema and politics, as witnessed in Phalke's use of resources of cinema to advance the cause for Swadeshi movement. We need truer to life works of political culture in Indian cinema.<sup>14</sup>The issues of nationalism, secularism, state, and capitalism embrace, in complex ways, embrace, the current discussion of political culture in India. The uncertainties, the gaps, and the fault lines related within the discourse of political culture are transcribed in the texts of popular films like Mani Ratnam's *Bombay* and *Roja*. Henceforward, as a means of re-examining and re-situating cinema in the evolving political culture of India, one must explore these difficulties as they find their voice in popular films.

Patriotism takes conventional ways in light of envisioned communitarian goals. The exaltation of the past is a result of the needs and worries of modernity. It

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<sup>14</sup> The idea of violence has been central to narrative discourse from the early beginnings of Indian popular cinema. Until recent times males were at the center of the violence. However, a number of contemporary films like *Pratighat* (1987), *Sherni* (1988), *Commando* (2013), *Kali Ganga* (1990), *Khooon Bhari Maang* (1988) and *Police Lock-up* (1992) have violent female protagonists, raising a number of significant issues related to questions of gender identity, female agency, and the challenges to the patriarchal social order. Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema [www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781315062549](http://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9781315062549)

is not really surprising that cinema, which is a metonym of innovation, has assumed a critical part in the resurrection of social patriotism. However, the condition of the prominent cinema and social patriotism is mind-boggling and multivalent. According to Chatterjee, the ascent of fascistically-situated developments of ethnic patriotism in India has brought about a proper response against the studies of modernity and illumination insight defined and dispersed by some current political investigators (Chakrabarty, 1996)<sup>15</sup>. However, he cautions us against simple equations and lessening of thought:

We deceive ourselves intelligently when we endeavour to comprehend the present ethnic clashes in India through a framework that has radicalism and dictatorship fastened into an incessant dual dissent to each other as if they have a place with totally extraordinary and uncontested histories (Chakrabarty, 1996).

Thus, film studies researchers need to bring into play the discourse of politics and the discourse of popular cinema in more complexly imagined ways with the intention of deepening their understanding of both politics and cinema.

Rocha, Solanas, and Getino, and Gabriel, all begin with the thought of the ‘Third World’, drawing on the progressive talk of Che, Fanon, and others which had effectively denoted the ‘Third’ as a space of counter-imperialist collectivism (Rocha, 1995). Rocha’s classic record in 1967 peruses:

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<sup>15</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty is a historian, who has also made contributions to the postcolonial theory and subaltern studies. <https://scholar.google.ae/scholar>



For the Third World Filmmaker, duty starts with the basic light, in light of the fact that the camera opens on to the 'Third World', an involved land...These movies from Asia, Africa, and Latin America are movies of uneasiness. The inconvenience starts with the essential material: second rate cameras and research centers. The tools have a place with Hollywood as arms have a place with the Pentagon. No movie producer is totally free. Notwithstanding when not the detainee of oversight or money related duties he [sic] remains a detainee until the point when he finds inside himself the tri-continental man. (Johnson and Stam, 1995)

For Gabriel, the third phase of Third World cinema is attained when the industry is under national (or even government) control and filmmakers insist on 'viewing the film in its ideological ramifications' (Teshome, 1989, 30).

### **6.10 Question of 'Nation' in Third Cinema**

According to Paul Willemen, there are snags with an internationalized description of national cinemas (Willemen, 1989). In the event of ideological resistance to Hollywood being the primary marker of Third Cinema, a different proof with national freedom was the possibility of the 'nation' in this talk national cinema rubs against globalized Third World recognizable proof of a 'national cinematic voice'. On the one hand, the tri-continental meaning of a radical film style resists national limits and despite what might be expected, as Willemen calls attention to the fact that 'if any cinema is unequivocally 'national' even 'territorial' in its address and goals, it is Third Cinema' (Willemen, 1989). Essentially, as Ahmad remarks

around one of the more compelling ways to examining social writings, '[Fredric] Jameson (referred to in Krishna, 2003) demands again and again that the national experience is integral to the subjective arrangement of the Third World scholar, and that the narrativity of that experience takes shape solely of a 'national purposeful anecdote' (Ahmad, 1992 p. 109).

Anderson is considered to be one of the preeminent authorities of nationhood in Indonesia; he additionally observes the country as the epicenter of social imaginings. His study can be used to understand the concept of 'nation' in Third Cinema. Anderson contends against 'the contemporary conflation' of a 'famous, participatory country with a more established adversarial state' (Anderson, 1983 p. 119). He proposes that states have:

Family histories more established than those of the countries over which they are presently roosted' and explains that division amongst state and country with regards to the historical backdrop of Indonesia. Suharto's New Order, notwithstanding, 'is best comprehended as the restoration of the state [founded in Dutch colonialism] and its triumph versus society and country (Anderson, 1983 p.109).

## **6.11 Closing Questions**

The concept of Third Cinema is perhaps two-fold. First, it 'constitutes the necessary first step in... expelling the Euro-American conceptions of cinema from the center of film history and critical theory' (Willemsen, 1989 p. 17). Second, the

very notion of Third Cinema demands socio-political contextualization of films. The desires that motivate all theorizations of Third Cinema are more abiding than the more rigid criteria, such as the countering of Hollywood and Bollywood codes or identifying with Third World or national liberation movements. Further, moving beyond texts and taking into account the political economies within which filmmakers operate from day to day, there is no necessary correspondence in the social and political sphere nor anti-Hollywood in the cinematic sphere. Indonesian cinema of the 1960s suggests that Hollywood, in fact, may have provided some of the languages for those filmmakers who did not want to be co-opted into legitimizing Sukarno's growing authoritarianism under the guise of anti-West nationalism. Again, in the 1990s, at another moment of a cultural and political watershed in the Indonesian archipelago, Hollywood was insignificant as a target of opposition. As Garin Nugroho's film *Surat Untuk Bidadari* (Letter for an Angel) (1994) suggests, 'the lines between what is and is not foreign, what does or does not belong to a particular geopolitical site, are too difficult to draw' (Krishna, 2003 p.163). The question which thus arises is; when the Dutch-Indonesian film *Max Havelaar* (1976), which tells the story of colonial corruption, is banned in Indonesia for being both imperialist and leftist, does it not also confound all conventions of right/left (or colonial/nationalist or reactionary/radical) divisions in politico-cultural debates? When a Dutch documentary about a banned Leftist-nationalist Indonesian writer, Pramoedya Ananta Toer<sup>16</sup> Is prohibited in Indonesia but is celebrated by specialist

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<sup>16</sup> Pramoedya Ananta Toer was an Indonesian author of novels, short stories, essays, polemic and histories of his homeland and its people. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/36731/summary>

audiences around the world; how do we ever put it into any tripartite typology of cultural work (Krishna, 2003)? The idea of a Third Cinema may remain relevant as the 'third space' which 'displaces the histories that constitute it and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom' (Bhabha, 1990 p.211).

In India, the Alternative films in the 1940s started by pioneer filmmakers like Satyajit Ray, Chidananda Das Gupta, Ritwik Kumar Ghatak, Mrinal Sen, and Bimal Roy had a powerful influence on the society but did not initiate a movement in the sense that Italian filmmakers established with Neo-realism. Mrinal Sen once explained Alternative or Parallel Cinema continues to influence Indian filmmakers, but it has lost the political edge it once had:

I make films which have something to do with the political situation and involve political characters, but I have also made films which do not have direct political relevance. In all of them, however, I have always tried to maintain a social, political and economic perspective. I am a social animal, and, as such, I react to the things around me – I can't escape their social and political implications. (Mrinal Sen's interview with Udayan Gupta, in Downing 1987).

The movies of Satyajit Ray *Pather Panchali* (1955), Mrinal Sen's *Neel Akasher Neechey* (Under the Blue Sky) (1959), Shyam Benegal's *Manthan* (Churning) (1976) and Govind Nihalani's *Ardh Satya* (Half Truth) (1983) offered their audience a political message about the social conditions they represented. The

new breed of non-mainstream Indian movies, in contrast, is similar to worldwide art house films, offering a significantly more quieted message in an examination; these movies course mostly outside India. While this offers access to a more extensive group of viewers, they do not have the direct address and mediation into the political and social issues of present-day Indian culture. There is a lack of feeling of mutual realistic and political activism that portrayed Parallel silver screen in the 70s. Therefore, their chiefs are more like auteurs (in the Western craftsmanship silver screen sense) than the social activists of the IPTA (Indian Peoples Theatre Association).

A vital factor in the shift has been foreign financing. Parallel Cinema had always depended on the western alternative film circuit, through winning honors at film festivals and being circulated art house film circuit. In any case, with the dwindling of financing and enthusiasm for these movies inside India, outside subsidizing and distribution turned out to be significantly more fundamental for producers who needed to make movies that diverge from the norm. However, political and formally radical movies are still made in India; but, probably the result of universal financing. For instance, both the Göteborg and Rotterdam Film Festivals have reserves for producers from nations outside the created entrepreneur West; but in the UK they will generally be seen on TV, especially Channel 4, instead of in cinemas.

If Indian cinema is to grow to adulthood, it has to come out of the cloying, cliché ridden commercial films, this requires the springing up of a whole movement, many directors making their films the way they

like, in their own individual styles, unfettered by considerations of big finance, big star cast, and voluminous box office returns. It is necessary that there should be many new directors, many new styles of filmmaking and the possibility of these directors making more and more films. Only then can the real Indian cinema be active, living and progressing' (Close Up No.4 1969, quoted in Georgekutty, 44).

## Chapter 7: Research Findings

### 7.1 Conclusion

The qualitative study examines the representation of Kashmir and Kashmiris in Indian mainstream (Bollywood) cinema, with a focus on the organization of beauty, romance, family, conflict, religion, and the nation in the Bollywood films set in Kashmir. The study examines how the identity of Kashmir intersects with the representation of Kashmiris within the genres considered, and if different contexts produce representational variations. The thesis explores the narrative of Kashmiris from 1960 to the present day through the protagonists, the antagonists, their characterizations, and the ideologies expressed by these characters.

Since the advent of Bollywood, it has shared a unique relationship with Kashmir. The region of Kashmir has been the primary shooting destination for Bollywood films. Even though Kashmir has had a significant place in art, literature, and poetry, scholars have disregarded the depiction of Kashmir on screen. The study thus, textually examined the portrayal of Kashmir to answer the research questions.

The central claim of this study is that Bollywood (Hindi) film industry has not portrayed the real picture of Kashmir in pre and post-1989 films. The textual analysis of each film and its narrative plot reveals the perspectives that promote and serve the bearers of particular ideologies. To this end, textual analysis is the primary vehicle of investigation, with the use of New-Orientalism to understand the discourses around the ideas of ‘terrorism’ and of ‘terrorist.’ Orientalism was first described in the pioneering work by Edward Said in 1978. Since then, the world has changed in

many ways and come a long way in representing the other. Accordingly, the New Orientalism expresses and serves part culturally and ideologically as a mode of discourse in understanding and representing Kashmir. Orientalism is a thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and Occident. Based on the theory of Orientalism this research indicates Indian cinema to be a western style Occident, a dominating, restructuring, representing and having authority over the Orient (Kashmiri) and what Kashmiri is known to or made to do as New-Orientalism.

Observations on film art, controversial conventions like the politics of representation, stereotyping, and agenda-setting provides insights into how filmmaker's construct 'Kashmir', 'the Kashmiri', and 'terrorist'. The thesis argued the case of Bombay (Mumbai) cinema and based on the evidence generated by reference to numerous productions from the pre-conflict era (1960 -1980) to the post-conflict period (1990 to the present) that there exists a bifurcated trajectory of peace and conflict in cinematic Kashmir.

Textual analysis assisted in gathering data about how other human beings make sense of the world. Further, it provided multiple perspectives, such as iconic analysis and semiotic analysis to study the role of Indian cinema in visually analyzing the beauty of Kashmir, conflict between Indian and cross-border nation of Pakistan, infiltration, terrorism, suicide bombing, extortion, and kidnapping, and the way these issues have a significant impact on the people's perception of the happenings within that region. Though textual analysis aids the research, it has limitations and disadvantages as well; it is restricted to only recorded information. Further, the



challenge of using a large quantity of available data is a significant difficulty in textual analysis.

Drawing a distinction between the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist approaches to representation and placing the extremes of the bifurcated trajectory, the pedestal of beauty and serenity, on one, and the demonizing portrayal of Kashmiris in the terrorism films on the other reveals how language of films imitate a meaning which already exists out there in the world of entities, and actions (reflective). Does language make explicit what the writer or filmmaker wants to say, his or her conscious meaning (intentional) or is the meaning constructed through language (constructionist)?

The Kashmiris portrayed in more contemporary productions such as *Mission Kashmir*, *Fanaa*, *Jaal-the trap*, and *Maa Tujhe Salaam* reflect the representation of Kashmir as a neglected area of scholarly research, showing how it mobilizes symbols and stereotypes. The 1960s, melodrama about Kashmir (*Kashmir Ki Kali* in particular) played a redeeming role for Kashmir which reflects in the protagonist's characterization and narrative trajectory. By contrast, a radically different approach was characteristic of the 'bad' personification in the 1990s melodrama, *Mission Kashmir*. Such chronological differences helped foreground the presence of generic and national variations in the general cinematic representation of Kashmir.

The analysis also uncovers a significant complexity in the representation of terrorism in Bollywood films. In most of these representations, 'terrorism' is identified as a Pakistani import into India, especially about Kashmir echoing a widely

disseminated political position on the matter. It is treated as a fundamentally valid issue, linking it melodramatically and crucially to belongingness, the familial, consanguinity, and kinship in the context of the nation. Benedict Anderson's 'Imagined Communities-Reflections on the Origin and the Spread of Nationalism' talks about Nationalism as traditional items of a particular kind. He further points out that to understand the issues we need to carefully reflect how they have come into historical perspective, in what ways their meaning has changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotive legality (Anderson.1983). In *Fanaa*, one could well consider it as a typical nationalistic film since, in the end, the nation takes over the love between the protagonists, and expiates the wrongdoings of Rehan by his death at the hands of his wife. Similar complexity features in the protagonists of *Hero-the Spy*, *Jaal –the Trap* and *Maa Tujhe Salaam*.

The use of stereotype allows the audience to deconstruct the film text to promote the liberal agenda of dividing the identity of Indians and Kashmiri by religion and nationalism. The Orientalist discourse on Islam and Muslims silently but decrees that Muslims terrorize and show no mercy. Muslims, whether male or female antagonists, undertake training, demonstrate skills, and are capable of managing emotions (*Fanaa*, *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, *Jaal the Trap*) to become anti-organization (anti-government) is seen as negative characters in the culture at large, and in turn, the hegemony of Indian and Hindu characters as protagonists. In choosing and displaying visual text, films play an essential part in shaping political reality. The audience not only learns about a given story but also how much importance to attach to that story and its position. The mass media forces attention to specific issues. It is

continually presenting objects, signs, and language suggesting what individuals in the masses should think about, know about and have feelings about (Trenaman and McQuail, p.165 cited in. McCombs and Shaw, 1972). While the mass media may have little influence on the direction and intensity of attitudes, it is hypothesized to set agenda, influencing the salience of attitudes towards the political issues (Cohen, p.13 cited in. McCombs; Shaw 1972). Owing to the audio-visual combination, the meaning carried by the invented characters resembling real life stands more strength to create a specific purpose of determining the reality that all peace, law, and order in Kashmir are due to the presence and control of Indians. The Islamic sections in Kashmir are creating trouble with the help of Pakistan and trying to free Kashmir from the Indian occupation.

Considering further the agenda setting and the iconography of a nation, my thesis charts the conflict between portrayal of Kashmir and the reality of Kashmir by examining the prodigious output of Bollywood filmmakers' necessary combinations of film ingredients that best guaranteed high returns on investment by trying to ensure that every film has something in it for everyone. Each film that is analyzed had a little action and some romance with a touch of comedy, drama, tragedy, music, and dance. Sumita Chakravarty in her book 'National Identity in Indian Popular Cinema' wrote:

The commercial Mumbai Cinema has sought to stay clear of controversy by converting history into pageantry and spectacle and developing a repertoire of characters who have presented over and over again in form as firmly lodged in the public memory. Colorful characters from the past reinforce themes of patriotism, and their actions weave into narratives of

romance, intrigue, conflict, notions of historical accuracy or attention to detail subordinate to the more massive imaginative sweep of legend and heroic sentiment. (Chakravarty, 1993)

The films examined almost deploy the same method of creating a romantic plot through the choice of actors. A favorable Indian (Hindu male), as Shekhar of *Jungle*, Rajiv of *Kashmir Ki Kali*, Rishi Kumar of *Roja*, Amar of *Dil Se*, Jaidev Rajvansh of *Pukar*, Jaydev and Ranvir of *Zameen*, Ajay of *Jaal, the Trap*, Aman of *Yahaan*, and Arun of *Hero-Love Story of a Spy* followed the conventions of some romance with a touch of comedy, drama, tragedy, music, dance, and escapist ideology to keep the viewers in a state of arrested development.

The study attempted to textually analyze the selected films that praised Kashmir's beauty in the films of 1960s, the 1970s and in the 1980s shifted to the conflict and turbulence in the valley. The analysis focused on why the films moved from portraying innocence of Kashmiris to terming them as terrorists by classifying the films into four categories. (1) addressed the beauty of Kashmir; in *Jungle*, *Kashmir Ki Kali*, and *Jab Jab Phool Khile* Kashmir is depicted as a place where the wealthy Indians go for recreation and fall in love with the Kashmiri individuals. (2) The idea of a 'Nation'; *Roja*, *Dil Se*, *Kohram*, *Hero-Love Story of a Spy*, *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, *Zameen*, *Jaal the Trap*, *Fanaa* depict the concept of nationalism. The selected films show how the movies understand and support the national spirit by placing India and Pakistan as binary opposites, where India is the superior nation. (3) Addresses the politics of representation in *Mission Kashmir* and *Pukar*, the two films that use signs, subject, and symbolization to clarify the camouflage of reality. The

negative associations are established as a part of the plot to legitimize the death of the terrorist in the mind of the viewers. (4) The context of 'neorealism'; *LOC-Kargil*, *Sheen*, *Yahaan*, *Lamhaa*, *Tahaan*, *Sikandar* and *Haider* are the films that endeavor to associate the elements of Italian neorealism on the stories of everyday people and the situation of Kashmir.

*Tahaan* (2008), *Sikander* (2009), and *Haider* (2014) were the only exceptions which had a story of Kashmir, in Kashmir, and felt somewhat real as they featured Kashmiris as main characters without the identification as anti-establishment, anti-national caricatures, as well as their dubious association with Pakistan and Afghanistan. The characters portray clichéd and stereotypical religious and power hierarchies. These three films showed adherence to the origin of characters and where they belong, but the fictional treatment and formation of sequences still create stereotypes that could be internalized by audiences. One scene in *Tahaan* shows children dressed in attire resembling that of terrorists. In another scene, young *Tahaan* is used by the local militants for smuggling ammunition, who promises to help him get his donkey back. This reflects a negative image on the audience, who might think kids are being used for smuggling weapons and are not checked by troops, which creates fear for the place (Bandura, 1977).

The militants even take *Tahaan* to a hideout and are shown cleaning their guns, when suddenly *Tahaan* asks them, 'Kya Main Isse Chala Sakta Hoon?' which means if he can use the gun? the rebel replies, 'Ye Bachon Ka Kaam Nahin, Magar Mard Chala Sakta Hai'. It means it is not made for kids to play; only a brave man can use it. The director portrays that this is normal for people in Kashmir to use guns. Such

scenes are bound to disturb the minds of viewers and create a bad image of Kashmiris in the outside world. These examples highlight that the screen representation of Kashmiris is not yet immune from terror and anti-establishment inflections, which contributes to a distorted image of the Valley of Kashmir from the rest of India and the world.

The Third Cinema promotes the idea that films should be made by the people for the people so that art and life are seen as associated with the other. Also, the Third Cinema desires the audience to be an active viewer and part of the movie, unlike the first cinema where the viewer was expected to be passive. The objective of Third cinema is merely reproducing events which have happened throughout history and are essential to the people and the nation. Since films that are a part of the Third Cinema pursue to be socially realistic portrayals of life and issues such as poverty, national and personal identity, tyranny and revolution, colonialism, class, and cultural practices, it is the only option available to tackle the stories of conflict, mass protests and unrest in the Kashmir valley. Thus, Third Cinema must be advanced as critical theory and practice which is stimulated by the Third Cinema films and tries to be acceptable to these films.

As a researcher and a filmmaker developing a Third Cinema approach to depicting the more human side of Kashmiris is highly recommended. There is a need for further in-depth analysis on-screen depictions of the social, cultural, and professional life of Kashmiris. Studies of this type would be beneficial for the development of a new, Kashmir-related research area within cinema. By unearthing historical, sociological, and cultural aspects of Kashmir, Kashmiris and their screen

representations that, so far, have been misrepresented, neglected, or left unexplored, could be challenged. There is a need to examine the various pathways to gain a deeper insight into popular cinema and further recognize some significant gaps and possible locations of inquiry. It is essential for movie makers to engross much more thoroughly with questions of form, the language of cinema, its aesthetic strategies, to interrogate the politics of those formal operations. The failure of Bollywood is its disposition to move from a self-conscious examination of form for 'social intelligibility' to a celebration of a way for its purpose. These questions need to get addressed through the vital component of the Third Cinema.

The thesis suggests a subtler reading of the Kashmiriyat, Sufi culture, and the history of Kashmir as visualization makes more things possible than verbalization of Kashmir. Film, therefore, not only offers fertile ground to explore and explain how beauty, terror, and terrorists are simultaneously the subjects and agents of broader social, political, and religious patterns of power relations; it also makes such connections more vivid and apparent, not just in a reflection but also in a reflexive manner.

In conclusion, while the representation of Kashmir in Bollywood films shows a chronologically long downward trend which has cut across different film genres (though with some variation), a final pronouncement on the Kashmiri cinematic image cannot be formulated in black and white terms, especially given my discussion above of complexity and hybridity. Kashmiris feature in every film genre: however, as leading characters, they also reflect the entire spectrum of stereotypes, albeit in a hybridized way, as a result of their identity. They are predominantly reflected as

derided characters or demonized protagonists, be it Liaqat Khan of *Roja*, Hilal Kohistani and Altaaf of *Mission Kashmir*, Lala and AlBaksh of *Maa Tujhe Salaam*, or Rehan of *Fanaa*.

The research began by using politics of representation as a theoretical basis for an inquiry into the representation of cinematic Kashmiris. It concludes by aiming to do justice to Kashmir image evidence, by creating a more nuanced representation of its stories. Representation theory also helped to some extent uncover the complexity of stereotypes, inaccurate and negative portrayals. Challenging the set of defined stereotypical images theorized by early critics such as McCombs and Shaw, cinematic Kashmiris were also revealingly expanded and enriched thanks to the views of more contemporary stereotype film scholars (McCombs and Shaw 1972).

Throughout, the thesis examined the relationship between Kashmir's screen images and social reality and hoped to demonstrate that films, if dealt with intellectual contemplation, will have a unique role in the functions of democracy. If the roots of the Kashmir problem lie in the history of Kashmir and the process of partition between India and Pakistan and the subsequent intervention of India is an event that is a very significant issue, it should not be fetishized and commoditized as a work of art. The modes of representation through the Bollywood (First) cinema should not strip the valley and its inhabitants of materiality through the ostensibly disinterested promotion of its beauty and confront the Kashmir conflict and its discursive history.

Of course, the relationship with Third Cinema and issues of post-colonialism



is not unproblematic. In aiming to address issues arising from the collisions and collusions of cultures and ideologies, Third Cinema challenges the hegemony both in terms of political and economic power relations and cultural ‘contamination’, and it tries to address the deleterious effects wrought by imperialism on nations and identities. Intrinsic to the position of Kashmir within two nations theory that evolved by partition between India and Pakistan after British left India and the subsequent freedom in 1947, Kashmir inevitably implicates itself in a political debate that interrogates its positioning within the territories of Third Cinema.

Further, there is a scope for research and in-depth analysis to explore the First Cinema by Third Cinema in more detail and find answers to both infrastructural questions of creation, circulation, and display as well as aesthetic issues concerning the films on Kashmir in specific, and films in general.

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