

ISSN-0976-8165



THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

Bi-Monthly Peer-Reviewed eJournal

VOL. 15 ISSUE-3 JUNE 2024

15 YEARS OF OPEN ACCESS

Editor-In-Chief: **Dr. Vishwanath Bite**
Managing Editor: **Dr. Madhuri Bite**

www.the-criterion.com

AboutUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

ContactUs: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

EditorialBoard: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Akh Dour (Once Upon a Time)

Author: Bansi Nirdosh

Translated by: Qaisar Bashir

Publisher: Authorspress, India

ISBN: 978-93-87281-06-6

Year: 2017

Pages: 131

Reviewed by:

Dr Jan Mudasir Gul

Once upon a time, Kashmir truly represents its uniqueness not only in terms of its natural beautiful surroundings but also in terms of its inner beauty of individuals despite innumerable adverse circumstances they come across.

The book under review is a Kashmir Novel by Bansi Nirdosh (*Akh Dour*) which has been translated into English by Qaisar Bashir under the title *Once Upon a Time*.

Bansi Nirdosh was a well known dramatist, short story writer, novelist and journalist of J&K. He was born in 1930 and died in 2021. He was the son of a famous writer and journalist Pandit Sham Lal Wali of Badyiar Mohalla, Dalgate, Srinagar. Bansi's works deal with local traditions, customs and various social situations of J&K.

The foreword of the translated work is written by Prof. Shafi Shauq who praises the translator in the following words:

Qaisar Bashir is one of the youngest translators of Kashmir who possesses sufficient enthusiasm and ability to undertake the difficult vocation of translating works available in the Kashmiri language into English, a language of the West. He is conscious of the fact that the number of non-Kashmiri readers of Kashmiri literature, spread all over the world, is fast growing, and the

translators have to meet their demands. I am happy that Qaisar is steeped in the fast-changing cultural patterns of Kashmir reflected through literature in the language of the people.

Regarding the translated work, Prof Shauq comments:

Translation, I believe, is essentially recycling time, and as such, it is inevitable even in appreciating the literature of the past. In the novel Once upon a Time the time that is embodied in the characters, setting, references, values, cultural items, needs, and other forms of material ambience, is alien even to reader in the original language. Culture is a continuous process, not a state; after every ten to twenty years it undergoes such transmutation as makes the earlier state almost a thing of the memory. Qaisar Bashir has sufficient inquisitive passion for the past which has motivated him to select the novel and translate it into a totally different linguistic substratum. Behind the unrecognisably 'old' cultural and social space, the translator feels the basic passions, joys, sorrows and pain of mankind that are not specific to any particular culture and society. When Nageena finally acquiesce in the conditions of her utter ruin, she emerges as a suffering individual who is accessible in any language depiction.

The narrative is set in Bandipora and Srinagar during the early 19th century. It tells the tale of brotherhood, love, peace in villages and the deception, fraud and porn culture in some regions of Srinagar but within the foreground is the story of a young peasant girl, Nageena, who visits Srinagar furtively to see her ailing father. Her father, Deen Mohammad, is under treatment in Mission Hospital, a government hospital in Srinagar. After being barred to stay with her father in hospital, she spends a night in a nearby shrine where she meets a man who takes her his home, that finally turns out to be a prostitution house. She, however, tries often times to escape, but fails. She is sold. Lastly, she conceives a child and marries the man she had bought her for 300 rupees.

The other prominent character that we encounter in the novel is Ghan Bhat, the kind landlord from Bandipora who often visits Deen Mohammad in the hospital to enquire about his health condition and accordingly inform Nageena and other villagers who are concerned about Deen Mohammad.

The rest of the chapters capture a vivid picture of culture of promiscuity in Srinagar with characters like Sideeq Joo, Ali, Tout'a, Sara and Shada stealing the show. One wonders if any

such immoral culture ever existed in Srinagar. However, the reader can't resist to be empathetic to Balbader, the main protagonist who like a lovelorn bird flew from place to place in search of her lost beloved, Nageena.

Overall, the novel beautifully depicts the day-to-day struggles of common ordinary folks in the face of adverse circumstances; thus revealing profound depths of human experience. However, the end truly portrays the existence of Kashmiriyat when Danwath, ex-wife of Balbader, tightly hugs Nageena against her bosom.