

CULTURAL MATERIALIST READING: VISUALIZING DOMINANT IDEOLOGIES AND DISSIDENT DISCOURSES IN THE CREATIVE GRAPHIC PANELS OF *MUNNU: A BOY FROM KASHMIR*

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Abstract. One of the prominent theories of cultural studies is cultural materialism, which has its base on the theory of Marxism. Much of the research work done regarding cultural materialism is on Renaissance literature; the development of the theory itself is through the studies conducted on the plays of William Shakespeare, who is one of the epitomes of Renaissance literature. This paper aims to be a unique cultural materialist reading done on a graphic novel based on Kashmir, Indian subcontinent. Kashmir is one of the most desired lands on Earth; it has also been a land of contest right from 1947. This article attempts to explore Malik Sajad's reflection of the Kashmiri society by analyzing and discussing graphic panels from *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir* (originally published in 2015) in the light of cultural materialism. Since cultural materialism admits that a text mirrors the socio-cultural and political life of a society; it has been used for interpreting this Kashmir-based graphic novel which is a blend of image and words. This graphic memoir offers a unique narration of the political and societal lives of Kashmiris through the creative deployment of an anthropomorphic metaphor. This study shows how Sajad graphically reflects the dominant ideology and dissident discourses in these panels.

Keywords: creative metaphor, cultural materialism, graphic novel, ideology, Kashmir, socio-cultural life.

Introduction

"History itself retains its whole range, and still, in different hands, *teaches or shows* us most kinds of knowable past and almost every kind of imaginable future" (Williams, 1985, p. 148). As per these lines, authors tend to be active agents in conveying history to readers and there are theoretical practices that deal with the historicity of texts. Two such theories that are dependent on history are cultural materialism and new historicism:

"Both these critical practices treat literary texts on an equal basis with text and documents of all kinds, professing not to privilege 'literature' as a form of expression outside the realms of society, politics or history and both Cultural Materialism and New

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Historicism insists that there is no division between text & context or between literature & politics” (Brannigan, 1998, p. 21).

Hence, according to cultural materialism, there can not be any text without sharing its space with history and society. Hence, in this paper *Munnu*, is read under the lights of cultural materialism by relating it to its historical background. Sajad’s (2015) *Munnu* (a semi-autobiographical graphic novel) is a massive collection of 1723 images revolving around the life of Sajad himself. He is a cartoonist by profession, who has the experience of working as a cartoonist in newspapers right from the age of 13 and eventually holds a degree in visual arts from the University of London, United Kingdom (UK). He has exposed every important thing that he has encountered, even the differences and oppressions that he felt while living in such a conflict zone. To make the readers intensively feel the oppression and the menacing ambiance that the Kashmiris are facing, Sajad seems to have followed the footsteps of Art Spiegelman’s (Ghosal, 2016) by clinging on to the anthromorphic metaphor to represent the Kashmiris as “hangul deer” and people other than the Kashmiris as normal human beings. The reason for this creativity in representation is very obvious since the author tries to demonstrate the near extinction of the Kashmiris by comparing them with the hangul deer, which is also on the verge of extinction. For the past six to seven centuries, there have been frequent shifts in the culture and religion of the Kashmiri people leading to several conflicts. These conflicts are illustrated in Sajad’s (2015) graphic novel along with the coming-of-age narration of his own.

1. Objective and methodology

The current paper aims to analyze the graphic novel from the perspective of cultural materialism. Cultural materialism emerged in the late 20th century in Great Britain, UK and was developed by Raymond Williams, who is considered to be the father of cultural materialism. It was further developed by Dollimore and Sinfield (1994) in their book *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*. According to Williams (2009), cultural materialism is a theory of the specificities of material culture and literary production within historical materialism. For Williams (1985), the word *culture* entails the social and political life of people, their beliefs, practices, and their way of living, whereas the above-mentioned entities are considered to be the expression of culture which forms the respective ideology. For Milner (1993), a cultural theorist and literary critic, cultural materialism is a field focussing on the material existence of culture. Thus, cultural materialist opines that the ideology of a particular culture exists in material forms like buildings and other cultural artifacts. Hence, this approach examines material forms of culture within the literary text. This particular approach politicizes and historicizes literary texts, which is exactly opposite to the formalist approach of the 1980s which worked within the text. Though at the foundation level, cultural materialism seems to have some commonality with new historicism because both these approaches consider the literary text as historical and cultural artifacts, the former has political commitment which the latter does not possess (Brannigan, 1998). Brannigan in his book *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* has talked about the characteristics of cultural materialism as a way of reading:

“First, the literature at particular moments offer a dissident perspective and, second, that the potential for either dominance or dissidence in a text will be shaped by history and will change according to the historical context in which the text is read” (1998, pp. 169–170).

Brannigan praises cultural materialism to be the most useful critical practice in exposing the ideological and political interests surfacing through literary texts (1998, p. 11). The focus of cultural materialism on historical and political content, and its close textual analysis explores the ideologies hidden in the text. It explores how certain ideologies of dominant hegemonic groups are infused in those texts. Initially, this cultural materialistic reading got widespread attention through its interpretation of English literary canonical texts. *Political Shakespeare* by Dollimore and Sinfield (1994) validated those canonical texts to disseminate the hegemonic ideologies surfacing through those texts. Leaving aside the “upper class”, cultural materialists always focus on the secluded and marginalized section of the society. Here, *Munnu* (Sajad, 2015) also talks about the dominant and marginalized position of the Kashmiris but Sajad (2015) seems to have inscribed certain ideologies in his work. It is important to take into account the political and societal struggles of the Kashmiris and their culture which has been dismantled frequently by various hegemonic forces and that is how the potential of this graphic novel is also shaped by those hegemonic forces. Hence, a dissident reading of this novel would bring out the ideologies and also the power struggles of the Kashmiri society. Thus the objective of this paper is to study how Sajad (2015) has made use of graphic panels to express dissident discourses and the ideology of Kashmiri society. The first part of this paper argues on the novelty and appropriateness in the image metaphor relating to hangul deer and Kashmiris, whereas the latter part discusses the dominant ideology and dissident discourse of the text. Since cultural materialism paves the way for critical understanding of the values and beliefs of a culture, this paper finds it appropriate to use it to analyse the uncertainty of the Kashmiri culture.

2. Literature review

“Cultural materialists focus more on the literary text to analyze the material construction of ideologies prevailing in the society eventually they consider culture as a field of ideological contest. Hence, cultural materialist practices enable us to analyze literary texts as part of a wider context of cultural and political institutions” (Brannigan, 1998, p. 12).

Various studies speak about the relation of literary work to the context of its production, to the economic and the political system of the society, and focus on the ideologies signified in the literary works, which depends on the context in which they are situated (Dollimore & Sinfield, 1994). “A Cultural Materialist Reading of Martin Crimp’s *Cruel and Tender*: Crimp’s Approach to Ideology” seems to support the same ideas of Dollimore and Sinfield, it opines that literary works and the society on which the literary works are based are inseparable because text reflects the political and economic structures of society (Şakiroglu & Ross Marshall, 2015). The social and cultural context of this graphic novel makes use of metaphors, which has a way long connection with creativity. “Similarity, Metaphor and Creativity” talks

about the existence of similarity in metaphors. It also opines that the more implicit metaphor defines the novelty of creativity (Wang & Hu, 2018). In “Looking on the Dark and Bright Side: Creative Metaphors of Depression in Two Graphic Memoirs”, el Refaie (2014) presents both the advantages and disadvantages of using the creative metaphor. It opines on how personal experience becomes universal with the use of creative metaphors. It also casts light on how graphical properties enable authors to use metaphors in creative ways. Authors can creatively use self-speaking images to convey their personal experiences.

Studies were also conducted on the plights of the people of Kashmir. Misra (2005) in his paper titled “The Problem of Kashmir and the Problem in Kashmir: Divergence Demands Convergence” focuses more on the history of the Kashmir conflict and discusses the most possible resolution that can bring peace between India and Pakistan. His focus is on the resolution and not on the power structures prevailing in Kashmiri society. Yet another paper titled “Kashmir Conflict: Solutions and Demand for Self-Determination” (Sehgal, 2011) also discusses the solutions for this dispute. This paper focuses on the self-determination of the Kashmiri people, which got affected by the dispute that is going on between India, Pakistan, and China for the land of Kashmir. For this, a questionnaire survey has been collected from five districts of Jammu and Kashmir (union territory), India to bring out the aspirations of Kashmiri people with this particular issue. Both these research papers seem to be a forward look at the positive future of Kashmir.

Various studies have been done on *Munnu* (Sajad, 2015). Some focus on the postcolonial and postcolonial gothic features of the text (Nayar, 2016; Narayanan, 2021). “The Art of Postcolonial Resistance and Multispecies Storytelling in Malik Sajad’s Graphic Novel *Munnu: A Boy From Kashmir*” by Sarkar (2018), comments on the real conflicts prevailing within the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Kashmir and discusses the real situation of Kashmir. This paper additionally looks at the visual-written strategy and Bildungsroman narration of Sajad (2015) and also the ability of this graphic novel in rewriting the history of Kashmir. Andrew Hock Soon Ng (2018) in “Nationalism and the Intangible Effects of Violence in Malik Sajad’s *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir*” discusses the representation of violence in comic art. Some research papers have wholly focussed on the graphical representations in *Munnu* (Baishya, 2018; Singh, 2017).

3. Creative metaphor

The superior quality of human beings that differentiates them from other species of the world lies in their ability to convey their thought process through a medium called language. As time progressed, developments in the use of language led to creativity in its usage, where language users began to entail word play even in day-to-day interactions. *Language and Creativity: The Art of Common Talk* by Carter (2004) talks about how commonly meanings were created in many creative ways while speaking, in a wide range of social contexts and diverse settings. It also accounts for socio-cultural properties deployed in the creativity of the written or spoken discourse by stating, the creative play with the words works on several levels and it is jointly created or co-created by two speakers emphasizing the shared cultural knowledge and alignment between the speakers (Carter, 2004). As said in the preceding lines, it is

worthy to consider that personal and social interactions carry socio-cultural elements and political perspectives of the particular society. Underlying these notions, this paper looks into the dissident elements presented through the creative metaphors in *Munnu* (Sajad, 2015).

Creativity in the context of language is not seen as an extraordinary ability of uncommon people rather, a common property of all. “The pervasiveness of metaphors has been identified in several discourses which are essential to our lives, such as politics, economics, religion, emotions, time, and others” (Bratož, 2013, p. 25). Its pervasive presence in everyday language is also widely discussed in *Language and Creativity* by Carter (2004). Figures of speech are the best example to prove that everyday discourse exhibit creativity. The most frequent forms of linguistic creativity include metaphor, pun, parody, idiom, verbal play, morphological inventiveness, etc. (Carter, 2004). This paper prefers to focus on the metaphors, both verbal and visual metaphors displayed in Sajad’s (2015) panels. Metaphors were used to create a notorious effect on the narration. In classical Greek, the word *metaphora* means to “transfer” or to “carry over” and meaning is carried over when one layer of meaning is compared with another (Carter, 2004).

The metaphor seems to carry a conceptual system within it (Kövecses, 2006), where on the upper level something is told with the intent to carry the underlying meaning. In other words, the conceptual system of metaphor has a source and a target that has a sort of connection, or rather, the source and the target are creatively connected unusually. In the image metaphor used in *Munnu* (Sajad, 2015), the target domain is hangul deer and the source domain is Kashmiris. Sajad (2015) in his graphic panels has dehumanized Kashmiris by creatively projecting them as hangul deers:

“To be considered truly creative, however, the new metaphor must accord with our basic embodied experiences and be well suited to the medium and context of communication. Each medium, I argue, thus offers unique opportunities for, and constraints on, metaphor creativity” (el Refaie, 2014, p. 152).

Here, Sajad’s (2015) graphic medium has given enough space for metaphor creativity, where the comparison between Kashmiris and hangul deer suits well with the context. Both hangul deer and Kashmiris have faced problems due to human actions in their habitat. The following section discusses the anthropogenic pressure that both Kashmiris and hangul deer had in common.

4. Anthropogenic hazard

The reason behind the use of creative visual metaphor in the graphic panels of *Munnu* has anthropogenic pressure in common between the hangul deer and the Kashmiris. As of the 20th century, among the Indian native red deer species, Kashmir stag/hangul deer is the only leftover. A research paper titled “Historical Range and Present Status of Hangul Deer CERVUS ELAPHUS HANGLU in Kashmir, India” (Bhat & Fazili, 2015) details the history of the extinction of hangul deer and the real reason behind its extinction. It briefs out how the population of hangul deer at the beginning of the 20th century was ten to fifteen times higher than its population in the early 21st century. The same paper claims that anthropogenic actions like poaching, grazing, and habitat occupation to be the reasons for the near

extinction of hangul deer. Hence, it was given priority in the conservation list by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India (2013, p. 77). The same anthropogenic hazard is seen in the extinction of the Kashmiris as well. “Extinction” in this context refers to the mass reduction in the population of native Kashmiris due to various reasons like war and communal riots. Looking back at the culture and political history of Kashmir, there are many instances where native people of Kashmir were killed in huge numbers and were made to flee their own land leaving their belongings behind.

Discussion

The graphic novel is a typical genre that gives more space to creativity than any other genre because of its verbal-visual narration. The specific properties of the genre include panels, speech balloons, moving lines, and pictorial runes. According to the componential theory of creativity, individual creativity consists of three major components- domain skills, creative thinking skills, and intrinsic task motivation (Al-Ababneh, 2020). Coming to Sajad (2015), his domain skill, and creative thinking skill can be seen in his graphic panels and the intrinsic task motivation for his work is the social and cultural environment where he lived. This motivation has forced him to come up with the dissident discourse. Thus the creativity in this graphic novel makes it one of the mind-provoking works on the lives of Kashmiris and an eye-opener for the readers. By depicting his lived experiences in Kashmir, Sajad (2015) makes the readers go through the horrors faced by the Kashmiris during the 1990s. Creative metaphors make it possible for authors to share their personal experiences with others (Scannell, 2001). Following this, Sajad (2015) has also graphically expressed certain things using metaphors that cannot be told directly. One such example is the use of anthropomorphic metaphor to explain the condition of Kashmiris. This creative narration has two effects: “one is the dehumanization of Kashmiris under Indian occupation and the intertwined fates of human, non-human and their environments within the conflict zone” (Sarkar, 2018, pp. 107–108). Due to the strong connection between a text and context, literary texts seem to carry the ideologies that prevailed in the society and turn, create ideologies as well. This graphic novel, which is the author’s reflection on Kashmiri society exposes the ideologies that prevailed among the Kashmiri people during the 1990s. This is where the theory of cultural materialism has been used to interpret ideologies surfing through the text. This novel exposes the haunting and terror experiences of the Kashmiris. The most dominating themes prevailing in this graphic novel are death, mourning, haunting, terror, and most importantly the anger against the Indian Army and this is very evident from the chapters titled “Inside Out” and “Scrapbook” where Sajad (2015) shared his journey of becoming a cartoonist.

In Figure 1, the Indian Army is represented as a ferocious bear – an image metaphor. In yet another image in the *Munnu* by Sajad (2015, p. 182), an Army man with an amputated leg is standing with crutches near the Indian flag, where Sajad (2015) shows his anger on the Indian Army by representing them as disabled and incompetent because of the only reason that they have attacked a few Kashmiris doubting them to be the reason for a small blast in the city center, this is same with few other chapters as well. Here, creative image metaphors were used to delineate the arrogance and dictatorship of the Indian Army in the land of



Figure 1. Indian Army as a ferocious bear (source: Sajad, 2015)

Kashmir. When these metaphors exhibit the Indian Army as tyrannical, the presence of the Indian Army in Kashmir has a purposeful reason. Looking back into history to know the real reason behind installing a large number of Army troops in Kashmir, it becomes evident that the invasion of Pakistani tribes in the 1920s caused Hari Singh to join India. Government of Pakistan and the then-President Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who thought Pakistan, would be incomplete without Kashmir sent troops to Kashmir. On the other side, Indian nationalists deliberately wanted the diversified Kashmir to remain with India to show the secularity of India (Ganguly, 1997, pp. 7–10). Government of India (GI) employed their Army troops in Kashmir to safeguard Kashmir from Pakistan. Though the GI employed Army troops only to safeguard Kashmir and Kashmiris, part of Kashmiris gradually began to fight for their freedom from India. As a result of this, Kashmiri nationalism aroused among Kashmiris during the 1980s, leading to the formation of various separatist groups among Kashmiris with different ideologies and opinions, which eventually created conflicts among them. Thus, the Kashmir dispute became a multidimensional problem. There are studies focusing on the GI's effort in maintaining control over Kashmir and the sufferings of the Indian Army in fighting with an unknown enemy (Singh Bali, 2016; Ganguly, 1997; Wirsing, 1994). It is very clear that Sajad (2015) has expressed the dissidence discourse on the actions of the Indian Army. Though Kashmiris are facing some troubles because of the presence of the Indian Army, their presence is not always mischievous to them. This is more evident from the research paper titled “The Portrayal of Indian Army in Kashmir Media: An Analytical Study of Local Newspapers”, which uncovers the truth about the Indian Army and its services (Singh Bali, 2016).

Kashmir dispute is miserably a multidimensional problem, where blaming the Army for the miseries of Kashmiri people is not understandable. A paper titled “The Postcolonial Gothic: *Munnu*, Graphic Narrative and the Terrors of the Nation” talks about how a huge space of the graphic novel is filled with Sajad's (2015) reflection on the Indian Army,

“Numerous images of the army's excesses, rudeness and the sheer intensity of violence mark Sajad's work. The army as the most visible face of the nation-as-family serves as the constant reminder in Sajad's work that the Kashmiri families do *not* belong to the larger nation-as-family” (Nayar, 2016, p. 4).

Though the violations of the Indian Army in Kashmir are not negligible, their presence and service in Kashmir land are needed. If it is not for India, some other country would have gained control over Kashmir to show off its power. Though *Munnu* (Sajad, 2015) is a great insight into the plights of the Kashmiri people and a greater collection of traumatic memories, it carries within it a dominating ideology that the major reason behind the trauma and sufferings of Kashmir is the Indian Army. The way he concentrated more on the violation and behavior of the Indian Army is too much for its historicity. The novel should have concentrated on every possible problem that the Kashmiris faced. A cultural materialist reading of a text considers the historicity of the text by comparing it to its historical context. While doing the same with this novel, it does not seem to have focused on all the issues faced by the Kashmiris in the backdrop of the 1990s. A study titled *Kashmir Conflict: A Study of What Led to the Insurgency in Kashmir Valley and Proposed Future Solutions* by Bakaya and Bhatti (2010) speaks about every issue that took place in Kashmir. It has remarked on the “exodus of Kashmiri Pandits” which took place during the 1990s, but Sajad (2015) has talked less about the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits. Even in those few panels, where he has talked about the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, he insists more on the insecurity that the Pandits felt in Kashmir and the failure of Kashmiri Pandits in managing the situation. This is evident from *Munnu* by Sajad (2015, pp. 280, 281, 283, 285).

Visual metaphors are implied through the visual styles such as composition and forms in the graphic panels. Haunting and abandoned houses, memorials, and melancholy have a prominent place in Sajad’s (2015) panels. These abandoned houses and memorials are the material form of Kashmiri culture. Nayar (2016) in his paper “The Postcolonial Gothic” considered *Munnu* (Sajad, 2015) as a postcolonial gothic because of the postcolonial and gothic elements, which occupied the most number of panels. Haunted and abandoned houses are the background for most of the panels. Eventually, the half-destructed buildings were found in every chapter of the novel. All these expressions are seen as cultural anxiety. The consecutive panels in Figures 2–3 and the preceding panels of it depict the story of a Kashmiri Pandit, who was very desperate to leave during the massive migration, stayed in his house for a while only to be killed later by a fellow Kashmiri. The third, fourth, and sixth panels in

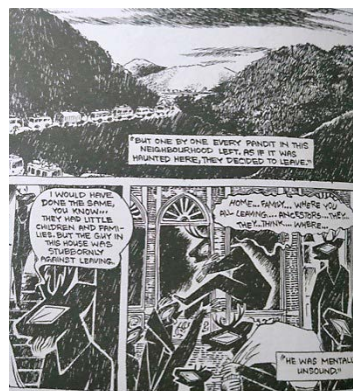


Figure 2. Exodus of Kashmiri Pandits (source: Sajad, 2015)



Figure 3. Abandoned house of a Kashmiri Pandit (source: Sajad, 2015)

Figure 3 display the abandoned house of a Kashmiri Pandit, these cultural panels containing a heap of household things like dismantled furniture, clothes, photo frames, slippers, and books metaphorically disclose the fact that Pandits left their place and belongings in such a hurry that they found no time to carry even their essentials. Added to it, things are in raided condition and the doorway of the room is closed with wooden strips so that no one can enter again, this metaphorically exposes how Pandits were raided of their identity and restricted from entering Kashmir again. This raided house signifies the material existence of conflicted culture of Kashmir. Looking back into the history of Kashmir, the Islamization of Kashmir began in 1980 and the first clear outbreak took place in 1986 when the Muslim fundamentalists attacked the minority Kashmiri Pandits, followed by numerous clashes between Kashmiri Muslims and Pandits. Finally, leading to the exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits in January, 1990 (Bakaya & Bhatti, 2010). *Culture and Political History of Kashmir* by Bamzai (1994) gives a detailed account of the migration of Pandits by briefing on the Islamic fundamentalists being the reason behind the massive migration of Pandits on 21 January, 1990. They manipulated Kashmiris that Pandits are the obstacles in the path of their freedom, which aroused the Muslim population to crowd up the streets of Kashmir with threatening slogans. Bamzai writes: “the fear of death and the danger to the womenfolk prompted them to flee. The scene was pathetic. They left behind everything and made a beeline to the Jammu road” (1994, p. 860). The composition of the graphic panel creatively enhances the potential meaning of the comics displayed in the panel. In this way, the composition of the last panel in Figure 2 containing “pictorial runes” creatively convey the pathetic condition of Pandits. The droplets around the eyes of the woman and the unsettled restless words in the speech balloon metaphorically convey the fear of Pandits and their restless situation when they were forced to leave Kashmir overnight. Though this accounts for narration on Kashmir Pandits, evidently these are the

only pages where Sajad (2015) has talked about the exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits when their execution holds a prominent place in the history of 1990. Despite the great role played by the Kashmiri Muslims in the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, Sajad (2015) has opened up very little. He failed to open up either on the real cause for the great exodus of Pandits in such a short time or on the Kashmiri Pandits who might have wished to remain in India, which might give a false ideology to the readers. Though Sajad (2015) seems to have taken the side of Kashmiri Pandits in these panels, he safely returns to the side of the dominant culture by not revealing the real reason behind the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits.

In Figure 4, Sajad (2015) has indirectly articulated the dissident discourse on Indian occupation in Kashmir. This panel exhibits the independence day celebration in Kashmir, where the streets are decorated with Indian flags. Though the panel shows a considerable amount of flags hanging overhead, the narration part of the panel “Indian flags camouflaged the sky above” metaphorically signifies the Indian occupation of Kashmir. By infusing contrast within the visual and verbal metaphor of the same panel, the author creatively conveys how the Indian occupation restricted Kashmiris from living a normal life. Sajad (2015) has also creatively made use of the same panel to stress the highly militarized condition of Kashmir through a conceptual metaphor “sea of uniform”. This clearly shows his resentment towards the Indian occupation.

Figure 5 bears graphic panels that further support the previous argument on dissident discourse. Panels in Figure 5 and its preceding panels (Sajad, 2015, p. 108) depict the disharmony of Election Day in Kashmir, which illustrates the non-participation of Kashmir people in the Indian election. The whole situation in these panels is about Munnu (Sajad, 2015) and his



Figure 4. Independence day in Kashmir, Indian subcontinent (source: Sajad, 2015)



Figure 5. Munnu and his family are fleeing to Eidgah on an election day, due to the unrest in Srinagar, Kashmir, India (source: Sajad, 2015)

family fleeing their place beforehand to avoid the struggles that would arise during Election Day in Kashmir. Disinvolvement of Kashmiris in the Indian election is creatively depicted through the voters in Munnu's family who, mark their index fingers with homemade ink (a mark that indicates their participation in the election) before fleeing, so that they will not get caught during the Indian Army raids. This panel carries a conceptual metaphor "the vast rice fields, the sky, and the birds were calm and seemed unaware of the elections", where Sajad (2015) tries to creatively project the turmoil and unquietness of an election day in Kashmir. This again accounts for his dissident perspective towards Indian occupation and identity. In yet another panel Sajad (2015, p. 191) metaphorically conveys the distress and miseries of Kashmiris through the conceptual metaphor "miseries and distress crawled on the land" (2015, p. 191). This conceptual metaphor is a discourse on suffering, which is displayed with the intent to bring out the unrest prevailing in the valley due to Indian occupation.

Conclusions

Since the creative metaphor is employed only in particular parts of the novel, this article has limited itself to the selected number of graphic panels in order to interpret the novel from the cultural materialist perspective. This selected analysis shows how Sajad as a memoirist has accurately made use of the graphic medium in narrating the struggles of Kashmiris through dissident discourse, but it is very apparent that Sajad has in turn constructed dominant ideologies in the way of documenting the sufferings of Kashmiris by focusing more on particular content. Since *Munnu* is operating on the major theme of the sufferings of Kashmiris, this text is considered to be a carrier of history of Kashmir, it should expose every prominent detail about Kashmir and the people of Kashmir to understand their cultural and societal lives. From this article, it is very obvious that Sajad has creatively embedded metaphors to expose the violence of the Indian Army and the socio-cultural life in Kashmir. Eventually, through the cultural materialistic reading of creative metaphors, dominant ideologies and dissident discourses flowing through the text get exposed.

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