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# Imagining Kashmir

*Emplotment and Colonialism*

PATRICK COLM HOGAN

University of Nebraska Press | Lincoln and London

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This book is dedicated to the author of  
*Shalimar the Clown*.



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## Contents

List of Illustrations ix

Acknowledgments xi

Introduction: Kashmir, Narrative, and the  
Complexity of Colonialism 1

- 1 Understanding Kashmir: Salman Rushdie's  
*Shalimar the Clown* 49
  - 2 Dominant Ideologies and Their Limits:  
Four Movies about Kashmir 71
  - 3 Breaching the Ideological Boundaries:  
Three Films Not (Apparently) about Kashmir 110
  - 4 Kashmiri Alternatives: Rival Ideologies in  
Three Anglophone Novels 132
  - 5 Colonial Violence and Scapegoating:  
A Poem about Majorities and Minorities 176
  - 6 Fractured Tales and Colonial Traumas:  
Disfigured Stories in Kashmiri Short Fiction 200
- Afterword: Ending the Trauma: What Can Be Done? 216
- Notes 227
- Works Cited 249
- Index 269



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## Illustrations

- 1 One of the few deaths represented in the novel  
(from *Kashmir Pending*) 139
- 2 Hurling a stone at soldiers on patrol  
(from *Kashmir Pending*) 142
- 3 India's ghostlike army on a blood-red street in Kashmir  
(from *Kashmir Pending*) 144
- 4 Mushtaq's school (from *Kashmir Pending*) 145
- 5 Militants pray with their weapons  
(from *Kashmir Pending*) 148
- 6 A Kashmiri mother and child, endangered by a possible  
militant action (from *Kashmir Pending*) 151





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## Introduction

### *Kashmir, Narrative, and the Complexity of Colonialism*

#### Why Kashmir?

Kashmir is an important topic today primarily because of the great human tragedy that has been unfolding there—intensively over the past twenty-five years and, in a more attenuated form, for decades before that. Seema Kazi reports that at the time she was writing (in 2008), the death toll was estimated at 80,000–100,000 (xi; the numbers vary, as shown by the estimate of 70,000 cited by Waheed [305] in 2011). Kashmir had become “the most heavily militarised region in the world” (Kazi 85); in 2004, there was “one soldier for every ten civilians” (Kazi 97). The suffering of the people is only partially revealed by the death tolls. The conditions of life itself have been suffocating. Consider, for example, “The imposition of indefinite twenty-four hour curfews in Srinagar during the early 1990s, for months on end,” which made it “impossible for ordinary citizens to buy daily supplies, [and] prevented those needing medical attention from reaching a hospital,” among other debilitating consequences (Kazi 100). The populace has been terrorized by both the military (who are largely immune from prosecution [see Kazi 98 and 105] and therefore have little reason not to act cruelly on the basis of anger or fear) and the militants, who are of course not subject to ordinary laws. Moreover, the vast majority of the Indian military and a large percentage of the militants (Swami estimates “over a third” [194]) are not Kashmiri. In consequence, they often treat Kashmiri people as enemies, though both the soldiers and the militants are putatively fighting on behalf of the Kashmiri people.

The ethnic and linguistic difference just mentioned is related to the nature of the conflict. As Kazi explains, “According to an independent poll conducted in the Kashmir Valley in 1995, 72 per cent of respondents

were in favor of independence” (103). A 2010 poll showed 66 percent favoring independence (“Two Thirds”). A poll from 2009 (published in 2010) put the desire for independence in the valley at 74–95 percent by district (Bradnock 16; for a summary of the report, see “Kashmir Mulls”), with the desire for merger with Pakistan ranging from 2 percent to 7 percent (17) and that for merger with India ranging from 2 percent to 22 percent (16). But it seems unlikely that the people will have self-determination. They are currently caught between what are in effect two colonialist powers—India and Pakistan. Almost no one who has any authority seems to take seriously the idea of Kashmiri independence. The real options seem to be incorporation into Pakistan or continued incorporation into India, perhaps with some degree of regional autonomy.<sup>1</sup>

This international aspect to the Kashmir issue has two components, both with further consequences. First, there is the bilateral, state conflict between India and Pakistan. This poses a global danger due to the fact that both India and Pakistan are nuclear powers and have fought three wars over Kashmir. As Wajahat Habibullah notes, Kashmir is widely recognized as a possible nuclear “flash point” (3). The second international aspect to the Kashmir issue bears on jihādi movements, such as al-Qaeda. In the Muslim world, and particularly among militants, Kashmir is widely seen as a prime instance of the oppression of Muslims and threat to the *ummah*, or community of faith. In this way, the situation of Kashmir is not entirely unlike that of Afghanistan in the 1980s. The intensity of the militant Islamist commitment to Kashmir may be less, but it is of the same general sort. As such, it has the potential to expand beyond Kashmir, not only to other parts of India (as has repeatedly occurred), but elsewhere as well. Indeed, these two aspects of internationalization are interrelated as the Pakistani secret service has repeatedly supported jihādi groups as part of their conflict with India (see Swami; Jamal; and Tankel). This has, in turn, caused problems for Pakistan, which has suffered violent attacks from some of the fundamentalist groups it has nurtured (see Tankel 189–92). Stephen Tankel claims that one such group, Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Pure) “threaten[s] the US and its Western allies at home and abroad” (266).

However, the following chapters are not a sociological, political, military, or historical discussion of the situation in Kashmir. They bear on literature and film or, more broadly, imagination. As such, they point to

another way in which Kashmir merits our attention. Kashmir is not only a politically consequential region. It is a region with narrative importance as well—importance in stories. This, too, has two aspects. First, and perhaps most obviously, Kashmir has been the topic of stories from ancient times to the present. In modern India, it has been a repeated focus of attention in film, particularly, where it is highly romanticized for its physical beauty (a point stressed by writers such as Kabir). More generally, Kashmir has had a prominent place in the imagination of South Asian people. As almost every author writing on Kashmir points out, it is widely represented as a paradise on earth, most famously in Emperor Jahangir’s statement about the valley, “If there is a paradise on earth, it is this; it is this; it is this” (see, for example, Douglas). Part of this imagination has been social as well. Kashmir has been envisioned as a place of unusual harmony between Hindus and Muslims, and thus a source of optimism for social peace and friendship. For example, after the murderous terrors of partition, when roughly one million people lost their lives in religious violence (see Wolpert 348), Mahatma Gandhi asserted that “in an India which had become dark all round, Kashmir was the only hope” (Bamzai 669; however, see Puri on “religious polarization” and communal “killings” in Jammu and Kashmir outside the Kashmir Valley proper [2–3]). Since the beginning of the insurgency in 1988, this image of Kashmir has of course changed. But the valley remains an object of intense imaginative interest in a range of narratives directed at a variety of audiences.

In addition to being the topic of representation, Kashmir is also the source of literature. It has one of the richest literary traditions in all of South Asia, extending back to the great collection of tales, *The Ocean of the Streams of Story*, as well as through Sanskrit drama and poetry. The Indian tradition of literary theory developed largely in Kashmir. Vernacular poetry flourished in the writings of Hindu and Muslim mystics over several centuries (for an overview, see Raina). This literature provides one of the richest bodies of anticomunal writing in South Asia and has helped foster the (somewhat mythical) view of Kashmir as a heavenly land of intercommunity friendship. Though Kashmiri-language literature has not had the broad impact of some other Indian language literatures (e.g., Bengali or Hindi/Urdu), it constitutes a substantial body of work. Moreover, Kashmiris are among the most important Anglophone Indian

writers today. Undoubtedly, the most significant Indian Anglophone writer is Salman Rushdie, an Indian of Kashmiri descent who has also treated Kashmir in his writings, particularly *Shalimar the Clown*. Another Kashmiri, Agha Shahid Ali, was arguably the most important Anglophone Indian poet of the twentieth century. Kashmir was a primary subject of his poetry.

As both the topic and the source of art, then, Kashmir calls out for intensified attention. Given the significance of the political and human issues at stake, the urgency of that call is only increased. Despite this, there has been only very limited attention to the Kashmir crisis through its literature. Moreover, that has largely taken up a poststructuralist approach, leaving aside the more obviously relevant research on social psychology, emotion, and human cognition.

The mention of social psychology brings us to yet a third area in which Kashmir is an important object of study today. The theoretical analysis of colonialism has had an important place in literary study for several decades. Indeed, some of the most influential works of “Post-colonial Theory”—such as Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* and Edward Said’s *Orientalism*—have been largely literary analyses. What makes Kashmir significant in this context is that, as colonialism, it is a highly theoretically complex case. At least *prima facie*, the Indian presence in Kashmir is an atypical colonialism (see McLeod 73). Atypical cases are valuable for challenging our presuppositions about colonialism and for refining our theoretical treatments of it. No less importantly, the apparently atypical quality of the situation may reveal to us aspects of other cases of colonialism that have been underappreciated. In other words, one value of an atypical case is that it may indicate how other cases of colonialism, even paradigmatic cases, are perhaps not as “typical” as we previously imagined.

In this respect, there are some relevant features of the past and current condition of Kashmir. First, there is a layered history of colonialism that manifests itself in majority-minority relations within the valley itself—the history of Mughal, Afghan, and Dogra domination that has affected the religious demographics of the valley and the relations between the Muslim majority and the Hindu minority. Second, there is the vexed relation between the valley itself—with its domination of the state government—and other regions of the state, such as (heavily Bud-

dhist) Ladakh. This relation itself has some features of colonialism (as, for example, Behera's analyses indicate). We might refer to these as *internal* or *majoritarian* colonialism. Both points suggest complications in the issue of self-determination (clearly a central issue in defining colonialism and anticolonial nationalism), prominently in the relation of self-determination to minority rights. Moreover, in connection with this, the case of Kashmir raises issues of revolutionary and state violence in perhaps particularly salient ways given the diversity of agents involved. Specifically, the violence is not only a matter of state versus militant or state versus Kashmiri sympathizer (or putative sympathizer) but also militant versus Kashmiri civilians with different political views or cultural practices, foreign or Islamist militant versus Kashmiri and semisecular militant, and so on.

Moreover, as I have already noted, the issue of self-determination in Kashmir tends to be usurped by the claims of competing "external" colonialisms (Indian and Pakistani). In other words, there is not simply one external colonialism at issue here but at least two, though one is dominant in the sense that India is exercising direct colonial control. (I say "at least" as international Islamist jihād has elements of colonialism. Whether it has enough elements to count as colonialism seems to be a matter of how capacious one chooses to make the concept of colonialism.) Other complicating factors include the provenance of the colonialisms at issue, since they are to a great extent derivative of earlier, European colonialism. Specifically, the British Empire largely defined the successor states.

Finally, there is the peculiarity that the colonialism of India particularly does not appear to be significantly connected with exploitation.<sup>2</sup> It has been highly oppressive, but it does not appear to have significantly extracted resources or labor from Kashmir. For example, the percentage of Jammu and Kashmir state's "total revenue" coming from the national government in 1950 (shortly after independence and the accession of Kashmir to India) was under 4 percent. In 1987–88, just before the explosion of the insurgency, it was 72 percent (see Ganguly 74). There are, of course, problems with this. But these are not problems of exploitation, which should lead revenue to travel in the opposite direction (i.e., from the colony, Kashmir, to the colonial power, India). As Šumit Ganguly explains, "The resources devoted to the state did improve the

material standards of the Kashmiri populace; dispassionate observers have commented on the tremendous economic transformation produced in the region” (74).<sup>3</sup> In this respect, the colonial occupation of Kashmir is not only *derivative* (i.e., an at least partial result of former colonialism) but also, at least to some extent, *anomalous* (i.e., not following the usual pattern of economic exploitation). The Indian government probably does perceive there to be some economic and strategic benefit to union with Kashmir. However, there is no reason to see, for example, the facilitation of trade as exploitation. Indeed, if anything, Kashmir has exploited other regions of Jammu and Kashmir state. Thus, Navnita Chadha Behera reports, “Although Jammu contributed more than 70 percent of the state’s revenue, it received less than 30 percent of budgetary allocations for its development.” Moreover, “Among the state’s large power projects, only one was installed in the Jammu region” (122).

The apparent absence of exploitation, and thus economic benefits from the colonial relation, makes the sustaining force of Indian colonialism more difficult to explain than paradigmatic colonialism. It also makes the development of the insurgency more difficult to account for. Of course, once there is massive killing, torture, rape, and other violence by the Indian military against Kashmiris, the Kashmiri desire for independence needs no explanation. But the question is—given the apparent lack of economic benefit of colonialism on one side and independence on the other—how did the situation develop to this point initially? While this situation is in a sense atypical, it may also reveal something about the social psychology of colonialism, since it presents a sort of “pure” case, largely unaffected by mercantile motives.

Thus, there are three main reasons for addressing narratives of Kashmir at this time—the human importance of the crisis, the literary significance of the place, and the theoretically consequential nature of this somewhat atypical situation. In keeping with this, the following chapters have three main purposes. The simplest and most straightforward purpose is literary—to explicate the narratives discussed in the course of the book. Sometimes (as in the case of Mani Ratnam’s film *Roja*) these are ideologically consequential works. At other times (as in the case of Rushdie’s novel *Shalimar the Clown*) they are, at least in my assessment, works of great literary accomplishment. In still other cases

(e.g., that of Agha Shahid Ali), they may be symptomatic of the feelings and ideas of a significant part of the population. In any of these cases, they are works that merit careful interpretation.

The interpretation of these works is, to a certain extent, an end in itself. It is also important for what it reveals about Kashmir—both what is really happening there and how it is imagined ideologically. This brings us to the second purpose. If successful, the following analyses will present ways of conceiving of the multiple, complex, changing causes and consequences of this tragic situation. This is not to say that the book presents anything like a definitive explanation of the situation in Kashmir or its development. It does not. Its contribution in this respect is necessarily more modest. The enormous complexity of the Kashmir crisis and its history defies a unified, global account. Perhaps the best one can do—and certainly all I have tried to do in the following pages—is to present some aspects of that complexity, adding to our comprehension of the crisis by treating different components and presenting the problems from different angles.

This is related to the final purpose of the present book. One understands a particular case in part by reference to general patterns that extend beyond that case, patterns that are themselves grounded in some theoretically well-specified field (e.g., social psychology or systems theory). In examining the situation in Kashmir, the following chapters also set out to formulate more broadly applicable theoretical concepts, principles, and variables within principles. The chapters seek to relate conditions and events to what we know about the human mind and human interaction, while at the same time extending and complicating accounts of cognitive, affective, and social psychology in relation to this particular case. Here too, however, the book does not lead to a single, unified and complete theory of colonialism. One may say a good deal about colonialism that is theoretically integrated and generalizable. But colonialism cannot be subsumed under a limited set of overarching or definitive principles drawn primarily from one or two disciplines (in this case, cognitive science and social psychology). If the single case of Kashmir resists a simplified account, how much more must all cases of colonialism collectively do so.

Needless to say, a central component of the cognitive and social psychology treated in the book is the human practice of emplotment. As

we will see over and over, narrative is crucial to the way in which people understand colonialism and anticolonialism—and indeed to the way they experience and enact the daily events and conditions of these conflicting identifications. In keeping with this, the theoretical purpose of this book is to a great extent a matter of advancing our comprehension of the interrelations between colonialism and narrative. Specifically, my hope is that the book will advance our knowledge about the operation of emplotment in colonialism, and indeed our knowledge about the constancies and variabilities of emplotment generally.

### **Explaining Kashmir, Explaining Colonialism**

The preceding points about the diversity of explanation for complex social phenomena may seem commonplace. Yet they are not. At least the most influential theories often attempt to subsume very large phenomena under limited rubrics, systematizing problems in a way that one is tempted to call reductive, in the popular sense of the term (where it refers to a loss of nuance and complexity, and thus an excessive simplification). The most extreme case of this is in the use of master concepts (such as *hybridity*), a popular form of literary theory—often a form of sloganeering that substitutes for theorization. But even more multi-componential and genuinely theoretical approaches to postcolonial theory often seem to assume that everything must fit together organically. We find this, for example, in classical Marxist approaches that seek to give an ultimate explanation of colonialism in terms of the economic base. (This does not mean that a Marxist approach is not extremely valuable. It is. A nuanced understanding of the economic conditions enabling colonialism is crucial—if also difficult and distressingly infrequent. But it is not all there is to explaining colonialism.)

We also find this problem in accounts of the Kashmir crisis, including such illuminating accounts as Ganguly's explanation of the problem in terms of political awareness without democratic outlets. As Ganguly explains, "modernization exposed young Kashmiris to the possibilities of alternative futures, but the political process largely choked off such opportunities. With democratic dissent curbed, violent and separatist sentiments came to the fore" (xiv). Ganguly is undoubtedly correct that this is part of the problem. Indeed, he does an excellent job of showing that it is one factor distinguishing different periods in Kashmir's recent

history. Nonetheless, there are at least two problems with this sort of argument, which takes various periods and ties divergent outcomes to a single factor. First, there are undoubtedly other differences across the periods discussed, which singly or collectively may have produced the effects of interest (in this case, a popular insurgency). Second, any of these differences may simply have had a “tipping point” effect. In other words, it may have been the case that other, preexisting factors had much more causal influence than events in the late 1980s. But those events—perhaps the most important being the blatantly rigged election of 1987—were required to shift the state of the system. The rigged election may have directly affected only a limited number of people (e.g., the election workers who were arrested and maltreated), such that their increased activism was enough to alter the entire situation. As Habibullah explains, “Many of the young men who were election and polling agents” for the Muslim United Front (the victims of the vote fraud) “went on to lead the insurgency in 1989. At the time of the 1987 elections, these men were imprisoned without bail for months under the state’s draconian Public Safety Act and treated inhumanely” (62). One of the main candidates who was deprived of a seat—and then, after he “protested,” was “arrested and beaten” (Stern 207)—became head of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (Habibullah 63). To take an example from physics, cold temperatures are not enough to freeze water. There must be some “nucleation,” something local within the water that initiates the phase shift from liquid to ice. This is often some external item, such as a speck of dust (see Ball 163, 321). However, finding that a speck of dust entered the water before it froze, we would not wish to explain the freezing primarily by reference to the speck of dust. Of course, the factors isolated by Ganguly are far more important than a speck of dust—but the system he is trying to explain is also far more complex.

Indeed, Ganguly’s work shows the extent to which other accounts of the crisis tend to seek uniformity in what is certainly a complex system where many partially overlapping and partially divergent factors enter in ephemeral configurations. Thus he divides treatments of the crisis into the following categories: “Pakistan’s sponsorship of terrorism” (15); “India’s denial of self-determination” (16); “Ethnonational fervor” (17); and miscellaneous “Circumstantial accounts,” which stress sequences of historically contingent events. These accounts all have valuable points,

as Ganguly acknowledges. But they are not only in themselves partial; they arguably suffer from an aspiration to give a unified, overarching explanation when that is almost certainly impossible. Such a mistaken aspiration may narrow the vision of interpreters and lead not only to an occlusion of complexity and loss of nuance but to more severe distortions.

Put more simply, one does not want to have contradictions or theoretical incompatibilities; however, it is important to recognize that not everything in a colonial situation is a function of a single factor or set of factors. Different fields of research, and thus principles of explanation, necessarily enter into accounts of real colonialisms in complex and changing ways. The point is highlighted by research in “situated cognition” (even if adherents of this school sometimes overstate the extent of fluidity and contingency in actions and events).

Situated cognition is an approach within cognitive science that is commonly associated with three principles (see, for example, Robbins and Aydede, “Short Primer”): (1) cognition is embodied; (2) cognition is embedded; and (3) cognition is distributed. To say that cognition is embodied is to say that it is involved with action and with external and internal perception; our thoughts are inseparable from what we are doing and feeling. To say that cognition is embedded is to say that it is involved with our ongoing interactions with the world; our thoughts—as well as our feelings and actions—are continually altering and being altered by the conditions in which we find ourselves. Finally, to say that cognition is distributed is to say that our interactions with the world are not simply a matter of a single agency (our own) faced with a passive world (e.g., a rock that we might move out of the path). They equally involve other agents and one’s own cognitive operations are commonly intertwined with those of other people. This occurs most obviously in joint activities, cooperative or competitive, but it is found also in more apparently individual activities. For example, driving a car involves reliance on the cognitions and actions of the people who designed and made the car, as well as the (predictable) behavior of other drivers.

For our purposes, the most important aspect of situated cognition is that it stresses the degree to which all our actions and interactions are highly particular. They are not simply a matter of general principles encountering particulars (e.g., the idea of a cat in my mind encountering

this particular cat before my eyes). Rather, even abstract concepts and principles are continually altered, reshaped, given different emphases and nuances, by interaction with particulars. In keeping with this, our understanding of those particulars is constantly changing, with further consequences for our principles. Put somewhat crudely, when I am hammering a nail, I slightly change the swing of my arm, the grip of the handle, the angle of the head, and so on, with each blow. My hammering the nail is not a uniform activity but a constantly changing one. Moreover, that hammering will be different on different occasions—and none of these will be identical with the hammering engaged in by other people. The point about complex particularity applies even more clearly to such socially multifarious phenomena as colonialism and anticolonialism. In these cases, we again have many complex actions, which involve complex cognitive and affective reactions. The actions of individual colonialists or anticolonialists will vary; those (variable) actions for one agent will further vary across agents; the aggregation of those actions and agents will vary across aggregations (and thus across different cases of colonialism). In short, there will be great diversity both within and across colonialisms. Not only will British colonialism in Kenya be different from that in India. British colonialism in one part of India will be different from that in another part; British colonialism in one part of India will be different from one time to another; and British colonialism in one time and place will differ depending on the precise individuals involved. It is important to keep this diversity in mind when considering any case of colonialism or when developing a theoretical account of colonialism. It discourages facile generalization and excessive simplification.

On the other hand, despite the claims of some more enthusiastic proponents of situated cognition, not all generalization is facile and not all simplification is excessive. Consider the physical world. In judging the trajectory of a projectile, we need to take account of contingent and changing conditions, such as wind direction and velocity, which may shift abruptly and unpredictably. In other words, one could argue that mere mechanical motion is “situated” in roughly the same sense as cognition. But that hardly means that physicists are misguided in formulating such generalizations as the law of universal gravitation. Situationists make important points, but they often wish to throw out the

baby with the bathwater. Generalizations simplify. They abstract from particularity, and outside physics they to some extent misrepresent particularity as more uniform than it is. But to make any sense of particularity, we need the generalizations. We should of course avoid forcing everything into the procrustean bed of a single master concept or small set of putatively all-encompassing principles (including the three defining principles of situated cognition). But we still need to recognize and isolate patterns, abstracting generalizations that are accurate and complete enough for our purposes.

In keeping with these guidelines, the following analyses will focus on a few areas of explanation—primarily narrative analysis, cognitive and affective science, and the social psychology of group definition. These are, perhaps, the main fields constituting cognitive cultural study. I set out to isolate useful and broadly valid general principles, but do not assume that every phenomenon of importance in colonialism will fall into those areas of explanation or will conform to a limited set of precepts. In this way, the book has a further purpose as well (roughly a subgoal of the third purpose listed above)—to illustrate how an account of colonialism may avoid asserting great uniformity without falling into mere particularism.

### **The Framework of the Present Analysis**

In short, the isolation of principles is necessary for understanding, even if these involve some simplification. When dealing with complex social phenomena, such as colonialism and anticolonialism, these principles are necessarily selective, since a single study cannot cover anything even approaching all the elements. Moreover, when one is writing a book on a topic, one seeks a certain degree of consistency in focus. Thus I have selected topics that give some shape to the account of colonialism, and to the interpretation of individual works.

The most general principle I have followed is to interrelate an account of motivational systems with a treatment of causal cognition and, to a much lesser extent, the dynamics of complex systems. Motivational systems, or emotions, are clearly crucial.<sup>4</sup> One does not get colonialism, anticolonialism, or any other human phenomenon without motivation of some sort. However, the activation of particular emotion systems, crucially including the consequent orientation of action, does not occur

on its own. It is inseparable from causal cognition—even in such a simple matter as recognizing the source of one’s fear and inferring which direction to flee (e.g., away from the bear, not toward it). Human causal cognition bearing on social phenomena does sometimes involve law-like generalizations. In some cases, these are reasonable, such as, “Ready availability of firearms is likely to increase the use of firearms in crime”; in other cases, they are vague, but innocuous and broadly plausible, such as, “Power corrupts”; at times, they are false and destructive, such as, “Muslims [have] no loyalties” (to quote one common opinion of Sikh communalist characters in Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* [121]). But, whatever their nature, such generalizations are not the most important form of causal cognition. Law-like generalizations are usually far less consequential than the *narrative* connections that guide particular emplotments. Even law-like generalizations tend to have their force only as the conclusion—the so-called moral—of narratives. For example, “Muslims have no loyalties” has motivational consequences insofar as it is linked with the salient story of, say, betrayal by a friend. Moreover, recurring stories have their own generic patterns that operate in many ways as an implicit equivalent of law-like generalizations. For example, we will see how Pakistan and India emplot the events of 1947 in different ways, while using very similar (“heroic”) genre structures. Such emplotment has consequences even without abstract generalizations.

### *Some Basic Principles of Emplotment*

The importance of narrative has not been ignored in the literature on Kashmir. However, the terms of the discussion have often been left far too vague. Indeed, the point holds for the general relation between nationalism and narrative, as in Homi Bhabha’s famous collection *Nation and Narration*. Bhabha’s volume stresses the intertwining of the two concepts in the title, but does little to clarify the nature of that interrelation. The problem arises not only in literary theory (such as Bhabha’s collection), but in political psychology as well. For instance, Ronald Fisher, Herbert Kelman, and Susan Nan stress the importance of “each group’s national narrative” (500), but do little to clarify what constitutes such a narrative. Daniel Bar-Tal and Eran Halperin note that intractable conflicts “are organized around narratives” that have specific

functions—justifying the origin of the conflict, elevating the in-group, and delegitimizing and blaming the opponent. This list is significant and valuable. Yet it does not indicate how narratives themselves operate to satisfy these desiderata, or what the relevant narrative patterns are.

In the case of Kashmir, this common lack of theoretical precision is illustrated by Chitralkha Zutshi's contention that "political solutions to the 'Kashmir problem' will be abortive until nationalist narratives—Indian, Pakistani, and Kashmiri—that are primarily responsible for its intractability, are dismantled" (332). Zutshi has written a highly scholarly and very insightful book. Moreover, I obviously agree that emplotment is very important in understanding colonialism in general and the Kashmir crisis in particular. However, the idea of narrative here remains excessively vague. As such, it not only fails to further our understanding of the situation but may also actually inhibit subsequent analysis. There are distinguishing characteristics of emplotment and specifiable types of emplotment, and these are deeply important. Of course, the historical and cultural conditions in any particular case serve to specify and in some cases alter those types of emplotment. Thus, in the case of Kashmir, the social context uniquely determines the particularity of emplotments. But to have any sense of that particularity, we need to comprehend the general principles—just as we need to know the general laws of physics before we make claims about the particular events occurring in a specific context. In short, we need to set out what the distinguishing characteristics and relevant types of narrative are if our claims about emplotment and nationalism or colonialism are to have any explanatory value.<sup>5</sup>

In keeping with this, one main concern of the following pages is to develop the account of cross-cultural modes of emplotment outlined in my earlier works, *The Mind and Its Stories*, *Affective Narratology*, *Understanding Nationalism*, and elsewhere. That account draws on findings of cognitive and affective science and social psychology as well as a range of literary narratives from different western and eastern, northern and southern traditions. On the other hand, in developing that account, the following analyses do not simply repeat and respecify the general principles from those earlier works. They challenge and revise those principles—for example, by considering cases in which traumatic

events deform standard narrative structures. In short, an examination of narrative and Kashmir should enrich our understanding of both topics. Indeed, given the peculiar status of Kashmir in the history of colonialism and anticolonialism, it should be especially consequential for our understanding of what is sometimes called “postcolonial narrativity.”

At a very basic level, a story is any particular causal sequence, usually a sequence defined by an agent’s goal pursuit and obstacles to that pursuit. In itself, this may seem trivial. But it already tells us that stories are inseparable from emotion. Emotions are what define goals. We pursue goals because they will satisfy the desires associated with particular emotion systems. More exactly, we commonly use “desire” to refer to a specific sort of longing—the longing for sexual relations. In that case, we are actually referring to the desire associated with the goals of the sexual system. Similarly, if one desires to eat, one desires the goal of the motivation system of hunger. A desired goal of the attachment system is proximity to the attachment object, and so on. Needless to say, particular goals differ for particular people (e.g., not everyone loves the same person, fortunately). Which goals are prominent at any given time is a function of biological, contextual, and other matters (e.g., eating is an important goal when blood sugar and other factors promote a feeling of hunger). However, the general types of goal people can have are determined by the emotion systems, which are of the same sorts in almost all people. One person’s attachment system will differ from another’s in, say, degree of attachment security, but virtually everyone will have an attachment system and presumably no one has some wholly idiosyncratic emotion system.

This is, then, already a good case of the ways in which there may be great individual diversity and great diversity in situation, but still important, isolatable patterns. These patterns become more evident when we look further at the ways in which emotion systems guide story formation. As I have argued in *The Mind and Its Stories*, *Affective Narratology*, and elsewhere, there are story genres that recur across unrelated narrative traditions. Most important, the more prominent or “major” genres are romantic, heroic, and sacrificial. But there are also less pervasive or “minor” genres of family reunion, revenge, criminal investigation,

and seduction. All these genres are produced by the desires and goals associated with particular emotion systems.

The romantic genre is produced by the goals of the attachment and sexual systems (which conjointly define romantic love). The heroic genre is produced by the motivation system that governs the desire for dominance—the “will to power,” in Friedrich Nietzsche’s terminology, “pride” in more ordinary speech—along with anger at threats to dominance. The sacrificial genre is produced by the desire to satisfy hunger and the desire for, roughly, forgiveness (the desire bearing on the feeling of guilt) or the eradication of shame. In each case, the details of the genre are produced by other emotional (and to a lesser extent cognitive) factors. Specifically, stories are generally more appealing to the extent that they intensify the emotional outcome. That intensification is most likely to occur when there is a significant and sharp change in the condition of the protagonist. In comedy, that is a change from near certain loss of the desired goal or state to possession of that state. For instance, the impact of lovers’ marriage is stronger if it is preceded by the apparent separation of the lovers (e.g., through death) than if everything proceeds smoothly. In a heroic plot, the hero’s (rightful) domination is most rewarding when it is preceded by his or her apparent defeat. Thus, standard romantic and heroic genres involve, respectively, separation of the lovers before their reunion and defeat of the hero prior to his or her enduring triumph. Moreover, there are emotional aspects of our relation to space and time that affect the development of story structures. These lead to such motifs as exile (bearing on the relation to space).

These cross-cultural genres are, like many other cognitive structures, defined by prototypes, not strict necessary and sufficient conditions. Thus the romantic structure prototypically involves two lovers who encounter obstacles due to social interference, commonly from parents. The attribution of the interference to parents is due both to the real occurrence of parental interference in life and to the emotional intensification of conflict by placing it between attachment figures. These prototypical properties need not all be present in any given case. Indeed, they can be significantly and systematically violated in particular cases. Moreover, prototypes are context sensitive,<sup>6</sup> so that what constitutes a prototypical case will change somewhat in different contexts. Our prototype for a romantic comedy in the context “Elizabethan the-

ater” is not precisely the same as our prototype for romantic comedy in the context “Bollywood cinema.”

To a great extent, it appears that prototypes are a function of instances or “exempla.” We have more or less detailed, more or less complete, more or less salient memories of many particular stories. Those memories converge on certain features, producing a pattern. Thus, many instances of interfering parents make the feature of parental interference important in the prototype of romantic narrative. However, changes in context may change the configuration of those memories. Moreover, in different contexts—for example, in different traditions—some particular exempla may have far greater force than others. In the English tradition, William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, and perhaps a few other works have disproportionate weight in defining our romantic prototypes. In the Indian tradition, it happens that these works are important as well. In addition, there are Indian works, such as the *Rāmāyana* that are of central importance. In a given context, the *Rāmāyana* paradigm may be particularly activated, skewing one’s prototype further in that direction.

Individual works also figure importantly in nationalist emplotments. The specific case of the *Rāmāyana* is particularly germane to our present concerns as it is the paradigm for emplotting India’s relations with its military enemies. In keeping with this, it is not only a romantic story but also a heroic story. As we will see, Ratnam’s film *Roja* uses this paradigm to emplot the relations of Kashmiri militants to India and to foster a particular emotional response to those militants.

The narrative importance of the *Rāmāyana* is most obviously consequential for our understanding of Indian nationalism and its relation to the Kashmir situation. But it is no less consequential for narrative theory. Narrative theory has been fairly pervasively Eurocentric (on the Eurocentrism of mainstream literary theory, see my “Ethnocentrism,” and discussion in Krishnaswamy). That is predictable and even unobjectionable in the early stages of theoretical development. After all, narrative theorists necessarily discussed the works with which they were familiar. However, if we wish to develop narrative theory that is not parochial, it is necessary to broaden the scope of our studies. The following study of Kashmir part of such an undertaking.