

Politics of Representation: A Comparative Study of *Our Moon Has Blood Clots* and *Curfewed Night*

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ABSTRACT

This article combines the approaches of New Historicism and comparative studies to analyse the *Curfewed Night* by Basharat Peer and *Our Moon Has Blood Clots* by Rahul Pandita. Published two years apart, these books recount the turbulent years in Kashmir from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s. Even a superficial glance makes it clear that these books view these events from different narrative and ideological perspectives. New Historicists emphasise that history is not a series of objective truths and that multiple viewpoints exist at any given point in history. As a result, they focus on what interpretations of history tell us about the interpreters. At the same time, the recollection of traumatic events raise serious questions about the accuracy and authenticity of a particular account. Under these considerations, this research article attempts to reveal the politics of representation and the ideological and political goals of the authors.

Keywords- New Historicism, Memory, Representation, Exodus, Human Rights.

I. INTRODUCTION

New Historicists give importance to secondary sources from the same time period as the work under examination. They are interested to know how two literary works from the same period interact with each other. New Historicists deny the status of history as a series of objective truths that always stay the same. For them, multiple viewpoints circulate at any given point in history, each varying according to the individual, institution, religion or country in question. And “by collecting the many strands of concurrent storytelling available in any given era, critics and scholars can construct a richer, more complete account of that literary period” [3]. New Historicists deny that truth can be retrieved from a historical document as a variable fact. Therefore, instead of focusing on the interpretations of history, they focus on: “what do the interpretations tell

us about the interpreters?” [3]. They are not interested in knowing only the narratives of dominant groups or the people who wield power. “To hear only the narratives of the dominant group would mean ignoring others that have helped shape people and would provide only a partial understanding of what and how ideologies operated and interacted to form personal and group identities” [3]. Literature not only conveys the ideologies but also helps cement them. Due to this reason, literature is not only the product of history; it contributes to history-making.

Before the bloom of social media and the internet in India, there were limited sources to know about a particular historical period. Print media, TV and books were the chief media through which the information could be gathered. Since New Historicists deny that complete objectivity could be achieved, it becomes imperative to analyse these sources for

subjectivity. The Kashmir issue started emerging in its present complex form in the second half of the 1980s when there was no public connectivity to the internet. Due to this, only state-run sources of information were accessible, which can also be selective in their choice of subjects. Owing to the frequent curfews which were imposed in this period, there are even less sources to have a thorough understanding of that period. In this situation, the point of view of the people who were directly involved in the conflict holds great importance. Literary books on the Kashmir issue started appearing in the 21st century in the form of memoirs, poetry and novels. It is to be noted here that even these sources are not completely reliable considering the methods used by the people who are involved in writing these books. Authors of these books rely heavily on memory for writing these books. When it comes to recollection of events specifically related to some type of trauma, memory can be highly misleading. Maurantonio, in his paper, claims: “to remember is to place a part of the past in the service of conceptions and needs of the present.” Thus the consideration of memory requires less attention to ‘issues of accuracy’ or ‘authenticity’ than it does to the values, beliefs, and norms shaping cultures at a particular historical juncture” [8]. In the process of writing about historical events, the act of remembering or even forgetting becomes political in nature. There are thick chances that these narratives are political in nature, and they strive to attain certain ends, whether consciously or unconsciously. While reading these narratives, we should be aware of “who wants whom to remember what, and why” [8]. More often than not, memoirs which are written about an event which is witnessed by a large number of people are not written for self, but for the community to which the people belong. For example, the memoirs written by holocaust survivors are crucial in throwing light on the lives of thousands of Jews who were detained in concentration camps. It is also true of memoirs written by Kashmiris about the years which led to the secessionist movement in Kashmir and the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits. For example, *Curfewed Night: A Frontline Memoir of Life, Love and War in Kashmir*, as the name suggests, is not solely about the author's life. It includes the experiences of hundreds of people who belonged to different groups and different social circles during the time period covered in the memoir. In the same way, *Our Moon Has Blood Clots: A Memoir of a Lost Home in Kashmir* deals with the lives of thousands of Kashmiri Pandits who were forced by the militant organisations to leave the Valley in the wake of terrorism in the last years of the 1980s. When an author is dealing with the history of a community, especially a common experience or trauma, many things are at stake. These pieces are written with a certain goal in mind, like how an outsider should look at the community or the experience of the community in a particular time period. These books were written almost 10-20 years after most of the events narrated in the

books took place. Moreover, this fact makes these books susceptible to the politics of the times in which these books were written.

In this paper, the researcher will try to find how both the authors advance the ideologies and worldviews of their respective communities and how these viewpoints help in constructing the identities of their communities. The researcher will try to bring together the crucial recollections from the historical period covered in *Curfewed Night* and *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*. Observations will be made as to how these works from the same historical period interact with each other. In addition to these books, other books from the same historical period can be consulted wherever the need is felt. The reason behind choosing these writers for this comparison is that both writers come from the same historical period. Rahul Pandita was born in 1976, and Basharat Peer was born in 1977. Both of these writers grew up in Kashmir in the period when the Kashmir conflict emerged in dangerous proportions. Moreover, both of these writers are journalists and have a thorough understanding of the Kashmir issue, as both of these journalists have reported from Kashmir. In both the books, the authors have attempted to compile the history of Kashmir from their perspectives.

Adarsh Ajit, in his article “Feeling the pain of ‘pain’”, has pointed out how Kashmiri writers from different communities or institutions only talk about issues faced by their community and how these writers have failed to remain impartial. He claims that most of the writers are talking about Kashmir from the perspective of their respective communities and that there is a lack of books that talk about Kashmir encompassing all its narratives. He says: “Writers of the Valley write about their own pain and the Kashmiri Pandit writers paint their own pain though all claim to be Kashmiris. To project the ‘self’ is natural but sometimes such writings seem a reaction. Almost [all] writers have failed to project the pain of all Kashmiris as a whole and irrespective of the communities” [1].

II. EMERGENCE OF THE SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT IN THE 1980s

In his book, Basharat Peer describes the emergence of the secessionist movement in grand sweeps, talking about only the main events. He talks about the significant changes that were taking place in those times, like the accumulated anger of the people of Kashmir for the Indian government and the steps of the central government to curb the autonomy of the state government promised to it during the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the Indian state. He says: “Indian government rigged state elections, arrest[ed] opposition candidates and terroriz[ed] their supporters” [11]. Peer writes that these rigged elections of 1987 proved to be the primary trigger for the anti-Indian sentiments. Peer

and Pandita, in their books, have written about the frequent appearances of armed youth in the villages who had returned from Pakistan after armed training. However, there is an apparent difference in how the members of both communities look at these armed men. For Peer, they represented the hopes of “aazadi”. Peer writes: “Malik and his friends found immense popular support. The bottled up resentment against Indian rule and the treatment of Kashmiris erupted like a volcano. The young guerrillas challenging India were seen as heroes” [11]. But for Kashmiri Pandits, they represented fear, the reminders that some secret movement was going on in the Valley of which they were not aware. Pandita writes:

Ravi had gone on a plant-collection trip to the Lolab Valley along the Line of Control, with his department colleagues, including one of his best friends Irshad. In the forest they were waylaid by armed men who asked if there were any Hindus in their group. [10].

Pandita writes that his cousin had to use a fake Muslim name to escape that situation.

There is a point where both the writers disagree when it comes to the role of the then Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Jagmohan, in forcefully crushing the rebellion and the mass movement of Kashmiri Pandits outside the Valley in different parts of India. Peer, in his book, writes: “Two days earlier, Jagmohan, an Indian bureaucrat infamous for his hatred of Muslims, had been appointed the governor of Jammu and Kashmir. From his palatial residence on the slope of the hill bordering Dal Lake, he gave orders to crush the incipient rebellion” [11]. He also tells how the paramilitary men “slammed doors and dragged out young men” who were arrested. Contrary to this, Rahul Pandita, in his interview with Sunil of *NDTV*, says that Jagmohan has been wrongly accused of giving orders to the paramilitary forces in the Valley on the night of 19th January 1990, after which the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits began. He says: “I think Jagmohan had no role; I am sure about it, to play in the exodus. . . Mr. Jagmohan was not even in Srinagar Valley. He was being flown in a BSF aircraft. He was in Jammu’s Raj Bhavan” [7]. He also has written on this in his book. In a way quite contrary to Peer’s, Rahul Pandita paints a different picture of Jagmohan during his tenure as the governor of Jammu and Kashmir in that period. He says: “Jagmohan was a very popular administrator and, during a previous stint in 1986 as the governor of the state, he had won the hearts of the people by undertaking large-scale reforms” [10]. However, the speculations of the Kashmiri people regarding Jagmohan were not altogether baseless as he helped the central government deny the democratically elected Farooq Abdullah the post of Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. According to Balraj Puri, Jagmohan was appointed governor after the previous governor B.K. Nehru refused to play his part as planned by the central

government. Moreover, he was also known for his “lack of empathy with the Kashmiri identity, “creating his image as the Muslim hater governor [12]. The reasons that made him unpopular among the Muslims of the Valley also made him popular among the non-Muslims of Kashmir and the people of Jammu [12]. Thus, it explains to some extent why Pandita feels “Jagmohan was a very popular administrator” during his tenure as governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

In addition to this, Pandita adds some crucial details in his book which are missing from Peer’s book. Rahul Pandita points out how the attitude of the majority community had started changing several months before the night of 19 January 1990. In his book, he has written an incident where a Muslim lady talks of throwing a Pandit lady out of the bus because a Muslim man had helped her by giving her his seat. Pandita mentions that two low-intensity bombs exploded in Srinagar on July 31, 1988, which were followed by other bomb blasts. Furthermore, in a bomb blast that took place in March 1989, a Pandit woman was killed. According to Pandita, in those days, many men were doing physical exercises in the vicinity of Shankaracharya Temple, and among these men were those who had crossed the LOC for arms training. He also recounts an incident with their milkman Rehman. He says: ““Why are you wasting your money like this? . . . “Tomorrow, if not today, this house will belong to us”” [10]. It makes clear that Rehman and his community had the knowledge of some underground movement in the Valley because it turned out to be true in the near future. Like Rahul Pandita’s family, many families in Kashmir lost their homes in Kashmir after the exodus. Later some of these houses were illegally occupied by their Muslim neighbours. Rahul Pandita covers in detail how Kashmiri Pandits were killed in cold blood to scare them to leave the Valley. However, Basharat Peer covers the gruesome incidences of deaths of Kashmiri Pandits in a few lines: “Along with killings hundreds of pro-India Muslims ranging from political activities to suspected informers for Indian intelligence, the militants killed hundreds of Pandits on similar grounds, or without a reason” [11]. In this matter-of-fact manner, Basharat covers the macabre killings of Kashmiri Pandits, which started taking place a year ahead of the large-scale migration of Kashmiri Pandits. Considering Basharat Peer is telling the story of Kashmir, his failure to give due space to the historically important events points to the political motives of the author. Perhaps Peer feels that adding the sufferings of Kashmiri Pandits would dilute his narrative of the victimhood of Kashmiri Muslims caused by the security forces in Kashmir.

Rahul Pandita, in his part, also indulges in a selective approach while talking about the times when the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits took place. In the months when the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits took place, one of the gruesome incidences took place in Gaw Kadal in downtown Kashmir. Around 51 unarmed protestors were

killed by the paramilitary forces when they opened indiscriminate firing at the protestors. Pandita, in his book, mentions the procession that took place on that day, but he fails to mention the fate of the people who took part in that procession. In the paragraph where he mentions this procession, he suddenly shifts the narrative four days after that procession when four unarmed personnel of the Indian Air Force were killed near the narrator's home.

III. HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

From 1989 through 1990, hundreds of people died in Kashmir in clashes between armed forces and militants, including civilians, armed forces and militants. There is a difference in what and how both writers have written about these deaths. Primarily, Peer focuses on the lives of Kashmiri Muslims and militants, while Rahul Pandit focuses on the deaths of security personnel and the Kashmiri Pandits. *Curfewed Night* extensively covers the violation of human rights in the Valley by the Indian Army and paramilitary forces. Peer took great pains to cover these cases, often personally interviewing the victims. Nevertheless, he fails to talk about the mass massacre of Chattisinghpora, where about 36 Sikhs were killed by the militants. The Chattisinghpora is near the ancestral village of Basharat Peer; still, he did not cover this massacre in his book. In addition, Peer fails to write about the Wandhama mass massacre of Kashmiri Pandits, where the militants killed 25 people.

After the migration of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley, the security forces in Kashmir took decisive actions to check the presence of militants in the Valley. Often the security forces indulged in excesses which resulted in the violation of human rights in the Valley. Many times innocent people were subjected to torture in interrogation centres. Balraj Puri writes: "Apart from unofficial censorship imposed by the government, there was a self-imposed censorship that stemmed from so-called patriotic considerations" [12]. Due to this reason, mainstream media refrained from reporting the high-handedness of the security forces. It is important to note that almost all narratives by the Kashmiri Pandits fail to discuss the violation of human rights by the security forces in the Valley. In this regard, a passage in Pandita's book holds importance. He mentions a tragic-comic incident that occurred during one of the search operations by the Indian army in Kashmir. It was narrated to him by his friends. Pandita expresses his concern that the people in Kashmir had to endure this humiliation every day. Pandita writes:

But we did not share sadness beyond this. Because then the topic always veered towards the events of 1989-90, and that was the point at which our truths became different. For them, the events of 1990 were a rebellion against the Indian state. For me, these same

events had led to exile and permanent homelessness. [10]

In a roundabout way, Pandita justifies his stance of not talking about the human rights violation by security forces in Kashmir.

IV. IDENTITIES AND IDEOLOGIES

Basharat Peer, writing about his school days in Kashmir, recounts how he and his friends were attracted to the armed youths who had returned to Valley after arms training in Pakistan. He talks about the fascination of school-going children for the Kalashnikovs and the dress code of these armed militants. "When they returned as militants, they were heroes—people wanted to talk to them, touch them, hear their stories, and invite them for a feast" [11]. In these Kalashnikovs, these young boys sought power, manhood and acceptance in the world of elders. Unsurprisingly, the youngsters of that era were strongly driven to join these terrorist outfits. Even Peer and his friends in the school nurtured the dreams of going across the LOC for arms training. Once, Peer and his friends approached a group of armed men belonging to JKLF so that they could join their organisation. However, their plan was thwarted because one of the members was from his village, and he informed his parents about this. Compared to armed militants, the presence of soldiers in uniform invokes fear in the minds of children and adults alike. But for Pandita, the presence of a BSF camp in his neighbourhood gives him a sense of security.

New historicists claim that "our identity is never given, but always the product of an interaction between the way we want to represent ourselves – through the stories we tell (or the stories we want to suppress) and our actual presentation— and the power relations we are part of" [2]. Considering this statement, the dynamics of the relations portrayed by Peer in his book become instrumental in determining the identity of the people he is representing in his book. His book demonstrates how the army and paramilitary forces deployed in the Valley interact with the civilians. *Curfewed Night* mentions many instances of crackdowns, interrogation and identity checks, which show how the Army and paramilitary forces mishandled the civilians. At one point in the novel, a commander of a terrorist outfit wants to attack the convoy of the Army near the Peer's village. People of the village plead with the man named Mohiuddin. One of the men says: "Mohiuddin sahib, you know what the soldiers do after an attack. Do you want your own village burnt? Have you forgotten we have young daughters? Do you want soldiers to barge into our homes?" [11]. This conversation shows the inconsiderate measures taken by the security forces in Kashmir. However, the lack of sympathy of his people for the security people is also visible from this incident. Once out of Kashmir, the

narrator is astonished to find that the people outside Kashmir have no reason to be afraid of the Army men. He says: “Unlike people in Kashmir, our north Indian fellow passengers had no reason to be scared of the soldiers: they ordered them around and the soldiers obeyed” [11]. The surprise at the different treatment of the army jawans by civilians in Kashmir and the rest of India invokes the feeling of otherness for Peer that his Kashmiri identity makes him different from the rest of India.

In the initial pages of *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*, Rahul Pandita has presented a brief outlook of the life of Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley from the earliest times when they first arrived there. It is important to note here that he paints an ideal picture of Kashmiri Pandits flourishing in the natural environment until the arrival of Islam in Kashmir in the 14th century. After that, he represents the life of Kashmiri Pandits as a continuation of hardships under the Muslim rulers who were particularly harsh towards the Pandit community. Pandita writes that these rulers often converted the Kashmiri Pandits to Islam by force, often at the point of naked swords. This resulted in a series of exiles of the community depending on the harshness of the ruler towards the community, and which invariably was the case. Pandita also quotes Walter L. Lawrence’s *The Valley of Kashmir* to convey the identity of Kashmiri Pandits as that of victims [10]. Other books by Kashmiri Pandit in exile also try to create the image of the community as that of victims. The preface of *A Long Dream of Home* starts with the representation of Kashmiri Pandits as victims of Islam. The opening sentence of the preface is: “Over the centuries, the Hindus of Kashmiri (known by the eponym ‘Pandits’) have faced persecution by successive Muslim rulers” [5]. Even after the Independence of India and the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the Indian state, Rahul Pandita tries to prove how Pandits in the Valley had been hard done by. He also tells an apocryphal story of two boys in Kashmir who started fist-fighting due to some dispute, and when the Muslim boy realised that he had been overpowered by a Pandit boy, he quickly overthrew him. Pandita states that it was the thumb rule in the lives of the Kashmiri Pandits. “No one knew exactly when this apocryphal fight had occurred. I had heard this story many times from men who belonged to my grandfather’s generation and from those of my father’s generation as well. It had probably trickled down, this piece of wisdom, from generation to generation” [10]. Though a small story, it represents the place of Kashmiri Pandits among the majority community in the Valley.

For Rahul Pandita, his religious identity was crucial in forming his personality and worldview. Many experiences from his childhood played an important role in identity building. Being a Kashmiri Pandit made him realise that he belonged to the “other” among the majority Muslim population of the Valley. He mentions the incident when his Muslim neighbours and the idols

broke a small temple in construction in his neighbourhood was desecrated. Pandita, a child, felt heartbroken at the sight of these broken idols. Pandita writes: “There was no protest. We had learned to live that way. Whenever things went sour, we would just lower our heads and walk away” [10]. He also mentions other incidences where the religious places of Kashmiri Pandits were attacked. Pandita’s days in school among his Muslim classmates also contributed to his identity as “other”. He recounts an incident when his Muslim classmates desecrated the picture of Saraswati to ridicule his religious feelings. Pandita mentions how during Operation Blue Star in 1984, a mob desecrated the idol in the Hanuman temple in Amira Kadal in Kashmir. Even the priests were beaten by the mob. For young Pandita, it was hard to fathom why the mob attacked the temple: “I couldn’t understand why the Hanuman temple had been targeted for what had transpired hundreds of miles away, events in which Kashmir had no role to play” [10]. All these experiences added up to form an identity of an outsider in the mind of Pandita. On the other hand, Basharat Peer had no such experiences regarding religious identity as a follower of Islam. These incidences bring the concept of “Kashmiriyat”, which has been praised by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, under question.

In addition to the political and religious factors, Cricket also played an important part in the narratives by Basharat Peer and Rahul Pandita. It becomes the method to bring out the core part of the ideologies of their respective communities. Peer, in his book, writes: “We followed every cricket match India and Pakistan played but never cheered for the Indian team. If India played Pakistan, we supported Pakistan; if India played the West Indies, we supported the West Indies; if India played England, we supported England” [11]. In this case, Cricket, rather than just being a sport, becomes the medium to display one’s sympathies and sense of belonging. Pandita, in his book, narrates how his Muslim classmates would adulate Pakistani players, and he idealized the Indian players. The cricket match played between India and West Indies on 13 October 1983 in Kashmir, where the Muslim audience attacked the Indian players, is etched in the mind of Rahul Pandita. He recounts how his Muslim neighbours would throw stones at the Pandit houses whenever India won against Pakistan.

The narratives written by Kashmiri Pandits point out that in addition to the difference in religions, ideology played an important part in the lives of both Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims. The high ideals of patriotism played crucial roles in the lives of Kashmiri Pandits. The sense of attachment Kashmiri Pandits had for India was seen as unfavourable by the Muslim population. In the short story “The Kidnapped” by Maharaj Krishen Santoshi, a Kashmiri Pandit is kidnapped by his friend, who later turned a militant. During his period of confinement, his militant friend

asks him certain questions. “‘What are you? Kashmiri or Indian?’ he asked me with the look of a killer. ‘First Kashmiri and then...’ he did not let me complete the sentence. His voice became harsh. He asked: ‘Why not only Kashmiri?’” [15]. Many Kashmiri Pandits believe that their patriotism was the reason for many of their sufferings. Meenakshi Raina, in her story “Nights of Terror,” writes, “Kashmiri Pandits have paid an enormous price for their patriotism” [13]. In the late 1980s, the relationship between Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits worsened because the Pandits did not take part in the “aazadi” movement, which was mainly supported by the Muslim community. Rahul Pandita writes that in many places, Pandits were forced to lead the processions, in case the protests turned violent, Pandits would be the first victims [10]. In the same story, “The Kidnapped”, by Santoshi, the kidnapper asks his friend why he is not participating in the movement. “‘Don’t you want freedom?’ he asked ironically. But I was strong with my silence. ‘I will kill if you don’t speak,’ he threatened me” [15]. Varad Sharma, in his story “The Inheritance of Memory”, has written about the discord between Hindu and Muslim communities. He writes: “On an individual level, Pandits and Muslims are very friendly. But at a collective level, there are differences, particularly over nationality and political affiliations. The differences manifested themselves in 1990 when most Kashmiri Muslims supported the idea of Kashmir’s liberation from India” [14].

On a closer look, *Our Moon Has Blood Clots* appears as a kind of response to *Curfewed Night*. The reason for that is even though Peer’s book claims to be about Kashmir, it almost leaves out an important part of the history of Kashmir, which is the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits and their last days in the Valley when the insurgency and the protests against the Indian government were at a peak. Peer fails to mention the repercussions of the actions of the Kashmiris, who were actively involved in the secessionist movement, in the lives of Kashmiri Pandits. For example, if they were talking about the application of Islamic rules in the Valley, what would be the future of Kashmiri Pandits and other minorities in Kashmir under such a law? In his book, while talking about his village, Peer fails to mention even a single Pandit family in his village or neighbourhood through which the readers could understand the relationships between Muslims and Pandits. Basharat Peer also fails to mention how the Pandit families, which stayed in the Valley after the exodus of the majority of the Pandit community, formed relationships with their Muslim neighbours. It is important to note here that many families which stayed behind after the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits talk about the strained relationships with their Muslim neighbours; they were seen as the informers of the Indian government. On the other hand, Pandita also resorts to a selective portrayal of the events. For example, many people from the Muslim community were also killed by

terrorists during the period of 1989-1990. However, Rahul Pandita only writes about the deaths and sufferings of Kashmiri Pandits. Pandita also fails to mention the lives of thousands of Sikhs who were living in Kashmir at that time of the exodus. Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal, in her review of *Our Moon Has Blood Clots*, has criticized Pandita for the selective narration of the incidents in the above-mentioned period. She writes, “Even a bomb blast on a busy Srinagar road has a Pandit victim, but there is no mention of any Muslim killed by either the militants or the security forces” [6]. In addition, many Sikh and Muslim families also migrated from Kashmir in the 1990s like Kashmiri Pandits. But Rahul Pandita does not mention how these migrated families of Kashmiri Muslims and Sikhs from the Valley lived in migrant camps, and what sort of relationship these families shared with the families of Kashmiri Pandits.

The problem, it appears, with the narratives in the books of both these writers is that they are preoccupied with the idea of presenting things to withdraw a particular response from the readers. Pandita’s book narrates the events to paint a picture of the victimhood of Kashmiri Pandits so that the lives of his family members and of his community appear to be a chain of continuous hardships. But there is hardly any mention of the struggles of Kashmiri Muslims in those times. He only writes about them while recalling the processions and anti-India activities they indulged in. The same is true of Basharat Peer, who, in his book, continues to paint the victimization of Kashmiri Muslims at the hands of the Indian government and the paramilitary forces. He fails to mention the deaths of paramilitary personnel by the armed militants who were supporting the secessionist movement of the 1980s. Rahul Pandita writes how the plan of an ambush for the security forces was conveyed to the civilians. The civilians would vacate the place so that militants could carry on with their plans. Pandita writes: “Pushing his cart, the vendor shouts in Kashmiri: *Tamatar paav, Bae’jaan aav* (Tomatoes, one-fourth of a kilo, big brother says hello). While the soldiers from the mainland of India understand nothing, civilians take the hint and discreetly vacate the area to avoid being caught in the crossfire” [10].

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be posited that the book *Curfewed Night* by Basharat Peer views the imposition of curfews and other hardships from the point of view of the Muslim population of Kashmir. At the same time, *Our Moon Has Blood Clots* by Rahul Pandita primarily highlights the experiences of Kashmiri Pandits. Both literary works provide significant insights into the lives of their respective communities; however, they overlook important historical events related to other communities. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of the era encompassed by these books necessitates examining

additional literary and non-literary resources. Maurantonio's ideas related to trauma and memory provide possible insights into the reasons why Pandita and Peer took that approach while writing their respective books.

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