Turning away by not considering “The Fathers”: Anglophone Kashmiri Literature coined with “Writing Back”

Abstract:

"Necropolitical Kashmir" investigates the ways in which post-2000 Anglophone writing from Kashmir, the Indian region at the focus of an armed separatist struggle, mediates decolonization. The paper focuses on vivid literary works: “My Days in Prison” by Iftikhar Gilani, “Curfewed Night” by Basharat Peer, “The Collaborator” and “The Book of Gold Leaves” by Mirza Waheed, “The Half Mother” by Shahnaz Bashir, and “Life in the Clock Tower Valley” by Shakoor Rather are a few notable autobiographical/fictional works that are ideologically in favor of a separate nationhood for Kashmir. “A Bit of Everything” by Sandeep Raina, “Kashmiri Pandits' Under the Shadow of Militancy” by Tej N. Dhar, “The Garden of Solitude” by Siddhartha Gigoo, “Kashmir: Nativity Regained” by Ashok K. Kaul, “Our Moon Has Blood Clots” by Rahul Pandita, and “Firdaus in Flames” by H.K. Kaul Malik Sajad's graphic novel “Munnu”: A Boy from Kashmir. By examining texts that depict civil unrest, militarization, insurgency, trauma, human rights violations, and mortality in the conflict zone of Kashmir, this research seeks to broaden the scope of postcolonial excellence. The base of literary interpretation of the works on two basic questions. How do postcolonial writers resist necropolitics and neo-colonialism by fusing politics, ethics, and aesthetics? What connections exist between post humanism and post human knowledge and modern postcolonial literature and theory? More broadly, this research aims to bring Kashmiri new English literature on state oppression to the forefront of the English literary canon. This essay is a two-pronged polemic against neocolonialism: (a) against necropolitics and state violence, like the Indian state's militarized siege of Kashmir; and (b) against the epistemic violence of canonization, which leaves important postcolonial works like Munnu marginalized in the English canon. In an effort to address these concerns, this thesis explains how writers from Kashmir, such as Mirza Waheed and Malik Sajad, are bringing in a new wave of Anglophone Indian writers by extending the canon of postcolonial writing, which is best represented by the writings of Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy. Modern masterpieces like “The Collaborator” and “Munnu” are innovative because they combine a strong political voice to address postcolonial themes like border conflicts and state-sponsored violence with a subtle depiction of post-independence India's ups and downs.

Anglophone Kashmiri Literature:

Early in the 20th century, the Jammu-based Dogra regime's economic mistreatment of Kashmiri Muslim peasants sparked the start of the nationalism movement in that region. After gaining traction in the 1930s, the organization forged a political alliance with the Indian National Congress and led the Indian nationalist movement's resistance against the British colonial government. As the British Empire withdrew from the subcontinent, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was established and the Dogra kingdom was dissolved. by the Instrument of Accession, which Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir signed, joined the Indian Union in 1947. During the pivotal period of the Indian subcontinent's cartographic restructuring, the popular politician Sheikh Abdullah of the National Conference advocated for Kashmir's inclusion. The fight of Kashmir against the Indian state was led by its nationalism by the middle of the 1950s. With the founding of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) in 1977 by Amanullah Khan and Maqbool Bhatt, Kashmiri nationalism took a violent turn. With widespread public backing in the Kashmir valley, the self-determination movement in Kashmir has evolved since 1989 into a full-fledged armed insurgency. Even if there was less militancy in the valley by the turn of the century, it gave rise to new kinds of civil disobedience, including as large-scale rallies in the streets and stone-

throwing at images of the Indian state, like Indian army soldiers, etc. Article 370 and article 35 A of the Indian Constitution were recently revoked in August 2019, and the state was demoted to a union territory. The political fallout from these events is still being felt. Kashmiri nationalism, seeking to forge a unique identity and territory for itself, became entangled in the power struggle between the two beleaguered nation governments, India and Pakistan, and their disparate, nearly diametrically opposed forms of official nationalism. Eminent scholar, Ashutosh Varshney stated that, "At its core, the Kashmir problem is a result of three forces: religious nationalism represented by Pakistan, secular nationalism epitomized by India, and ethnic nationalism embodies in what Kashmiris call Kashmiriyat (being a Kashmiri). Internal inconsistencies, contradictions, and paradoxes mark all tree." The movement of Kashmiri nationalism is diverse, employing a range of political tactics and not always aiming for a single objective, rather than being a cohesive force led by a single organization. Kashmiri literature has developed into a "arena of struggle" in this highly politicized sociopolitical context, where literary narratives by Kashmiri Pandits, non-Kashmiri Indians, and Indian army personnel validate Indian claims on Kashmir, while pro-Azadi Anglophone Kashmiri literature supports Kashmiri claims of Azadi. The literary works of Anglophone Kashmiri authors are nearly invariably overshadowed by the political landscape of the beleaguered valley. The challenging responsibility of portraying an armed conflict in media res for a polarized public sphere and a widely dispersed reading public made up of stakeholders with competing interests and political/national connections falls to Kashmiri Anglophone literature.

British Authors in Kashmiri Anglophone Literature:

An Anglophone literary corpus of its own has been developed by the Kashmir war. Literature from both Indian and foreign authors has fictionalized the 1948 Kabaili invasion. "The Scarlet Sword", written by British novelist H.E. Bates, honors the corruption and destruction of St. Joseph's Mission in Baramullah during that period. Andrew Whitehead claims that although Alan Moorehead's tale is set in Kandahar, his 1948 novel "The Rage of the Vulture" is also based on the Kabaili invasion of Baramullah. "Death of a Hero: Epitaph for Maqbool Sherwani", written by Mulk Raj Anand in 1963, is an ode to Maqbool Sherwani's valiant attempts to keep the invaders out of Srinagarii. Being the first Indian English novel dedicated exclusively to the job of portraying Kashmir as an integral component of the post-colonial Indian state, Death of a Hero is a momentous work of literature. "Kashmir Per Hamla" by Krishna Mehta was translated into English and released by Signet Press, Calcutta in 1954. It was first published in Hindi by the Sasta Sahitya Mandal, Government of India. It is the sole literary depiction of the 1948 Kashmir scenario authored by a Kashmiri, and it was just brought back to life in 2005 as Kashmir, "1947: A Survivor's Story" published by Penguin. The corpus is important for political reasons even though it is not very large. These stories are still the only ones that fictionalize Kashmir at the time of its political upheaval and assimilation into the Indian nation. This corpus pales in comparison to the literary accounts of the armed struggle that international writers, Kashmiris, and non-Kashmiri Indians have been producing since the 1990s. Many Indian English books that depict the armed insurgency in Kashmir are preceded by Vikram Chandra's 2000 book The Srinagar Conspiracy.

The explosion of Anglophone Kashmiri literature followed the armed rebellion.

"My Days in Prison" by Iftikhar Gilani, "Curfewed Night" by Basharat Peer, "The Collaborator" and "The Book of Gold Leaves" by Mirza Waheed, "The Half Mother" by Shahnaz Bashir, and "Life in the Clock Tower Valley" by Shakoor Rather are a few notable autobiographical/fictional works that are ideologically in favor of a separate nationhood for Kashmir. "A Bit of Everything" by Sandeep Raina, "Kashmiri Pandits' Under the Shadow of Militancy" by Tej N. Dhar, "The Garden of Solitude" by Siddhartha Gigoo, "Kashmir: Nativity Regained" by Ashok K. Kaul, "Our Moon Has Blood Clots" by

Rahul Pandita, and “Firdaus in Flames” by H.K. Kaul are just a few of the Anglophone Kashmiri literature, though most of it is critical of the Kashmiri movement for self-determination. There are numerous edited volumes that include essays and short stories that have been published. Examples of these are of Occupation and Resistance: “Writings from Kashmir” edited by Fahad Shah and “Until My Liberation Has Come: The New Intifada in Kashmir” edited by Sanjay Kak. Suvir Kaul's pro-Azadi Pandit writings, collected in “Of Gardens and Graves”, are also included. “A Long Dream of Home: The Persecution, Exodus, and Exile of Kashmiri Pandits”, edited by Siddharth Gigoo and Varad Sharma, and “From Home to House: Writings of Kashmiri Pandits in Exile”, edited by Arvind Gigoo. Since the body of literature is a broad and ever-expanding collection with a range of themes and political issues, the list of literary works is just indicative and not exhaustive.

Putting Anglophone Kashmiri Writing in Its Place in Indian English Writing:

Known in various forms as the "Perishable Empire" or the "slender sapling from a foreign field," Indian English literature emerged as a subversive literary movement during the colonial era and has since grown to become a thriving international genre. It has grown into a diverse corpus of writing with notable differences in topic interests, venues of production, publication, and distribution. Its reputation has grown both domestically and internationally as a result of international awards and worldwide renown, which has inspired authors to explore a variety of subjects in their writing. Despite the inventive use of the language of the former colonizer, Indian English literature has demonstrated its flawless nationalist credentials. Starting with the 1830s poetry "To Indian—My Native Land" by Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and continuing through the 1930s and 1940s Gandhian nationalist reflections of Indian English novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R. K. Narayan. Many modern writers, including the esteemed pantheon's Arundhati Roy, Shashi Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, and Upamanyu Chatterjee, have addressed nationalism, the Indian nation, or its critique in one way or another in their imaginative and polemical works. Since English is the only language that is understandable throughout the entire country—unlike other regional Indian languages—and aside from its constitutional status as the associate official language of the nation, Indian English literature has actually lived up to its nomenclature, being primarily about India in the broadest sense possible. This feature of national reach gave the works in the genre—which critic Meenakshi Mukherjee describes as being marked by a "anxiety of Indianness"—a national identity. "Pull towards a homogenization of reality, an essentializing of India, a certain flattening out of the complicated and conflicting contours, the ambiguous and shifting relations that exist between individuals and groups in a plural community," the author claims of Anglophone Indian literature. There is undoubtedly a "anxiety of Indianness" in the ever-expanding corpus of Anglophone Kashmiri writing, but it is substantially different from the one that Meenakshi Mukherjee developed.

As previously mentioned in the study, the main issue raised by the corpus is the absence of or ambiguous sense of belonging to the Indian nation-state. Ideally, any English-language literary work that originates inside India's borders should be included in Indian English literature. Any literary work published by authors of Indian origin is typically regarded as belonging to the category of Indian English literature because of the preponderance of diasporic authors in the Indian English canon. Indian literature "resides in the common civilizational ethos of the Indian people and the common national origins of its authors," claims Aijaz Ahmad. In fact, because of the heterogeneity of the corpus and the contingent character of what makes up the categories of nation and national literature, identifying a national literary tradition such as the Indian English is always going to be problematic. Since Kashmir remains a part of the Indian nation state despite the dissident political aspirations of the majority of Kashmiris, Anglophone Kashmiri

literature is unquestionably a constituent element of Indian English literature by the basic logic of territoriality.

Some of these themes are covered in Kashmiri Anglophone literature if Mukherjee's suggestions are followed. Since the fundamental goal of the genre is to ponder about the Indian nation state and validity of its presence in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in general and the Kashmir valley in particular, Anglophone Kashmiri literature deals with subjects that are Pan-Indian in scope. This politically radical genre continues to center on the establishment of the Indian state and the political developments that led to the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir's admission in 1947.

Since Jammu and Kashmir is the only state in the Indian Union with a majority of Muslims, its participation has enhanced the state's secular credentials while simultaneously expanding its territory. Kashmir has remained essential to India's nation-building process. Anglophone Kashmiri literature that supports azadi for Kashmir is vehemently critical of the Indian government and calls for the region to break away from the Indian Union. A body of literature that ideologically supports breaking away from the national body politic should not be included in a national literary tradition.

Evaluating the reception of Anglophone Kashmiri literature in the Indian public arena would help resolve this political dilemma ingrained in the literary-aesthetic realm.

Indian English literature has been revitalized by Kashmiri Anglophone literature, which has created new idioms and vocabulary to portray the conflict-ridden conditions in the Kashmir valley. Words like "Kalashnikov," "light machine guns," "military," "soldier," "crossfire," and "cease fire" are frequently used in these stories to refer to Kashmir and have become essential. The normalization of violence in Kashmir, thus, depicted is so very different from the sophisticated, elite world of Anglophone Indian literature emanating from diasporic locations in United Kingdom or the United States or from the metropolitan cities of India primarily aestheticizing the globalized urban mise-en-scene. Authors like Basharat Peer, Mirza Waheed, Farah Bashir, and Shakoor Rather became well-known in India as a result of the "charm" of this book and its linguistic/political experience. In the non-fiction category, Basharat Peer went on to win the 2008 Vodafone-Crossword Book Award. Many well-known and reputable newspapers and magazines, such as Outlook, India Today, The Literary Review of “The Hindu”, and others, have published in-depth reviews of Anglophone Kashmiri literature. It's also noteworthy that, despite its politically fissiparous orientation, the Sahitya Akademi library in New Delhi has copies of popular Anglophone Kashmiri literature. The National Academy of Letters, Sahitya Akademy, is supported by the Indian Government’s Ministry of Culture. Thus, there is no issue with this literary category's inclusion in the larger category of Indian English literature in terms of reception, acceptance, and popularity. The major contention in this political dispute is whether or not the national literary tradition of India is willing to embrace dissenting or separatist politics on a literary-aesthetic level. "The disagreement that a person or persons may have with others, or, more publicly, with some of the institutions that govern their patterns of life," is how Romila Thapar defines dissent. The original goal of Anglophone Kashmiri writing was, in reality, to protest official Indian discourses and the Indian nationalist fantasy. It is also important to remember that the Indian constitution's promise of freedom of expression has limitations and limits on it. In addition, the question of how much dissent is acceptable within the framework of democracy as a political system and its literary and cultural traditions is also relevant. Nation, defined by Benedict Anderson as a "imagined community," has a political requirement to survive after forming a state. How can a literary tradition be deemed integral to a country's literary heritage if its goal is to undermine the legitimacy of the nation or state in order to establish a new political

community or nation? The question goes beyond the purview of literary and artistic inquiry and is more political in nature.

“Writing Back”:

These are some of the poems from the highly acclaimed book The Country Without a Post Office by critically regarded Kashmiri-American Poet Agha Shahid Ali, discussing his personal and creative dilemma. From the "Cashmere" of colonial times to the "Cauchemar" (French for "bad dream"), the political nightmare of the 1990s, there seems to be an abundance of Kashmirs. However, the term "void" denotes a startling lack of a clear understanding of Kashmir's physical and mental boundaries in public discourse. This is due to the fact that, despite being a "territory of desire," Kashmir is still subject to colonial persecution at the hands of neo-colonialists from Pakistan who have battled for the right to control and categorize Kashmir. As a result, the Kashmiri voice has been systematically suppressed and silenced, pushed to the periphery and existing in an artificial political "void."

Being a trailblazer of Kashmiri Anglophone writing, Agha Shahid Ali demonstrates a keen understanding of the challenges of writing in a "void" and reclaiming the Kashmiri story from dominant discourses. Several Kashmiri writers have recently broken through the silence with a variety of literary works purposefully written in the English language and marketed to a worldwide readership. These writers are greatly influenced by Shahid Ali's inventive literary forms, idiomatic choice, and—above all—his aesthetic and political concerns. Novels written by authors who identify as Kashmiri among other identity markers include Jaspreet Singh's Chef, Siddhartha Gigoo's “The Garden of Solitude”, Basharat Peer's “Curfewed Night”, Mirza Waheed's “The Collaborator”, and Rahul Pandita's “Our Moon has Bloodclots”. Claire Chambers supports this viewpoint in her academic dissertation, “The Last Saffron”: Agha Shahid Ali's Kashmir. She claims that Shahid Ali's literary contributions have enabled the recent “upsurge in [..] Kashmiri writing in English.”

According to Indian author Pankaj Mishra, these texts written in Anglophone Kashmiri make an important contribution to the canon of Kashmiri literature, which has a rich and multilingual past of its own. But according to Mishra, the release of these writings is not a singular event in the history of literature. Rather, he places the changes occurring in Kashmiri cultural output in context by emphasizing how these changes are mirrored, and in some ways even made possible, by more significant changes occurring in the city's streets. Some analysts claim that the year 2008 saw a shift in Kashmir's poetics of resistance, with a deliberate shift away from armed conflict and toward nonviolent forms of political protest. Young Kashmiris have been conducting a "massive, sustained and predominantly non-violent, civil disobedience" through the streets of Kashmir as part of this campaign, known as the "second revolution". Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, online blogs, and Youtube have all emerged as "critical arena of contestation" within the shifting political and cultural dynamics of Kashmir, and they have frequently accompanied this street movement.

This paper focuses on many Post-Colonial Writing Style(Anglophonic) of vivid authors including “The Collaborator”, the first book by Mirza Waheed, which serves as a textual indicator of the shifting poetics of resistance in Kashmir. Even though Anglophone Kashmiri literature only began to appear in the twenty-first century, it gives the crucial period of the Indian subcontinent's geographical rearrangement a significant amount of narrative space. This paper critically examines how contemporary Anglophone Kashmiri literary narratives such as

‘Curfewed Night” by Basharat Peer, “The Collaborator” by Mirza Waheed, “Our Moon has Blood Clots” by Rahul Pandita, and “The Half-Mother” by Shahnaz Bashir depict the political events of 1947. The

story of the "Kashmiri" nation in opposition to the Indian nation is examined in these literary pieces. The goal of the paper is to extract a "Kashmiri" viewpoint from discourses that emphasize Indian nationalism in these literary narratives, in order to investigate the potential for allowing dissent to be accommodated within the context of Indian writing in English.I contend that The Collaborator makes an effort to liberate the Kashmiri subject from the filial piety of regional father-narratives from Indo-Pakistan. It accomplishes this by using the postcolonial literary technique of "writing back" to challenge the dominant control of these narratives. My argument is that Anglophone Kashmiri writers "write back" to a variety of "texts," establishing the foundation for the emergence of a uniquely Kashmiri voice.

"Let me cry out in that void, say it as I can. I write on that void:Kashmir, Kaschmir, Cashmere, Qashmir, Cashmir, Cashmire, Kashmere, Cachemire, Cushmeer, Cashmiere, Casmir. Or Cauchemar in a sea of stories? Or: Kacmir, Kaschemir, Kasmere, Kachmire, Kasmir. Kerseymere?"

-- The Blessed Word: A Prologue by Agha Shahid Ali

"I had a sense of the alienation and resentment most Kashmiri Muslims felt and had against Indian rule. We did not relate to the symbols of Indian nationalism—the flag, the national anthem, the cricket team. We followed every cricket match India and Pakistan played but we never cheered for the Indian team."

--Curfewed Nights

These two quotations—the first from The Country Without a Post Office, a collection of poems by Agha Shahid Ali, and the second from Curfewed Night, a book by Basharat Peer—reflect the political ideologies and circumstances facing Kashmiris in the wake of their armed rebellion against the Indian government since 1989. Given that they both came before a large number of other literary works in their respective genres, these two works are especially important when it comes to literary portrayals of conflict-ridden Kashmir. Peer remarks on the sense of alienation and disaffection Kashmiris share with the Indian state, whereas Ali's poems capture the sorrows and concerns of Kashmiri life in the midst of an extended military conflict. Literature and other cultural outputs have become a point of contention for parties with divergent agendas in the context of Kashmir. Anglophone Kashmiri writing has become a unique genre in recent years, aiming to aestheticize the intellectual foundations of the Kashmiri fight for independence from the Indian state.

In a newspaper article headlined The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance, which parodied the title of a Star Wars movie titled The Empire Strikes Back, Salman Rushdie first used the term **"writing back."** After the publication of The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures by Helen Tiffin, Bill Ashcroft, and Gareth Griffiths, which established "writing back" as a central concern of postcolonial literature, it became associated with the project of dismantling "Eurocentric literary hegemonies". Writing **"back"** in practice refers to postcolonial works critically engaging with canonical English texts to challenge the authority of these texts and the "discursive field" in which they function.

Nevertheless, Tiffin, Griffiths, and Ashcroft's "writing back" methodology is insufficient to examine the writing back practices in Anglophone Kashmiri texts since it places a strong emphasis on classical English literary texts. I suggest two significant changes to the writing back model's theorization in order to adapt the current model and make it applicable and helpful in the Kashmiri context. First of all, it's critical to consider "pre-texts" that go beyond the canonical English literary works. This means that other, non-English centers need to be added to the center that creates the "discursive field" that a text acts in. The purposeful use of the plural "centres" is to demonstrate that, while it is possible to envision a non-English "center," the uniqueness of this "center" must also be questioned to provide room for

numerous foci of writing back, or many "centers." Furthermore, national narratives, prevailing political discourses, and media representations are examples of non-literary formations that should be included in the definition of "text." Anglophone Kashmiri novels can be seen in the updated model as a corpus of literature that "write back" to two local parent narratives, two centers.

Biological "Father" and Substitute Patriarchal Father in "The Collaborator":

It is referred to it as the "father narrative" for a reason. First of all, the Indo-Pakistani claim to the Kashmiri region is invariably framed in terms of filial piety, with "Kashmir" acting as an estranged and, at times, submissive kid. Second, The Collaborator delves deeply into the frequently encountered archetype of the controlling father and his creative son in traditional English literature. In a classic English literature, the artist-protagonist's internal development is significantly impacted by his or her physical or symbolic separation from a father figure. This is due to the father figure's attempt to suppress the young protagonist's artistic nature by stifling his "strongest drives and fondest passions," whether it be Paul Morel in Sons and Lovers or Simon Dedalus in The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man. In a similar line, The Collaborator emphasizes how crucial it is for the titular protagonist's self-development and adulthood to break away from paternalistic figures. It shows the protagonist, an artist, growing apart from both his paternal biological father (the Nowgam headman) and a patriarchal stand-in father figure (Kadian). This Oedipal "repudiation" of Fathers can be interpreted as a metafictitious critique of how these writings "write back" to the narratives of Indo-Pakistani fathers in an effort to break political connection with filial ties. This gives the postcolonial subject—Kashmiri in this case—the ability to carve out and claim territory as well as find ways to resist beyond the authority of the "fathers."

Possessive Parent in "The Collaborator":

The region has been engulfed in unrest since India annexed Kashmir following partition, acting as a hotspot between the two post-colonial states that it is situated between, India and Pakistan. Pakistan and India have tried in different ways over the past few decades to subdue, subjugate, and undermine the demands of the Kashmiri people in order to advance their own political agendas. In line with this perspective, Victoria Schofield notes in her extensive work Kashmir in Conflict that both nations have used a variety of tactical strategies to "absorb" the region, particularly the Valley of Kashmir, inside their own borders (Schofield xiii). For example, Pakistan backed the armed insurgency in the area, the demand for self-determination by the Kashmiri people, and other political objectives that it was unable to accomplish through bilateral negotiations and diplomacy. However, India began an aggressive campaign in the area, and some estimates have the number of army and paramilitary soldiers stationed in Kashmir at 150,000. The Kashmiri resistance movement is portrayed as a "terrorist campaign" directed by outside forces, in accordance with the Indian familial narrative that views Kashmir as an essential component of its geo-body. This is due to the perception that it is a political outlier in comparison to the dominant narrative that asserts Kashmir's "natural" and thus unquestionable position inside Indian boundaries. The Indian state uses specific historical events from Kashmir, like the signing of the instrument of accession, the victory of subsequent wars, and the holding of elections, among other things, to highlight the legitimacy of its claim over the region in order to portray it as "Atoot Ang," or a natural part of India that predates its modern demarcation. The manner that the Indian state builds its discursive hegemony over Kashmir by choosing to "forget" some historical periods in favour of others so validates Renan's claim that "forgetting" and "historical error" are "crucial factors in the creation of a nation." The Indian media, which has come under fire for portraying the "Kashmir issue" as a tool of the government, is currently promoting this discourse, which has been sustained through national symbols and maps. As a result, The Collaborator responds to the filial narrative of Kashmir's inherent and

unquestionable position within Mother India's geo-body by revealing the falsity of the Indian "colonizing mission" in Kashmir. Furthermore, Pakistan's second "centre" is also "written back" too. Pakistani political discourses place a strong emphasis on the "Muslim connection" and highlight the "logic of partition," which states that provinces with a majority of Muslims were supposed to join the nation-state in order to claim Kashmir. While the Pakistani national narrative offers support to the Kashmiri resistance movement, Kashmiris hold the Pakistani government accountable for using their people's emotions for political gain. By maintaining Kashmir as a "natural" and unquestionable component of their own nation-states, the post-colonial powers of India and Pakistan have manifestly similar conceptions of the region. In order to achieve this, they carefully choose historical events and add to them with legal assertions and denials, crafting conflicting family sagas that are intended to solidify their control over "Kashmir." In order to create political and literary spaces beyond the fathers, The Collaborator rejects the discourses of the two "centers." In particular, it looks at the persuasive language of media and political propaganda, which is a technique used to secure and govern the land of Kashmir.

Kashmir's Portrayal from the "Center":

The Collaborator parodies political and media propaganda rhetoric to highlight its artificiality. An exchange between the Indian army and the rebels, for example, is described by the narrator of the same name as "an encounter, a battle, a skirmish, whatever they choose to call it". This quote demonstrates the state's ability to regulate how the incident is presented by adjusting its scale to the point where it becomes a "battle" or a "skirmish," depending on the incident's relative importance and size. Furthermore, the word "whatever they choose to call it" highlights the influence that the Indian political and media establishments have over the terminology that is used to report on and debate events in Kashmir.

Not only does it demonstrate the ability of the Indian state to fabricate a story about Kashmir, but it also highlights the overused expressions used to describe and document occurrences in the region. As an example, the title character bemoans the "sporadic shelling on the LoC" and puts this sentence between inverted commas to suggest that he is copying the artificial language of Indian news reports. Furthermore, he contrasts media terminology with images of forest fires and explosions, highlighting the discrepancy between the orderly reporting of news events in mainland India and the actual reality on the ground. The way that events are purposefully "staged" by state actors, such as the media or the armed forces, exacerbates this gap. The passage parodies how the media "frames" military exchanges as either a "big hit" or the outcome of a foiled "major attempt". By highlighting the phony nature of the media coverage, the text calls attention to the sensationalist and exaggerated language that is used to describe events on the ground. In a second incident, it is demonstrated that the conflict's "staging" was motivated by a desire to distort actual occurrences. When a television crew from Delhi travels to Kashmir to shoot "foreign militants," Kadian says he can use "old photos" and "clothes" to make any corpse look like an Afghan. There is a theatrical quality to these references to the concealing of bodies through the employment of clothes and visual media in order to modify their identities. The poem draws attention to the manner in which events in Kashmir are arranged and presented through the media by making references to stage plays.

Protagonist- "rolling over and over"

Examined is not only media discourses but also the terminology used in "official" military reports. When reading a study on infiltration, for instance, the protagonist says he gets roll over and over through the 'howevers' and 'subsequents' and 'further tos without making much sense.'" The protagonist feels like

they are "rolling over and over" as a result of the report's elliptical structure and dearth of pertinent content, which makes it appear incomprehensible.

Therefore, The Collaborator exposes the manner in which the Kashmir war is manufactured for the Indian public by responding to military and media narratives. By highlighting the absurdity of physical persecution and propaganda meant to "fix" Kashmir in the Indian mind, this works to undermine the Indian narrative of Kashmir's invincible position within India. Put another way, the notion that Kashmir has a natural and essential position in the Indian nation is undermined by the realization that it is a lie perpetuated by force and manipulation.

Analysing the language and image of the military establishment critically is another way to expose the Indian colonization mission in Kashmir. For example, the narrator of the story describes the notification of a curfew as coming from a "alien voice," meaning that someone who is not local or among us is making the proclamation. The speaker announced that there will be a cordon and search operation in the region in fairly sloppy Hindi, Urdu, Hindustani, or whatever language.

“Alien- not among us”:

The author comes to the conclusion that the announcer is "not from among us" because of the "alien" character of the voice that speaks in Hindi or Urdu rather than the native Kashmiri language. The author highlights the "alienness" of Indo-Pakistani rule over Kashmir by demonstrating the "alienness" of the Hindi/Urdu language within the region. The artificiality of the Indo-Pakistani discursive claim over Kashmiri territory is thus indicated by the metonymic usage of the language's alienness.

The Governor of Kashmir addresses the artist-protagonist in English, much to his confusion, further thematising the use of a "foreign" language. The crowd's "disoriented glances" and "ears bent over tilting shadows" show that this governor's wording has confused them. The narrator claims that the Governor "railed in never-ending English sentences", in spite of the crowd's inability to understand his message. Here, the governor's shaky command of the local language of the community he rules from the center causes cultural misunderstandings when he uses the English language to 'instruct' a gathering of Kashmiris.

Division of Center and Cross-culture linguistic confusion:

The author emphasizes the division between the center and the periphery by demonstrating his linguistic incompetence and the resulting cross-cultural confusion. The reason for this discrepancy can be attributed to the cultural differences between "India" and "Kashmir," which stem from differences in language, regional conventions, and traditions. Since "India" controls the area from the "centre" rather than giving authority to the Kashmiri periphery, which contributes to alienation in the local population, the gap can also be seen as a gap in power-sharing. The overall goal of this disparity in power dynamics and cultural standards is to undermine the idea that Kashmir is an invincible and "natural" part of India by portraying the two areas as being significantly apart rather than as synonymous (Kashmir is India; India is Kashmir).

English Pre-text, less significant to the Anglophonic Kashmiri Writers:

Furthermore, the Governor's use of "English" alludes to India's post-colonial past, which led to English being designated as one of the official languages of the nation. It's interesting to observe that in The Collaborator, "English" stops being the language of the "old" center and instead becomes the preferred language of the "new," Indian center. As a result, any writing that is done in the past is seen as coming from India. In light of this, the peculiarities of Indian English in the Kashmiri peripheral point to the

peculiarities of Indian colonial rule over a region that, in the Pakistani account, was annexed by India against the will of the native population. This indicates that English pre-texts are becoming less significant in the writings of Anglophone Kashmiri writers, supporting the claim that the "centre" does not always refer to Britain.

The speech's content is just as important as the linguistic choice, which aims to highlight the cultural divide between "Kashmir" and mainland India and to highlight the latter as the neo-colonial "Centre." The governor says to the assembly, in her own words:

"My dear brothers and sisters, let me tell you something... The bond between Kashmir and Mother India is based not just on your king Mahraja 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."

Here, he highlights the unbreakable link that exists between India and Kashmir despite the historical "convulsions" and "tribulations." Since "lasting forces" uphold this link, it is filial in the sense that it refers to the relationship's eternal and enduring nature. Unlike these purportedly ages-old ties of "lasting" kinship, history and politics are perceived as artificial interventions that aim to sever the biological bloodline that binds Kashmir to India.

"The three-nation theory, Sheikh Abdullah, the Sun God temple at Martanda, Nehru, General Douglas MacArthur, the history of failure, the "too late" and "too late," Article 370, Namaste Saradadevi, Kasmira Mandala Vasini, and Kashmir's ineradicable place in the Indian vision," he says as he proceeds with his speech. This quote uses well-chosen historical and religious allusions to "fix" and assert Kashmir's status as a "sacred" region in the minds of Indians.

Moreover, in order to reveal the Governor's speech's manufactured nature and draw comparisons with the discourse it is written back to, the author once more employs meta-theatrical allusions. The governor makes his speech in a "saliva-spitting frenzy," slamming his hand down on the rostrum to create a "orator's thump." He varies his tone "with deliberation" to the point where his delivery has a "well-rehearsed rhythm." This prompts his young officer to describe the play as a "successful show," and a formal picture shoot follows. The governor's speech is compared to a dramatic performance by means of these theatrical allusions, something that Sanjay Kak categorizes as a monologue in his thorough analysis of the book (Kak The Ghosts shall Walk). Thus, the speech and the photo opportunity both highlight the event's theatrical and performative nature. Consequently, it is evident that The Collaborator challenges the idea of Kashmir's "integral" position within the Indian nation-state by responding to political and media discourses in India. It accomplishes this by demonstrating how these discourses are created, purposefully staged, and kept together by the use of force, disinformation in the media, and military force.

Cartographic Interpretation of Kashmir:

The novel examines how maps are used to portray Kashmir as a sacred region of India, while simultaneously parodying the vocabulary that defines Kashmir as "fixed" in the Indian mind. "Maps are not merely pictures of the world, but depict a world that can be shaped, manipulated, and acted upon," contends Stuart Hall. According to this perspective, maps serve as "expressions of power" that forward the political objectives of their creators. As a result, they stop being objective cartography drawings and start to take on the form of pictures that represent the "spatial and temporal dimensions of Empire."

Graham Huggan claims that because cartography and colonialism are so closely related, post-colonial literature frequently examines how maps are used and deployed within colonial discourse. Thus, the Collaborator carries on the tradition of challenging the connections between cartographic maps and "center" ideologies.

Mirdu Rai asserts that nation-states use maps to visually represent their claims to geographical areas, carrying on the colonial habit of doing so. Maps are presented as "depictions of 'pure' signs of physicality in a space that is presumed to have existed a priori its demarcation" in order to achieve this. The relevance of this feature of colonial mapping to the Kashmiri predicament lies in the fact that the region was considered an essential part of India long before the contemporary, post-partition India was created. Rai specializes in maps of India that are more overtly ideological, including anthropomorphic depictions of the country in the form of Hindu goddesses.

"Mother India" as a feminine Hindu goddess:

This specific tradition started in 1905 when 'Mother India' was depicted as a goddess by artist Abanindranath Tagore. Various anthropomorphic representations of "Mother India" as a feminine Hindu goddess persist and multiply even in post-colonial India. Sumathi Ramaswamy examines the changing representations of the Indian nation-state before and after partition in her book The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India. She provides a thorough visual study of each image within a fully developed socio-historical context. Owing to the topic's vastness, I shall confine my discussion to one of the versions that Ramaswamy covered in her work. This particular image is cited by Ramaswamy as being "ubiquitous" in "picture postcards, calendar art, processional pictures, and the World Wide Web". The image is from a photo postcard that the Karnatak Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh printed in 1990. The tagline on the postcard says, "I am India." "My body is the Indian nation". The motif's ancestor, nevertheless, is an older picture that was first included in a Tamil textbook and has been repeatedly replicated over time. The Indian nation-state is portrayed as a "bejeweled goddess" whose body completely fills the Indian geo-body. Furthermore, Ramaswamy observes that the head of the mother-goddess eclipses the area that, on a normative map of India, would contain the province of Kashmir. The geographical area becomes a holy region with a divinely predetermined outline when the Indian nation-state is anthropomorphically portrayed as a heavenly deity. That being said, the division of this land would be sacrilegious to the extent that it would arise from the severing of the sacred Indian geo-body.

The collaborator works with cartographic representations of India that convey nationalist narratives about the holiness and indisputable nature of its geographic coordinates. The Governor of Kashmir, for example, alludes to Kashmir's status in Indian consciousness when he says, "Dosto- these forces have one objective- one motive- to break Kashmir from India, to chop off what everyone now knows and sees as an integral part of India." They desire to cut off Bharat Mata's crown!

The Separation of Kashmir- "severing" a portion of Mother India:

The separation of Kashmir from the rest of the political system is considered a sacrilegious act, a symbolic beheading, given the Indian nation-state's perception of itself as a sacred area. By emphasizing the sacrilege of "severing" a portion of Mother India, the Governor of Kashmir uses the anthropomorphic picture of her to further the Indian filial narrative. Thus, he attempts to "wrap" the region of Kashmir into "Bharat Mata's crown, her "halo," and her "flowing tresses" by using this specific image.

The concept of "Bharat Mata," often known as "Mother India," as a feminine goddess overlayed over a post-colonial map of India is challenged and eventually changed in The Collaborator. Captain Kadian substitutes the image of an angry behemoth for the maternal and life-giving universal mother when

characterizing the geo-body of the Indian nation-state. "Colosseus with countless arms and limbs, tongues and claws, hands and mouths" is how he characterizes "India". As a result, the life-giving and maternal figure of "Bharat Mata" is reinterpreted as a monstrous entity that rules over its domains through its agents, its "countless arms and limbs." He continues with the following explanation of the characteristics of the Indian "colossus":

"Even if you have these small ulcers festering in various places and crevices, they don't matter to it; it uses one of its many hands or claws to scratch at the sore, soothing the irritation, and then waits until the ulcer dies on its own, or just plucks it off and throws it away."

The "small ulcers" in this phrase stand in for "troubled areas," including Kashmir and a few northeastern states that have had uprisings against the government. The use of terms like "small" ulcers and "minor irritants" to characterize regions like as Kashmir is intended to draw attention to the comparatively smaller size of the rest of India, which has the capacity to put down insurrection in certain areas due to its sheer size and potency of power structures. By being "scratched" and "plucked," the latter can be subdued. These verbs are quite passive in their action, and their passivity suggests how easily the Indian government can put an end to uprisings in unstable areas. The "giant" can, however, occasionally "wave," "blow," and "crush," highlighting the potentially disastrous nature of the Indian geo-body, which can also employ force to put down an insurrection.

As the conversation has progressed, it is clear that The Collaborator Challenges Indian filial discourses that establish "Kashmir" as an essential component of its geo-body by analysing the cartographic shape of a map, which has been essential in maintaining these discourses as a visual aid.

"The Second Center:"

I'll look at how The Collaborator challenges Pakistani familial narratives that portray Kashmir as an integral part of the country's territory in this section. The book parodies the way in which political benefits are achieved by using the Kashmiri struggle in both India and Pakistan. The protagonist, who is also an artist, addresses this truth by saying:

"You know sometimes I wonder- because for Kashmir there is always an Indian and a Pakistani version of everything – what if they have their own stash of the infiltration residue? Young men who have lost their lives while walking the perilous path to freedom."

By manipulating the word "version," the author raises the possibility that India and Pakistan will also have a "version" of Kashmiri casualties if they are able to establish their own political narratives and "versions" of the Kashmiri resistance movement. He calls attention to the reality that the post-colonial fathers of Kashmir do not share any interest in the persecution that the Kashmiri community endures, despite their fervent discourse on the Kashmir "issue" and defense of their respective political narratives. The author deftly draws attention to this facet of the Kashmiri situation, liberating the Kashmiri self-narrative from the dominant influence of Indo-Pakistani political "versions" and elevating it to a position of value. Referring to the Pakistani tribals living along the North-West frontier as "shameless" and "invading marauders" paints them as opportunists and emphasizes the detachment that existed at the time between the Kashmiri people and their Pakistani "liberators."

The piece goes on to emphasize the opportunistic element that drives Pakistan's diplomatic assistance for the Kashmiri resistance movement. The late Rouf Qadri, for example, speaks of being welcomed into training camps in Pakistan across the border and being taught how to use weapons. This highlights

the fact that they were subjected to violent resistance tactics by their Pakistani "supporters," which ultimately resulted in their deaths.

“Juxtaposition of Azadi”:

The book strangely refers to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as "sad Azad Kashmir," with the adjective "sad" standing in juxtaposition to "azad," which means "free," to highlight the reality that the freedom that the Pakistani paternal narrative purported to bring about was merely surface-level and self-serving. This prompts the main character to disparagingly describe the nation-state of Pakistan as one "which is never at rest and will never let anyone else rest in peace either."

Along with emphasizing the filial ties between "Pakistan" and "Kashmir," the book also draws attention to the "passion" of Pakistani discourse. It contrasts this emotion with the relative detachment and ambiguous behaviour of the Pakistani army in managing its operations in Kashmir. The narrator refers to the “longwinded, thoughtful remarks” made by Pakistani leaders Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif in favour of the Kashmiri resistance movement. The author highlights the existence of "miniature Pakistani outposts," which are seen "sketchily" with soldiers watching the valley from "dark check-posts," in contrast to the political leaders' impassioned lip service. This demonstrates how the checkpoints are separated from the ground operations by their relative distance from the bloodshed in the Valley. The emotive rhetoric of Pakistani political personalities contrasts with this moral and physical detachment.

“Dark Check-posts:”

Furthermore, from their "dark check-posts," the Pakistani army voyeuristically "observes" the havoc that Kadian unleashes on the Valley without taking action, which ultimately reveals them as accomplices in the devastation. The storyteller expresses this cooperation by saying that the Line of Control resembled a “fireworks exhibition” for the two fathers of Pakistan and India, where the lives of the Kashmiri people were used as “tinder”. This indictment aims to dispel the myth that exists between India and Pakistan that Kashmiris were killed in cross-fire during political intimidation. Moreover, by referring to Pakistan and India as a single, homogenous entity, the protagonist fails to distinguish between the two, implicating them both equally in inciting unrest in the area. By doing this, the book further undermines the nationalist language of Pakistan, which portrays itself as the "supporter" and champion of the Kashmir cause.

By referencing the familial links that unite the two areas, The Collaborator responds to Pakistani nationalist and political discourses that support "Kashmir" as an integral part of its nation-state. These connections are based on Pakistan's assistance and liberation of the Kashmiri people, as well as its moral and emotional commitment to the autonomy movement in Kashmir. By revealing the Pakistani nation-state's underlying manipulation and moral detachment—which is seen as almost as culpable as India in the silence of Kashmiri voices—The Collaborator refutes these myths.

Conclusion:

Throughout the anticolonial nationalist movement, Indian English literature unquestionably affirmed the Indian nation and proceeded to elevate the Indian state through aesthetics. Even though a number of writers have critiqued many aspects of Indian society and the policies of the Indian government (such as the fictions of the Emergency era), they have largely continued to focus their creative endeavours on India. Similar to this, Anglophone Kashmiri literature has been unwavering in its efforts to provide the nationalist struggle in Kashmir cultural credibility while also harshly denouncing the Indian government and its methods of governance there. The genre's main goal is to draw attention to Kashmir's uniqueness in comparison to the Indian nation state. Its inclusion is essentially a political concern that goes beyond

literary-aesthetic boundaries. Though it has starkly different political objectives and philosophies, Anglophone Kashmiri writing can be regarded as a subgenre of Indian English literature.

Kashmiri writers create a space for a unique Kashmiri identity and literary "voice" by challenging the fathers' discourses and writing back to the "centres." These books reject the Indo-Pakistani filial narratives that attempt to establish Kashmir as an inseparable and essential component of the nation-states in which they are set. The Kashmiri voice is demonstrated to possess agency by challenging the fathers' categories, narratives, and epistemologies, as well as by asserting their right to political and artistic space. Furthermore, by rejecting Indo-Pakistani parental paradigms, the book challenges the idea that "Kashmiris" are the "rebellious" or alienated offspring of two colonial parents. Rather, voices from the area are portrayed as complex, self-constituting, and deserving of attention.

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