

# The Metanarrative of Independence and the Micronarratives of Kashmir: A Study of Agha Shahid Ali's *The Country Without a Post Office*

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**Abstract:** Agha Shahid Ali is a renowned poet writing for Kashmir. India achieved its official independence in 1947. But this happy incident did not bring happiness for all. Among them perhaps the worst victims were the people of Kashmir. After 1947 their condition became more and more abominable. They were crushed between the narrow political interests of the Indian Government in one hand and the Pakistani militants on the other. Thousands of innocent people have been slaughtered. The rights and freedom that the rest of India enjoys is not accessible to them. Once the "Paradise on earth" has now been dipped into blood. Agha Shahid Ali, being a Kashmiri by origin, empathises with the pains and sufferings of the poor Kashmiris. He rises his voice for them. Lyotard in his "Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge" claims that grand narratives should be avoided because these are faulty and sometimes fabricated. And in place of grand narratives he argues to rely on the various micronarratives to have a comprehensive and true knowledge of a given fact. This paper will focus on the situations of Kashmir as depicted by Agha Shahid Ali in his "The Country Without a Post Office", based on the theoretical perspective of Lyotard and thereby try to examine the legitimation of the grand narrative of Indian independence through the lens of Kashmir Scenario.

**Key Words:** Agha Shahid Ali, *The Country Without a Post Office*, Lyotard, metanarrative, micronarrative, Indian independence, Kashmir.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001) was one of the few and perhaps the best known Indian English poets writing for Kashmir. Born in Delhi and brought up in Kashmir, Ali had always nourished a soft corner for the people of Kashmir, and empathized with them in their pains and distresses. Two of his major volumes of poetry namely *The Country Without a Post Office* and *Rooms are Never Finished* depict the deplorable condition of the poor Kashmiris so acutely and touchingly, that, soon after their publication, a great deal of sensation broke out inside and outside India regarding the gross violation of human rights in the valley. *The Country Without a Post Office*, consisting of 28 poems and published in 1997, is one of his masterpieces. This volume is mainly concerned with the uprising of the Kashmiris for their rights to freedom, against India, which resulted in political violence and literally the closure of all the post offices for long seven months, completely disrupting Kashmir's connection with the rest of the world. This unrest, though it began 30 years before, has yet no sign of stopping. The poems in this volume are written in the background of this "Azadi" movement. Government of India responds ruthlessly to it and the worst victims are the poor innocent Kashmiris. *The Country Without a Post Office* questions the justness of the atrocities perpetrated upon the Kashmiris. The irony of the situation strikes us at once when we realise that this Kashmir valley is a very integral part of India – it is the northern most state, and the crown of India. But in spite of that, while the people of India attained their freedom in 1947, the people of Kashmir have been yet fighting for their 'Azadi'. The fundamental rights enjoyed by the rest of India are not accessible to them. Progress seems to be an unrealizable dream for them and Indian independence in this political perspective, looks like, in terms of Lyotard, the incredulous grand narrative whose bubble is pricked by the micro narratives of Kashmir Azadi movement.

In his *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), Lyotard is mainly concerned with knowledge, its nature and its use in the post-industrial age and the postmodern milieu. Here he argues that the control of knowledge has gradually become the 21<sup>st</sup> century's definition of power. But the problem that arises is of the legitimization of that knowledge. He divides knowledge into two varieties – the scientific knowledge and the narrational knowledge or philosophical knowledge. Drawing a parallel between the process of legitimization in politics and in that of science, Lyotard argues, both of them require an authority figure or "legislator" to determine whether a statement qualifies to enter a given round of discourse for consideration or not. For science, he opines, it is easy to legitimize a certain derivative through the use of scientific equipment or machines. Scientific formulas and theories also come to the help. But, how shall we be able to legitimize a philosophical knowledge? Lyotard's answer

is that traditionally this legitimization has been done through the help of grand narratives, narratives with a totalizing view. But in an increasingly transparent society, these grand narratives seem to be ineffective and biased in providing us the actual knowledge or truth, because what the grand narratives do is merely to generalise a fact and in order to generalise they try to marginalize, cover up and eliminate all odds or exceptions, and thereby present an imperfect, idealized view of the fact, not the real fact. For instance, Marxism, a grand narrative, always shows the society from an economic point of view and bisects the society into two parts – the dominant and the dominated, the ruler and the ruled, the master and the slave. But when we read the novel *Reef* by Romesh Gunesequera, for example, we find a different kind of relationship between the master and the slave in contradistinction to the basic premise of Marxism. Here the relationship and understanding between Mr. Salgado and the little boy Triton is radically different from what the Marxist approach would have us believe. That is why Lyotard affirms: “I define postmodern as incredulity towards metanarratives.”(xxiv). And in place of metanarratives what he argues to introduce in the process of legitimization of narrational knowledge is the importance of studying the micronarratives.

Lyotard’s postulate applies to the politico-historical phenomenon of Indian independence too. In 1947 the people of India achieved their independence from the British colonizers, and soon after attaining independence they formed a democratic Government “of the people” which was supposed to be run “by the people, [and] for the people” of India, a well established constitution, a strong judicial system and a few fundamental rights that conform to their sense of freedom, Swaraj and equal justice. But this is merely a totalizing view. Astonishingly, this knowledge about Indian independence will remain incomplete or only partially true if we ignore or overlook the conditions of the people residing in a state of this India named Kashmir. In order to gain a comprehensive knowledge of this event or state, we must study the micronarratives that come out of the people of Kashmir, who neither experience the taste of freedom nor of equal justice and do not even know whether they will ever be able to secure their rights. They just instinctively know how to save their lives from the bullets of the Indian army. Agha Shahid Ali, being a representative of Kashmir, has experienced all the adversities himself and thus raises his voice against this injustice through his poetry. The poems in *The Country Without a Post Office* bring out in a horrifying manner all the minute details of the atrocities that Kashmiri people have to experience every day. Every single image used in these poems is so full of pathos and so much heart-wrenching that one cannot but sympathise with these poor people. And this paper tends to study some of the poems contained in *The Country Without a Post Office* from a postmodernist angle of vision as theorised by Lyotard.

“If there is a Paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this” – it has been long since the emperor Jahangir, enthralled by the beauty of Kashmir, made this ecstatic comment. But today this “Paradise” is not the same as it was in Jahangir’s time. It has been dipped into blood and death is crawling everywhere in this valley rent asunder by shots of bullets and terrified shrieks. The Kashmir situation began to be worse than ever after the British left India and divided the nation into two. Kashmir has been the largest of the five hundred princely states under British rule in 1947. It was ruled by a weak maharaja named Hari Singh. When India was being violently partitioned, both Singh and the popular leader Sheikh Abdullah sought time before deciding on the fate of Kashmir. In the mean time, a group of militants supported by the Government of Pakistan invaded Kashmir and Hari Singh immediately joined India. Abdullah also supported this. And the battle stopped with the intervention of UNO which endorsed a plebiscite to determine Kashmir’s fate. The agreement of accession that Hari Singh signed with India in October 1947 accorded some administrative autonomy to Kashmir. India controlled defense, foreign affairs and telecommunications. Kashmir had its own flag and its own constitution (Peer 13). But gradually this autonomy was rendered inoperative. Sheikh Abdullah, who was then the Prime Minister of Kashmir, was jailed in 1953, and in the following decades India Government instated puppet rulers for the state, eroded the legal status of Kashmir’s autonomy, and ignored the democratic rights of the Kashmiris. The result was terrible. The bottled up resentment of the Kashmiris against Indian (mis-)rule erupted like a volcano. In the following months, hundreds of Kashmiris were killed and arrested after Indian troops opened fire on pro-azadi Kashmiri protesters. The war had begun – a war that would last long and take thousands of lives.

It is in this disturbed scenario of Kashmir that Agha Shahid Ali was born in the illustrious and highly educated Agha family of Srinagar, Kashmir. His father Agha Ashraf Ali was a renowned educationist in Kashmir and his grandmother Begum Ali was the first woman to pass matriculation in Kashmir. Ali was raised in Kashmir and was educated in the University of Kashmir. Later at the age of 27 he finally left for the United States in 1976. But though he settled there and identified himself as an American poet writing in English, he never forgot his childhood memories. The depressed faces and emaciated figures of the people of war-stricken Kashmir always haunted him. He was aware of his Kashmiri identity and the biased treatment of India Government to Kashmir, and felt pity for the helplessness of the Kashmiris. Therefore he never introduced himself as an Indian; instead he preferred the term ‘Kashmiri Muslim’. Ali pays his tribute to the people of his homeland in *The Country Without a Post Office*. In *Contemporary Poets*, Bruce King remarks that Ali’s poetry swirls around insecurity and “Obsessions [with]...memory, death, history, family ancestors, nostalgia for a past he never knew, dreams, Hindu ceremonies, friendship, and self consciousness about being a poet”(poetry foundation). In all his poems in this volume, Ali with his dexterous

craftsmanship picks every single detail of life of the Kashmiri people that they are forced to lead, and challenges the notion of Indian independence through these poems. Built on association and repetition rather than straightforward and logical narrative, the poems are filled with recurring phrases and images. Joseph Donahue, reviewing Ali's posthumously collected volume *The Veiled Suite* (2009) for *Bookforum*, describes *The Country Without a Post Office* as "the first of the two volumes that form the peak of his achievement". In this book, Donahue explains, "the poet envisions the devastation of his homeland, moving from the realm of the personal to an expansive poetry that maintains an integrity of feeling in the midst of political violence and tragedy. Kashmir is vividly evoked..." (*poetryfoundation*). And this explains why and how Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* is very much relevant as a theoretical scaffold to perspectivise Shahid's poems in *The Country Without a Post Office*. In the next section, this paper will try to analyse a few widely anthologized poems from Agha Shahid Ali's *The Country Without a Post Office* where he repeatedly brings the image of Kashmir burning in the fire of violence and compels the readers to rethink about the metanarrative of Indian independence from a postmodernist point of view.

## 2. The "Paradise" Lost: Dystopia in Kashmir:

All the poems contained in *The Country Without a Post Office* are concerned with Kashmir, its people and the insecure life they are forced to lead. In the very inaugural poem of this collection, "The Blessed Word: A Prologue", for example, the poet, by quoting a line from an untitled poem by Osip Mandelstam, asserts that in Kashmir a promise to meet again is uncertain. At a certain point of departure from his friend the poet writes, " 'We shall meet again in Shrinagar', I want to answer Irfan. But such a promise?" (Ali, Country 1). He dreads the thought of the promise remaining unfulfilled. But this is a very common phenomenon in Kashmir; whenever a young man goes out of his house, for any business, rest of the family members pass their time in excruciating anxiety, praying for his safe return. And every young man, when out of home, carries in his pocket a note containing his identity and address, so that, if he is killed, at least the body can be identified and sent back to his family. But despite being forced to live a dangerously precarious life in this state, they love Kashmir, because it is their homeland. The poet's love for his homeland is revealed in his act of enunciating Kashmir in a lot of endearing names: "Kashmir, Kaschmir, Cashmere, Quashmir, Cashmir, Cashmire, Kashmere, Cachemire, Cushmeer, Cachmire..." (Ali, Country 1). As Geetha Dore quite empathically comments:

The homophonic play with the name "Kashmir"... is at once a childish sputtering symbolically manipulating the presence and absence of the mother figure, a loud and repeated cry from [the] depth of [the] adult poet's soul that echoes in the valley... (Dore 37)

The "blessed word with no meaning", however, is "Azadi" or freedom, and it has no meaning because there seems to be no hope of its being true. Jahangir's "Paradise" on earth has lost its idyllic splendour, its enchanting beauty, and its meaning. It is now reduced to a black and dark place. The dim lights of the patrolling army trucks are ironically referred to as the "night's sun" and the gun shots as the "stars into the sky". Kashmir is under curfew. The identity cards issued by the Indian Government cannot save the Kashmiris. "Son after son – never to return from the night of torture" (Ali, Country 2). Neither a meadow, nor flowers, nor the icy landscape is there today to decorate the luster and beauty of Kashmir, and in their place there are enemy bunkers, bombs, mines, crackdowns, blood and merciless killings. The Indian armies commit "mass rapes in the villages" and turn the towns to "cinders". The army troops, appointed there from distant plains are "licensed to kill". A "dismembered body" floating on the waters of the river Jhelum is a common sight to see. The Government acts "like a barber's hand", and to the Kashmiris God seems a poor, weak and helpless creator, unable to protect his own creations. However, the poem ends with an unconvincing optimistic note, as the speaker tries to convince himself that this barbarity will come to an end someday in future when the Kashmiris will be able to pronounce the blessed word "Azadi" "truly for the first time".

In "The Last Saffron", again, Ali experiences his sweet childhood memories being disturbed by the present violent situation in Kashmir. The poem begins with "I will die in autumn in Kashmir". His obsessive desire to die in Kashmir shows his intense love for his motherland. The mention of the landmarks like "Zero taxi stand" and "Grindlay's Bank" suggests Ali's cordial attachment to every nook and corner of his homeland. But death prevails everywhere, as the poet sees the signs of blood in "captions under the photos of boys...killed in fluted waters", which is followed by another image of violence – "...each voice / [is] torn from its throat..." (Ali, Country 13). In the third section of this poem, Ali expresses his desire to visit the "last saffron" left on earth: "keeper of the last saffron, rowed me / on an island the size of a grave" (Ali, Country 15). Symbolically this suggests that Kashmir is no more the same "Paradise" that it was in the time of Jahangir, as saffron is the very representative of Kashmir. The "last saffron" here symbolizes that Kashmir too is on the verge of being eternally doomed, and that neither the saffron nor the "Paradise" would be seen in reality, but will remain only in the memories, visions and in folktales.

The most harrowing and heart-wrenching poem "Dear Shahid" is crafted in the form of a letter written by one of his father's close friends to Agha Shahid Ali, describing the situation in Kashmir. This epistolary poem depicts the horrifying goings-on of the ordinary people of Kashmir, as will be clear only by a few fragments quoted below:

...Rumors break on their way to us in the city. But word still reaches us from border towns: Men are forced to stand barefoot in snow waters all night. The women are alone inside. Soldiers smash radios and televisions. With bare hands they tear our houses to pieces.

You must have heard Rizwan was killed. Rizwan: Guardian of the gates of Paradise. Only eighteen years old...

This letter, *insh' Allah*, will reach you for my brother goes south tomorrow when he shall post it. Here one can't even manage postage stamps. Today I went to the post office. Across the river. Bags and bags – hundreds of canvas bags – all undelivered mail. By chance I looked down and there on the floor I saw this letter addressed to you. So I am enclosing it. I hope it's from someone you are longing for news of.

...we are waiting for the almond blossoms. And, if God wills, O! those days of peace when we all were in love and the rain was in our hands wherever we went. (Ali, Country 29)

The turmoil in Kashmir not only brings about the loss of life and property but it also affects adversely the relationships between friends, between neighbours, between communities, and between near and dear ones. The poem "Farewell" bears testimony to this. The speaker here laments the exile of the Hindu Pandits from Kashmir Valley. Written in first person, the poem does not only express the poet's personal feelings but it becomes a representative voice of all the Kashmiri Muslims, the fellow sufferers of the Hindus. When the Pandits are gone, the regular routine of life in Kashmir becomes severely disrupted. The weaver, the jeweller, and the ones who collect the fleece of the ibex from mountain slopes, are all gone. "They make a desolation and call it peace" (Ali, Country 7). This line was uttered by Calgacus about Romans during their colonization of England. By alluding to it, Ali deconstructs the notion of peace which the authorities claim as true. With the departure of the Pandits, even the stone idols, worshipped by them are buried. In Kashmir, "Army convoys all night like desert caravans". Here Kashmir is compared to a desert whose peace has been destroyed by the noisy "caravans" of "Army convoys" with their "smoking oil of dimmed headlights". This image of gloom gives Kashmir the look of a military state. And the Kashmiris do not have the right to ask them, "Are you done with the world?" The religious harmony that had for long existed in Kashmir is suggested by the poet with the image of temples and mosques to have been locked in each other's shadow with their reflections falling on the water. And as they are gone now, the speaker requests them to come back again and live in the same spirit of communal harmony. He coins the oxymoronic term "Exquisite ghost" that suits the present situation of Kashmir, the "Paradise", now turned into hell.

After dreaming of an ideal and peaceful future in "The Pastoral", the poet again comes back to the gruesome reality of the present in "The Country Without a Post Office" – "Again I've returned to this country". Here he finds nothing but desolation and destruction. Even the minarets have been "entombed". The Post Offices have become inoperative and the communication system has totally collapsed in Kashmir. The frightened Post Master sneaks into the Post Office with his "clay lamps", reads the letters sent to the relatives in Kashmir from various parts of the world. Yet he can do nothing but cancel the stamps and dump the letters into the archive. He is helpless, for the addresses are now "doomed" and obliterated. The houses are either "buried" under the ground or have been emptied. The houses have been emptied because the residents of those houses "fled, ran away, / and became refugees there, in the plains". The people who have migrated to the plains wistfully wait for the sight of a "final dewfall to turn the mountain to glass", and at the same time lament the loss of their homes, which may have been destroyed by the soldiers. Soldiers act like hell hounds – they just enter a house and set fire to it, and a whole family turns into ashes. Nobody can protect them. "When the muezzin / died, the city was robbed of every call" (Ali, Country 37), just as when the Pandits left Kashmir, the temples became forsaken and were robbed. "The houses were swept about like leaves / for burning" (Ali, Country 37). And the people who are doomed to stay on admit: "every night we bury our houses – and theirs, the ones left empty. / We are faithful. On their doors we hang Wreaths".

The pain that the people of Kashmir experience is not their alone; this is a situation that every war-stricken country has to face and so Shahid, the trans-nationalist, humanistic poet, demands for a global movement against this, as we find in "The Correspondent". Here the speaker, who is the poet's persona and a resident of Kashmir, prevents his friend, a war journalist from some distant nation, from leaving at night as the nights in Kashmir are full of danger. The speaker tells his guest that "he must never leave", which suggests that even daytimes are not free from danger and the Kashmiris seem to be eternally doomed here. In order to stop the correspondent, the poet creates "barricades" of fears by reminding him of the dampness and the slipperiness of the mountain routes and of the hellish darkness of light occasionally reddened by the lights on the graves of "dead dervishes". And finally, when the friend, being compelled, comes back into the speaker's dark room, he "murmurs Kashmir!", an exclamation which brings out his helpless anguish on realizing what an abysmally infernal place the Paradise on earth has been reduced to by the unwise political policies. The poet incorporates the pictures of Sarajevo to convey that Kashmir is not an exception; the devastation caused by war at any place in the world is almost the same. The correspondent shows the poet from the video clips of Sarajevo the "close-ups in slow motion: from bombed sites / to the dissolve of mosques in colonnades. / Then, wheelchair on a ramp, / burning..." Then there comes the picture of a musician in "formal wear", playing a

moaning tune in his cello which is unaccompanied by any other musical instrument. And soon after the disappearance of the celloist, the screen is filled with the images of soldiers, then inevitably with the dead people, with their eyes wide open, evoking a sense of horror and total loss. The poet is eager to know when the satellites, that have made the pictures of war-torn Sarajevo known to the world, will transmit the troubled narratives of Kashmir “across the seas” so as to expose the truth to the whole world. But “a haze settles over” them, for none of them has a satisfying answer to this question. And as the correspondent opens the window to take shots, he finds convoy of the army trucks in the mountains, with their dimmed light, ready to ambush at any moment, a spine-chilling yet a very common sight in Kashmir.

The poet himself was not spared from the effects of war, for in “Some Vision of the World Cashmere”, Ali presents a very personal account of his life, when his grandmother was ill. He received the message: “She had a terrible fall. There is curfew everywhere. We have no way to bring her back. There is panic on the roads. Our neighbors have died.” Here he also presents the treachery of the soldiers for they do not even hesitate to occupy the private property of an old lady. As the poet moves towards the cottage where his grandmother lived, he finds that the army has “made it their dingy office, dust everywhere, on old phones, on damp files, on broken desks”. And then the poet becomes more astonished to see that the colonel of the army, responsible for the unrest in Srinagar, is his childhood friend. The poet cannot believe his eyes and he exclaims, “Srinagar is his city, too, he wouldn’t have ordered its burning. It’s not him. Someone else...”. But, he realizes that the truth must be accepted. And finally, in “A Villanelle”, the poet, being unable to hold his patience, cries out in a half mocking tone, and addresses the whole world to let their blood “embellish” the slaughter till the military forces and the militants would have “destroyed everything” in Kashmir and all the ruins dissolve “like salt in water”. The poet becomes restless at the massive indifference that the world shows towards the Kashmir situation. He asks, if they are yet comforting themselves with the words “They will not have destroyed everything till the ruins, too, are destroyed”. And when everything is destroyed, they will come with roses and console the victims. The roses will only be used to “Wreath the slaughter”. Ali warns the world: “Chechnya is gone” in this way, and now it is the turn of Kashmir. If the people of the world do not wake up and sharpen their voice even now, they will never ever have their Paradise back again.

Agha Shahid Ali portrays a cluster of images of ruined Kashmir in another poem called “I See Kashmir from New Delhi”. In this poem, he addresses Kashmir as “The city from where no news can come / is now so visible in its curfewed night”. And in this dystopian city, the depressed and suffering people see hallucinations. The poet speaks of a ghost who, being chased by “searchlights” takes refuge in a cell so that he can sleep there, but he freezes at the most inhuman and brutal sight inside the cell: a boy is being tortured there by the soldiers: “Drippings from a suspended burning tire / are falling on the back” of the boy and the “naked boy screaming, ‘I know nothing’ ” (Ali, Veiled 178). The shadow comes running to the poet for shelter. The poet at once recognizes that he is Rizwan. He is the innocent boy who was shot by the army while attending a funeral. Rizwan is the representative of thousands of innocent Kashmiris who have been killed wantonly by the army of a nation that claims to be independent and the largest democracy of the world. The “houses are set ablaze by the midnight soldiers” and no one can protest because they are licensed by the Indian nation-state to do so. The cruel and barbaric nature of the army is also borne out in “After the August Wedding in Lahore, Pakistan”, where a brigadier boasts: “The boys of Kashmir / break so quickly, we make their bodies sing / on the rack, till no song is left to sing”. The Government applies all its machineries to suppress the slightest signs of unrest and in the process turns cruel and heinous to such a degree as to burn the entire state into ashes. Agha Shahid Ali tries to capture this situation in *The Country Without a Post Office* in all its extremely moving and terrifying detail. And it is this aesthetic effect which, in Edward Said’s words, is a “massive achievement” of the poet, because it creates in this volume a specimen of poetry “whose appeal”, to quote Said again, “is universal”, and whose “voice [is] unerringly eloquent.”

### 3. CONCLUSION:

Though Kashmir has its own democratic Government, its own legislative assembly, and though the bureaucrats and politicians try to convince us that Kashmir is calm and peaceful, the reality is different. The resentment that the Kashmiris feel for Indian soldiers are often brought out by their anti-Indian slogans and by their riotous acts like pelting stones at them. India Government has always tried to marginalize and ignore their sufferings. And the ones who dreamt of finding peace by flying away from Kashmir to the Indian mainland are the worst victims. The Government, for example, has not done anything to provide a secure shelter for the Kashmiri Pandit families yet, but it seems more interested in giving shelter to the migrant Rohingyas. The Government of India seems to have abolished the name of Kashmir from their agenda of development and progress. If one goes to Kashmir, one will feel as if time has stopped there since 1947. No trace of development in the villages, no sufficient educational institutions, no advanced health services and no human rights can be found there. Diseases spread like plague there, and hundreds of poor die due to starvation and lack of any health care system. Torture and slaughter by armies only add to this indescribable misery of the Kashmiris. Agha Shahid Ali, through the poems in *The Country Without a Post Office*, evokes in the readers a sense of pity and fear for the Kashmiris, so that a mass revolution can be built up to stand by

the suffering humanity and to protest the brutal Government policies causing that suffering. And by studying the poems in *The Country Without a Post Office* we get a true and comprehensive knowledge of Kashmir's condition after Indian independence.

From the above analysis we can unambiguously state that what Lyotard had foretold about the post-industrialist, postmodernist society in his *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* in 1979 is quite true and justified. The grand narratives and metanarratives have become obsolete for their fault of totalizing everything, and the present era demands an analysis of the micronarratives which expose all the exceptions of a given situation that lie hidden under the deceptive veil of grandnarratives. Therefore, Indian independence is not a happy turning point of life for all the Indians; for some, like the Kashmiris, it is the boiling, burning blister, a curse. Until all the minor and regional problems like those plaguing Kashmir are redressed, India will never achieve its independence in the true sense of the term.

#### NOTES:

1. The political situation of Kashmir in the post independent India, in section I, has been extracted from Peer, Basharat. *Curfewed Night*. Haryana: Penguin Random House India Pvt. Ltd, 2009. Print.
2. The quotation by Edward Said in section II has been taken from the cover blurb of Ali, Agha Shahid. *The Country Without a Post Office*. Haryana: Penguin Random House India Pvt. Ltd, 2013. Print.

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