A Socio-Psychological Analysis of Gigoo’s The Lion of Kashmir

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Abstract

In the current study the socio-psychological analysis of The Lion of Kashmir (2020) by Siddhartha Gigoo's is done by using the prism of socio-psychological theory and the theoretical notion of psychoanalytical theory. According to the researcher, the novel's protagonist has a disturbed mental state brought on by violence. There are many elements which can induce mental disturbances. These elements include frequent bombardment, a shortage of basic amenities in contested regions, homelessness, the murder and kidnapping of family members, and others. The study also looks at how the victims of this mental disorder suffered from inferiority complexes and self-shattering. The novel's author provides a window into the protagonist's mind and paints a vivid picture of his anxieties. The narration's phantasmagoria offers us several perspectives on the story. This analysis supports the idea that the selected novel of Gigoo emphasizes life is difficult for Kashmiris.

Keywords: Violence, Mujahids, Psychological Disorder, Kashmir, Army

Introduction:

Due to ongoing unrest in the valley, which has led to widespread human rights violations, Kashmir has become a flashpoint on the international stage. In fact, it has evolved into a place where terror, fear, torment, bad luck, and brutality are known by another name. The pains and tribulations that the people of Kashmir are going through are well recognized to the modern world. The people who live in the Kashmir valley are negatively affected by the ongoing instability and cruelty. This ongoing suffering poses a serious threat to the mental satisfaction and equal rights of the Kashmiri people. Life has come to a complete standstill due to the presence of armed troops that have placed the entire valley under siege. None other than the average person has been affected by these tragedies. As a result, this undeclared war has had a significant negative impact on the mental health of women, children, and adults. Literature represents society by making an effort to realistically and creatively...
foresee good and terrible times, conflicts, and disparities between social systems and people. This is also true of Kashmiri literature, which highlights unjustified violence. Sidhartha Gigoois' *The Lion of Kashmir* (2020) also addresses the eye-catching problems of the Kashmir valley. Present study is about the social and psychological condition of the people of the valley as presented by Gigoo in his novel.

This book examines the valley's state prior to the removal of its special status; subsequent events may have modified that scenario. It may have made things worse for the locals. Gigoo deserves praise for the way he approached Kashmir and for his amazing writing. 2020's *The Lion of Kashmir* examined Kashmir in two different angles. A dad, a special force commander, suddenly disappears. One such incident can only mean suffering and carnage. Zooni, his daughter and a human rights activist travels from London to Kashmir in attempt to locate her father and search for her mentally ill brother. The following is a terrible tale of loss told through the eyes of a daughter who is trying to escape a nation divided into several ideologies. Later in the story, when she trips over her father's notebook, the narrative changes, taking us deeper into the lives of the Special Forces in order to survive their sacrifices, suffering, and loss. As we venture into and out of reality, the boundary becomes increasingly hazy. In a nightmare that comes as close to reality as possible, Zooni experiences both the reality of her life and her deepest anxieties. This narrative deviates from the norm because of the Kashmiri people's collective experience, the military presence, and their erratic mental condition. Gigoo tackles an unheard topic, a narrative that deserves to be heard just as much as any other tale of trauma and injustice.

**Statement of the Purpose:**
The study addresses the aspects of violence, oppression, suppression, alienation, and identity crises. The researcher is interested in how oppressed Kashmiris want to reclaim their identity after it was destroyed by intercultural conflict and religious prejudice. The purpose of this research is to give a voice to those who feel excluded and outcast from dominant cultures. When colonies were established, an effort was made to divert their identities, which led to the emergence of imperialism, otherness, and identity crises. In addition to exposing how minorities are treated in extremist societies, this study shows how imperialism affects people all over the world and how it affects the social life and mental health of the people living in the conflicted areas.

**Research Questions:**

1. How does *The Lion of Kashmir* depict the psychological state of Kashmiris?
2. How does *The Lion of Kashmir* illustrate the socioeconomic conditions that lead to doubt and alienation?

**The Significance of the Study:**

This study is crucial in present time not only for Kashmiri Muslims but for all people because it highlights the reality of dominating cultures that oppress minorities. A growing number of writers and scholars are interested in exploring topics including violence, homeliness, and alienation. World experts have taken notice of these incidents because they think that even in this day and age; humans are still dominated and treated like animals. The issues of trauma and alienation are also highlighted in this study. The people of Kashmir have been cruelly oppressed and unjustly occupied for many years. Recent scholars have given Kashmiris’ delicate and serious predicament a lot of attention. An illustration of such an effort is current research.

**Literature Review:**

It is clear from what Machiavelli (1989) suggests that violence is acceptable in some situations. As opposed to the first rule of law approach, it would like to become the dominant dispute resolution technique in interpersonal relationships. But not everywhere the legislation is in force. According to Machiavelli (1989), there are situations where the law either fails to prevent violence or is blatantly disregarded. These are the societal circumstances in which the law does not regulate interpersonal interactions and restrain the propensity to use violence. According to Machiavelli (1989), the laws are untrustworthy as a special means of upholding normality because they distort the role of violence in the efficient operation of non-violent social relations. He is not under the illusion that the law operates in a way that promotes the civil administration of justice. If Machiavelli (1989) suggests that using violence is the only way to stop social life and relationships from being distorted, he is aware that nobody can do it. He contends that the Prince must act alone to stop the bloodshed and bring about the restoration of normalcy.

Bloodshed, conflict, and violence have become a way of life for the people of Kashmir. There are reports about continuous conflicts between various groups every day, which have a significant influence on people's everyday life. Students' education is distressing, and their future is in danger. Since the end of 1989, political violence, according to Singh (2008), has steadily become a way of life for the people of Kashmir. The worldwide network's efforts to achieve peaceful cohabitation have been thwarted by political violence, which is a component of a larger collection of circumstances known as equipped conflict. Due to India's international dispute with Pakistan for
sovereignty of the area, which broke out into war twice in 1965 and 1971, Kashmir has come to be viewed as a state of armed conflict in the South Asian region. Hard living circumstances, the constant fear of death for oneself and one's friends and family, and the impending shortage of basic necessities have wreaked havoc on people's lives. As a result of the battle, some of the families have lost everything, including their loved ones, education, tranquility, and sense of community. The only option left to the locals is to relocate because of the persistent turmoil, chaos, and warfare in the area. The prolonged siege of Kashmir, where the situation is marked by military repression, indiscriminate brutality, and the loss of life in the ongoing bloodshed, has a negative psychological and social impact on the general populace, especially the young (Parveen, 2014).

The 1990s were a time of greater individual and societal endurance, as depicted by Kaul (2013). The growing graveyards, the bodies and souls broken in interrogation centres, and the military's unending shame were all on the rise. Estimates place the number of executions at above 70,000; nevertheless, this is not the most important number: There have been several kid disappearances recently, and there have been reports of unidentifiable victims interred in mass graves; both common folks and an administrative team entrusted with looking into the subject have corroborated these interments. Zutshi (2016) claims that it is a trauma that happens in the wake of events and cannot be understood or put into words. It is not located at certain historical turning points that show the community's historical wounds. According to the accounts, many are unable to express or document trauma in writing. Kaul (2013) demonstrates how poetry's many subjects and abstract philosophies help mankind address its perennial problems. Some of the most egregious human rights abuses ever recorded in literature have occurred in Kashmir. Books, short stories, diaries, and journalistic works are other powerful forms of resistance for writers, in addition to poetry, according to Kaul. In fact, documentarians are capturing the lives of common Kashmiris who have endured humiliation and abuse at the hands of security personnel.

According to Alexander (2004), traumas occur when people or groups believe they have experienced a traumatic event that has permanently altered their awareness, will affect their memories perpetually, and will fundamentally and irrevocably change their future. The past still has an impact on the present for people. Basic misrepresentations of the fundamental reason, which happen repeatedly, are part of horrible encounters and situations. According to Halbwachs (1992), as environmental conditions start to change, people's reference points become more problematic, their sensitivity increases, and their mental strain increases. Groups also fall under this. It evolves and
changes in reaction to the conditions that are given to it, creating a framework for itself. All persons who are necessary for the group are included in this idea of dependability, so the individual does not see himself as both a group member and an isolated individual. In this vein, Coser (1992) describes how spatial pictures are stored in collective memory. Additionally, he asserts that memories from every period and stage of our life are stored in our psyches and continuously recreated. But it is so often repeated in our brains that it loses its originality, organisation, and look. The ongoing sharing of these memories helps to maintain a feeling of identity. The reason Sztompka's (2000) research is so important in relation to Kashmir is because bad things that happen in one town or town shock and hurt individuals who are far away, who may then relate to and feel something that did not truly happen. As a result, their suffering could be real, but it could also be overstated or exaggerated depictions of actual events.

**Theoretical Framework:**
The researcher has analyzed the chosen text using Adler's socio-psychological theory (1961). The idea of inferiority was originally articulated by Adler in 1961. An inferiority complex is the feeling that a person is revolting and beneath the standards of other individuals or of society. Adler's ideas of inferiority are very different from those of Sigmund Freud. According to Freud, we are motivated by sexual and violent desire, but according to Adler (1961), every thought, emotion, and behaviour is motivated by feelings of childhood inadequacy. Adler (1961) agreed with Freud that social development, not Freud's phases of sexual development, is what drives children's growth. Adler emphasised the link between all people and the importance of working together for the welfare of everyone. Humanity enjoys cooperating and living as though each individual has committed to making a positive contribution to the group's well-being. He said that the main goal of psychology is to acknowledge the equality and dignity of others (Adler, 1961). Adler (1961) established three fundamental social obligations that we must all uphold: job (employment), society (friendship), and love tasks (finding an intimate partner for a long-term relationship). Adler (1961) concentrated on social reasons rather than sexual or violent urges, much like Freud did. He highlighted that understanding and purposeful compliance with the three fundamental social obligations prevails over instinctual impulse. This is not to say that Adler didn't believe in unconscious processes; he did, but he thought having conscious processes was more important. In contrast to Freud's view that personality is fixed in adolescence, Erikson (1973) presented a psychosocial theory of development, as you learned while looking into the origins of
longevity. Erikson's theory focused on the social ties, which are essential at every stage of personality evolution, in contrast to Freud's emphasis on sex. Erikson proposed eight steps, each of which represented a specific challenge or function in growth. The appropriate completion of each job is essential for the growth of a strong personality and feeling of ability.

Textual Analysis:

*The Lion of Kashmir* (2020) is a twisted maze of the human psychological terrain that reaches deep into the confused people's minds. On the surface, it appears like a daughter is attempting to comprehend her father's connection within the constraints of her family. Kashmir is today a bizarre place, not at all as it was in the book. The whole novel's plot is a surreal scenario that gives the reader the impression that they are on a movie set or immersed in a daydream. Along with seeing the characters' conditions, there is also disappointment. The book also depicts an alternate history of a deserted paradise and the dispersed lives of its inhabitants, including conflicts between identities, ideologies, and connections on a new level. The Kashmiri people are struggling for their independence. There are various fighting organizations with well-developed systems. These organizations enlist local youth to fight for their independence. The locals appreciate these organizations and the people who belong to them because they see them as their saviours. Salim Dar, the leader of the Kashmir Liberation Front, is adored across the Gurez valley, as is seen throughout the story. The populace views him as a living legend. As we see once Salim Dar is stranded in a shrine and people were ready to do anything to save him, “The town’s people come to know that Dar is inside. They will do anything to save him. They will even take bullet for him. Dar is their liberator. His life is precious than the lives of other people”. (Gigoo, 2020, p. 317)

The Kashmir valley has experienced ongoing carnage and massacres. It is also unknown who is actually accountable for this slaughter and who is behind it. For instance, the people of Kashmir saw the burning of a temple and the rigorous siege of the whole city in the second book as a horrific deed committed by the security forces in the valley. However, Book 3 reveals that Salim Dar was hunkered down inside the shrine. To rescue Salim Dar, the valley residents set fire to the shrine. As the novel makes clear, “The only way is to set the shrine on fire so that Dar gets to escape uncaptured and unhurt. And people do what they would never do in any circumstances. “They burn the shrine” (Gigoo, 2020, p.318). In Kashmir, life continues in this manner. Due to this act of burning the temple, there is a harsh curfew. This curfew brings the city to a complete standstill.
Penumbra and Umbra are the titles of the first two books, whereas the title of the third book is simply "Abdul Aziz's Journal." It implies a sober acknowledgement of what exists beyond of the physical world. Gigoo encourages daily interactions with the worlds of dreams, imagination, memory, and illusions that obfuscate the boundaries between minds and reality while dismantling objective truths. A unique perspective on life, circumstances, and events is provided by the flow of awareness method in Kashmir, which gives rise to the idea of a direct statement from the mind. The complexity of Zooni's connections with her father is represented in her delusional interface.

Even if readers are introduced to new elements of the narrative and its world, confusion still rules since reality and fiction are blended in this work. In truth, reality need not be logical; a person may just have a sophisticated misunderstanding of it. Random, somewhat genuine, partially made-up visions appear in Zooni's head: “A woman standing next to me is looking at me with mischief in her eyes…Her nose is flat…In the sky float small reflections of people familiar and unfamiliar” (Gigoo, 2020 p.8). Zooni then encounters the young woman with a flat nose who is sitting with Zubair and her dad's subordinate, Uncle Dar, in her dream. She meets Muknas, the country girl, and together they help save the calf. So it says in the text, “Look at what you have done, Flatnose. You have mistaken me for yourself” (Gigoo, 2020, p.169). Gigoo manipulates some of the complexities of mood and life in a battle, the numerous transient shades of meaning, via the interaction of those two female characters, to portray feeling in its tangled core. The terrorists killed Salim Dar the following morning, and his daughter reportedly killed herself, according to the press. Zooni spent the night with Salim Dar's daughter, whom she referred to as flatnose, and she is cheerful and grinning. The limited significance of waking and sleeping, dreams, and reality casts doubt on the scope of true liminality and makes readers less sure of themselves.

The first book of the novel is titled Penumbra. The earth's partial shadow on the moon while it is between the sun and the moon is a natural occurrence. This natural occurrence has been used by the author in a very artistic way to highlight the protagonist's internal conflict. In the first segment, Penumbra, Zooni is in London and is hurriedly returning to her birthplace in Kashmir after getting a telegram from her Uncle Dar. In this phase, she switches between a wakeful and a nightmare-like condition. It can be challenging to distinguish between reading about her dream-like state and her awakened condition because the language is so beautiful. As she puts it, “I have lost interest in everything—what I should do and what I shouldn’t do. Things lying in front of me and around me are useless. I must simply take my bag and run away from here. I don’t need anything” (Gigoo, 2020 p.
Zooni isn't totally lost in this passage of the text. She is trapped between reality and her sense of being lost. Because she now lives in London and has a more stable lifestyle than she had in the Kashmir valley, her illness has only partially deteriorated. She is completely bewildered when she returns to her own country. The first book's title expresses the protagonist Zooni's thoughts quite well. Several incidents occur while she prepares to return to Kashmir in search of her father, showing her partially cognizant, partially unconscious state of mind. For instance, in the airport, when she mentions the mole on her face. For example at the airport when she talks about mole on her face she says, “I am a damn fool. I run my fingers over my face. The mole is there I beg them again: look, it’s here. Let me go. I am not lying. Look at me. The mole is there” (Gigoo, 2020, p.32).

Additionally, Gigoo's characterisation is essential for giving animals their own uniqueness. The insects in The Lion of Kashmir, Whitey the dog, and Rani the pigeon are all crucial to creating and comprehending a world that is no longer an actual thing but a creation of the mind. The novel's overall magical realism is enhanced by the anthropomorphism. As depicted in the story, Whitey defends Zooni from a pack of hounds, saving her life, “The dogs are weary of me. They know Whitey and I are a team now. I can’t leave Whitey alone amongst these salivating brutes dying to kill her. I can’t let anything happen to her” (Gigoo, 2020 p. 218).

Many of the novel's most crucial events, plots, and points of view are provided by animals like pigeons, dragon flies, dogs, birds, and foxes. It occurs when people are mute or passive observers in an unfamiliar environment. The status of the Kashmiri human subject is put into question as a result of human-animal interactions that use magic realism tropes to produce a singular interspecies relationship that reconfigures and blurs lines between people and animals. One of the most noteworthy aspects of The Lion of Kashmir is the decentering of the human subject as the purported centre of meaning, which disrupts the Cartesian paradigm and provides avenues for the animals to express their affect, feelings, and experiences. Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: New Geographies of Human-Animal Relations by Philo and Wilbert, a seminal work on postcolonial studies and animal studies, highlights the idea of agency through human-animal interactions due to the presence of creatures, animals, and figures whose identities aren't fully established or clear in the narrative. As a result, the portrayal of animals in The Lion of Kashmir demands special attention. This is another world in Kashmir to which the reader must pay some attention.

Voices from several characters, including Zooni's narration and her father Aziz's partially epistolary diary, are interspersed throughout the text. Sometimes readers are drawn into the voice of Salim Dar,
the second-in-command and the only other character other than Abdul Aziz who merits the title of "The Lion of Kashmir," as represented in Aziz's diary, while other times readers are exposed to what locals, such as taxi drivers, are thinking about Article 370 and Kashmir's impending doom. The neuropsychiatric Dr. Riyaz also speaks in Aziz's journal, professing his inability to treat the children at the mental hospital who live in constant fear and violence. Like Zooni, Aziz has a distinctive and unpredictable voice. Salim Dar, his subordinate, who lives in a condition of betrayal from his buddy, is denied the truth and honesty by him. These layers of polyphonic voices from many people create a complex, non-monolithic Kashmir, but they also reveal what is frequently left unsaid, the silences, and the frequently unexpected revelations of eerie shadows that lurk in the present. One of the most direct letters I wrote to Zooni was titled, "Things you mustn't know" (Gigoo, 2020, p.387). Aziz claims that he is being pursued by the ghosts of those he has slain, who demand answers for their murders.

In its magical realism, *The Lion of Kashmir* (2020) is both upsetting and comforting. For instance, Zooni frequently appears to be missing her father. She worries about her dad's security. She hasn't lived with her parents like other young girls her age, but she has instead lived in a secure setting. She had never experienced such irrationality. She has never considered her father to be a backup plan. It's emotionally compelling, with a smidgeon of magical realism and a bird's-eye view of Kashmir's sociopolitical situation. One occasionally wants to take a pause to simply sit back and drink it all in one chapter at a time because the writing is so beautiful, the characters are well-developed, and the delivery is so strong. Zooni is heard claiming that, in her dreams, she is the most vulnerable of all. And just when you believe you know who is the weakest, you find out she wasn't dreaming it herself. This type of writing does not use straightforward words to imply deeper ideas. It is actually the complete opposite. There are obvious, fundamental human truths hidden underneath everything that seems complex: “Will you always keep going away like this? Does it not bother you to see me suffer and pine for you eternally? I will always keep coming back to you. Will we still be happy? We will still be happy despite the comings and goings” (Gigoo, 2020, p.265).

A terrific journey into the hot, sticky, mucky, dirty underbelly of human passion is provided by *The Lion of Kashmir* (2020). This is not a political piece; rather, it is about the vile, grotesque, horrifying, and depressing emotions of love and loss. The reader is drawn in by its calm writing only to be swept away by a tsunami of genuine honesty. This is a heartwarming tale that prompts a moral discussion on sin, righteousness, guilt, and salvation. This quote wonderfully illustrates the fine line that
separates love from revolution, power from slaughter, and the cost of idealism. It all comes down to learning the truth about the Kashmir valley and the locals. In the valley, there is a blame game being played in the guise of independence and serving the state. When a shrine is set on fire in the second volume of the story and no one is willing to accept responsibility, this is apparent, “They torched the shrine at Khankah… The agents of the state, who else…they burn it and are now blaming the liberators to give them bad name” (Gigoo, 2020, p.104).

**Conclusion:**

We have noted that the titles of the first two novels in this novel reveal Zooni's psychological state. The first component, called the "penumbra," occurs naturally when the earth passes in front of the sun and the moon and receives some light. The mind of Zooni is partially in the light and partially in the dark, similar to this occurrence. She is alternating between a dream-like and actual environment. "Umbra" is the title of the second book. In this occurrence, there is no shadow cast on the earth, which is absolutely black. It really well conveys the state of sheer confusion that our protagonist is in. Her thoughts are flitting from one idea to another. In this section of the book, there is a phantasmagorias narration, which provides us a true understanding of Zooni's mental state. The author has very artfully peeked into the protagonist's head to depict the several ideas occurring at once. Through text analysis, we have learned that she is experiencing some nightmares in the second book of the novel. The author's depiction of the dream state in the nightmare is the best since it reads so smoothly that it's simple to think it's real. The phrases that follow make it quite evident that Zooni is not acting normally.

Zooni Aziz, the book's main character, and her brother Zubair are both mentally ill, according to the research. We have a strong understanding of Zooni's mental state as the second volume of the novel's insights into her thoughts. Additionally, Zubair's behaviour shows the mental illness he is dealing with. The study demonstrates that there are not enough jobs in the valley. People are struggling, and the young people in the valley need a job that will pay them well. Parents anticipate that government representatives will provide their kids with employment opportunities. They are therefore susceptible to being duped by the freedom group, which uses them as recruits for its soldiers. The report demonstrates that the security officers mistreat residents in the valley. Their religious requirements are removed, and their holy sites are desecrated. They are under siege and deprived of their fundamental rights.
The author immerses the reader in the protagonist's thoughts to illuminate his or her mental state. The protagonist of the book is typically in a situation that resembles a dream, and this dream gives her the freedom to say things that are ordinarily impossible to say. The mental state of Zooni's sibling Zubair indicates that he has post-traumatic stress disorder. Numerous bug species are imprisoned by Zubair in an effort to save their lives. But in reality, the insects choke and pass away in excruciating pain. This represents the people of Kashmir, who the government placed under siege to protect them but who are being smothered by that siege. We also discover that the valley's continual violence causes several social issues for its residents. They struggle with an inferiority mindset. They are having trouble financially. People have left their homes in search of work and never came back. They are liminal beings who exist in the crucible between life and death, neither alive nor dead.

References:


