

REPRESSION AND VIOLENCE: A STUDY OF SHEHNAZ BASHIR'S *THE HALF MOTHER* (2014) UNDER REPRESSIVE STATE APPARATUS THEORY

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ABSTRACT

This research explores repressive state apparatuses with reference to Shehnaz Bashir's debut novel The Half Mother (2014). The research throws light on the handling of executive institutions like the police, army and judiciary by the state against the group of people who go against the ideologies of the state. In doing so, the reaction of various characters to the state sponsored terrorism and extremism, as depicted in the novel The Half Mother (2014), are examined and evaluated. Moreover, this study explains how the state uses violence after not getting the desired result by applying repressive state apparatuses (1971). Furthermore, this research extends the domain of the study of state sponsored terrorism through executive institutions and the role of media in the shaping of public opinion. Thus, the study is beneficial for future studies in the field of state apparatuses and paves the way for further research into the events or elements which lead to crimes perpetrated by the state.

Keywords: State, State Apparatuses, Violence, Repression

INTRODUCTION

This research examines violence through ideological state apparatuses and repressive state apparatuses in Shehnaz Bashir's *The Half Mother* (2014). *The Half Mother* (2014) is written by a Kashmiri writer Shehnaz Bashir and it is based on the sufferings of a Kashmiri mother. Previous research on this novel has focused on exploring cultural hegemony, war on terror, identity crises and the role of women in the resistance movement in Kashmir. Moreover, previous researches also include aspects such as motherhood, resistance discourse, psychic trauma of a bereaved mother and a woman's journey for Justice. The present research, however, focuses on state apparatuses, ideological state apparatuses and repressive state apparatuses. This study utilizes Louis Althusser's theory of 'State Apparatuses' (1971) in order to get its findings. There are various states which are repressing their people by using different tools of force. State's version of the story is propagated through national and international media but people who are suffering have little say. Thus, the research highlights the plight of victims and it helps in understanding atrocities within the states.

The Half Mother (2014) is a story of Halima whose father is killed by Indian Army and her son is captured from her house. Halima goes to every possible institution like, police, army camps, judiciary, media and political leaders but no one listen to her. She sells her house to meet the expenses of this searching. Every family who has someone gone missing is inspired by her struggle and determination against the state suppression. Meanwhile, she died herself due to suffering, pain, violence, and suppression. She was not even able to have a look at her son.

Statement of the Problem:

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The research aims to explore *The Half Mother* (2014) from the perspective of state apparatuses; repressive state apparatuses. Moreover, this study explores the way author has focused on violence and suppression imposed by the state upon its people. This research focuses on the fact that the lives of people cannot be controlled by the state through violence and repression.

Research Objectives:

- The key objective of the study is to find out repression and violence in the novel *The Half Mother*.

Research Questions:

1. How does violence relate to repressive State Apparatuses in *The Half Mother* (2014)?

Significance of the Study:

Judiciary, Army, Police all executive institutions are organs of repressive state apparatuses. This study addresses the basic rights of the marginalized ones. These people must have due rights as citizens and must be treated on equal level. Rights of the people are marginalized through the use of the repressive state apparatus and its is taken on the name of command and control.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bilal Ahmed Dar (2016) in his journal describes Kashmiri women as the symbol of pain and trauma where she has to beg for justice. She has to follow all those rules for the justice which is intentionally drafted to marginalize her. The study explains the pain and the sorrow of female gender that women have to observe the death of their fathers and sons. There was one to help her out to get justice for these killings. The story and the presentation of the society expose the status of women in Kashmir where they have to undergo misery and agony on a daily basis. Things like rape, killing, raid, arrest and searching of homes are no more new to them. The cases of kidnapping are an issue exploited by the military men for the sake of rape and harassment. All these inflictions are evident in the novel which the women of Kashmir have to pass the days and nights with. The feelings of Kashmiri women are full of fears of being raped, captured, and harassed. They have no relief from any department of state on capturing of their men and sons. Even political leaders are not there to help them through this carnage. The Kashmiri Women have to fight alone with the system as they have to wait out their ordeal.

Muzaffar Ahmed Rather (2016) in his journal says that the novel is all about Indian military oppression and state sponsored terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. The study describes the motherly pains of Haleema which she has to face during the conflict of nineties. The depiction of motherly love and standing against such brutal detentions makes the protagonist a symbol of bravery and valour. She represents all mothers and other Kashmiris who have lost their loved ones. Moreover, he raises questions on the professionalism of the Indian army in how they capture innocent Kashmiris and keep them in unlawful custody. To him, the Indian state is deliberately giving instructions to its army for detention, killing and genocide of Kashmiris, in order to get dominance over them. Further he argues that India is propagating his narrative over the globe as it is the largest secular and democratic state in the world and on the other hand they have illegitimate occupation over Kashmir. He is of the view that the novel is a tale of misfortune of a daughter and mother at the same time that becomes prey of suppression, barbarity and repression of the Indian army. He claims that *The Half Mother* (2014) is the best example of a mother's love for her child.

Mohammad Yasin Pandit (2016) makes a comparative study of two Kashmiri English novels *Curfewed Night* (2008) and *The Half Mother* (2014). The purpose of the research is to highlight the victimized mother of Kashmir who has to face the different hardships to bring back her lost son who is in the army's custody from where he was taken. She goes to every authority within her reach but her voice remains unheard. Pandit reveals that the backdrop of both the novels is of riots. In these riots Kashmiri men as well as women stand against state sponsored terror and the army's onslaught against them. In this resistance women play a courageous role as they stand by their men. This research not only shows victimization of women but also their steadfastness. These women have active participation in both the armed struggle and non-violent Kashmir movement. Role of women is explicit in the domain of struggle, they go hand in hand with their men.

Javeed Ahmed Raina's (2017) journal which is based on misfortune and the traumatic aspects presented in the novel *The Half Mother* (2014). The study reveals that the protagonist of the novel Haleema has to suffer continuous miseries and these are the sufferings which Kashmiris have to face on a daily basis. Raina pays tribute to the writing impact of Bashir who depicts the plight of Kashmir

and the socio-cultural facets which are negatively impacted by the conflict. She argues that the percentage of psychological trauma is very high in number in people due to the external factors which are enforcing people to live in cultural conflict. The study reveals that Haleema has to deal with two types of trauma. One she is suffering from is waiting for her son who is in detention of the Indian army. Nobody tells her where her son is but she is searching for him and waiting anxiously to see him. On the other hand the trauma of loneliness is haunting her. She lives alone and searches for her son alone. Moreover, Raina says Haleema stands for the people who have gone through catastrophe and affliction living in the state.

Jan Muhammad Pandit (2018) conducted a study on the chronic of the pain experienced by the protagonist of the novel describing the resistance discourse when she has to face the adverse situation. The study shows the pain of mother measured as the resisting discourse presented by Haleema in the novel. The journal reveals that the discourse adopted by the author of the novel highlights that Bashir's experience is based on the personal experience as he is the native of Kashmir valley. Pandit in his study says that the chronic of the pain as presented in the novel has the unique language and feelings of that mother whose son has disappeared while in the custody of the Indian army. Pandit further argues that the language and the narrative style used by the author show the conflict and the suppression exerted by the state on its inhabitants. The violation of the basic human rights in the so called democratic state raises the possibility of rebellion and then such possibility is kept in check by the army by raiding and keeping young people in custody. Moreover, Bashir gives a life like picture by depicting the character of Haleema as a miserable Kashmiri mother. Bashir's title selection of the novel is the most interesting part of his artistic expression because it intrigues the reader's curiosity as well as masterfully conveys suffering of his protagonist.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research is qualitative by its structure and nature. As L. R. Gay (2012) has defined qualitative research method is a method in which the facts and figures are described in discussion form. This way of research also includes the textual representation of the problem of the specific study. State Apparatus theory is given by Louis Althusser in one of his essays "Ideology, Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive state Apparatuses" in which he throws light to inter-parallel relationships of social practicing and the social institutes. Althusser describes ideology as the concrete practicing rather than only the concept of conscienceless or theology. He adds that ideology can be manipulated by the ruling class for the construction of massive control over public, under repressive policies for maintaining power. He explains that the political power is not only manipulated by the state through repressive apparatuses i.e. police, army and courts but is also imposed by the private institutes i.e. schools, churches, families or other educational institutions called as private apparatuses for the ideological hegemony over society (p. 14).

Repressive state apparatuses are visible in their nature and are being utilized for maintaining power in the state. On the other hand invisible tools are also used for maintaining the control over inhabitants which Althusser calls the "Ideological state Apparatuses". He distinguishes the repressive state apparatuses from the ideological state apparatuses as the repressive state apparatuses includes army, police, courts and prisons. While the ideological state apparatuses includes family, culture, schools, political parties, unions of trades and mass media. He distinguishes it as different as follows.

1. State Apparatuses function repressively and through ideology, through repression the predominance is maintained while through ideological state apparatuses, mass control is maintained.
2. The repressive state Apparatuses maintain the state power through the implementation of organized agenda under the commanding unity agenda while the ideological state apparatuses are being utilized for the limitations of the extremes, making distinctive relationship of powerful class and working people and keeping the working people as the subordinate of the ruling class as giving ideology of development and progress.
3. There is security for the repressive state Apparatuses through the unified and centralized organization representing the ruling class of power while the Ideological State Apparatuses are insecure and face lot of challenges so different ideologies are given to people of the state to control them (p. 24).

DISCUSSION

Repressive State Apparatuses

Repressive State Apparatuses are open kind of ideological state apparatuses. It is an exaggerated form of Ideological state apparatuses. Contrary to ideological state apparatuses, in this type of state apparatuses, the state uses its constitutional institutions like police, army, judiciary and prison System to suppress people. State deliberately backs her institutions to repress people who are against state ideology or follow other ideologies. Althusser (1971) throws light on Repressive State Apparatuses in his essay Ideology, Ideological State Apparatuses and Repressive State Apparatuses from his Book *Lenin and Philosophy And Other Essays* (1971). In which he describes the intentional use of institutions against a certain group of people to suppress them. These traits are present in *The Half Mother* (2014) in which Indian State uses constitutional institutions to repress Kashmiris.

Police, Army, Judiciary and Prison System

The Police is one of the key components of the state which looks after law and order in a state. The Police works upon the motto that everyone is equal before law but in repressive state apparatuses the police discriminates between the people who are following state ideology and who are against it. Althusser (1971) puts forward the concept of Repressive state apparatuses in which he illustrates that the state intentionally suppresses people through institutions like Police, Army, Judiciary and Prison system (p. 83). In *The Half Mother* (2014) the Indian State is using police to suppress the people of Kashmir. Haleema goes to police station to file an FIR at Major Aman Khuswa for unlawful capturing of her son Imran. However, she comes to know that police is not able to lodge an FIR against the Army (p. 63). She pleads before them to recover her child from somewhere. The constable says that their job is restricted to carrying, identifying and delivering dead bodies to their families (p. 63). This shows that the state is using the police according to its wishes. The institutions which are supposed to provide security are causing security threats for their own people.

The army is considered to be the most important pillar of a state. Its function is to protect the borders and from any aggression from outside the territorial boundaries. The army can also be used to repress people within the state. As Althusser (1971) discusses the role which army is asked to play in local politics. He is of the view that the army is also a tool of the state to suppress people with. Army use force to impose state's writ or ideology upon people (p.83). Same is the case in *The Half Mother* (2014) where the Indian army is killing, capturing and suppressing Kashmiris. Haleema lives with her father and she has a son. The army kills her father in one of the raids on their house. Ghulam Rasol argues with Major Aman Lal Khuswa on the horrific situation created by the army. As she says "Three bullets pumped into abaa jaan. 'One in his neck. One in the heart and one in his stomach'" (p. 49). Later Major Khuswa captures Haleema's son Imran without having any allegation against him. Haleema begs before him to leave her son. She says "you already killed my father! Please leave me someone to live with. How could you be so cruel to me?" (p. 56). This shows that the Indian army is involved inhuman activities in Kashmir and Indian state backing them.

Judiciary is a cornerstone and critical organ of a state. Judiciary's function is to redress aggrieved persons and punish the culprits. Althusser (1971) explains that in state apparatuses the judiciary gives decision according to the wishes of the state. Judiciary never goes against the state and works as a state tool. The State controls the judicial system and sets patterns for the judges to follow (p. 83). In *The Half Mother* (2014) the judicial system is not providing people justice. The Indian state controls it according to its policies. As Haleema files a petition against the army and it takes months to have its first hearing. After five or six hearings court summons an army representative. Col. Ajit Kumar appears before the court as a representative. He says nothing in the defense of the army but he apologizes on the behalf of his institution. He is not going to indulge in any debate. Army will give 2 lakh rupees to the petitioner (p. 153). Judge holds that Haleema is entitled to 2lakh rupees from the army. This shows that Indian state uses its judiciary to suppress people. The Judiciary gives verdicts on the government's instructions rather than on the merit.

People go against state policies. Althusser (1971) has recognized that detention centers are also a source of suppressing people. The State warns people to stay away from its affairs. If people are not getting back to state's policy than they have to face detention in these canters (p. 84). In *The Half Mother* (2014) the Indian state has detention centers, jails and torture camps for the Kashmiris. The army captures young boys and men and locks them in these places. The army captures Haleema's son from her house and takes him to one of these places. Haleema goes to police station in search of her son and

SHO tells her that “Army Often takes most of their catches to Papa 2 Interrogation center. They have two main centers in Srinagar: Papa 1 and Papa 2” (p. 84). This shows that the Indian army suppresses Kashmiris through physical torture and unlawful detention.

Violence and Repressive State Apparatuses

Violence and state apparatuses go hand in hand. State apparatuses work through ideological state apparatuses and repressive state apparatuses. After, using these tactics the state comes up with violence and force in the end. This violence has many different names like state terrorism, state oppression, homicide and genocide but it starts from ideological differences and ends on physical assault. The State uses force and violence in order to dominate people who are going against its policies. The violence and repressive state apparatuses work in tandem so violence can be through the likes of Police, Army and special task forces. Althusser (1971) only mentions that violence is also an option for a state to utilize against suppressed people (p. 86). These aspects are present in *The Half Mother* (2014) by Shehnaz Bashir. In which Indian state uses violence against Kashmiris who are against the state policies.

Indian State’s Violence against Men, Women and Children

Being a bread earner man has to work far from his homes and he has to face all kinds of restrictions first hand. Though Althusser (1971) has not explained violence in his essay but he connects violence with repressive state apparatuses. He thinks that violence is exaggerated form of repressive state apparatuses (p. 86). In *The Half Mother* (2014) Kashmiri men are facing extreme violence by the Indian Army and police. After every second day, the army comes for a house search and beats men in front of their families. As Haleema narrates, the next day, a patrolling party under the supervision of Major Aman Lal Kushwaha started house searching. “Almost all the men in neighborhood received their share of beating in turns” (p. 47). In the same campaign, Major Aman kills Haleema’s father Ghulam Rasol Joo for arguing with him. Major warns him to shut up otherwise “I’ll kill you” (48). Ghulam Rasol bravely replies that go ahead, kill me, I don’t want to live with inhuman people like you” (p. 48). Major pumps three bullets into him and makes sure that he dies at the spot. This shows the violence of the Indian state on Kashmiri men with the help of its army. The army kills a man only for the reason of arguing.

Violence has trickledown ramifications on genders, but it affects woman the most. It has direct as well as indirect consequences for women. Rape, and physical torture affects them directly and struggling to find lost members affects women indirectly. In *The Half Mother* (2014) both aspects are present. As the narrator, tells “Shafiqa’s Daughter Ruksana became first woman to be beaten in her own house. Her parents were tied and made to see their daughter being stripped by a trooper” (p. 32). It reveals the Indian Army’s physical brutality and direct violence on women. The protagonist of the novel Haleema suffers indirectly by the violence of the Indian State. As Major Aman lal beats and kills her father before her eyes. She pleads that he does not know anything. “Please don’t beat him (p. 48).” After killing her father, Major Aman captures her son from her house. Haleema runs behind the jeep and beseechs before him to leave her son, but he takes him away (. 56). She goes to every possible place like Police stations, interrogation centers, army camps, media and courts but finds absolutely nothing (p. 152). This shows, indirect violence which a woman suffers from. So, women suffer in direct way as well as in indirect way.

When a state starts fighting against its own people then there is no discrimination of race, sex or age. State takes on everyone even children too. In that onslaught of violence, there is no leverage for anybody regardless of demographics. Althusser (1971) thinks that violence is last stage of repressive state apparatuses (p. 86). In *The Half Mother* (2014) the Indian State uses force and violence even against Kashmiri children and school going young boys. The narrator narrates a story of a young boy who becomes the first young prey to army. The Narrator says “Shabeer Ahmed, the son blacksmith, was the first in Natipora to fall to army bullets (p. 32).” This shows that the Indian state kills young boys for petty things. When they come out and raise their voice against exploitation the Indian army start killing or capturing them. The army captures Haleema’s son Imran from his house for no reason and she looks for him at every possible place till her death. The army takes him to various torture camps like PAPA 1 PAPA2 where they have hundreds of other young Kashmiri boys (p. 84). This elaborates the intensity of violence which the Indian state uses against Kashmiris in the novel *The Half Mother* (2014)

CONCLUSION

This research has explored Shehnaz Bashir's *The Half Mother* (2014) and analyzed Ideological State Apparatuses, Repressive State Apparatuses and Violence. The research draws upon Althusser's (1971) theory of Repressive State Apparatuses to assess the impact of state on people. This research has highlighted the aspects of repressive state apparatuses which any state can use against its own people. In repressive state apparatuses the state has used its executive institutions like army, police, prison cells and Judiciary to suppress people. This study has presented these aspects in the novel where the army has killed people without any reason. Moreover, they raped women in front of their parents and captured young boys without any warrant. Furthermore, the police has no authority to lodge any FIR against the rapes, killings and kidnappings. Additionally, this research has exposed the prison system within a state where mostly youngsters have been taken to and no one is allowed to visit such places. Moreover, this research has unveiled the weaknesses of judicial system where neither any lawyer nor any judge is willing to take up the case against the state. This research has covered all aspects of repressive state apparatuses in this study.

The research has highlighted that the apparatuses have their end on violence. It is the exaggerated form of repressive state apparatuses. The research has explained that the violence is the last options which the state uses. Moreover, this research has elaborated violence which a state uses on it people in order to govern them according to its likings. Furthermore, this research has explained that the state has no discrimination of man, woman or a child she uses force against everyone who goes against the state's ideology. The research has explained violence of the army against men of certain group of people. The army has beaten men in search operations. Furthermore, the present research has presented that the army has raped and beaten women in front of their parents. Additionally, the research has unveiled plight of the children in apparatuses and violence. The army captures them from anywhere and takes them to prison cells, where they torcher them to death. This research has covered all aspects of violence in this study.

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