

## **Panopticism In Bashir’s Scattered Souls: A Trauma Study**

**Hafiza Anum Shahzadi,**

MPhil Scholar, Government College University, Faisalabad

**Prof Dr Mazhar Hayat,**

Professor, Department of English, Government College University, Faisalabad

**Saira Akhter,**

Assistant Professor of English, Government College Women University, Faisalabad (Corresponding Author)

### **ABSTRACT**

Kashmir is a bone of contention between India and Pakistan since partition which resulted in massacres, lynching, and molestation of Kashmiris. Bleeding Kashmir has raised the rage, rebelliousness, resistance and trauma etc among the masses which Shahnaz Bashir has represented very deftly and realistically in his work *Scattered Souls*. The dark and gloomy atmosphere of Kashmir has distorted the psyche of its inhabitants and the despotism is driving Kashmiris to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This research shows the imbalance of power between Kashmiris and Indians and how it affects the life of people at different grounds in the context of the trauma theory in the selected Kashmiri fiction. Through different stories, the author reveals the unending pain, chaos, rebelliousness and degradation in Kashmir due to panoptic situation. The study evaluates Kashmiris in a dictatorial territory as Shahnaz Bashir's narrative explores how traumatized people describe the depredations and barbaric environment with the help of Judith Herman and Cathy Caruth's trauma theories with the views of Freud. This research is analytical and descriptive in its approach.

**Key Words:** Panopticism, Massacres, Trauma, PTSD, Sexual and Child Abuse, Psychosis, Despotism

### **Introduction:**

In the 18th century, Jeremy Bentham (2020) developed the Panopticon architectural model to be used in disciplinary structures such as jails, educational institutes, laboratories and warehouses etc. Panopticism is a concept invented by Michel Foucault (1995), a French philosopher, to suggest a kind of inner monitoring which creates mental issues in common people. The observer ceases to be external to the observed in panopticism. The watcher's gaze is internalized instead of external behavior to such an extent that each prisoner becomes his/her own guide. It guarantees the automated processing of power. To him, a cruel, ingenious cage is this type of imprisonment. In words of his own, “the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (p. 201). Judith Herman Lewis (1992) a psychiatrist states that “From those who bear witness, the survivor seeks not absolution but fairness, compassion, and the willingness to share the

guilty knowledge of what happens to people in extremity” (p. 49). She further describes the trauma of the life of global conflict and the trauma of war, along with the pain and sorrow of the individual.

Trauma adheres to the fact and honesty related to the fleeting moments of existence that stay invisible. This tensed state can be explained by other people's descriptive stories and can be described in Caruth's views as “dreams repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident” (1995, p. 5). The psychological basis for this literary research focuses on the conceptual origins of suffering and imprisonment from Caruth for a painful interpretation that reflects the opinions of Freud. She has anticipated the wounded tales which are dealt with Freud's trauma feelings; her brace reflections have extended the revolutionary trauma parabola patterns which make a fascinating understanding of PTSD.

Freud states that psychoanalysis is the evaluation of natural psyche. Trauma has been a basis for literary criticism since the 1990s, mainly at the beginning of the 21st century. When a traumatic shock case was reported, Freud first generated ‘belatedness’ in 1895 which implies to a provisional or lasting duration of amnesia. “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920/1955), an essay of Freud, is a reflection of a psychogenic context that describes the initial start of his hypothesis that human satisfaction resides beneath the acts they wish to do through dishonest means. The experience of trauma by Freud is central.

Shahnaz Bashir is a much-admired artist of Kashmir who has added to the content writing. He won the global popularity with *The Half Mother* (2014) that won the Muse India Young Writer Award in 2015. His *Scattered Souls* (2016) is an assortment of thirteen short stories delineating the shell stunned lives of the individuals of Kashmir, particularly in the 1990's when the activists' revolt was going all out in Kashmir. The book is a progression of interconnected stories and can be perused as a novel. Individuals are in the mess of death and misery; wars, curfews and massacres are always considered as brutal and inhuman acts as they always disturb the normal course of life. Individuals value insubordination for various opportunities yet every endeavor for the equivalence is defeated by the Indian Army. Bashir makes us visualize those suppressed and despotic scenes throughout the book.

### **Literature Review**

Using a simple narrative, Shahnaz Bashir draws a very literal line of truth that pervades *Scattered Souls* (2016) and truly portrays the sorry situation of Kashmiris through their characters in a collection of heart-rending stories. The narrative explains how in the 1990s Indian Army convoy invaded Kashmir and started clutching the life of Kashmiris through barbaric despotism with the long hours of lockdowns. In almost every narrative, impotence, psychological morbidity, indifference, and doubt are repetitive focal concerns of the author. *Scattered Souls* explains how in the lives of citizens the bitter conflict, inaccurate rules, and strong militarization have created chaos.

A student of Jean-Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet (2007) studied dissociative phenomenon and the recollections of trauma; he explored development of personality and behavior of specific trauma patients and their experiences. Freud was also influenced by Janet in his early studies of hysteria (1893-1895), so he adopted some of his ideas. In *Studies on Hysteria* (1895/2009), Freud and Josef Breuer suggested that we must point out that we consider it essential for the explanation of hysterical phenomena to assume the presence of dissociation with the content of consciousness. Freud (1920) asserted that the result of willful injustice was despair. Trauma happens when one loses the feeling of having a sheltered spot to withdraw inside or outside oneself to manage terrifying feelings or encounters (Kolk, 1996). According to Ter (1983), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is not only the adults' thing but also it badly affects the mental health of

children. Moreover, he described that this trauma in children stays longer than adults and for them it is a characterization of re-experiencing traumatic events in the shape of frightening visions and nightmares by emotional numbing and symptoms of hyper-arousal.

In the field of Trauma Studies, Kali Tal's revolutionary book, *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma* (1996) has been reviewed, quoted, and cited widely. She worked as a coach and an editor for scores of Vietnam veteran writers and the survivors of trauma. Tal has served a great period of her life in the Oral History Archives as a consultant. She explains the suffering as a uniquely designed experience, and those individuals who have transitioned rarely revert to a former state of remorse. She states that the evaluation of the clinical reports of the victims in painful incidents enabled psychiatrists to create a clear picture of the symptoms specifically to PTSD to create the relationship between the trauma of war and disorders that happened to the victims.

Caruth's books *Trauma: Explorations of Memory* (1995) and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (2016) provide comprehensive answers to questions like how a traumatic event affects the human psyche and how traumatic events resurface in the mind to replay in words whatever the mind has experienced recently. Caruth says that it can be defined as 'an overwhelming experience' linked to an incident of a sudden or disastrous nature, when describing trauma, adding that the reaction upon this part of the person who is dealing with it typically in the form of a sudden or devastating event "delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (1995, p. 11).

In Morrison's paper "Child Abuse in Morrison's Fiction" (2016), she suggests her readers about all the distinct elements of environment and culture in which an individual lives with the impacts of trauma. The relation between PTSD and psychosis is a dialectic one and somehow or other this relation is interlinked because psychosis practice can cause the growth of PTSD that increases psychosis for some personalities. Migration and alien places to live give a new turn to this topic. Immigrants always feel strange and unfamiliar in other lands. *Home* is not a word; it is a place where your heart and soul feel comfortable, even wherever you go, it is confirmed that you are going to come back to your home. Kaplan, Simpson, Jabra, Asma, Chinua Achebe, Darwish, Brennan, these are some fine people who contributed gratefully in order to define home, exile, safety, and memories of being a part of home.

Bhabha (1994) brings a totally new and mind-blowing concept of 'homelessness'. He evaluates the 'unhomely' community. He says more about migration that it is a question of both knowledge and identity. He uses the idea of "unhomely" to explain the problem of the modern home, or homelessness. Bhabha thus introduces a whole new outlook on homelessness. He claims that homelessness is not a stable category since there is no such thing as a homeless person. Multiculturalism and diaspora are more common words used in the writings about migration and displacement, and wherever these words are used, debatably two other words define the first words and these are 'refugee' or 'exile'.

Edward Said (2000) says that the outcast is an excruciating encounter that every individual leads as his own social, strict convictions. This is agony given to the people by other people and it keeps a large number of individuals from the sustenance of customs, families, and their underlying foundations. These things can make an ousted individual feel contrary to others. An outcast's mental state changes because of contradicting perspectives and watching the world.

Supriya Sharma (2016) reviewed the book saying Shahnaz Bashir's *Scattered Souls*, a collection of short stories, explains the impacts of Kashmir's long-drawn conflict and militarization on its relatives. In one story, Gul Baaghwaan, a nursery worker in Srinagar, offers a lot of red and pink roses to a gathering of American sightseers. He decreases the cash offered in kind tone, saying, "All I need a touch of consideration... We don't have oil... yet we have roses" (p. 39). Recollections of police torment started to blur from his psyche as he becomes focused on Barack Obama's visit to India. He trusts the Black American president way very well who according to Gul will "say something regarding the goal of the Kashmir issue" (p. 32).

Hansda Shekhar (2017) stated, *Scattered Souls* (2016), a series of thirteen interconnected stories set in the Kashmir valley, was one of his favorite books by Bashir. It is both moving and inspiring with a cathartic experience because the stories are so strong and, in some cases, surprising. It is not a tear-jerker like Bashir's novel *The Half Mother*, but it is still so heart-touching because the stories are so powerful and, in some cases, shocking. Furthermore, *Scattered Souls* is unflinchingly honest.

### **Research Methodology**

Judith Lewis Herman (1992) states that remembrance is something that takes the shape of storytelling of all traumatic experiences the victim had experienced and survived. Herman's perspective on the portrayal of traumatic arousals is that "the conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma" (p. 1). Caruth demonstrates her hypothesis with a galore of hysteria pieces, a mammoth image of trauma that has been explained in her *Exploration in Memory* that are related to particular traumatic experiences for historical trauma purposes. It describes why a person is consumed again and again by hallucinations and distorted experiences of the past.

Terror trauma is the basic definition of the word called 'powerlessness'. The overwhelming forces consider the victim helpless making trauma prominent. Whenever humans perform the same form of motion, it is an act called 'atrocities'. Such tragic events were unusual once but nowadays these events are so normal like the existence of beings. These traumatic events like sexual abuses, body shaming, harassment, and rapes are the basic parts of female's lives and for them, it is not easy to describe the pain even. In another stage of trauma, hyper excitement, surviving in traumatic events, the person feels as if the fear may be back at any moment. Herman (1992) believes that the early sign of PTSD is the hyper-arousal condition, where an individual becomes the prey of a traumatic situation, which can create sleep disorders, less intake of food and furious reactions in people. She further describes that the post-traumatic stress disorder patients suffer from a disconnection with the surroundings and they take much time to sleep as their mind is not at peace so they keep thinking about the irrelevant stuff to pass their time at night. For Herman, distressing and embarrassing times have unusual effects on the natural memory of the person fighting with post-traumatic stress disorder. Mostly these victims have flashbacks of wild behaviors and dreaming intervals on regular basis, which is a strong riddle between their recoveries. Awful arousing is Freud's term for the accomplishments of bad dreams and displays the thoughts which are overlooked and repeated in trauma. Freud clarifies that the trauma of a bad dream is not just named as a dream rather an "experience waking from it" (in Caruth, 1995, p. 64). The term 'nightmare' was identified by a renowned foreign scientist Lauri Loewenberg in *Dream on It: Unlock Your Dreams, Change Your Life* (2011). According to her, the term 'nightmare' suggests something has gone on long enough in someone's inner life.

Kardiner predicted that “the nucleus of the (traumatic) neurosis is a psychoneurosis” (1992, p. 24). That is how the survivor is disturbed by his past exposure and as per response to a devastating threat considers the situation a fight or a flight. Other important changes in PTSD are substantial and long-term psycho-physiological changes. The decision to test the detestation of previous occasions rests by the side of survivor so a notable researcher Janet assigns conventional remembrance as “the activity of telling a story” (in Herman, 1992, p. 25). On the opposite side horrendous memory is the silent measurement, and sincerely dead. A horrible story in its underlying phase would be redundant, generalized, and clear that will be seen as non-transformed structure as “pre-narrative”. Retribution gets its unpleasant and merciless structure when there is no way to capture the culprit and the casualty intensely feels defenseless.

Horrible happenings raise doubt about essential human affiliation and division with the connection of family, companionship, and network. The traumatized individuals feel alone. Inevitably, the rationale of estrangement and suspension implants each connection and if the trust is broken, damaged people get themselves more to be inert than to stay alive. Horrendous accidents show up on the scene and break the feeling of connection among people and situations. In *Scattered Souls* (2016), Ameen’s home is not less than a heaven but the misfortune of the events stayed with him as he got a gun shot through the window of his home from Indian police and got paralyzed for rest of his life. His mental condition turned into a deep well of knotted question “...what is the purpose of the mind in heaven? Ameen murmured the same question again and again” (Bashir, p. 61).

### **Textual Analysis**

In *Scattered Souls* (2016), the interconnected short stories are distinctive in their viewpoints narrating brutal deaths, mystified killings and repulsive incidents in Kashmir. These echoes of terror have made the air full of despondency and worries among Kashmiri individuals which draw them towards PTSD. The researchers have analysed these situations with the help of Herman and Caruth’s debates on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Bashir, on every page of *Scattered Souls* (2016), offers the traumatic injuries of the characters and horrifying incidents that show us that the human brain is affected by traumas. PTSD is a psychological and mental health disorder which can be triggered by any near-death or negative news or knowledge from some loved ones but which can be improved through excellent care and communication. The co-event between PTSD and psychosis is vividly portrayed in the quick set-ups of a trauma. People with schizophrenia or schizoaffective issues report higher paces of trauma and attack on everyone. Sakeena in a story “Psychosis” is molested by Indian soldiers and her husband also does not return home as he seems to be dead. “She was admitted to this hospital for acute onset of confusion, delusions, hallucinations, altered behavior, pan anxiety, elation, happiness or ecstasy of high degree...” (Bashir, 2016, p. 20). The condition of Sakeena was so miserable as all the glimpses of her past were as fresh as the incident of rape happened some time ago. After Sakeena, the society was behind her daughter named Insha, who was the victim of everyone’s bad words just because of her mother’s rape. “Now you wish you died the day you were born...or the day your father vanished. Or the day your mother was raped...” (p. 26). Insha also received hateful comments and behavioral issues from the society like her mother. “Feelings of rage and murderous revenge fantasies are normal responses to abusive treatment.” (Herman, 1992, p. 74)

There are sufficiently high rates of sexual assaults on women that make women live with a permanent and persistent fear of abuse. Herman expressed her views on harassed women in her journal *Sexual Violence* that sexual violence is a stigma that strongly affects both personal and social cognition.

Sakeena and her son Bilal are the most prominent examples of sexual harassment and child abuse. The whole community witnessed the brutal rape of Sakeena done by Indian police officers. As a result of this rape, Bilal alias Biul was born and was abused by Sakeena and his surroundings for his whole life. "If they called him *haraamuk* or *zinhuuk*, he would tell them about their mothers' and wives' and daughters' illicit affairs and dirty scandals" (Bashir, 2016, p. 31).

In *Scattered Souls* (2016) the only son of Sakeena faced so many identity crises in a story named "A Photo with Barack Obama". This story deals with main themes of the issue like indifference, hopelessness and frustration. These themes of the story deal with the whole story of Kashmir. Bilal is a character born as a result of a barbaric rape of Sakeena who was raped by Indian military soldiers. Bilal is a neglected child who always starved for his mother's love, care and affection. In his youth Bilal becomes too indifferent from everything and never cares about what people call him. Caruth (1995) is in the view that, trauma requires a mode of interpretation that, for instance, spaces and calms, the repetitive collapse of vocabulary, and the breakdown of comprehension, textually executes trauma and its incomprehensibility. He starts bunking his classes and most of the time roams about alone in isolated pastures doing nothing but watching the cows and their heifers grazing and also to know about his existence in the world. He becomes a good stone-pelter and throws stones at policemen to get revenge of his miserable life from them. "Before lobbing them, Biul would examine the texture and dimensions of the stone, heft them, consider their edges and roughness. Each time he threw a stone, it felt like he was shedding off a burden" (Bashir, 2016, p. 31). Bilal is aloof and never cared about anything besides once, when a police man titled him *haraamzaada*, and jerked him badly in his ribs ten times as a result of finding a bag full of stones from him. The police man put him into a cell, from where he was released by the endless efforts of Dr. Imtiaz, the psychiatrist.

In the terms of Herman, in a family environment of pervasive fear, persistent childhood violence takes place in which normal caring relations become exceedingly detached. Bashir in this story thoroughly described the child trauma through Bilal as the abused child is isolated from everyone in the family and society but it is also true that this situation of negligence is first created by Sakeena the mother of Bilal who hates him too much. She has so much anger in her towards Bilal but it is also true that it is not his fault. In this kind of climate the child's psyche is more disturbed as he started looking for the help from others whom he even does not know. In this story there is a political turn too which is narrated by Bashir. Bilal became so excited to know that US president Barack Obama is going to visit India soon. "He could just say something about the resolution of the Kashmir issue, something the Indian State didn't want to hear." (Bashir, 2016, p. 29)

He didn't know anything about Obama but he heard boys talking about him as a person that he is black and understands the pain of being deprived as well as he talks about equality in all caste systems, religions, races and regions. Bilal also heard that many believed that he was basically a Muslim so his own faith increased in him. A Healing Relationship is a concept given by Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery*, powerlessness and disconnection from others are the key experiences of psychological trauma. The survivor's independence and the development of new ties are focused on her recovery. This is the same relationship with Barack Obama that Bilal has built in his mind that he is about to save Kashmir.

A character of an insane structure builds the danger of trauma and PTSD. In the case of Ayesha the protagonist of "The Woman Who Became Her Own Husband" couldn't handle the news of her husband's murder, totally lost her identity and became her husband apparently. "Another day, I found her dressed in Tariq's navy-blue suit, smoking a cigarette just like him, wearing his pair of brogues, carrying

his leather briefcase, limping down the lane for ‘office’” (Bashir, 2016, p. 66). She did this also because she was insecure without her husband Tariq Zargar and gradually she lost her senses.

Bashir has briefly presented Kashmir in a few lines as Srinagar is a primitive town seeping in deadly fights with its clear boulevards, bolted shops, irritated troopers, and its children with stones. It has a few thousands of armed sanctuaries, four fairways, and three bookshops. Its cunning lawmakers rehash their double-dealings about conflict and concordance to TV cameras and little groups accumulate through the conceivable outcomes of a slippery activity or a day by day charge of a couple of hundred rupees. “Lately Srinagar had grown intensely turbulent. Day in and day out there were curfews, shut downs and crossfires between the troops and the insurgents” (Bashir, 2016, p. 64).

In “The Transistor”, the protagonist of this story is an innocent man, whose name is Muhammad Yousuf Dar. He is very fond of radio and keeps himself aware of all the happenings in the world especially BBC News and Cricket commentary. He had so many transistors of old times and new times in his room. His room was a museum of transistors. After the migration of his brother Rehman Dar to Delhi the very first thing he asked of him was a transistor. His mind was totally diverted to hear the news all the time as he did not believe much in government news. Malik, a politician in the village of Yousuf, spread the news that Yousuf’s transistor was a walkie-talkie rather than a transistor. This news spread like a fire in the village. On next Friday when Yousuf was in Masjid Molvi Ali Muhammad Shah delivered his sermon and announced:

We have learnt that some unethical persons in our Daddgaam have been spying on the village. And they have been exchanging information regarding the resistance movement with the government forces through wireless sets. And yes, you heard it right: wireless sets. They have become informers and are betraying the great cause of freedom and Islam. (Bashir, 2016, p. 12)

By hearing this, all were looking at Yousuf but he was thinking about some other people in his mind but steadily he stopped thinking about anyone else. After some days, he got a bang on his house door and went to open the door carrying his transistor. There were three men at the door and they cocked their guns before he could ask them who they were and what they wanted.

This is the viciousness of the army that without doing any investigation they shot him and made his wife questioning and crying for the rest of her life. This story also delineates how the people of Daddgaam paid heed to the rumors and claimed the death of an innocent transistor lover at the hands of militants. Herman claims in her recognizable statement about the certain events in life that are “outside the range of usual human experience” (1992, p. 24).

Another interesting story named “The Silent Bullet” tells more about the viciousness in the characters generating conflicts zones where the innocent people become the victim of every kind of barbaric situation. This ironic story is about the protagonist named Muhammad Ameen, a teacher and a philosopher, who always lives in utopia. On one day Ameen was looking out of his room window to notice a protest on the road against Army’s arrest of two young boys in Natipora. The aerial shots were fired by Army to disperse the huge crowd gathered there and that was the time when a silent bullet pricked and capsized Ameen touching his spine in the back. The bullet injury was examined by physicians, who recommended that it would be left inside the body as the chance of the successful operation is not very bright. Bashir ironically used the bullet to represent the presence of Indians who are inside every Kashmiri, implying that there is no way to extract the bullet or make the pain go away. In this case, doctors believed

that removing the bullet from Ameen's body would render his lower body paralyzed and that the operation would result in his death. The same is true of Indians' barbaric actions against Kashmiris, in which silent bullets are injected into every Kashmiri, slowly but steadily killing them. Muhammad Ameen dreams about heaven to ask a bundle of questions from God. By using the word Heaven again and again, Bashir wants to direct the attention of the reader towards Kashmir as it is a heaven in this world that is threatened. It also shows the traumatized mind and body of innocent Ameen who was victimised by the atrocities of the brutal army which made him bed ridden with various unanswered questions in his mind.

*Scattered Souls* (2016) shows a strong image of PTSD that can be found in the novel with all the features and characteristics. Herman has distinguished even a tiny detail about the essence of trauma and identified a lot of explanations behind the traumatized individuals that are identical in the novel scenes and pasteurized how people live in a scenario that seems dispersed. Another genius theory is Freud's version of the idea that inflictions affect not upon the body but upon the mind. By her groundbreaking theme documented in *Unclaimed Experiences*, Cathy Caruth relies on Freud's assumptions that the reactions to unpredictable or excessive violence that are not completely understood when they happen but return later in recurring flashbacks, nightmares, and other recurrent phenomena.

### **Conclusion**

Violence has been depicted in all its inhuman ways that cement on the victim's psyche; every character of Bashir in *Scattered Souls* (2016) goes through the mental torment. The primary aim of this study was to illustrate the painful dilemma of the inhabitants of Kashmir in the background of Trauma theory. To establish the traumatic foundation on Bashir's text, essential points of theory such as terror, mourning the loss, disassociation, defeat, intergenerational trauma, reconstructing the narrative, and traumatic affinities are emblematic. Bashir reflects the very real pain of living in a traumatic atmosphere. His characters are dreaming of their families to be in a free land. Anyone having a cautious mind can imagine the traumatic situation the characters must have been through. The philosophical context of the conducted research is traumatic syndrome and PTSD.

Due to the adverse scenario in Kashmir, a debilitating personality flaw causes a psychological illness in Kashmiris that approaches its climax; Herman and Caruth disclose all the major points of their theory to discern trauma characteristics on various grounds. The text of Bashir establishes that Kashmiris experience a miserable and uncomfortable life that threatens their confidence to face various life episodes. Sometimes a mother struggles because of her children's discomfort, sometimes dignity is invaluable, and everyone is at the height of his or her predicament. Everywhere, the terrible and frightening visions of facing the torture and demise are located in Bashir's *Scattered Souls*. The current research showed the painful side of Kashmir in this narrative in the light of Trauma and it would also open the window in a creative way for the other researchers to work upon the texts related to the occupied lands through trauma theory.

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