Conclusion

The literary traditions of Ireland and Kashmir are of a huge literary and cultural significance. Both the locales have been witness to intense politico-cultural conflicts of the twentieth century whose origins are traced to multiple factors that have made these conflicts seemingly intractable. Though currently the violent part of these conflicts has subsided to a large extent, the unfulfilled political and cultural aspirations of these two regions continue to dominate their literary discourse. The Irish conflict has been resolved in a way which has inspired many to suggest the implementation of the same model for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, referring to the extent of comparison between these two cultural locations.

Apart from the political comparisons, the two cultural traditions can be compared from other perspectives also. Both the traditions have drawn their inspiration from their mythical and historical roots. Legends, myths, social motifs and historical narratives have collectively gone into the making of these cultural traditions which confers the sense of unique identities on them. The cultural landmarks that pervade the literary traditions of these two locales include ethnic
symbols, mythical lore, oral lore etc. In fact, their ethnic identity is the direct outcome of the construction of their mythical and historical narratives. In other words, these two ethnic identities depend on their collective folk memory, oral narratives, political troubles and cultural tensions. Thus, Irish and Kashmiri traditions have been taking recourse to their past and their oral, mythological and historical sources to redeem their lost self to shape their future which is exclusively theirs without any imperial or external intervention.

The two ethnic identities are as much a result of external factors as much they were spawned by internal evolution. There is a strong external element including their colonial relationship with their colonizers over the ages which has helped in the growth of the ethnic identity and the cultural assertion on their part. Irish identity is to a great extent an outcome of the British imperialism in that land. Britishers would look down upon the Irish as the ‘other’, thereby pushing the Irish to the margins. The exclusion of the Irish from the mainstream British led to the cultural assertion on part of the Irish nationalists. In case of Kashmir, the sense of having been a colony for many centuries continues to haunt the Kashmiri psyche. The same anxiety gets reflected in the literary tradition of the Kashmir.
Kashmiris were over the centuries subjected to such oppressive rules which left them with no other option but to give vent to their frustration through literary mediums including folk drama.

In such contexts, both Irish and Kashmiri nationalist ethnicists found the modern medium of the short story ideally suited for their predicament. They picked up the medium and used it optimally to express the bruised psyche of their respective cultural spirits. The result is that both Ireland and Kashmir are considered to have produced some of the greatest short fiction in the world. The short fiction of these two locations is especially important as they are engaged in serious pursuit of the question of their identity. They have yet to resolve the crisis of their respective identities as they have to sift through their imposed identities and indigenous identities.

Ireland is an independent country though there are contestations about its being a post-colonial state. It has very lately been included under the rubric of the post-colonial studies. On the other hand, Kashmir, at least a huge part of it, still considers itself to be fighting for its freedom. At the same time, Kashmir has never been under the direct control of any imperial power. There used to be a British resident in the erstwhile state of the Jammu and Kashmir that
was ruled by the Hindu monarchs from Jammu upto 1947 when part of Kashmir came under Indian rule.

Another point of comparison is the trauma of partition. Ireland had to be divided between Ireland and the Northern Ireland in the twentieth century, in view of deep religious and ethnic complexities. The similar complexity has traumatized Kashmir also. The geo-cultural partition of the erstwhile Kashmir left a deep impact on the Kashmiri psyche too which has tried to deal with this issue in its own way. In both Ireland and Kashmir, the partition did not simply draw a political boundary between two divided selves, but the lines were drawn on the very historical soul of these two nations which again is the benchmark to assess their literature against.

Such commonalities make it tenable to compare the divided and deeply bruised cultural selves and fractured landscape of these two literary traditions. Such a comparative study has its merits of making us understand that no man is an island and that in all conflicts it’s ultimately humanity in general which has to suffer.