

Politics and Poetics: Literary Strategies of Resistance in Post-1989 Anglophone Kashmiri Literature: A Case Study of *The Collaborator*

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Abstract

*The current study seeks to investigate the post-1989 Anglophone Kashmiri Literature from the perspective of the resistance literature. It is argued in this paper that the literature written in English by the native Kashmiri writers may be bracketed with the wider literary tradition of resistance literature, as it is chiefly characterised with the essential characteristics of resistance literature. This paper is an attempt to bring to fore the patterns of literary strategies embedded in the literature. In order to do so, *The Collaborator*, a pioneering work of representative nature of Kashmiri literature in English produced in the post-1989 context has been selected. The analysis will be carried out in the light of the theoretical construct of resistance literature, derived and shaped from the key text titled *Resistance Literature* by Barbara Harlow. Harlow had extensively mapped the body of resistance literature in different genres ranging from fictional and factual narratives, prison memoirs and resistance poetry, created in various regions of the world. The study transpires that the Post-1989 Kashmiri Anglophone Kashmiri literature is predominantly characterized with the major trends of resistance literature which include the politicization of the narratives, location of narratives in a certain historical backdrop; reclaiming history, proclaiming a distinct cultural identity, the narratives shaped by the conditions, either material or ideological, in which they are produced, blending fiction and fact, demonstrating and representing a shared identity of the community. The presence of these key aspects of resistance literature in *The Collaborator* suggests that the English literature produced in the post-1989 context is predominant with the major trends of resistance literature, thereby, classifying it to be a form of resistance literature.*

Keywords: *Resistance, Literature, Politics, Anglophone, Kashmiri Literature*

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1. Introduction and Backdrop

Kashmiri literature in English is not a fresh phenomenon. Alan Moorehead's *Rage of the Vulture* published in 1948, H.E. Bates's *The Scarlet Sword* appeared in 1950 and Mulk Raj Anand's *Death of a Hero* produced in 1963 are the English narratives produced in the backdrop of the first India-Pakistan war in 1948 and the tribal intervention on October 22, 1947. However, these narratives were produced by the authors other than the Kashmiris. The recently evolving post-1989 Anglophone Kashmiri literature stands distinct because of its authorship as it is produced by the native writers who are also observer participants. The literature by and large is woven through the post-1989 developments when a full scale armed uprising erupted in Jammu and Kashmir, massive military deployed and the violence and human rights violations became order of the day. So these developments were responded to by the native Kashmiri writers in their narratives.

2. Theoretical Framework for Analysis

The analysis in the current study will be carried out from the perspective of Resistance Literature. The framework of resistance literature has been derived and developed from the work titled Resistance Literature authored by Barbara Harlow in which she has extensively surveyed the narratives characterized with resistance themes. Based on her analysis of the resistance narratives, some distinct features, key characteristics and parameters have been identified and termed as the literary strategies of resistance. These literary strategies have been employed in the narratives mapped and analysed by Harlow in her book. With these strategies in view, a representative and classic text of Anglophone Kashmiri literature would be analysed to understand to what extent Kashmiri literature in English being written after 1989 share these characteristics and whether or not it could be classified as the resistance form of narratives.

For Harlow, "the theory of resistance literature is in its politics unlike narrow framework of criticism inspired by the mantle of neutrality and objectivity in the western tradition. It originates in and responds to a particular mode of politics and can only refer to actions which function against the apparatus of the state" (Talajooy & Laachir, 2012, p. 80). Besides politicization, historicity, fusing fact and fiction, blending realist and symbolist structures, creation of knowledge in knowledge-power paradigm, representing collectivity, the choice of language by the authors of resistance narratives and the mention of material conditions shaping these narratives, polyphonic and heteroglossia forms of narratives reflecting multiple voices and perspectives, and close correlation with the freedom struggle

are the defining characteristics of resistance literature.

3. Research Question

- What kind of literary strategies of resistance have been employed in the Kashmiri literature in English, and to what extent it resists the India's statist narrative on Kashmir¹?

4. Brief Sketch of the Novel

The Collaborator, being the first novel written in English by a native Kashmiri author has been set in Nowgam, a bordering village on the Line of Control, a de facto border which separates Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Indian Controlled part of Jammu and Kashmir. Set in the backdrop of socio-political scenario of Jammu and Kashmir emerged after 1989, The Collaborator narrates as to how the Kashmir being the proverbial paradise on earth has turned into a place where violence, torture, massacres became of the order of the day.

The novel revolves around the story of a four-teenaged boys who would spend their time together and play cricket. They crossed the LoC to get themselves trained from the armed training camps based in Azad Kashmir in order to fight against India's occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. The son of a headman and the nameless protagonist in the novel, remained in the valley and survives to narrate the story in The Collaborator. All the families of Nowgam decided to migrate, except that of the headman. The unnamed protagonist was inducted by an Indian Army Captain Kadian to count the dead bodies of the militants killed during the operation with the military, collect their IDs and the weapons they carried.

The novel is written in first person and broken down into three sections. The first section narrates the story of the protagonist, his friends who later crossed the LOC over to Pakistan. This section also narrates the stories of the families based in Nowgam which had migrated because of safety concerns. The second section narrates the consequences faced by the teenaged boys who crossed over to Pakistan while the third part draws the readers again to the story of the

¹According to this narrative, the erstwhile state J&K is an "integral part of India". The unrest in Jammu and Kashmir is an internal matter of India which has been caused by a few Kashmiri militants and miscreants. Kashmiri population repose their political faith on India by participating in the state assembly elections since 1951.

protagonist. It also narrates protagonist's perplexity and his intriguing association with the Indian army Captain Kadian.

Following are the key literary strategies of resistance employed in the novel:

5. Literary Strategies of Resistance in *The Collaborator*

5.1 Politicization of *The Collaborator*

The literature of resistance is essentially and predominantly political. Harlow argues that "the theory of resistance literature is in politics... it is a politicized activity that invokes national consciousness and enhances the feeling of self-identity and existence". (Harlow, 1987, pp.28-30). "This literature informs the readers about some of the urgent political and cultural debates taking place with liberation movements". (Marry Layoun, 1989, Middle East Report, No. 159, Popular Culture (Jul. - Aug., 1989), p. 46). *The Collaborator* sounds an apt case in this context as the novel is predominantly situated in the political context where a piece of land is contested by India-Pakistan, India has deployed massive military presence to occupy and quell the mass uprising of Kashmiris against Indian occupation and human rights accesses. The narrative brings out political sympathies and invokes national consciousness among Kashmiri people. This fact has been duly affirmed by an erudite Indian Lawmaker and India's former minister of state for external affairs in while reviewing *The Collaborator* in his article titled "What the Brook Saw: A Need for Pathetic Fallacy". He contends "As a writer myself I found myself with much to admire and value in Mirza Waheed's first novel, *The Collaborator*; but as an Indian politician I found it impossible not to feel profound discomfort with the political sympathies the work seeks to evoke." (Throor, March 7, 2011, Outlook India). The political sympathies this work brings out causing distress to one of the erudite and liberal India lawmaker ought to be further investigated and examined to understand as to how this work is rooted in the politics.

First and foremost, the narrative places the Kashmiri public at the receiving end in the face of repression perpetrated by Indian security forces. By depicting scenes of dead bodies of Kashmiri fighters, archiving the violent occurrences, environment of fear among the Kashmiris, stewing hatred against Indian state and its military, the work seeks to stimulate sympathies for Kashmiris. All this explains how cruelly they are being murdered; the trauma and agony their parents and kinsmen undergo. The depiction of all the macabre details and plight of common Kashmiris in *The Collaborator* evokes readers' sympathies for the ill-

fated populace of Jammu and Kashmir.

The passing scenes depicted in *The Collaborator*, the horrendous massacres graphically depicted in the narrative belies the India's state version that the unrest in Jammu and Kashmir is an issue of law and order and it were a modest bunch of youth reprobating within the valley. India also claims that the bigger populace of the valley are comfortable with India, as is reflected through participation of the populace in the state assembly elections. Their franchise, according to India's official claim, is tantamount to accept Kashmir's accession to India. But that as it may, all the Kashmiri characters in *The Collaborator* harbor solid hatred against India's occupation of Jammu and Kashmir and the stifling and suffocation they are experiencing over the past seven decades.

The story setting and backdrop of the novel also politicize the narrative. The setting is a bordering village on the LoC and the context which informs and shapes the novel is the post-1989 developments in J&K. This was the phase when Kashmir was entangled in killings, violence, disappearances of the youth, establishment of torture centres in the valley, using rape as a weapon to sap the will of the Kashmiris, human rights abuses of all sorts. Moreover, the Line of Control being the setting of the novel holds political significance as it coercively separates Kashmiri families on both sides of the line.

The significance of the setting is rationalized by the author himself in an interview:

The Collaborator was literally, physically and figuratively set on the border, where there is a line of fracture, political, geographic and historic — a ridiculous faultline that cuts through our land and divides our people. That is also where the rebellion against the Indian government started in the 1990s and there were many killings. So I set my first novel there. (Wani, 2014).

So the portrayal of post-1989 Kashmir from the viewpoint of a common Kashmiri, archiving the blatant human rights violations, portraying pain, trauma and the agony an common Kashmiri undergoes, India's annexation of Jammu and Kashmir through military might, the militancy factor, the part played by the Indian army Pakistan's spy offices and Kashmiris quest for freedom make this narrative a political statement and a politicized act.

5.2 Factual Fiction

Factual fiction is the key characteristic of all the resistance narratives. Unlike representing the universal themes through anecdotal imaginary tales, narratives of resistance portrays the real incidents. The setting and social milieu, characters, places and incidents in *The Collaborator* are derived from the sociopolitical milieu developed in the aftermath of 1989 in Jammu and Kashmir. These incidents seem to have been incorporated in the novel to represent the sociopolitical realities of Jammu and Kashmir. *The Collaborator*, in this context where fact and fiction are interwoven could be a classic case to be studied.

Though the novelist Miza Waheed gives a disclaimer note at the start of his work, stating that the narrative is a fictional work. “Names, characters, places and incidents either are the product of the author’s imagination or are used entirely fictitiously” (Waheed, p. vi), the careful reading of the narrative suggests the contrary. The settings, characters, places and incidents are so entrenched in post-1989 Kashmir that drawing a demarcation between real and imaginary, fact and fiction is hard to discern. They are closely intertwined. While giving the public reading of the novel in Srinagar the author’s claim for its work as entirely fiction draws upon the fictitious tales was questioned when “one could hear sobs constantly being unsuccessfully stifled by many in the audience.” (Ahmed, December 26, 2011) Zamir Ahmad, Mirza Waheed’s friend since the childhood observed:

Waheed, fortunately for us, launched his book here in Kashmir. While he was reading from the book, one could hear sobs constantly being unsuccessfully stifled by many in the audience. Waheed, like Aga Shahid, has ardent fans all over the world but their works would draw tears from our eyes alone. The rest of the world may marvel at their creativity but only we will know what that means to us. And to them as well. For the world may remember “Rizwan” as the young man, the news of whose death at the border, Shahid could not break to his father. But only we know who Rizwan was. Yes, I still remember him as our illustrious senior in the college. And I remember what his sudden death meant to us and his friends. (Ahmed, December 26, 2011)

The combination of fact and fiction is displayed and permeated all through the novel. The setting of the narrative, the construction of real life characters, significant signposts, real places from the valley and Jammu and the important incidents took place in Kashmir during 1990s have been incorporated in the

narrative. These aspects reflect the fact-fiction fusion in the narrative.

The choice of Nowgam for the setting of the novel seems to be made by the author to spotlight the fact as to how common Kashmiri youth surreptitiously sneak into the other side of the Line of Control to get military training from the camps in Azad Kashmir to fight against India's occupation of their homeland. The author has carefully chosen this town for the setting of the novel, indicating the matter of fact illustration regarding cross LoC intrusion from the Pakistani side of the line and signifying the role usually played by the Gujjar community. It is one of the largest bases of the military units of the Indian army. This fact is signified in the novel when Captain Kadian, an Indian Army officer stationed in Kashmir, told the protagonist, signifying Nowgam military base "this is one of the biggest sectors and, as you know. Very popular with the sneaky bastards" (Waheed, 2011: 10). Additionally, *The Collaborator* also mentions the weather factor, which is an established fact, in the rise and fall of the movement of the fighters on the LoC. Their movement decrease in the winter because of heavy snow falling whereas it increases in the summer. This factual factor is mentioned in the novel: "The numbers just decrease marginally during the winters, my winter" (Waheed, 2011:10).

The people residing in border towns particularly the Gujjar Community are considered to have an intriguing role. For instance, some individuals of such towns either gotten to be guides for the fighters crossing the LoC or lead them to their desired destination while some other individuals moreover play the part of sources for the Indian armed forces and India's intelligence agencies. The Gujjar clan residing in this town is widely known for this work in Kashmir. They are guides by trade for the fighters. The representation of the town in *The Collaborator* reflects the matter of the fact illustration.

Similarly, the characters in the narrative are derived from the real life of post-1989 Kashmir. The tale of four teenaged boys Muhammad, Hussain, Ashfaq and Gul is the account of every young Kashmiri during the decade of 1990. They are not the individuals who have either been ideologically indoctrinated or sent by any external element as its proxies to take up arms; instead they were the common Kashmiri youth, angered and aggrieved by the human rights abuses of Indian army. Zamir Ahmed, a childhood friend of Mirza Waheed, observes this phenomenon:

I'd heard stories of young men- excited, idealistic teenagers; hurt, angry boys,

wronged by police or army action; vengeful brothers with raped sisters and mothers at home; firebrand youth leaders conjuring up paradisiacal visions of freedom and an independent Kashmir—had been leaving home everywhere and joining the Movement by walking the perilous walk across the border to receive arms and training and return as militants as freedom fighters. (Ahmed, December 26, 2011)

The novel also portrays the trend prevailing among the youth in the bordering village of Jammu and Kashmir. The protagonist hailing from a border village factually captures this trends in these words:

In the years after I grew up, some of the boys either become guides and clandestinely scouted city boys across the border, into training camps in Pakistan, or became militants themselves to relive their parents of their yoke of shepherds' lives and give them proper homes Kashmir gain independence. (Waheed, 2011: 7)

The Collaborator, through another representative character of the bordering village of Nowgam, Shaban Khatana further illustrates this trends of frequent crossing over the LoC , saying “He’s the man whose sons have been going back and forth (Waheed, 2011: 57).”

Other than delineating factual characterization and setting, the real occurrences in Jammu and Kashmir in the aftermath of the mass uprising, factual reference points and real places are also mentioned within the novel.

The author refers “Catch and Kill” (p.7); it was the policy launched in Jammu and Kashmir in August 1992 to summarily execute the militants. Hundreds of Kashmiri fighters especially those associated with Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front were killed under this policy (Bose: 128).

Similarly, there was another significant incident took place in the valley and incorporated in *The Collaborator*: The incident of Rubaiyya Saeed. “Rubaiyya Saeed... was still in the captivity of those daring JKLF militants” (Waheed, 2011: 81). She was the daughter of a Kashmiri politician Mufti Muhammad Saeed who was the India’s Home Minister at that time (December 1989- November 1990). She was abducted by JKLF members on December 8, 1989 and released later on December 13, 1989 as a quid pro quo for the five detained militants by the Indian army.

The novel also specifically mentions the names of three key members of JKLF: Hamid Sheikh, Ashfaq Majid Wani, and Yasin Malik. These three members were part of the four-member dubbed as HAJY group. The acronym refers to the names of all four: Sheikh Hameed, Ashfaq Majeed Wani, Javed Mir and Yasin Malik. This group is widely known in Kashmir for launching armed struggle in the valley against Indian occupation of Jammu and Kashmir.

I saw myself with a rebel beard, the kind Ashfaq Majid Wani and Hamid Sheikh and Yasin Malik sported – not too long, not too short – and I would wear a green brimmed cap, a fatigue jacket too, sunglasses even ... but which group would I join? JKLF, I guess; they were smart, cool. (Waheed, 2011:114)

Likewise, the novel also draws a comparison between the BBC and Doordarshan, the two media outlets, for their coverage of day to day happenings in Kashmir of post-1989. During the 1990s people of Kashmir would be glued to the BBC for the neutral coverage and its reporter Yousaf Jameel was the household name throughout Jammu and Kashmir. Doordarshan, on the other hand would be considered the mouthpiece of the government of India by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmiris would take its coverage with the pinch of salt for its partisan coverage. This trend among the people of Kashmir during 1990s was factually captured in *The Collaborator*:

I wake up to Baba's Philips Jai Jawan transistor croaking over a bad-frequency BBC news broadcast. A presenter introduces the day's news. Yusuf Jameel will soon rattle off a list of casualties across the valley and read out statements from the Hizb, the JKLF, the Army and the Governor. He is at least better than those puppets on Doordarshan. (Waheed, 2011: 110)

5.2.1 Real Incidents in *The Collaborator*

Likewise, the novel also includes numerous real incidents which took place in Kashmir. The Kunanposhpura mass rape, occurred on February 23, 1991, was one such incident in which around one hundred women were gang raped by the soldiers of Indian army. "It is reported that at least 100 women were gang raped by the soldiers that night. Human rights organizations including Human Rights Watch asserts the number to be as high as 150" (Human Rights Watch Report, 1991:13–20).

Such real incidents are not referred to *The Collaborator* in a passing manner or in an exaggerated manner; but they have been narrated in the novel the way they have been documented in the press or reported by the independent human rights watchdogs during the time of their happenings. The novel captures this factual information and so graphically narrated that it sounds that the author of the novel might have gathered the information from the victims or their close kinsmen, for his description corroborates the findings of the independent organizations and the interviews of some victims appeared in Kashmiri press. *The Collaborator* represents in these words:

All the boys from Poshpur are gone, gone, no one left in the village, it's empty now, all empty! It's all happening, dear, happening everywhere.' Noor Khan, our ragtag village grocer and inveterate gossip, retold, for the hundredth time perhaps, during one of my routine tobacco-shopping trips, the story of the sixteen boys (some said twenty, some thirty) who had apparently disappeared together a few weeks ago from the nearest village down in the big Valley, soon after all the women there had been raped in a night-long raid by Indian soldiers. People in my village had been emphasizing 'all the women' as if to suggest that if it had been only a few women it might not have been so bad. (Waheed, 2011:24-25).

Besides including Kununposhpura incident of gang rape, the novel also mentions another horrendous massacre known as Gawkadal Massacre, occurred on January 21, 1990 in Gawkadal, Srinagar.

To suppress the mass uprising in Jammu and Kashmir, Jagmohan was appointed as the governor of the State. And on his directives, the security forces conducted a search and cordon off house-to-house operation in Chotta Bazar, downtown Srinagar between the intervening night of 20th and 21st January, 1990. People had been dragged out of their places during the biting winter nights of the valley during the operation. No militant was traced during the operation but the Indian military had molested several Kashmiri women. Daily *Alsafa News* on January 21, 1990. "Reported that almost 1000 people were arrested, and women and children were dragged out of their beds during the night, resulting in chaos and tension in the area. The daily had quoted the locals alleging forces of molesting women under the garb of search operations".

In the wake of the incident, a number of protest demonstration took place on January 21, 1990 in different parts of the valley. Of them, a demonstration

staged at Gawakadal Bridge demanding action against the perpetrator of the incidents was quelled by the brute use of force by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), leaving 52 people dead.

The novel graphically illustrates this matter of fact illustration by including the actual place and timing when and where the incident took place; as to how the CRPF opened fire on the peaceful protesters and how the bullet torn bodies of the demonstrators were huddled in the trucks. All this description is not just closer to reality, it is just a plain depiction of the incident the way it happened. *The Collaborator* incorporates the catastrophe in these words.

The Daily Toll said at least a hundred people had been killed on the Gaw Kadal deBridge in the heart of Srinagar. People had been killed, massacred, in broad daylight on the GawKadal Bridge deBridge in the heart of Srinagar on the River Jhelum, their bullet-torn bodies either heaped up on the polished grey macadam of the bridge or thrown into the backs of CRPF trucks. (Waheed, 2016:116).

5.2.2 Tribal Invasion of 1947

In 1947, the volunteers from tribal areas invaded to liberate Kashmir which turned out to be a historical event in freedom struggle. When the uprising erupted against the Maharaja, fighters from tribal areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which was then called NWFP came to help the freedom fighters in their struggle against Hari Singh's rule and penetrated as deep as Srinagar. This invasion was eventful and it triggered debates amongst Kashmiris. Some hold that it was where the Maharaja got pushed to India providing an excuse for Indian intervention and consequently, India landed its troops at Srinagar. Others believe that Maharaja had made up his mind to accede to India before tribal invasion in 22 October, 1947. Nonetheless, the occurrences of ransack were reported in some areas and many Kashmiris believe in the incidents. The same incidents are referred to in *The Collaborator* as alleged.

In 1947 they went almost all the way down to Srinagar, but what happened then? Nothing! Nothing but *lootmaar*, rape ... and they torched every single thing they could on the way. (Waheed, 2011:27)

5.2.3 Militancy in Kashmir

The Collaborator precisely discusses the background of militancy in Kashmir effectively highlighting the state of mind of the young Kashmiris and how the

armed struggle against India gathers momentum. The two major indigenous militant outfits of Jammu and Kashmir--Hizbul Mujahideen and JKLF were in the forefronts of the armed resistance and *The Collaborator* alludes to their methods of getting their recruits. "The major recruitment of the militants was carried out in Srinagar and its adjoining areas. The border areas were not usually focused for the recruitment".

This is how the recruits are actually received since in the peak time of armed resistance, it was found that some Kashmiris were playing the role of double agents. The organizers of armed struggle thought that young people from border areas were not worthy of trust and they could collaborate with Indian army.

The truth is that I had actually believed, quite naïvely I must say, that not many people from among us would want to join the Movement, and that no militant group, neither the Liberation Front nor the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, and none of the grandly named latest ones either, would want to come here, because for most people Gujjars were seen to be always on the move, shifting from place to place; and anyway, who would care about a small secluded community living in this tiny, sparse hamlet hidden in the midst of the mighty hills near the border with Pakistan. (Waheed, 2011: 25)

5.2.4 Counterinsurgency operation: Catch and Kill

Ever since the armed struggle began in Kashmir, it got popular with the indigenous youth and they started joining in great numbers despite killings and detentions. To eliminate the freedom fighters, India authorities pursued *Catch and Kill* strategy that became the order of the day in early 1990s. This happening got reflected in *The Collaborator*.

Because the young Kashmiris were the main contributors to the armed struggle, Indian military saw them as the major threat to its occupation, therefore, Indian military massacred them and this fact has been documented by the author of *The Collaborator*. As a matter of the fact reference, factual events reported as such in *The Collaborator* is the employment of an unusual strategy that has not been employed so far in the resistance literature.

My friends, *all* my friends, went away too, and God only knows if they will ever come back. Not, many do, you see, and those who do, don't live very long here. Because the army people, the protectors of the land, have

decided that there is only one way of dealing with the boys: Catch and kill. (Waheed, 2011:7).

While the youth were at the forefront of the armed struggle in Kashmir, they were the major target of Catch and Kill policy which has been factually described by the author.

The mention of all these factual accounts of Kashmir's struggle in the novel suggests that *The Collaborator* carries an important literary strategy which is peculiar to resistance literature.

5.3 Symbolism in The Collaborator

As held by Harlow, accounts of resistance put side by side the figurative and real-life events at once and diverts the attention to the multifarious depiction of the truth (Hussain, 2003:22). Furthermore, *The Collaborator*, by using representative accounts alludes to Indian aggression and repression. For instance, the red colour of the chair which is used by Captain Kadian symbolizes the blood being spilled across the state of Kashmir by the occupying Indian military.

Again in the Chapter "Hussain and I" the central character narrates that it was his very first visit to the mount of Sorrow, our mountain of grief or Koh-i-Gham (Waheed, 2011:2).

Hussain had gone missing once before, years ago, in the deep forest not very far from ShabanKhatana's home. We had gone there together but I had left him to get back in time for Baba's teatime curfew. Baba had only allowed me to go on the condition that I would be home before the evening tea. We were twelve years old. The year was 1986. There were two main attractions to the expedition – it was my first ever trip into the mountain of sorrow, our Koh-i-Gham (Waheed, 2011:2).

The mount of sorrow invokes the feeling of distress and utter grief hanging over the state Jammu & Kashmir due to a prolonged persecution, mourning, destruction and apathy of mankind. Moreover, it refers to the youth who have been forcefully disappeared, are suffering in Indian prisons or have rendered the ultimate sacrifice in quest of freedom instead of surrendering to the forces of oppression since 1989. In all these circumstances, their families are under perpetual agony and sorrowfulness. Half mothers as they are called are those mothers whose sons have been missing without trace and half widows are those

unfortunate wives whose husbands have been disappeared without clue whether they are dead or alive.

Likewise, golden papier-mâché platter strewn with bullets of all shapes and hues (Waheed, 2011:17) are suggestive of the valley hacked with bullets of the oppressors far and wide. The art of papier-mâché patterned with bullets has been alluded to in a roundabout way to stand for Kashmiri identity and culture and the tray or platter is the valley that is undergoing constant tyranny and usurpation insinuating the extreme violence being faced by the Kashmiris at the hands of their tormentors and oppressors since long.

While describing the room the protagonist says that “there is a long window at the back but it’s always covered with thick curtains, military blankets perhaps, so you can’t see what’s behind the office”(p.5). The military blanket and thick curtains are suggestive of the military cover and iron curtain fallen around the valley shutting the rest of the world outside, not letting the world have any access to genocidal raids of Indian army and crimes of all types being perpetrated against Kashmiris. There is a complete concealment of the facts from the world so that the world remains ignorant what is happening inside Kashmir.

In such an emblematic allusion, the author calls Kashmiri women as “curfew mothers” and also “curfew women” (Waheed, 2011: 182), signifying that women in Kashmir are the helpless preys in the whole conflict which is the worst in the contemporary world. The conflict is endlessly consuming their offspring so their sufferings are much beyond any description. Human tragedy is increasing every day in Kashmir in such terms and proportions that human beings and human relations are losing their usual identity.

5.3 Historical Referencing

Resistance literature is also distinguished by its characteristic feature of historicity. To engage with history is an important aspect of this kind of literature. Barbara Harlow sees historical referencing as essential to resistance literature as it has the capacity to carry the weight of historical knowledge. She writes: “Essential ... to the narratives of resistance is the demand they make on the reader in their historical referencing and the burden of historical knowledge such referencing enjoins” (Harlow, 1987, p. 80). Resistance literature’s use of history is a way of seeking readers’ commitment to history and whatever it keeps. In doing this, it also helps to preserve the past of a nation and the national cultural values. The history the resistance fiction or poetry document comes with the

perspective of the oppressed. It offers a counter narrative to the powerful narratives of the oppressors which are stronger and more effective as they come with the might of the states.

Kashmiri literature in English is written in a particular historical context and therefore engages with a range of historical events. Kashmir's recent past has been violently eventful. History makes an important aspect of this literature. It enriches the plot by sequencing events in a logical way. Some of the key historical events are the ready reference points for the Kashmiris and their oppressors. At times, it is a point in time that carries significant load of history. 1989, for instance, like 1967 in the context of Palestine, is a point in time when the struggle of Kashmiris triggered with a mass public uprising that was supplemented by armed resistance that renewed their old will to challenge the occupying state for continued oppression of over decades.

Each of the texts under study refers to multiple past events. For example, in *The Collaborator* the land reforms, considered "arguably the most successful land redistribution programme in the subcontinent, implemented in the early 1950s by the NC government under *Sheikh Abdullah*" (Contesting Justice in South Asia, p. 171) echo as the narrator states:

As Baba put it, they had not been able to 'improve their chances' the way most other families in Nowgam had after Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah's provision of free land and development funds in the seventies for small Gujjar communities which had settled down on pasturelands in the mountains after centuries of an uncertain nomadic life. While most people of my father's generation had then worked hard to assume a more sedentary life, building houses, procuring smallholdings of land while also adding to their livestock, Hussain's father, the humble Khadim Hussain, was given more to a spiritual life, and, most recently, to spending a lot of his time in the newly completed mosque he had helped build over the last year – the first concrete mosque in our parts. (Waheed, 2011, p. 25)

In Pakistan, a political agitation movement called *Nizam-e-Mustafa* was introduced by the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), the conglomerate of nine political parties, in opposition to the policies of the then ruling party Pakistan People's Party. The PNA used Islamization of all institutions and implementation of Sharia law as their election slogan. Despite the fact that this was a movement in Pakistan, it had its impact on Kashmir. *The Collaborator* alludes to this movement by gauging its impact on Kashmir's sociopolitical milieu: "And

gradually, the distant cries of *Nizam-e-Mustafa* started echoing in our secluded passes as well” (Waheed, 2011, p. 26).

Harlow believes that resistance literature is immediately situated within a specific historical context and liberation struggle. This is true for Kashmiri literature as well. Two historical events that repeatedly make their way in it are the 1947 partition of Kashmir and 1989 mass uprising of the Kashmiri people. Some of the other past events are also fictionalized in the novel. For instance, characters’ quest for freedom since 1947 and Sheikh Abdullah’s arrest due to his alienation with India. The historical intertexts of the novel demand readers to learn a perspective that the statist history would do every effort to hide.

This specificity of history that the novel foregrounds makes the Kashmiri readers to identify themselves with the narrative and the non-Kashmiri readers of a Kashmiri narrative receive an alternative history on Kashmir. These novels make those events accessible to their readers which are already a part of Kashmiris’ collective memory.

5.5 Knowledge-Power Paradigm and Resistance

It is a fact that most of the narratives that contribute to a resistance movement are created in a Knowledge-Power paradigm. *The Collaborator* was also written amidst a structure of power, managing to challenge statist narrative of India and proffer a range of alternate perspectives which reflect the sentiments of Kashmiris. In the battlefield of knowledge and power, *The Collaborator* might not be a paradigm changing work, but it produces a knowledge that the common Kashmiris can readily understand and identify with. This executes this task of successfully representing Kashmiris’ worldview by showing them as a nation caught up between the two countries, India and Pakistan, their strong desire for freedom from Indian occupation, and resentment against their constant oppression. The novel also imparts new historical facts quite contrary to the ones advanced by India as a state. The official Indian narrative is mentioned in the chapter titled “The Governor’s Gifts”, through a speech delivered by the Governor Jammu and Kashmir on India’s Republic Day (January 26)

My dear brothers and sisters, let me tell you something ... The bond between Kashmir and Mother India is based not just on your king Maharaja Hari Singh’s Instrument of Accession and the articles and clauses of India’s great constitution; it is held together by far more tenacious and lasting forces that neither the convulsions, tribulations and

tremors of history, nor the anarchy and cynicism of contemporary politics, can break up! (Waheed, 2011: 147)

This bond referred by the governor, the representative of the Indian government in Kashmir, which held Kashmir and Mother together and being termed as tenacious and lasting is challenged with the very production of *The Collaborator* advancing the perspective that the people of Kashmir are facing deaths torture and perennial agony by Indian security forces. The author, in the same chapter “The Governor’s Gifts”, terms him, “The King of Curfew himself” (p. 227), suggesting Indian government’s approach to impose a curfew on the population which do not seem aligned with them. In another chapter titled “The Street”, Waheed depicts a street protest, chanting slogans:

Azadi.
 Azadi.
 Azadi!
 Freedom.
 Pakistan Zindabad.
 Hindustan Murdabad. Indian dogs, go back. Indian dogs, go back!
 Hum kyachahte?
 Azadi!
 Go back, go back!
 Indian dogs, go back!
 Azadi!
 What do we want?
 Freedom.
 Freedom, freedom! (Waheed, 2011, 112)

There was a widespread wave of such protest demonstrations throughout the valley, as mentioned in the narrative: “The wave had swept all of Kashmir and finally reached our village, in some force, the forgotten last village before the border” (pp.175-176). The trend and upsurge was so rife and permeated throughout the valley that the protagonist working with the Indian army voiced his deep rooted desire to identify himself with this popular surge. “I wanted to join their cacophonous, hypnotic chanting from our house, to respond to their roof-beating with a slamming of my own. But I feared Baba” (pp. 175-176). So this widespread upsurge of the people challenge the India’s state discourse constructed to perpetuate its power in Jammu and Kashmir.

5.6 Representing Collectivity

Representing collectivity is a significant feature of all the resistance narratives. (Harlow, 1987: 119). The characters in the narratives do not just stand for themselves, they are representative in nature and signify the larger community they belong to. Allaham (2009), in his study titled *The Short Story as Form of Resistance: A Study of the Short Stories of Ghassan Kanafani, Ngugi wa Thiong and Alice Walker* further elucidates the defining trend of collectivity shared by all the narratives of resistance:

People's collective relationship to the cause they are fighting for, to the land they live on, and to the national identity they share makes collectivity an essential feature of resistance literature as it calls for a collective action to achieve the political, social and economic changes it struggles for. (Allaham, 2009).

While representing collectivity, *The Collaborator* portrays the post-1989 picture of Jammu and Kashmir. It graphically represents India's occupying framework in Jammu and Kashmir, representative state measures to quell and crush the people's uprising through catch and kill operation, using rape as a weapon by the state, engaging local Kashmiris as collaborators and informers for Indian army, Kashmiri youth in romance with the gun and different sections of Kashmiri society have been represented through different characters. Captain Kadian, the key character in the novel, signifies Indian Army's role in Kashmir.

Similarly, the nameless protagonist in *The Collaborator* is also a representative character, suggesting as to how some Kashmiri youth have been engaged by the Indian military and India's spy agencies to get their help in counter insurgency operations. They work as the reluctant collaborators and the informers. Like the protagonist of *The Collaborator*, they face a perpetual internal conflict while working for India's agencies but they seemingly agree to play this role for fear of death or protecting their kinsmen from being abused and exploited by the Indian military.

In the similar fashion, the four young characters in the novel, Hussain, Gul, Muhammad and Ashfaq are not fictional characters, constructed to advance the story of *The Collaborator*. Instead, they are derived from real life in Kashmir and representative in nature. The four teenaged boys are the representative characters of the Kashmiri young boys during 1990s and reflects collectively the resentment and aspirations of the young section of Kashmiri society. Their stories are shared

and identified by every young Kashmiri of post-1989 phase. They were deeply infuriated over India's occupation and rights abuses in Kashmir, had developed romance with gun and fostered strong quest to seek liberation through the guerilla warfare.

So, the representation of collectivity reflected through delineation of representative characters, tends to link *The Collaborator* with other forms of resistance narratives.

5.7 The Choice of Language

The choice of language by the authors for composing their resistance stories is an important literary strategy that serves the political purpose of the narrative. Harlow (1987) says:

[...] the very choice of the language in which to compose is itself a political statement on the part of the writer and will need to be considered in each case, from author to author, country to country. The debate on language is crucial to a discussion of resistance literature, involving as it does questions of writer and background as well as issues of readership and audience. (p. xviii)

It appears that the choice of language to compose *The Collaborator* is fundamentally made to tell the world the story of Kashmiri community to the worldwide community as well as the concerned global quarters. The purpose seems to stir the conscience of the global community and tell the world the firsthand account of the sufferings of Kashmiris and their yearning to get freedom from India's annexation and suppression.

On the one hand the author seeks to get attention of the global readership and audience by writing the narrative in English language, on the other, the narrative also asserts distinct Kashmir's cultural identity through appropriation and indigenization of English with words, expressions and cultural symbols of Kashmiri society. The few such words include "khraaw" (wooden slippers), "pyjama" and "pheran" (12), "gold papier-mache", "Salt tea", "samovar" (p. 43), "rajmah" (p. 83), "old chowki" (p. 81) and "challah" (p. 81).

5.8 Conditions of Production of Resistance Literature

All resistance narratives are produced in a certain material conditions and dynamics. These conditions predominantly shape the narratives and serve as the essential driving force behind these works. The Third World Literature, as surveyed by Harlow, suggest that the peculiar material conditions of the Third World primarily contribute to bring out such works which are termed as resistance narratives. For instance, Palestinian writer Kanafani's works are largely shaped by Israel's occupation of Palestine including the annexation of the West Bank, Jordan River and Golan Heights. Similarly, resistance narratives produced in South Africa, Latin America, Mozambique, Nicaragua and other such regions were also formed and influenced by the material conditions therein.

The Collaborator, also seems to be linked with this tradition of the Third World, for it has been mainly shaped by the material conditions developed in Jammu and Kashmir especially those developed following the year 1989. These material conditions were marked by the political uprising and armed struggle against India's Occupation of Kashmir, the extension of governor rule in Kashmir, imposition of the laws such Prevention of Terrorist Act (POTA), Troubled Areas Act (TADA), Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), Public Safety Act (PSA) by India, establishment of torture cells such as Papa 1 and Papa 2 in the valley, the dislocation of Kashmiri Pandits and Pakistan's support to the freedom fighter against Indian state repression in Kashmir. All these dynamics could be termed as the material conditions shaping the novel. So it could be argued that Waheed's work is not largely formed and fashioned by the universal themes the general human experiences rather Waheed's narrative: *The Collaborator* is essentially rooted, formed, shaped and influenced by the conditions in which it is emerged.

6. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the post-1989 Anglophone Kashmir literature is predominantly featured with the defining parameters and representative characteristics of resistance literature. The study of *The Collaborator*, a representative text of the newly evolving post-1989 Anglophone Kashmiri literature, suggests that the work shares the dominant trends of resistance narrative and is mainly shaped by the characteristics common among the resistance narratives. The study was fundamentally conducted to decipher the literary strategies of resistance employed in *The Collaborator* and to understand that to what extent this narrative challenges and resists the India's state claims

about Jammu and Kashmir. The most significant literary strategy, which is common among all the resistance narrative, employed in the novel is the politicization of the novel. The novel not only locates in the political context of Kashmir dispute and post-1989 Kashmir, but it also identifies itself with an ordinary Kashmiri and can be taken as a political statement against Indian occupation of Jammu and Kashmir and use of military might to suppress Kashmiris quest for freedom. The other literary strategies employed in the work include the fusion of fact and fiction to capture the real depiction of post-1989 Kashmir, the historical, ideological and material dynamics shaping the current state of affairs in Kashmir, reclaiming Kashmir's peaceful past, the use of symbolism signifying India's oppression in Kashmir, representing the collective sentiments of the whole Kashmiri community and asserting distinct Kashmiri identity may make this case as a the representative case of resistance narrative.

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