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IRVINE

The Politics of Absence: Women Searching for the Disappeared in Kashmir

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in Anthropology

by

Ather Zia

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Victoria Bernal, Chair
Professor Karen Leonard
Professor Susan Coutin
Professor Gabrielle Schwab

2014

DEDICATION

For Kashmir
For Justice
For Freedom

Marun chu akh godhh, rawun na Kehn.¹
(Dying is a pain once, not disappearance)

“Poor Kashmir, it lies in the Himalayan ramparts where the borders of India, Pakistan and China rub together. Reality mocks its beauty. There is no escaping the permeating melancholy of a land that lies under the gun.”²

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I offer my thanks to the institutions that made my fieldwork possible including Wenner Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant & Osmundsen Initiative, Association of University Women, International Peace Research Association Foundation, Human Rights Fellowship Berkeley, and UC Irvine's Center for Asian Studies, Center for Democracy (Kugelman Fellowship), and Global Peace and Conflict Studies. I am grateful for the writing Fellowship's from International Phi Beta Kappa, Dard Magnus and Associate Dean's Dissertation Writing fellowship, School of Social Sciences, UC Irvine.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Ather Zia

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Department of Anthropology, UC Irvine, 2014

M.A., Communications, Cal State University Fullerton, California, USA, 2007

NET, National Educational Test for Lecturers, University Grants Commission of India, 1999

M.A., Mass Communication & Journalism, University of Kashmir, India, 1998

B.Sc., University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Kashmir, India, 1995

RESEARCH & TEACHING INTERESTS

Political Anthropology, Anthropology of Human Rights, Gender, Women's Rights, Social Justice, Women's Studies, Feminist Studies, Islam and Gender, Law, Justice, Social movements, Civil Society, Memory, Body, Performance, Agency, South Asian Cultures, War/Militarization, Conflict, Terrorism, Armed Insurgency, Kashmir, India, Pakistan, South Asia and Latin America

RESEARCH

Field Research

Dissertation fieldwork (Kashmir, Jammu, New Delhi – India) 2011-2012

Preliminary Research Summer in Kashmir & Jammu – India 2009 and 2010

Researcher/Associate, Project Athwaas (Handshake), Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace (Wiscomp), & Women's Workshop, 2000-05

Researcher, Project Shared Differences, Institute of Counseling & Social Research, Kashmir, 2000-01. An action research project that focused on the estranged Hindu and Muslim communities in Kashmir, human rights abuses and reparations.

Researcher, State Resource Center & Audio Visual Research Center, Kashmir University, 2000 – 01. Researched media projects on issues of women's rights, illiteracy, mental health, violence, low-intensity conflict, sexual violence, and child labor

Research Associate & Writer, Voluntary Health Association of India, 2000. Researched women's movement for reproductive and health rights in Kashmir

FELLOWSHIPS/GRANTS/HONORS

Associate Deans Dissertation Writing Fellowship UC Irvine 2013 & 2012

International Phi Beta Kappa Dissertation Writing award, UC Irvine 2013

DARD MAGNUS Writing Fellowship 2013

Center for Asian Studies (CAS) Writing and Fieldwork Grant, UC Irvine, 2013 & 2011

Wenner Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant & *Osmundsen Initiative- Wenner Gren*, 2011-12

Kugelman Fellowship, *Center for Citizen Peacebuilding*, UC Irvine 2011, & 2010

Global Peace and Conflict Studies (GPACS) Fellowship, UC Irvine, 2013, 2011 & 2010

American Association of University Women, *International Fieldwork Fellowship*, 2011-12

University of Kashmir, *Resident Fellowship* for fieldwork 2011-12

International Peace Research Association Foundation, Fieldwork Grant, 2010
Human Rights Fellow, *Human Rights Center Berkeley*, UC Berkeley, 2009
International Fellow, *College of Communications*, Cal State Fullerton, CA - 2004-05
Fellow, *Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace*, New Delhi, 2001-03
Fellow, *State Resource Center*, Dehradun, India, 2001
Fellow, *International & Area Studies*, UC Berkeley, CA (could not join), 2005
Human Rights Fellowship, *State Resource Center, (RLEK)*, Dehradun, India, 2001
Poetry Grant, *Cultural Academy of Arts, and Languages of Kashmir*, 1999

Prize

2013 Second place prize for ethnographic poem titled “An ex-fighter returns” from the Society of Humanistic Anthropology, Anthropologists Association of America

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

TEACHING

Teaching Assistant: University of California Irvine. Assist in teaching courses on Introduction to Anthropology, Linguistic Anthropology, Anthropology of Body & Gender, International Human Rights, Race, Sexuality, Development Psychology, Honors Course (Psychoanalysis & Political Writings). Conduct discussion sections and evaluated student performances, 2008 - present

Guest Lecturer: Media Education Research Center, University of Kashmir. As a Resident fellow at the University of Kashmir during my fieldwork I taught two-part course on “Gender in Conflict: Human Rights, Militarization and Peace,” 2011- 2012

Teaching Associate: Teaching Associate, College of Communications, Cal State University Fullerton, Fullerton, CA. Conducted lab work on Writing and Assisted professors in courses on media/journalism, 2006 - 07

Guest Lecturer: Guest Lectures on Kashmir, Gender, Conflict and Media as International Fellow in College of Communications, Cal State University Fullerton, CA, 2004 -05

Lecturer

Part-time Lecturer, Indira Gandhi National Open University, India. Taught Mass Media, Gender, Conflict & Society, 1999-2001

Part-time Lecturer, Institute of Management, Kashmir. Taught: Media, Conflict, Society and Gender, 2000

Part-time Lecturer, College of Education, Kashmir. Taught : Media, Gender Coverage in Conflict, 1998-2000

Part-time Instructor, School of Education, Kashmir. Taught: Media, conflict and gender, 2002

Part-time Instructor, SSM College of Engineering. Taught Computer Applications (1998-2001)

PUBLICATIONS

Academic Journals

Published: Article “Politics of Absence: Women in Search of the Disappeared in Kashmir”, Association for Feminist Anthropology (AFA), Anthropology News, Damla Isik and Jessica Smith Rolston, eds. February 2011

** **Forthcoming** essay in Journal of Asian Studies “Territory of Desire and State of Siege”

** Submitted paper for review with Cultural Anthropology, titled “The Work of Mourning: Affective Law and the search for Disappeared in Kashmir”

**Submitted paper to Political and Legal Anthropology Review (POLAR), titled “The Spectacle of a Good-Half Widow: Performing Agency in the Human Rights Movement in Kashmir”

Book Review

** **Forthcoming** 2014 Review Essay in India Review titled Postcolonial Nation-making: Warfare, *Jihad*, Subjectivity, and Compassion in the region of Kashmir

Academic Newsletter

“Violence against Women in Kashmir”, International Women’s Day Newsletter, McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women (Women without Borders), January-February McGill University, 2008

Co-editor (Edited) Volume

***Forthcoming* - “‘They Gave Us Blood’: Narratives of Normalcy, Sacrifice, and Terror in Kashmir”, University of Pennsylvania Press, with Prof. Haley Duschinski (Ohio), Prof. Mona Bhan (Depauw). Also contributing a chapter titled, “The Hanging of Afzal Guru: The Killable Kashmiri Body and Necropolitics in India”

Co-editor (Edited) Volume

**Forthcoming 2015 with Harper Collins. Kashmir: The Gray Zone between 1947-1989, with Prof. Javaid Iqbal Bhat.

Online Academic/Research Websites

“The Good Half Widow”, Working paper Series Thinking Gender papers 2013, UCLA Women’s studies Working papers series at <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/3xx4n1zf>

“Women in Search of the Disappeared in Kashmir”, Working paper, & an ethnographic video published on website of Human Rights Center Berkeley, 2010 at <http://www.law.berkeley.edu/HRCweb/pdfs/fellow-reports09/Zia-Final%20Report.pdf>

“Women, Disappearance and Militarization”, Report on Exploratory Research published on International Peace Research Association Foundation, 2010 <http://iprafoundation.org/ather-zia/>

Books/Monographs

“Shehjar Khoj – A Monograph on Women in Health Campaigns in Kashmir”, Voluntary Health Association of India, 2001

“Reviewing Public Relations; A Tutorial”, Kashmir University, J&K press 2000
The Frame, an Anthology of poems published by the Cultural Academy of Languages and Arts, Kashmir

Book Chapters

***“The Hanging of Afzal Guru – The Killable Kashmiri Body and Necropolitics in India”, to be published in Edited Volume, *forthcoming 2015*

“Enforced Disappearances in Kashmir: The Case of Fateh Jaan” in *Of Occupation and Resistance - Writings from Kashmir - an Anthology*, Westland Publishers, 2013

“Women’s Experiences in Conflict Transformation”, Conflict Transformation Collection, Women in Security Conflict Management & Peace, WISCOMP New Delhi India, 2009

“Women’s Literacy in Kashmir”, co-authored paper in *Empowerment of Women in India*, Government of India Publication, 2001

Curated Digital Series on Women

Series on Kashmiri Women, International Museum for Women

“Disappeared in Kashmir”, The Missing Blog

“Women in Kashmir: Searching for the Disappeared”, South Asian Magazine for Action and Research

“My Life, My Kashmir”, World Pulse.org

Newspaper/Online Articles

Theatrics of Occupation, in the Kashmir Reader March 2013

Afzal Guru and the Killable Kashmiri Body, in the Kashmir Reader February 2013 & Kashmir Lit

“Mourning and Memorialization in Kashmir”, in daily Greater Kashmir May 2012

“Half-widows and travails of Disappearance”, in Kashmir Times, 2012

“Mughli: The Human Rights Activist”, in Kashmir Lit & Kashmir Times, 2011

“Women in Protest” in the Daily Kashmir Times 2011

“In the Killing Fields of Kashmir, in the Dissident Voice, 2010

“Rapes in Kashmir” in Arabisto & Countercurrents 2010

“Solution for Kashmir”, “Women's Empowerment & Rapes in Kashmir”, in Greater Kashmir 2009

Media and Militarization in the Greater Kashmir 2008

“Kashmiri Women: Roles, Concerns, & Milestones”, Kashmir Affairs, UK, 2007

“Wither Kashmir: Short Term Glory or Long Term Solution” in Dissident Voice & Countercurrents.org , 2007

Others available on request

Poetry & Fiction

Poems published in Convergence Journal, Blazevox, 3 Quarks Daily, SAMAR, Kashmir Walla, Shiraz, etc & Short Stories in Shiraza and Cerebration

MEDIA EXPERIENCE

Producer/Journalist/Director

Journalist/Producer, BBC World Service, 2001-2003

Producer Radio Intifada, member SWANA Collective, KPFK 90.7 fm, 2011- present
Writer, Courtyard Radio Pacifica, 2004-06
Executive Producer, World Press, Cal State University Fullerton Channel, 2007
Producer & Director, Mehtab Productions & Doordarshan Srinagar, 1998-2003
Assistant Director, Scriptwriter, Researcher & Translator, Audio Visual Research Centre, Kashmir University, 1996-99

Columnist

Greater Kashmir, 1998-06, Kashmir Times, 2005-06 & Etalaat News, Kashmir, 2007-2010

Editor

Founder/Editor, Kashmir Lit at <http://kashmirlit.org>, 2008- present

Editor (part-time), Urdu Quarterly Jehaath (Dimensions), 1999-02

Blogger

Blogger, The Mantlethought.org 2010- present & Blogger, Arabisto.com 2006-present

HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL JUSTICE & COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Co-Founder/Director/Coordinator, The Kashmir Project for research, education, empowerment focusing on human rights, women's rights and conflict resolution - this project will be active by Fall 2014.

Co-founder & Research Consultant Free Kashmiri Political Prisoners 2014

Co-Founder/member, Kashmir Women's Collaborative (Academics & Activists) 2011

Co-Founder/member, Kashmir Human Rights Foundation, 2004-11

Member, Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society 2003-till date

Coordinator (Webgroup), WorldPulse. Org, online women's action group on Kashmir, 2009 – till date (under the name Fatima Sultan Syed)

Co-Founder Kashmir Women's Initiative for Peace and Disarmament, 2000 – till date

Development Officer, Dept. of Rural Development and Community service, Government of Kashmir, 2002-04

Co-Founder Member, Yakja - Women's Empowerment Project, Kashmir, 2002-07

Coordinator, *Siyasar Aurat* (Women's) Foundation for victims of rape, Kashmir, 06-11

Co-Founder Member/Associate, Project Athwaas (handshake), Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace (Wiscomp), & Women's Workshop, 2000-05

Founder Member/Associate, Women's Meet, Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace (Wiscomp), & Women's Workshop, 2003-2006

Nodal Officer, Project PPERA (Empowerment Programs for Women), Kashmir University & South Asian Foundation, New Delhi, 2003-04

INVITED TALKS

State of Seige- Kashmir in the last 25 years, Center for Asian Studies, UC Irvine 6/2014

Making the Case for Affective Law: Women's Activism in Kashmir, Global Peace and Conflict Studies, 5/2014

"Kashmir: Women's movement and State of law and society", Working Title Seminar, Department of Anthropology, UC Irvine

"Human Rights Movements and the new Intifada in Kashmir", Talk at annual meeting at Kashmir Human Rights Forum, LA 11/2013

“Search for Justice: Human Rights Violations and Women’s Activism in Kashmir, at
“Ordinary Lives in a Conflict Zone: Voices from Kashmir”, India Institute of Advanced
Studies, Shimla India, 6/2013

“Militarization in Kashmir & Human Rights” World Policy Forum, New York 2/2013

“Half-widow-hood: Concerns and Solutions”, MERC, Seminar on Politics in Kashmir,
Kashmir University, 8/ 2012

Human Rights Movement and the case of Disappearances in Kashmir, Center for Citizen
Peacebuilding, UC Irvine 9/2011

“Women in mainstream: Patriarchy and Conflict in Kashmir”, State Resource Center,
Kashmir University 11/2011

“Dard-pora: The widow hamlet at the Border in Kashmir”, Institute of Social Research
Srinagar, India & Kashmir Education relief, LA 11/2010

SELECT CONFERENCES

**11/ 2014 – Pre-conference on Kashmir on "Critical Resistance in the Digital Age, South
Asia Conference Annual Meeting, Madison

** 12/2014 – Enactments, Panel, Society for Humanistic Anthropology, AAA annual
Affective law in a regime of Counter-insurgency - Inaugural Conference for Junior
Researchers at the Stanford Program in Law and Society, Stanford Law School 16-18 5/2014
“Subjectivity, Search and Human Rights in Kashmir” paper presented at Feminist
Interventions, UC Santa Cruz 6-8, 5/2014

Spectacles of Self: Politics of Human Rights and Gender in Kashmir, paper presented at Self
in South Asia, South Asia Studies, UC Chicago April 16-18 2014

Chair and Panelist - “Invisibilizing Militarization in Kashmir”, Critical Kashmir Studies
Panel, South Asia Conference – Madison, 11/ 2013

“Militarization, Operation Goodwill and state of law in Kashmir”, co-organizer and panelist,
Kashmir Critical Studies Preconference, South Asia Conference Madison 11/ 2013

“Affective Law and Politics of Memory: Women Searching for the Disappeared in Kashmir”
paper presented at “Telling Stories of Transition: Interpreting Experiences of Change in
Everyday Lives” School of Global Studies University of Sussex and South Asian
Anthropologists Group, UK 10/ 2013

“Performing politics: In search the Disappearance in Kashmir”, Second Annual South Asia
Graduate Student Conference Stanford University, 5/ 2013.

“The Good Half -widow: Agency and Women’s Human rights Activism in Kashmir” paper
presented at the Association of Political and Legal Anthropology, Chicago, 4/ 2013

“Women, mourning and the spectacle of disappearance in Kashmir”, paper presented at the
Association of Psychological Anthropology, San Diego 4/ 2013

“Performing Agency: The half-widows and mothers in human rights activism in Kashmir”
Paper presented at the Crossing Borders Conference USC 3/ 2013

“Politics of Agency: The Association of the Parents of the Disappeared in Kashmir” paper
presented at the Laboring Body, Institute of Critical Theory, UCI, 3/ 2013

“The Good-Half –Widow”, paper presented at the 23rd Annual Thinking Gender Conference,
Center for Study of Women, UCLA, 2/ 2013

“Pain & Mourning in Kashmir”, 4th Global Conference- Making Sense of Pain, Prague,
Czech Republic - could not attend

Yale Modern South Asia Workshop, 3/ 2013, New Haven, Connecticut – *could not attend*

“Women’s Politics of Mourning and Agency in Kashmir”, South Asia Conference in Madison 11/ 2012

Others available on request

SELECT ACADEMIC WORKSHOPS

Critical Justice Theory Group, Culture, Department of Law and Society UC Irvine

UCI Women in Academia, UC Irvine (Fall 2013 – Spring 2014)

“Working Title”, writing workshop on ethnographic writing (Winter 2014)

SYNERGISTIC ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

Academic Forum

- Co-Founder, Kashmir Studies Association in collaboration with Professor Haley Duschinski (Ohio University)

Academic Panel Co-organizer

- Forthcoming October 2014 – Pre-conference on Kashmir on "Critical Resistance in the Digital Age, South Asia Conference Annual Meeting (Madison)
- Preconference and a panel on Kashmir and Militarization, October 2013 South Asia Conference Annual Meeting (Madison)

Judge

- Victor Turner Prize Committee Judge (2013), Society of Humanistic Anthropology, American Anthropological Association

Board Member

- Executive Board, Society of Humanistic Anthropology (SHA) of the Anthropological Association of America.
- Book review editor "elect" (2017), The Association for Feminist Anthropology Section, Anthropology News

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Interview with Freny Manecksha on Rapes in Kashmir, Himal Magazine December 2013

Interview for the article titled Disappearances in Kashmir, by Zafar Mehdi in the Friday Times September 2013

Interview on the issues of Disappearances in Kashmir, on Kashmir Speaks with Tara Dorabji aired on KPFA’s La Onda Bajita – March 2013

Interview on the issue of women and Kashmir conflict by Shazia Khan for Kashmir Life, 2012

CONFLICT NEGOTIATION & PEACE TRAINING

2 Day Training Workshop, Taking Stock: Peace and Conflict Resolution efforts 1989-2010, Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society, Kashmir 2012

3 Day Workshop, Envisioning New Role: Women towards Peace Politics, JKCCS, Srinagar 2011

5 day Training Workshop “Resolving Conflict and Thinking Peace: The Way forward for the family of the disappeared”, Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society, Kashmir 2009

Training Workshop on International Human Rights and Women’s Rights Framework: Applications in Kashmir, Kashmir Relief (KHRF), Los Angeles 2007

3 day Training Workshop, Conflict Resolution & Peace, Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP), Delhi (2001, 2002, 2003)
3 Day Annual Conflict Transformation Workshop, WISCOMP, Delhi (2001, 2002)
15 Day Training Workshop, “Women’s as Peace Builders”, Development Conference for Panchayat Raj Officials, NIRD, Hyderabad (2002)
3 Day Training Workshop on “Creating Constituencies of Peace”, Non-violent Engagement & Conflict Transformation, Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP), Delhi (2002)
3 Day Training Workshop on Conflict Management with Kashmir Peace Partners Initiative, Fletcher School of Diplomacy & CMG group Workshop, Gulmarg, Srinagar 2001

PROFESSIONAL & HONOR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

Member, Anthropologists Association of America
Member, National Association of Student Anthropologists
Member, Association of Feminist Anthropologists
Member, Association of Political and Legal Anthropology
Member, Society of Psychological Anthropologists
Member, Kashmiri Women’s Association for Peace and Disarmament
Member, Orange County Press Club
Member, American Journalists Association
Member, Muslim American Journalists Association
Member, Muslim Urban Professionals
Member, Cal State University Alumni Association
Phi Beta Delta, International Honor Society, Cal State University Fullerton Chapter
Kappa Tau Alpha, Cal State University Fullerton Chapter

LANGUAGES

Kashmiri, Urdu, Hindi & English (Written/Spoken)

TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS

Diploma in Computer Applications (One year) SSM College of Engineering, Kashmir
Diploma in Computer Applications (11 months), Computer City, Kashmir
Diploma in Computer Applications, Regional Engineering College, Srinagar
Certificate course in Broadcast Journalism, BBC World Service, London

REFERENCES

Dr. Victoria Bernal, Department of Anthropology UC Irvine, email: vbernal@uci.edu
Dr. Karen Leonard, Department of Anthropology UC Irvine, email: kbleonar@uci.edu
Dr. Susan Coutin, Professor of Criminology, Law & Society and Anthropology, email: scoutin@uci.edu
Dr. Gabrielle Schwab, Department of Comparative Literature, UC Irvine, email: gmschwab@uci.edu

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Politics of Absence: Women Searching for the Disappeared in Kashmir

By

Ather Zia

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Irvine, 2014

Professor Victoria Bernal, Chair

Contemporary Kashmir valley is seen in a terminal colonial situation within India. Since the armed movement broke out in 1989, the Indian government has deployed massive number of armed troops and implemented lethal counter-insurgency laws. Human rights groups claim that over 70,000 people have been killed and more than 8000 men have been forcibly disappeared in custody by the Indian army. This study focuses on the women activists of the Association of the Parents of the Disappeared Persons who organized in 1994 to search for the disappeared men. The everyday gendered politics of mourning emerges as, what I conceptualize as “*affective law*” which reveals a fine-grained understanding of women’s agency that does not appear as only stereotypically confrontational but as nuancedly cultural. I trace the genesis of affective law within the paradigm of hauntology; a spectral space, of departure and return of the disappeared. The hauntological interiorization emerges as mourning, memory, and resistance. The women use performative politics which converges in the spectacle of mourning and allows them to transcend the limitations of the heavily militarized society. The performative politics of mourning makes it possible to resist oppression and through forms memory capture what might be rendered insignificant by hegemonic discourses of the state. The analysis of the work of mourning as a

mode of affective politics traces women's social invisibility and how they become visible in the public. The activist-women emerge as agents of change that alter social constructions relating to body, justice, human rights and gender.

The single disappearing body becomes a crucial counterpart in the state's political economy. The state's surveillance thinly masked in the disappearance becomes a symbol of panopticism – a theater, symbol, and a ritual. Even though spectacle has been conceptualized as separate, in this dissertation enforced disappearances come closer to the spectacular nature of punishment and become a “staging” visible to thousands of eyes. Thus, the society of surveillance emerges as deeply enmeshed with the spectacle and not as mutually exclusive. The spectacle of gendered activism allows tracing the state of exception that India has created in Kashmir valley. The punitive measures imposed by India, become means of forced assimilation of Kashmir. In this dissertation we see how the state becomes operational through dual modes including punitive measures like enforced disappearances and what is termed as military humanitarianism. The state terror emerges as a part of foundational violence for an ethnonational struggle to consolidate the Indian nation on what were pre-1947 heterogeneous territories.

INTRODUCTION

the Haunting

She says,

“you come to me in the night, at the crack of dawn, and when the morning is quiet and everyone is at work, sometimes during the day, sometimes it’s a shadow, sometimes a voice, sometimes a brush against my shoulder; you come quite often, you are always arriving at door, which is always a little ajar? I try to close it, it sways back heavily, as if someone outside is pushing to come in, then there is nothing else to do, but to let it be, and open it only more, I used to be afraid to keep it open, anyone could come in; maybe a mouse to lick the bare cans of food, or a soldier to kick everything I do not own anymore, or just wanting to kill me because I refuse to stay silent, Then I step out a bit, I bleed in the park in front of many eyes, displayed like a map of grief, inked with tears, I look, crane my neck, turn it towards the alley. I see a specter, it is you, beckoning me, wanting to be found, awaiting justice, which is always arriving and never here.”

(ather zia 2012)

The “Killable” Kashmiri Body and the Spectacle of Enforced Disappearance in Kashmir

Making the Disappeared “Appear”

The region of Kashmir is mired in one of the longest running disputes since India and Pakistan became two nations after British paramountcy ended in 1947. The policy of enforced disappearance¹ in Kashmir valley² has been in effect since the militancy for Independence from Indian rule started (Mehmood 2007; Duschinski 2010; Mohammad 2013; Qazi 2010). It was in 1989 that the Kashmir valley - which had by then entered what has been called a “terminal colonial situation” (Lamb 1991) within India - rose up in a popular armed struggle. In the ensuing violence, over 70,000 people have been killed and more than 8000 men have been subjected forcibly disappeared (Duschinski 2010; Qazi 2010). The Indian nation-state has imposed counter-insurgency laws which grant immunity to the armed forces against being held accountable for any act of impunity (Mathur 2012). In what follows I want to keep in full view the militarized state apparatus of Kashmir. The imposition of laws such as the the Armed Forces

(Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and the Jammu and Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act creates a siege in the valley where soldier's can kill with impunity without any accountability.³ The Indian state has put in place policies that censor and coerce people into submission and silence.⁴ The Human Rights Watch traces the Indian state's policies in an aptly titled report called "A Pattern of Impunity" which details the state violence and the environment of fear prevailing in Kashmir (Human Rights Watch 1992).

My dissertation pivots around the women activists of a well-known human rights group named the Association of the Parents of the Disappeared. The APDP as it is popularly known was founded by Parveena Ahangar, the mother of a 17-year-old boy who was kidnapped and then disappeared by the Indian troops, and Parvez Imroz, a human rights lawyer. The women dominated APDP mobilizes demonstrations, pursue court cases, collect documentation, seek audiences with army or government officials, and scour prisons and morgues. The highlight of the movement is a ritualistic monthly sit-in which has become a public spectacle of mourning. The protest is marked by funereal silence and lamentation for the men who have been disappeared in the Indian counter-insurgency actions. The gendered politics of mourning emerges as, what I conceptualize as "*affective law*" which reveals a fine-grained understanding of women's agency that does not appear as only stereotypically confrontational but as nuancedly cultural. I trace the genesis of affective law within the paradigm of hauntology (Derrida 1994); a spectral space, the threshold of being and presence, life and death, specters and ghosts, of departure and return of the disappeared.⁵ The tracing the hauntological interirorization manifests mourning, memory, haunting, affect and waiting. The women use performative politics which converges in the spectacle of mourning in order to transcend the simultaneous limitations of the nation-state and the society. The analysis of the work of mourning as a mode of affective

politics traces women's social invisibility and how they become visible in public. The activist-women emerge as agents of change that alter social constructions relating to body, justice, human rights and gender.

The motif of the spectacle is the theoretical heart of this dissertation and serves as a metanarrative for invoking modes of theater, performance and erasure - paradigms which I discuss in detail ahead.⁶ The spectacle becomes an analytic to explain the women's activism and resistance in context of state brutality. Foucault (1977) has argued that the spectacle has given way to surveillance; this dissertation illustrates how the state enforced disappearances in Kashmir become a spectacle and a mode of surveillance. The state directs the spectacle of the disappearance at all the potentially guilty. Intimidation and communal fear is fostered by building invisibility and deniability into the technique of punishment.⁷ The single disappearing body becomes a crucial counterpart of the surveillance-panopticon that fits the constructs of the state's political economy.⁸ The state's surveillance thinly masked in the disappearance becomes a symbol of panopticism – a theater, symbol, and a ritual. Disappearance comes closer to the spectacular nature of punishment and becomes a “staging” visible to thousands of eyes. Although a mode of “obtaining power of mind over mind” (Zizek 2003:252) the spectacle of disappearance ignites mourning, memories, grief and resistance in people. Thus, the society of surveillance emerges as deeply enmeshed with the spectacle and not as mutually exclusive.⁹

The lens of gendered activism allows tracing the state of exception that India has created in Kashmir valley. The punitive measures imposed by India, become means of forced assimilation of Kashmir. The state terror emerges as a part of “foundational violence” (Galtung 1991) for an ethnonational struggle to consolidate the Indian nation on what were pre-1947 heterogeneous territories In this dissertation we see how the state becomes operational through

dual modes including punitive measures like enforced disappearances and what is termed as military humanitarianism. I argue that by deploying welfare measures through military, the state enforces another kind of disappearance – to render the military bulwark invisible within the state government. In this mode, the foundational violence, camouflaged as being providential, *obliterates* established social relations and community in much more insidious ways. This dissertation traces how human rights activism ends up becoming a mode of pastoral power (Foucault 1977) which in absence of any real redress is reduced to mere theatricality of the state. The state performs a spectacle of democracy by allowing people to protest without delivering on its ideals.

In this introduction I situate the violent erasures of the body specifically through enforced disappearance of Kashmiri men by the armed troops as crucial in the staging of the Indian nation in Kashmir valley. The lens of enforced disappearances and the APDP activism illustrates how the Indian state normalizes punitive measures to regulate Kashmiris and how militarization becomes an accepted norm. The need to contextualize the “Kashmiri” body at the outset is important to understand how the illegal detainment, torture, killing and specifically enforced disappearances become a juridical norm under the largest democracy in South Asia¹⁰. I will trace how the “Kashmiri” body is constructed and perceived as the “Other,” a “killable” one in order to become a turf of subjection for the Indian nation-state and significantly, as resistance to oppression for the Kashmiri people. I use the word “killable” to refer to those forcibly disappeared men, who as this dissertation illustrates suffer a latent and social death. By implication killable conveys the one “who can be killed” without remorse.

One December morning in 2011 the sun shone weakly on the naked Chinar trees.¹¹ The women-activists of APDP were chanting slogans, singing eulogies and lamenting surrounded by signage decrying enforced disappearances. The gathering was reminiscent of a family funeral only it was held in one of the popular public parks in central Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir valley. Husna, an old woman of about 80 years and a veteran activist whose son had been disappeared 10 years ago, was talking to a new member.¹² Close to Husna sat her daughter-in-law Niqab and Haseena, her granddaughter. Niqab gazed downward while Haseena shyly held up a sign saying, *“Where is my Father; return him to us.”* They all wore white headbands displaying a featureless profile of a man representing the disappeared men. Haseena’s band sat lopsided on her hair and it reminded me of the princess hairbands young girls love to show-off. Only, this white piece of cloth on her hair was symbolic of the most heinous human rights abuses in the history of mankind. The little girl would keep this band safely tucked away amongst her meagre possessions for the monthly use. The protest had become a way of life for her as it was for everyone taking part in the protest.

The photojournalists covering the story swarmed around the scene, moving the women into better light; they clicked frenziedly. Husna approached a new member who sat quietly with her son’s photograph face-down in her lap. She instructed her to hold it up to make it clearly visible to the photographers. *“Don’t make him disappear in your lap, show his face, hold him high, he must be seen, that is what we are here for,”* Husna chided the new member. This admonishment that *“he must be seen, that is what we are here for”* is at the heart of what the women of the APDP are doing. Mothers, wives, and other kin present themselves to make the disappeared appear – to make the “invisible” “visible”. This dissertation argues that the women lay bare the state of exception that India has created in Kashmir valley. As they demonstrate,

give interviews to media and pose for pictures, lament and eulogize, these women appear as a trace - like the chalk outline at a murder scene which represents what has been erased. The emptiness within the outline becomes a spectacle enacted through politics of mourning which has made the APDP movement “one of the most visible political discourses of resistance to terror” (Feldman 1991: 491). In being forcibly disappeared the Kashmiri body was relegated to oblivion, but the women activists of the APDP make it attain “the highest condition of visibility” (ibid).

In this dissertation, the punitive measures, specifically the enforced disappearance employed by India, emerge as a means of forced assimilation of Kashmir. I argue that state terror in Kashmir is a part of “foundational violence” (Galtung 1991) for an ethnonational struggle to consolidate the Indian nation on what were pre-1947 heterogeneous territories. The enforced disappearances are performed or staged by the state as a mode of control in the continuum of foundational violence. While the mark of the nation-state manifests in the secretive claim on the body, it also makes the body an object of collective appropriation. The disappearance which becomes a murder done infinite times over (Gordon 1997) and gives rise to processes of resistance. The women of APDP who activate around these “bodily subtractions” (Scorer 2007) become agents of change that alter social constructions relating to justice, human rights and gender, imbuing them with new meanings (Gordon 1997; Leder 1990; and Ahmed 2004). By engaging in everyday politics of mourning the women-activists shape resistance, agency and counter-memory.¹³ They enable processes that produced subjugated knowledges which often are hidden behind dominant narratives.¹⁴ The performative politics adopted by women appears as a spectacle of agency, memory and memorialization which is a “resistance against the official versions of historical continuity” (Foucault 2003).

The figure of the “disappeared” becomes a revenant – that which is always returning, in the lives of those surviving. The “disappeared” body is a constant reminder, a perpetual but invisible presence (see Chapter 2) appearing as a ghost or a specter. The specter of the disappeared body becomes the impetus for resistance.. The figure of the ghost and the experience of haunting enables a framework for understanding how the “disappeared” body fuels the emerging experiences of resistance (Gordon 1987). In his paradigm of hauntology, Derrida (1994) posits that ghosts – bodies without flesh – enable the concern and demand for justice. As this dissertation illustrates, the specters/ghosts appear, visible-invisible, and haunt those who are living. The field of perception of the kin is filled with specters of the disappeared. They are not incompatible to the context of those surviving, yet the disappeared are not physically involved, but are in the realm of the imaginary (Merleau-Ponty 1945).

Although the body is “absent,” the figure of the disappeared becomes a perpetual presence in people’s lives, especially for the families, and gives rise to a politics of mourning practiced by the activist women. In place of an open execution, or killing or incarceration which would have occurred once, the torture on the disappeared body multiplies, replays, and becomes an unending invisible spectacle within the personal and collective imagination. Disappearance, for the living can be counted as a perpetual torture and a murder by a different name (Gordon 1997). Azi, an APDP activist and a mother of a disappeared man says,¹⁵

“...What did they do to him...where is he? I am terrified of my own thoughts... I imagine they killed him, his blood is splattered on the ground, they drag his corpse.....I think he is in the prison, maggots crawling over his wounds.....asking for water...When someone says a body has been found I run to see it, that terrifies me...those limbless, eyeless bodies, did they do the same to him? There is no end...there is no end...I hear his moans every day...”

Such narratives play continuously in the social imagination, constructing the spectacle of the ‘disappeared’ body on the invisible scaffold in varying degrees of duress. “*What must have happened to him as he was being tortured? He must have cried for me I am sure. Did he die from torture or did he survive? What if he escaped? But even if he did, he can’t survive for long, he must be wounded,*” ponders Azi whose imaginaries are permeated by the scenarios of torture and death from what is the “unknown world of the disappeared.”

In place of an open execution, or killing, or incarceration which would have occurred once, the torture on the disappeared body, which becomes an exemplary receptacle for the disciplinary techniques, multiplies, replays, and becomes an unending “invisible” spectacle within the personal and collective imagination. It gets entrenched in the physical and mental lives of those surviving. In case of disappearances, “society becomes terror stricken” (Robben 2000:24). The terror debilitates “people politically and emotionally without them ever fathoming the magnitude of the force that hit them” (ibid).

In the backdrop of the Foucaultian paradigm of spectacle, the disappeared body should have been foreclosed to visibility. It should have been in direct contrast to Damien’s execution in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) which Foucault uses as an example of public spectacle of punishment. In an enforced disappearance there is no gore, no blood, and no quartered body. Even though the body is lacking, the figure of the disappeared becomes a perpetual presence in people’s lives. The disappearance becomes a spectacle a true organization of images to be viewed.¹⁶ In the disappeared body, the nation-state technically tries to preempt the “spectacle” by “disappearing” the disappearance - by erasing all traces, by denial and by clamping down on all means of redress and justice for the family. The emergency laws in Kashmir thwarts any investigation to find the disappeared men. The nation-state enacts a spectacle of might and unabashed power to suppress

Kashmiri people, but even then the women appear as a spectacle of resistance.. It may even be seen as a counter-spectacle, a term I sometimes use interchangeably ahead. I do not see the nature of people's resistance to oppression only as countering the Indian state but as a spectacle of its own that exists in the "mansion of spectacles or mini-theaters" or a Tamara-esque (Boje 2002).

The women dominated Association of Parents of the Disappeared Persons congeals around the disappeared body, which in its absence becomes potent and suddenly visible through its invisibility. Once the disappearance is enforced by the army, a slew of rag-tag search processes begin which have converged into performative protests through the APDP. No one knows the fate of the disappeared after the person is either detained during a raid, an encounter or a crackdown. Often, it might be a random arrest, a term which in this context stands in for "kidnapping" and could happen anywhere and there may or may not be witnesses. Till date, return of the disappeared men has been rare, and over the years women relatives who searched on their own for their disappeared men gradually merged into the APDP collective. Reminiscent of the the Madres in Argentina (Taylor 1998; Gordon 1997; Arditti 1999; and Fischer 1993), the women-activists of the APDP "continue to keep the disappeared alive...in an effort to bring the perpetrators to justice" (Gordon 1997: 140).

In the section ahead I trace the interlinked spectacles of the nation-state's staging the enforced disappearance that hinges on the motif of the killable Kashmiri body. All spectacles; the disciplining by the Indian army and the resistant and protesting kin appear as imbricated in the megaspectacle of the nation-state. This does not indicate any collaboration between the state and APDP but indicates that even resistance is always embedded in a web of power (Foucault 1977).

The Killable Kashmiri Body and Staging the Indian nation-state

Most literature posits that that any nation fundamentally becomes a part of the experience of nationalism for citizens through modes of performance and representation. Generally speaking in conditions of harmony, nations are upheld and personified ,through “public ceremonies of celebration and commemoration with which the citizenry could identify and in which they could, eventually, participate” (Smith 2003: 223). In case of a restive population like the one in Kashmir the spectacle of the Indian nation takes place through, what Feldman (1991) has called the material reciprocity of bodily, violent and spatial practices.¹⁷ Instead of a vision of a unified nation, violence becomes the unified language of material signification and circulation between the antagonistic blocs. The silent torture wrecked by the disappearance of a person on the social realm with the “disappeared” being dead and alive at the same time, becomes a mounting fear which can outweigh the threat of a direct killing, imprisonment or torture. The disappearance becomes a spectacle unlike any other. The use of violence for civic torture is staged, ritualistic, and performative which the Indian nation-nation directs assert its power over the territory through the Kashmiri body.¹⁸

I utilize a phrase from a person named Shabir who was subject to enforced disappearance by the Indian army but was eventually found by his family. Such cases are very rare. The phrase which Shabir brings from the world of the “disappeared” becomes an analytic to trace how a Kashmiri body is socially and politically constructed and perceived in the Indian national imaginary. It illustrates how killability is justified without remorse or punishment.

*“This bastard wants freedom from India , kill the bloody traitor, give him freedom from life and throw him into trash, they all are traitor bastards, give them freedom.”*¹⁹ This phrase, hurled at Shabir by the soldiers who tortured him, was one that he recalled often. . It was in 1991

that Shabir was detained for more than 16 months under false allegations of being a militant (popularly called Mujahid).²⁰ For the entire duration of his incarceration, his family knew nothing of his whereabouts. Taja, Shabir's wife - like other women whose kin disappears in custody - began a frantic ritual of search; with the army and police denied that they had apprehended him. Thus, in the ensuing months, Shabir remained "disappeared".²¹ Then, one random evening, Shabir was found comatose, abandoned in a school building that had been used as a makeshift interrogation center by the army. Shabir had a ruptured abdomen, his rectum was infected and wounds were festering all over his body. Two other men, in similar critical condition, were also found with Shabir. Emaciated and severely injured, Shabir survived but only after many corrective surgeries and he still ended up with disabilities. Even though severely wounded, the families of these men were ecstatic to find them. Most often once the men are forcibly "disappeared" they are never found.

Shabir would recall the torture on his body, his pain multiplied by the mix of water and electricity. *"They [Indian soldiers] would electrocute me, and as I lay there writhing, they would stop for dinner and come back. After dinner was the worst, for then they would be drunk, that's when most boys would die. The soldiers of course would not be in their senses at all and go on beating till the body gave up."* Shabir's body had been taken to the brink of death many times; *"I do not know how I survived. Boys got killed almost every night. One night a wounded boy asked for water. I could see he was taking last breaths; he kept pleading with me, looking into my eyes, whispering for water. What could I do; I was wounded myself, I had nothing. I dragged myself towards him and spat in his mouth. He died soon after, that is all I had in my power. The soldiers would just throw the dead bodies out. Didi someone find them or not, I do not know. From what I could guess our camp was in a jungle. There was no land for proper burial. My guess is that*

they just dumped the bodies for animals to tear into; all I remember now is extreme pain and horrifying gory scenes,”²² recounted Shabir with a mask like expression on his face.

Many scholars have written about how nationalism gets constructed upon the body which becomes a literal and metaphorical vehicle for collective fears, hopes and commitments (Das 1995; 2008; Schirmer 2004; Nelson 1997; Malkki 1995; Taylor 1997; Feldman 1991; Weiss 2003; and Theidon 2013). The state appears by asserting itself through habitual performativity where it prevails over people physically and symbolically (Agarwaal 2007; Taylor 1997; Das 2005; Daniel 1991; Aretxaga 1997; and Navarro-Yashin 2013). In this dissertation, the state’s insignia on the body is revealed even when “the body” is made physically “invisible” or “disappeared” altogether. Many studies have detailed the brutality of the Indian state’s policies in the Kashmir valley (Duschinski 2010; Mathur 2012; Kaul 2011; Kazi 2010; Bhan 2013; Snedden 2013; and Robinson 2013). The Indian administration has been called “catastrophic” which had made people’s lives subservient to consolidating borders and state security ; and has paved way for their annihilation or destruction (Mona Bhan: 7; [Ophir 2007:56]). Contemporary Kashmir is seen as existing in a “terminal colonial situation” (Lamb 1991) within India and the Kashmiris perceive the Indian state as a defacto occupation (Bose 1997; 2004). Since the armed movement broke out in 1989, the Indian government has deployed massive numbers of armed troops and implemented lethal counter-insurgency laws. Killings, detentions, torture, custodial rape, extrajudicial executions, “disappearances,” and the desecration of holy sites (Mehmood 2001; mathur 2013; and Duschinski 2010, 2012) have become the norm. International watchdogs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have issued critical reports admonishing India and claiming it has lost its moral ground in integrating Kashmir into its borders.

Under the counter-insurgency laws which India has implemented in Kashmir, the Armed Forces Special Protection Act (AFSPA) of 1958 is the most lethal. AFSPA grants immunity to the army against all abuses, suspends sovereignty of the people and makes the protection of rights impossible. Under AFSPA, the armed and paramilitary forces gain sweeping powers which facilitates arbitrary arrests, detentions, extrajudicial executions and, further, reinforces the impunity of offenders acting under its aegis. AFSPA is notorious²³ for creating conditions enabling human rights violations such as arbitrary killings, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and enforced disappearances. The Act allows security forces in areas declared "disturbed" to "*arrest without warrant, any person who has committed a cognizable offence or against whom a reasonable suspicion exists that he has committed or is about to commit a cognizable offence and may use such force as may be necessary to effect the arrest,*" including the power to shoot to kill (Amnesty International Report 1999).²⁴ Since it is virtually impossible to identify the fighters who have had local support; the Indian forces subject civilians to terrible abuses because of their assumed complicity.

The Indian army and other state forces have carried out large numbers of summary executions, custodial killings, torture, "disappearances," and "arbitrary detentions" (Human Rights Watch 2006). The judiciary and the administration do not consider violations in Kashmir in the light of relevant international humanitarian law, such as the Geneva Conventions (1949), the Additional Protocols (1977), or international criminal law, as India has not yet legislated on crimes of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes. Domestic Indian law does not even criminalize enforced disappearance or torture, which means that it is unable to prosecute perpetrators of such crimes, thus depriving the people of appropriate instruments to force prosecution.²⁵ Therefore, an Althusserian²⁶ interpellation persists upon Kashmiris who are

subjected to the control of unmediated power where everyone is effectively reduced to the status of a killable. The Kashmiri body becomes a repository of “vulnerability, agency, and mortality;” it exposes all possible sensorial and symbolic manners and also carries an indomitable public dimension. It becomes the crucible of public life which is central to the paradigm of “spectacle.”

²⁷ The Kashmiri body gets marked as “killable” - one which can be killed without remorse, or accountability, somewhat reminiscent of what Agamben (1998) has called the homo sacer.²⁸ Even though people living under modern democracies are not entirely excluded from the political or the legal system, in the state of exception created by AFSPA in Kashmir, the legal order operates only by suspending itself. The suspension of the law becomes the rule and the law is in force without significance (Agamben 2005). The law even though prevailing (viz the AFSPA) is not absent²⁹ but is emptied of concrete meaning and suspended in its effective application.

In the context of the phrase “*This bastard wants freedom from India, kill the bloody traitor, give him freedom from life and throw him into trash, they all are traitor bastards, give them freedom*,” that Shabir recalled, and that in many varied forms has been heard by most Kashmiri men and women I met during fieldwork.³⁰ The Kashmiri body in the Indian imagination is marked as the “other” - a deviant one, a traitor to the union of India through its desire for separate nationhood. The separatist³¹ political aspirations of the Kashmiri body must be read in the backdrop of foundational violence which is manifest in the brazen militarization to seal India as a nation. Thus, as this dissertation illustrates the Kashmiri body becomes crucial not only in being disciplined to integrate with India, but is constructed as a threat its sovereign body and unify the Indian imaginary against an “identifiable” enemy. The “traitorous” killable

Kashmiri body, thus, becomes one which can be “killed, incarcerated, tortured or disappeared” without remorse to preserve, consolidate and assert complete sovereignty of the Indian nation.

The “killable” Kashmiri body is constructed from all the stereotypical markers of the “Other” - both material and immaterial. In the immaterial form they exist as discursive categories tangible as the indefatigable Kashmiri separatism,³² armed violence, and the specter of Islamic terrorism or Pan-Islamism. India’s own adversarial relationship with Pakistan since 1947 also derives from perceptions about Kashmiris who share an affective relationship with Pakistan through their shared cultural and religious heritage (Robinson 2013; Bhan 2013; and Nussbaum 2007). In material form, the type of dress and demeanor becomes suspect. A Muslim dress, *keffiyeh*,³³ sporting beards, kohled eyes, carrying a *Quran* or Urdu or Arabic scriptures – are seen as foretelling of “Islamist,” pro-freedom, fundamentalist³⁴ inclinations.³⁵ In Kashmir, families often discourage men from adhering to such dress or demeanor to avoid endangering their lives. Most of my informants would discourage their men-folk from dressing in a certain way or force them to shave regularly so that they would not be mistaken as “Islamists” or militants. It is telling that 99% of the disappeared men in Kashmir have been civilian Muslim males, with most of them being bearded (Choudhury and Moser-Puangsuwan 2007).

The material and immaterial markers appear as “body-maps” (Malkki 1995), which demarcate that “their body” (Kashmiri) will not blend³⁶ with “our bodies” (Indian). These body-maps, with their material and immaterial signification, are reinforced on the political and media platforms³⁷ which appear to work in tandem against the Muslim community in contrast to the contradicting tensions which are a hallmark of a thriving democratic set-up (Nussbaum 2007 and Bhan 2013). The body with “certain Otherness”³⁸ which can harm the nation makes it possible for the state to carry out extra judicial abuses. The Kashmiri body in the Indian imaginary is

primarily the “Other” - a Muslim³⁹ and, by extension, even a “Pakistani” body. The phrase from Shabir, which I mention at the outset, has many versions. Although the words used might differ, the emphasis on tracing the “other” is a common overlap. In one of many versions that Shabir has heard, he mentioned being branded a “Pakistani” and “in love with the Muslim land.” This labeling may seem to convey the belief that Kashmiris profess allegiance to Pakistan as a country, but it also stands proxy for everything that is perceived as the “Other”⁴⁰ – desirous of seceding⁴¹ and being in a continual adversarial relationship with India. The “Otherness” of Kashmiris who are generally followers of Islam is also connected to the trope of “Muslim” deviance within the Indian polity.⁴² In recent years, Muslims in India, and not just Kashmiri Muslims, have been cast as a volatile category. The communal tensions between majority Hindus and minority Muslims have fueled many pogroms and massacres.⁴³ As far as Kashmiris are concerned, in the Indian political imaginary (both elite and grassroots) they are seen as “deeply unhappy to be in India. Given an opportunity to determine their future—as India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, falsely promised that they would be—they would probably vote to secede.”⁴⁴ Thus, through the hyper-visibility of the “Kashmiri other,” the “killable” body is manifested as a model of disciplinary power that hinges on the spectacle of the scaffold to secure the nation and unite Indians against disintegration.⁴⁵

The body of the Kashmiri can be killed without any fear of reprisal. The act of killing of Kashmiri's has even been narrativized as a “habit” - a routine undertaking by the Indian soldiers.⁴⁶ In case of issues of perceived threats to security, such as the armed insurgency in Kashmir, countries often approve the use of force and the suspension of basic rights. Juridical power time and again appears as a result of a political approach to national security.⁴⁷ *“They can disappear anyone, even me while I am talking to you or you, anyone can be killed or*

disappeared at any time without reason” is a refrain often heard in Kashmir.⁴⁸ The Indian soldiers are not held accountable, either legally or even morally, by the state or by Indian citizens. Unmediated sovereign power has turned democratic politics into biopolitics – asserting itself on the hapless body. It has become impossible to distinguish biological life from political existence and the hidden foundation of sovereignty manifests in the bare life of the victim, and its constant exclusion, which the state politics keeps reenacting (Oksala 2010) through violence. The killability of the Kashmiri body appears as an act of nation, be it direct killing or what I term as a “latent killing,” as is the case with enforced disappearance. Within the Foucaultian body-as-site trope analysis, this act on the body can be read as an annihilating warning to all those potentially deviant. The spectacle of body becomes not only a representational threat to civil society in its entirety, but invokes the fantasy of nation which will stand united at any cost. In this dissertation, the disappearance becomes spectacular by reactivating the “spectacle” of unbridled power over the body in the public imaginary creating awareness about the ever-present sovereign. The body (in life and its death, visibility and invisibility) becomes a symbolic site for the production of sovereign might and for making the political logic manifest.⁴⁹ In this context, the emergence of human rights activism such as the APDP also becomes a device for the state to be deployed for flaunting politics of democracy rather than propagating its ideals of fairness and justice.

Staging the Nation through Humanitarian Warfare

While on one hand the Indian state stages itself through punitive measures on the Kashmiri body, on the other as this dissertation will illustrate, it enacts what has come to be known as “heart-warfare,” - specifically militarized humanitarianism.⁵⁰ Since 1997, the army has engaged in a humanitarian counter-insurgency project known as Operation Sadhbhavana

(Goodwill) in Kashmir. It has been argued by scholars (Bhan 2013; Agarwaal 2004) that Operation Goodwill is not an altruistic act, but an attempt by the army to appear provident, munificent and to merge surreptitiously with civil administration to propagate foundational violence by means that appear non-violent. I argue that by deploying this innovative “politics of visibility” (Feldman 1991) through heartwarfare, the state enforces another kind of disappearance – to render the military bulwark t invisible within the state government. The Goodwill project appears as a bid to make militarization appear as natural, and even required consolidating the territory, masking it under the democratic patina that India maintains in Kashmir. Moreover, by appearing provident the intent also become to make the desire for freedom from India seem abnormal and unnecessary. Heartwarfare thus becomes another mode of foundational violence that bears the seeds of cultural and structural violence in addition to the direct violence India metes out on Kashmir.

The foundational violence in the mode of militarized humanitarianism juxtaposed with direct violence and warfare (discussed in Chapter 4) *obliterates* established social relations and community in comparison to structural violence which primarily focuses on exploiting people and the direct violence which kills.. With the spectacle of enforced disappearances on one hand, and that of heartwarfare on the other, this dissertation illustrates the polity in Kashmir as not being a democracy but a politics of democracy (Galtung 2004), which requires the military bulwark to uphold it. The humanist forms of counter-insurgency become a policy to prevent “incipient terrorism” and an attempt to normalize the brutality of the “realpolitik” (Fassin in Bhan 2013:9) in which bodies and identities become subservient to national security. The project of Sadhbhavana in Kashmir region has in no way changed the nature of the Indian army, but has remained an attempt to make the military appear democratic and shed its colonial

persona” (Bhan 2013:134). The Indian military’s contrary goals of human security and counterinsurgency have given rise to anxieties in Kashmiri society, an issue that is addressed in depth in chapter 4. The Kashmiris perceive themselves to be in an adversarial relationship with the army who, in essence, are engaged in conventional warfare and not welfare. This bipolar nature of militarization has produced a very complex state of exception where democratic structure - overridden, enmeshed and undermined within the military apparatus - has unleashed an “obliteration” of social givens and created sublime divisions in society.

Contemporary political theorists (Agamben 1998, 2005; Arendt 1966; Anderson 1991), have emphasized the exclusionary impulses of the modern nation-states. It is the erasure of identities, solidarities, and whole modes of life that are the modern state’s pre-conditions. Indeed, erasure - whether by forcible (such as a disappearance) or “peaceable” (heartwarfare) methods - is the calling card of all foundational violence, which thereafter repeats itself in the ghostly form of the erasure from memory of the fact of that original erasure. The Indian state not only uses direct violence, but also appropriates peaceful means of “winning hearts and minds” (Bhan 2013 and Agarwal 2004). The trope of heartwarfare which is institutionalized as Operation Goodwill have become tools to normalize the nation-centric visions of territory, sovereignty and democracy.

In this mode, the foundational violence, camouflaged as being providential, *obliterates* established social relations and community in much more insidious ways. The invisibilization of the military’s martial nature by masking it as humanitarian does not merely distort reality but annihilates the meanings permeating social and political realities in Kashmir. When an army engages in a catch and kill operation to curb dissidents and simultaneously holds medical camps; when an army uses schools as makeshift interrogation centers and then holds cricket

matches or singing contests for youth - a new form of a state of exception evolves. When an army camp which has been a torture center in the night for young men and boys suddenly transforms into a banquet hall where the elders (who at some point also were incarcerated or tortured in the very same premises) are forced not only to attend but also to invite other apprehensive villagers to have a communal dinner to show solidarity with army - an obliteration of “givens” in the social and political order occurs. Social and political routines transmute, cultural meanings are inverted and subverted.

A space of death emerges where the signified and signifier come unhinged, and everything becomes what it is and yet something more. The surplus of meaning gives rise to duplicity and doubling. People live their public lives and their private lives, masking their torn allegiances (Theidon 2013). This dissertation illustrates how this laden environment of fear and coercion produces “partial erasure” of Kashmiri identities – which is another kind of disappearance. The reason I call it partial erasure is to indicate that the erasures of what people stand for are not complete. The erasure always leaves behind a trace –the indications of presence as well absence. The present spectacle of a coerced Kashmiri can only become visible through the evidence of a past, the invisible that was a present as ideal of freedom and resistance. The spectacle of a Kashmiri identity becomes “Sous rature, “ the Heideggerian norm (Derrida 1994) where the erased stood with the present and the traces of which are always to be read under erasure. Kashmiris as this dissertation illustrates especially as they wrangle with Operation Goodwill manifest partial –erasure, holding on the ideals of liberation and resistance while following the diktats of the state to preserve life. Shabir who bears wounds that are not healing, now sneaks around trying to escape the army which under Operation Goodwill is enforcing treatments on him. He not only finds these treatments as ineffective for his condition but also

ethically jarring. “How can you accept treatment from those who are intent to kill you; they {army} are killing me with their goodwill now,” Shabir said. Between the military’s dual intents of killing and welfare, Kashmiris exist in a schizophrenic and paradoxical polity exacerbated by the political unpredictability and general helplessness of their situation. Confusions have become the psychic inmates of everyone’s private panopticon fashioning behaviors to allow bare survival and which has produced obliterations in the social order. The process of Goodwill employed by the army not only disappears the community as it existed, but also marks a definitive and deliberate “invisibilization” of the military into processes of the Kashmiri every-day. While the military “invisibilizes” itself, the partial erasure (discussed in Chapter 5) of Kashmiri identity becomes symbolic of how people evolve tactics to tackle coercion. The Kashmiris exist on a thin razor line between death and bare survival. This complicated and compromised identity in itself becomes a “disappearance” of the Kashmiri person-hood and of the community as it knew itself. This process appears as a “spectacle” of its own erasure.

Theoretical Underpinnings: Modes of Spectacle, Performance, Theater and Erasures

In this section, I explain a few important concepts in light of relevant literature which are crucial to understand enforced disappearances, nation making and gendered resistance in Kashmir. This will also further clarify the motif of spectacle to show how it is interlinked with the paradigms of performance or performativity in which theatricality/theater is also imbricated. My approach to performance, theatricality and the spectacle in explaining the entire process of enforced disappearance is a metaphor or an allegory for interpreting the enacted processes of power, human behavior and society. The notion of spectacle, performance, and theatricality have been used effectively for analysis in interpretative anthropology (Geertz 1987; Turner 1980;

Goffman 1969). These motifs enable exploring beyond public and private and the hidden transcription of enactment, where politics of disguise cloak the identity of human agents and give form to the oppressive constraints (Scott 1990: 14-19). They allow a description of social or psychological behavior (Goffman 1966).and I use them as organizing concepts for describing how the event of enforced disappearances unfolds and the gendered processes it gives rise to in a militarized society.

I will use the terms theatricality/theater, performance/performativity and spectacle not absolutely as interchangeable, but near-liberally. I understand them as intertwined and interdependent concepts which converge in the spectacle. I also do not use the terms in the intensely nuanced manner of Butler (1993) or Davis (2003), but as devices to explore the nature of the severely delimited struggle of the APDP which is altering Kashmiri sociality in the backdrop of authoritarianism and state terrorism. The theatricality, performativity and spectacle become an analytic means of studying and illustrating social and political processes in which "organizational members are essentially human actors, engaging in various roles and other official and unofficial performances" (Morgan 1980: 615-616).

Apparently, disappearing the body comes across as a stealthy and sly act which the Indian state never intends to acknowledge. There are no remnants of the body and no access to information about what happened. The emergency laws foreclose most possibilities of investigation. At the same time, the disappearance is an open secret and rumors abound⁵¹. It becomes an ongoing torture and a ceaseless wounding that must bear on not only the victim's 'body' but on the kin and the general community. The spectacle of resistance performed by the activists of the APDP grows intense through public mourning as they demand accountability. A rangling questions that emerges here is that how can the state allow human rights activism against

its own counterinsurgency tactics in an environment that is highly censored? I argue that allowing human rights activism is a mode of pastoral power (Foucault 1977) which in absence of any real redress is reduced to mere theatricality of the state. The state performs a spectacle of democracy by allowing people to protest without delivering on its ideals. The human rights activism is rendered toothless amidst the capillary power of state and solidarities such as the APDP remain strictly bounded. The nation-state uses the human rights as a front to display its politics of democracy in the eyes of international regime of human rights. The Indian state displays the entire event of enforced disappearance to coordinate its policies, symbols, and processes towards the consolidation of the nation.

Theater has been exemplified as the state, a macrocosm which can be expanded to analyze the state infrastructure, its actors and spectators. There are repeated analogies between state/nation and theater, elements of shock theatricality and spectacles which describe the abuses of government (Postlewaite & Davis 2003: 29). The Indian state-craft appears as a “theatre state”⁵² – meaning a political state that is directed towards the performance of penalizing spectacle in order to execute power, rather than the pursuit of more concrete ends such as welfare (Kwon & Chung 2012: 45). Kashmir emerges as a “war system” (Goldstein 2001) where military and civilian life are enmeshed.. The army, administration and the political media⁵³ deploy various forms of symbolic and physical violence against Kashmiri people which the state hides under elaborate cover-ups. The state becomes a theater, a spectacle through and of its own institutions: “government, criminal justice, and the polis” (Postlewaite & Davis 2003: 151). There are studies that have drawn parallels⁵⁴ between theater and state (Pilkington 2010). The “event” of a disappearance, the surge of searching kin, the looming state infrastructure instigating, surrounding and supposedly investigating the “disappearance,” processes of judicial

and administrative redress all become a “megaspectacle”.⁵⁵ The event of disappearance, as an “invisible” representation of power, underlines the relationship between nationalism, spectacularized violence and politics which extend and buttress the carceral apparatus of the state in Kashmir. In this backdrop, resistance and quest for justice by groups like APDP exposes the scripted-ness of the prolonged, warped and unproductive state politics. The system of courts, police and administration become unending spectacles of deferral, appearing as a “judicial theatre” or “theatre of justice” within which women’s resistance also gets embedded and delimited.⁵⁶ In this The APDP activists appear as “spect-actors” (Boal 2003), as those who in their practice of everyday life become spectators, as well as participants -, a part of the spectacle, a performer (Certeau 1984). The women deploy collective and individual performative politics of mourning . They become active through performing a gendered invisibility in order to become visible (see Chapter 3).⁵⁷ Social dramaturgy becomes a condition of being (Davis 2003: 121).

The women use performative politics which converges in the spectacle of mourning in order to transcend the simultaneous limitations of the nation-state and the society. Using performance as an analytic to understand women’s resistance activities does not suggest artificiality but in a more complex reading, performance is recognized as coterminous with the real. ” The life situations of the APDP women activists which are forced by the event of disappearance can be understood through performance as an analytic which enables an “occurring” (Goffman 1996:18). In recent decades, the idea of performance in humanistic and social sciences has become an organizing principle capable of offering the fullest perspective on human thought and behavior. It is important to note that performance is not acting (Jackson 2003) since its motivation is not the same as that of acting. In the first instance, it appears as a referential to the artificiality of something but, here, performance functions as vital acts of

transfer,⁵⁸ transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity (Taylor 2002). While all human thought and behavior cannot be explained by the single idea of performativity, performance distills a truer truth than life itself (Taylor 2002). The idea of performance must be construed as continuum of human actions, including the enactment of social, professional, gender, race, and class roles and, by extension, to the working of the state (Schechner 1988). As the chapters ahead illustrate performativity permeates everywhere from ordinary gestures to macrodramas of resistance. The women activists emerge as a spectacle of a certain politics through which they become a visible response to state terror.

Positionality & Methodology

In this section my intention is to trace my fieldwork which is deeply entwined with my positionality as a native Kashmiri who also has a history with the APDP. I had worked with APDP since 1998 in different capacities as a journalist and bureaucrat and, last but not least, as a human rights activist. I try to understand the issues of plurality, intersubjectiveness, limitation and boundaries and boundaries of fieldwork through what Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1991) has called militant anthropology which is rooted in scholarship but also seeks modes of action. “What is involved in conducting research on political violence?” Kimberly Theidon poses this question in her ethnography on the beleaguered Quechua communities amongst the victims and perpetrators in a post-conflict Peru (2103:20). In matters where we ask people about life, death and pain, we either acknowledge it or avoid it – and, in either of those, the “possibility of distance and impartiality must be surrendered” (Theidon 2103:20). There is always the implausibility of neutrality in face of struggle (Scheper Hughes 1995), and we are always caught and one cannot simply observe. As a native Kashmiri woman and a novice anthropologist, I had

to deal with issues of representation, which ultimately more or less converged into thinking about “what was involved” by the way of advocacy in my work. In what follows, I trace the acts of witnessing (Marcus 2005) and archiving (Derrida 1994) in my ethnographic voyage which, under the aegis of ideals of scholarly neutrality and disengagement, become diagnostic and a mode of advocacy.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1991) proffers the paradigm of militant anthropology, a mode of action in which an ethnographer engages viscerally, politically and collaboratively with the field, paving way for applied visions. I consider the frame of “militant” ethnography not as something radically different from regular fieldwork undertakes, but as a reminder and reinforcement of “what need to be done especially” in the context of violence. To be in the field, amidst extreme violence, is being militant in and by itself. Scheper-Hughes herself admits that we are always inherently implicated and engaged in intimate ways in the field - thus always militant. The question I grappled with throughout my fieldwork had to do with how much of the “militancy” would extend as advocacy - outside the limits that scholarship deems fit. The reason I faced this predicament was because I had a history of being strongly entrenched in social activism in Kashmir and had also worked with the Association of the Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) in different capacities.

As far as my being a “native” anthropologist is concerned, there are convincing arguments that such a position may not be different, after all, from those who are also activists, or feminists or enhancing their understanding through personal experiences.⁵⁹ At this point in time, in anthropological history, being native has been studied extensively within the frame of emergent trends and crisis in representation (Marcus & Fischer 1986). The participatory design of ethnography is also deeply focused to not only deepen the engagement between “researcher”

and “subject,” but to generate an extreme empathy, which has often been lightheartedly referred to as *going native*. Since the 1980s, the word “native” itself has been debated in its varied meanings, especially in the context of anthropologists who live outside their homelands for too long (for example Arjun Appadurai, Akhil Gupta, Poornima Mankekar, Veena Das, Kamala Visweswaran, Lila Abu-Lughod and others). The paradigm of a “halfie,” an anthropologist caught between two or more cultural boundaries (Abu-Lughod 1991) reinforces the breadth of understanding about ethnographies produced by natives who have grown-up elsewhere or live outside. Kirin Narayan has proffered the idea of an enactment of hybridity in ethnography that depicts all authors and not just natives as belonging simultaneously to the world of engaged scholarship and the world of everyday life. Thus, both natives such as me and non-natives have multiple planes of identification (Lughod 1988; Kondo 1986), or what Rosaldo has termed as “multiplex subjectivity” with many cross cutting identifications (1989) which we deploy to understand social realities.

In 2008, when I joined the discipline of anthropology as a graduate student, I was naively readying myself to divest much of what I already knew, felt and held in my “bones” as any other Kashmiri growing up in conflict. I had grown up amidst the violence that I was about to study formally within academia. Disappearance of a young boy who I had seen growing up in the neighborhood became a quiet haunting that I have never been able to shake off. Like many boys before and after him, he was whisked off by the Indian troops in a crackdown. He never returned. His mother would leave early in the morning and come late in the night, exhausted from searching. Nothing was found of him. I would recall in schooldays how the boy would wait for his bus at the same place me and my siblings did. Curly haired, clad in warm clothes waiting we would hear his mother coax him to hurry boarding the the bus and hugging him. As I came of

age in an environment where killings and disappearances became a frequent visitor, the boy would make imaginary visitations. I saw his mother turn from a well groomed middle aged woman to bordering on crazy. She would sit near the pavement which doubled as her porch till sundown. She became notorious for asking everyone who passed by, strangers, neighbors or relatives who had nothing to do with searching for her son that “kehn ma nannow/did you find out anything.”

Disappearances remained a stark question. An open wound. There was no balm, no body, just open ended haunting. A famed Kashmiri pediatrician who must have treated almost every child of my generation, the ones before and after would wonder aloud about a young patient who was disappeared by the Indian army. “What must Yakeen be doing, he needed to have his medication for life, he needed dialysis. I often find myself wondering, if Yakeen gets his medicine? It’s been the same question for the last 21 years, I still can’t get to believe he might be dead, and he might not need medication anymore, but since there is no proof it is hard to believe, so I wonder and wonder about the same question. I also feel like thinking about it is like keeping the hope alive. We can hope, hope must not die,” the doctor would say.

I am also reminded of the first time ever walking by group of women crying and lamenting. One woman was standing up and several men stood nearby. There were a small number of photographers and journalists around. Till then all I knew of the park was that it had fountains that spewed water high up in the sky. That particular day I saw the wailing women. They wore placards around their neck and had photographs in their hands protesting against the disappearance of their sons and husbands, and it reminded me of our neighbor. I would keep wondering what happens to the disappeared? Where were they taken, and why? Why were they disappearance and not killed, at least the family would have the body? As for the women, I

would often wonder how “proper” Kashmiri women could even sit in a public park to mourn and protest. Although quite progressive, Kashmiri society still had a rigorous boundary between private and public. As such a show in grief in public was frowned upon but post 1989 it increasingly became a norm. Even though I was intrigued by the monthly APDP public protest, it was not as if I was untouched by the reality of demonstrations. Growing up I had myself been part of protests, accompanying family and friends to protest against human rights violations of varied kind, more often an arrest or detainment and even killings of close family close friends or neighbors. In this situation of violence I saw how easily women and men lost all sense of decorum and propriety. Many times I would find my relatives, mostly females (the domination of women in public protests is discussed extensively in chapters ahead) running out to save some significant member of the family, often a male. Once my grandfather, cousin and Uncle were “disappeared” by the Indian army. Initially they were picked up in connection to a kidnapping conspiracy with which they had very little to do. Later the army conveyed to use that they had been released but they had never returned home. Fearing their enforced disappearance, many protests took place against the army. In tandem with the demonstrations, our family which is of modest means actively sought interventions from higher-ups in the government, army and police. Incidentally and not surprisingly at all some of the higher-ups were relatives and friends as well⁶⁰. After weeks of agony they were found, released and later exonerated. Our family has had its share of deaths, injuries and killings, which is the story of most households in the Kashmir valley. As I grew up turning to writing, journalism and activism was an instinctual response to the excesses of Indian military hegemony.

In the 22 months that I spent in the field since 2008, I tried to keep the intimate knowledge of violence, trauma loss, and survival at arm’s length lest I taint my scholarly

objectives. I consciously, as academia expected, tried to steep myself in the ethos of a “fearless spectator” and cultivating the “disengaged observer” (Sanford and Adjani 2004) in myself.

These were increasingly difficult positions to attain as my informants at APDP embraced me in the same manner as they had in the past when I was engaged with them as a journalist and an activist. In addition, now that I am married and a mother, they extended more camaraderie toward me. I was explicit in conveying to my informants the nature and extent of my project. “*So what is it that you will do with ‘walking’ with us, with the conversations you have, and with meetings you attend? What will you make?*” asked Parveena Ahangar who is one of my key informants. When I would explain my work barebones to her, she would nod encouragingly saying, “*fatah, fatah*” meaning “victory.” When I explained my goals to other informants, some of whom were known and some new – no one treated me any differently. Almost everyone I talked to made a supplication of “victory” for my project. Their vote of confidence manifested in their supplication for me to have the “highest chair of authority” so that I could represent their case better. It was obvious that they thought of my work as an extension of their cause, only in a different arena. “*Tchyen kaem che aseh zorath, ye chu takaar, tche checkh aseh gawah*” (We need your work, your work will create awareness, you are our witness) Parveena would say.

The ready acceptance of me by the APDP group intensified as well as broadened the scope of my observations and participation. I was deeply interwoven in the formal activities of APDP and informal family events, conversations and even in running emergency errands. While this was enriching for my work, this extent of access also indicated to me the level of advocacy envisaged from my work. The APDP members always bolstered my introduction with “*ye che saney kaem karaan*” which loosely translates into “she is doing our job.” This phrase in Kashmiri is primarily used to convey closeness with the person being introduced, may or may

not be indicative of emotional or professional overlaps. In my case, the link to my work was clear as was the intimacy it had invoked between me and the members. This was often expressed as my being a “de-facto member, friend, a daughter, mother, friend.”

George Marcus (2005) argues that the reflexive distress of how anthropologists situate themselves in relation to objects of study becomes a key problem in rethinking identities as working scholars, especially when the landscape is rife with conflict and war.⁶¹ I would often agonize about how I was perceived and the mounting expectations of.... I did my best to remain close to the arsenal of methodological tools that were supposed to infuse my ethnographic analysis with neutrality and disengagement in order to keep my analysis objective and scholarly. Nancy Scheper-Hughes writes that “for generations, ethnographers based their work on a myth and a pretense.⁶² They pretended that there was no ethnographer in the field.” The portrayal rested on the ethnographer being “an invisible and permeable screen through which pure data, ‘facts,’ could be objectively filtered and recorded” (1991:23). In recent years, as global polity changed, anthropologists have increasingly grapple with issues of human rights violations, death and sickness that invoked visceral engagement from the ethnographer.

Scheper-Hughes contends that the use of anthropology has changed and the practice of ethnography has also become a test of its limits outside scholarship. She contends that that in the context of work “where a daily toll of ‘charred bodies’ is a standard feature,” its difficult to stop only at understanding cultural logic. She states that ethnography cannot be concerned only with how humans think, but with how they behave toward each other is needed, thus engaging directly with questions of ethics and power.” She calls it “a more womanly-hearted anthropology” (Gilligan 1982), which includes an ethic of care and responsibility where

anthropologists are privileged to witness human events close up and over time, suggesting the “primacy of the ethical” with the “the ethical” existing prior to culture (Levinas 1987: 100).

While the classic pose of expertise in ethnography might be considered as disinterestedness or disengagement, it does not necessarily mean independence (Marcus 2005). Anthropologists are always dependent and engaged in complex ways with the field, which reveals its facts and which become representation and interpretation through ethnographic skills. I began to understand the call of being “disengaged,” or “neutrality” as an observer as not being about divesting anything - emotional or professional, and which in my case had, for years, engaged me with APDP in the first place. It appeared to me that disengagement was not about distancing from the field or being unnecessarily wary of immediate or historical linkages, but it was a diagnostic for what I carried and “how it could shape my analysis. The participatory logic of give and take is a given in the emphasis on being a participant and an observer in anthropological methods. Thus, the disengagement for me was about removing myself while being embedded in the field in every possible way – just like catching tea leaves (self) in a sieve while pouring the liquid beverage (observations) into a cup. It is a given that without the leaves there would be no tea.

The complexity of plurality and ambiguity of intersubjective life, as well as the question of limitation and boundaries of ethnography, converged in “how we can see sharpest.” (Jackson 2013:21). The path of detailed ethnography, with a singular commitment to empiricism, which becomes a link between *vita active* and *vita contemplative*; the balance in two life-worlds – intimate/immediate and remote/abstract (Jackson 2013), and how anthropology would best serve the ethical call of documenting the enforced disappearances. The field procedure of *revealing* methods, which is argued as a critical component of ethnography, also becomes a means to

control and monitor the subjectivity made evident by the recognition of the anthropologist's dual roles of participant and observer (Kaplan 2002).⁶³

Witnessing and Archiving as Advocacy

The APDP members often referred to me as a “*tche checkh aseh gawah*” (you are our witness). I knew that they did not bestow this mantle easily even though they worked with many other media persons and researchers.⁶⁴ In this section I explain how I relate to the notion of being a witness; and how did I envisage the ideal of advocacy in my work? George Marcus (2005) posits that an anthropologist as a scholar, “is not just any witness, but a particular type who is immersed in special circumstances and ties the particularities to some transcendent discourse or argument in order to create cogency of witnessing” (31). Thus, it is not just being a witness, but the act of witnessing (Daniel 1996; Taussig 2003; Kleinman, Das and Lock 1997: Das 2001; Robben and Soares- Orozco 2000; and Greenhouse, Mertz and Warren 2002) which becomes a truthful observer.

The mode of participant-observation has a way of drawing ethnographers into spaces of human life which they might refrain from otherwise (Scheper-hughes 1991). The act of creating a “witness in ethnography of violence is not just objectivity, but also seeking the subject through the experiences of such limits” (Das 2005:20). An anthropologist differs from an eyewitness whose authority rests on science and disinterestedness and appeals to secular or legal authority. The act of witnessing is not just providing an account, but embracing the field circumstantially in any explicit and considered way. According to Marcus (2005), two forms of witnessing are at play in anthropological research, especially in a regime of intervention – one that is like testimony, a commitment to truth telling, in which narratives of suffering, victimhood and injustices take center place.⁶⁵ This appears as a classic documentary function of ethnography

and of “activism” without being activism. The other type of witnessing is a more theoretically abstracted narrative of new orders, techniques, and structures of political, social and cultural importance. I saw fieldwork congealing as a “witnessing which would create a role for critique in the field as a form of articulation complicit with, and participating within, its complex zones of representation” (Marcus 2005:36). The paradigm of witnessing bestowed my fieldwork “with an identity of independence and practical disinterestedness in regimes of intervention where the pressures to align, to be useful, to be active are nearly overwhelming.” As an ethnographer I was “witnessing” while the burden of being the witness would be borne by the ethnography (the archive).

Scheper-Hughes (1991) that the act of witnessing achieves its epitome through writing, which Derrida (1994) calls the “archive fever.” Witness is created through writing. Experience becomes an effective guarantee of ethnographic authority which is crucial to the act of witnessing and a motif of “archive.” Archive fever is the desire to find the origin, the point at which experience and its impression remain intact. The question of representation is unproblematic in that its sole aim is to produce a body of archival material, to reproduce a true version of the reality being studied. Modern power manifested in the aim of an archive to collect, categorize, preserve and classify (Foucault 1977) connects with ethnography. To create an ethnographic witness of gendered activism and the production of subjugated knowledges by the women-activists which mostly would remain invisible to mainstream perspectives and tracing its precarious existence becomes a form of advocacy. The ethnography becomes a witness which can be used “as a critical tool at crucial historical moments (Starn 1991:34). Thus the ideal of “ethical” primacy of advocacy for just causes is revealed through the act of “witnessing” and producing the “archive” as a form of witness; there is no advocacy without witness.

Chapter Organization

This dissertation is divided into three sections. The first section, *Tracing, Specters, Hauntings and Performance* consists of three chapters which contain historical background about Kashmir and establishes how the enforced disappearances animate everyday lives of the activist women. It traces modes of gendered activism under militarization and how women perform the politics of mourning as mothers and half-widows, a term which has been coined for wives of the disappeared men. The second section comprises of two chapters and is titled, *Invisible Spectacles and Other Invisibilities*. It explores the questions of women's social invisibility and traces it as pivotal in shaping their activism amidst a besieged patriarchy and state terror which appears as a hidden norm of Indian democracy. The third section titled *Memory and Modes of Memory* comprising of two chapters traces how gendered processes of memory and memorialization takes shape under acute militarization and how these constitute resistance and subjugated knowledges.

The first section focuses on establishing the specter of the disappeared as a hauntological interiorization in the lives of the women which fuels resistance against the human rights abuses. It theorizes Kashmir as a "psychic" border where gendered activism begins and evolves; and instigates agency, memory and resistance. The chapters are ethnographically driven by life stories of my key informants. I trace the notion of "affective law" which becomes pivotal in shaping the performative activism. In the ambit of feminist anthropology, affective law becomes a tool which yields a nuanced exploration of resistance through women's experiences. The category of gender emerges as an analytic in the paradigm of affective law which draws attention to another layer of subalterity, that of women within the social setup which is deeply militarized. Gendered subversions emerge in unlikely forms rather than large-scale collective insurrections

which become forms of resistance that may not challenge systems or ideologies (Lughod 1990).

In chapter 3, spectacle and performance become pivotal to the politics of visibility of women.

This chapter takes a detailed look into the performative activism of mothers and half-widows and how it is imbued by their perceived roles in the society.

Section 2 illustrates how the spectacle of disappearance becomes generative in lives of women who are socially invisible. Gendered invisibility or the enforced social disappearance of women becomes a mode of agency and subversion against symbolic violence. This chapter employs a historical and ethnographic analysis to reveal how women come to dominate the APDP movement and how dynamics of gender is changing under extreme militarization. It illustrates how situations of violence, women's lives become crucial to relations, practices and politics of everyday survival. Gendered politics of mourning emerges from a "*subalterity within subalterity*" i.e. women within the larger non-hegemonic Kashmiri patriarchy which is subservient to the Indian military regime. This chapter is cautionary in that it reveals how women's visibility is undergirded by their perceived social invisibility, wherein they are not considered as equal adversaries by the male dominated military regime. It enables understanding how women's social invisibility coupled with non-hegemonic masculinities allow them to become visible. While activism might appear as a mode of symbolic violence it nevertheless pushes the social boundaries for Kashmiri women. Chapter 5 traces the ethnographic contours of everyday life, relations and linkages that are formed under acute militarization in Kashmir. It underlines how Kashmir's acute militarization as the continuum of foundational violence which obliterates established social relations. By focusing on army's Operation Sadbhavana (Goodwill) this chapter reveals the linkages between the Indian army and Kashmiri people which does not merely distort reality and annihilates the community as it knew itself.

In section 3, chapters 6 and 7 trace how memory or counter-memory forms in unorthodox ways in a situation of extreme repression. In this section, I use the paradigm of archive (Derrida 1994) and repertoire (Taylor 2003) to understand the modes in which counter-memory manifests. I follow the production of subjugated knowledges which mostly remain invisible to mainstream perspectives; they have precarious subterranean existences that render them unnoticed by most people. This section traces, memory as agency, which commemorates and also makes invisible that which the hegemonic discourses of state do not want visible.

SECTION 1: TRACING SPECTERS, HAUNTING & PERFORMANCE

Establishing the Spectacle

She says,

“I carry the door which is ajar on my back like a map I must consult from time to time, my feet touch the clean earth of my porch, cold, I step into the cold winter, outwards, remember you never allowed me out after the sun went down, it was like the sun was my bodyguard (not that it was to me) and the moon my enemy, but those boundaries have long been erased, along with my old face, hands and feet – but I am not new, I am the same an ancient woman, whose being is sometimes a shorthand for malady of masculinity, an ailment on the face of humanity; humanity which is the fever of my loins and courage of my womanhood, the same which threatens you.

I hear my voice calling for justice, how funny even after all these years, justice seems enchanting, I turn strange corners, more steps cold and colder I sway yelling outside a makeshift prison, with others whose loved ones have also been disappeared, scuffling with policemen in muftis and soldiers with guns trained on my forehead outside an interrogation center, where I fear you was taken and still are imprisoned, huddled and wounded, then I am outside the court, outside a politicians house. I see the puddle my tears make as I fall on earth and stay there pleading for help; knowing the politician is more miserable than me, he will not, he cannot help, it is not in him to help, it is not written to for him to help, I find myself with others mothers, wives, fathers, sisters and cousins who were close to the disappeared ones, we are outside of everything, fists raised, a ghost after a ghost, a shadow after a shadow in pitch dark.

I retrace my steps, empty handed and cold, close the door to my house, and leave it a little ajar. I sit against the cold wall close my eyes, you touch my shoulder, my eyes flit open, I look across, the door sways a little, there is a shadow, I rise, I begin again.”

(ather zia 2012)

Chapter 1

The Territory of Desire and State of Siege

*This is a siege mentality of a totalitarian state which has become absolutely tyrannical and fascist in nature. Where does the rule of the law exist, much less civil liberties as guaranteed under the Indian constitution and the most vital component of any democracy?*¹

A Sprawling Psychic “Border”

There are many references to Kashmir as the unfinished business of partition between India and Pakistan. A Muslim majority state under British India, the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir as it was then called, was ruled by a Hindu king who acceded² to India. After the first major war on Kashmir between India and Pakistan after they became separate nations, the United Nations brokered peace which resulted in a 485 mile long “cease-fire line” splitting the region into two (Kabir 2011; Bhan 2013; Lamb 1998; and Bose 1998, 2004). The far northern and western areas, including Gilgit-Baltistan of the region, became an autonomous entity within Pakistan known as the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The valley of Kashmir came under Indian control and included the province of Jammu and Ladakh. The United Nations deployed a Military Observer Group and promised to hold an internationally monitored plebiscite, which never took place and also became basis of the dispute. As part of the negotiations in 1971, after another war between the two countries, the ceasefire line was renamed as the Line of Control (LOC), which is often treated as a de-facto border³ in the regional narrative much to the consternation of Kashmiris on both sides.

Contemporary Kashmir is woven tight into a state of siege by the Indian nation-state.⁴ Prisons, army camps, checkpoints, bunkers, interrogation centers, and surveillance towers have become brazen sites where the Indian nation is performed countless times during the day and night as the Kashmiris are stopped, detained, beaten, humiliated, stripped, interrogated and cross-

examined in order to prove their acquiescence to the Indian governance of the territory. The violence that is meted out on combatants and non-combatants alike becomes a constant reminder of the nation which conducts “arrest and interrogation, along with other spectacular forms of state performance (raids and such),” to display colonizing power and the command of territory to reclaim a temporality and geography of subversion (Feldman 1991). Rather than inclusion by amicable consent, the immense violence has become another way to absorb Kashmiris and their territory into the Indian national body.⁵ From outright arrests, killings and beatings in public, and raids and crackdowns on private homes, even the hearths on which rice is boiling for dinner⁶ become insignias of nation when the soldiers kick with their jackboot. Thus, all modes of space, body and otherwise – public and private are appropriated as sites of nation and nation-making albeit through lethal force.

In this dissertation, the punitive measures, specifically the enforced disappearance employed by India, emerges as a means of forced assimilation of Kashmir. I argue that state terror in Kashmir is a part of “foundational violence” (Galtung 1991) for an ethnonational struggle to consolidate the Indian nation on what were pre-1947 heterogeneous territories. In this backdrop, the “disappeared” person (or the enforced disappearance) becomes a “spectacle,”⁷ performed or staged by the state as a mode of control in the continuum of foundational violence. The Indian state’s “politics of democracy” (Galtung 1991) enables not only an unleashing of direct violence but also makes ideals of Independence seem like an abnormal desire for Kashmiris. The archetypal violent structure of the Indian military has become a centerpiece of the democratic set-up prevalent in Kashmir. The Indian government in Kashmir functions with support from two serving military corps commanders as the security advisors: “[T]hus the same

agency namely the army which is carrying out the operations in Kashmir, is in fact the highest decision making authority....the civil government is tantamount to proxy military rule.”⁸

Currently a six million strong India army exists in the Kashmir valley, which has about ten million people. There is one soldier for every twenty Kashmiris, a ratio which is one of the highest in the world. Woven tight under a blanket of questionable laws fueling impunity by the soldiers, India primarily makes itself visible in Kashmir through its military might.⁹ In a geographical bind, Kashmir has historically had a locational relevance for India, China and Pakistan. It nestles uncomfortably between the three nations; with Indians in constant conflict with Pakistan and in a latent power-tussle with China. While passion, emotions, resources and territorial relevance run the gamut of conflict between India and Pakistan, China has also captured some of its uninhabited territory. Caught between difficult neighbors, Kashmir appears as a piece of strategic real estate that everyone wants to take operational control of. Its margins are aflame with intermittently active confrontations with India, Pakistan and sometimes China. Thus, in a geostrategic fix, Kashmir with its citizenry in the main valley, which is over 100 kilometers away from the Line of Control (LOC),¹⁰ continues to be caught in a perpetual “border” politics with India. The state repeatedly asserts its symbolic authority “through a habitualized performativity” (Agarwal 2004:17). The state of siege makes the valley of Kashmir hypervisible in the national imaginary and reinforces Indian’s territorial claim.

I argue that the entire valley of Kashmir, about 12,548,925 square kilometers of it, is treated as a “psychic” borderland between the Indian nationalist imagination in emotional, political and physical combat with Pakistan as well as China which vies for it in the extreme West. More importantly, since 1989, India has been caught in repressing the armed struggle which is seeking an independent Kashmir. Even though I use the term “border,” it is solely to

make manifest the hyper-surveillance in the valley of Kashmir since, technically, no internationally recognized border exists between India and Pakistan. Through their drawing up of what was referred to as a ceasefire line, Kashmir was split into two by the United Nations in 1949. Later, that demarcation was renamed as the Line of Control (LOC) in 1971. The non-existence of the “international” border and the presence of the “LOC” between the two Kashmirs is symbolic of contestations which harken back to the unified nature of Kashmir. Kashmiri people claim that this makes dispute explicitly tripartite (Robinson 2013), contrary to most political analyses that obscure Kashmiri aspirations within the simple border dispute between India and Pakistan¹¹.

My attempt to understand the entire swathe of the Kashmir region as a psychic borderland is not to posit it as one, but to make explicit the spatial state of exception where logics of violence exist outside law and where the state is constantly perfecting its strategies of control and domination (Van Schendel 2005). Caught in perpetual violence as a “psychic” border, Kashmir has become a perpetual “war system” (Goldstein 2005) where under the heavy presence of armed troops, the state apparatus and the social set-up have become enmeshed to participate in potential and actual wars. Within the culture of military impunity, a tense siege-like atmosphere pervades in Kashmir which fosters fear, human suffering and ways of survival which are complicated and unique to living under counterinsurgency regime. The Indian state is single-minded in consolidating the nation with bare regard for human life in Kashmir. It is against this backdrop that the motif of the Kashmiri “body” becomes “crucial in staging the nation”.¹² A “hypervisible” turf, the Kashmiri body becomes a site on which multiplicities of power engage and produce desired results, which in this case is unifying and consolidating “India” as an unyielding power in the subcontinent.

Background

Historically since 1947 Kashmir has been looming between two nationalistic desires, that of India and Pakistan. At the time of partition India was keen on integrating Kashmir (Bose 1997; 2004) to keep the vision as a pluralistic nation intact, an ideal that despite numerous communal conflicts and ethnic strife India remains steadfastly attached to. Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first prime minister of India and a veteran freedom fighter against the British rule, was pivotal in fashioning Kashmir as an emotional part of India being a Kashmiri Pandit (Hindu) himself. Nehru describes Kashmir as a *“supremely beautiful woman, whose beauty is almost impersonal and above human desire, such was Kashmir in all its feminine beauty of river and valley and lake and graceful trees. Conversely he would also say, “then another aspect of this magic beauty would come to view, a masculine one, of hard mountains and precipices, and snow-capped peaks and glaciers, and cruel and fierce torrents rushing down to the valleys below.”* When Lord Mountbatten informed Nehru of Pakistani incursion (Lamb 1991; Akbar 1994)) on Kashmir and urged him to remain cool, an irate Nehru responded by saying, *“As Calais was written upon the heart of your Queen Mary, so Kashmir is written upon mine.”* In a similar manner, for Pakistan also Kashmir represents an emotional ideal of a Muslim state that encompasses the powerful idea of self-determination which even the United Nations has mandated. Pakistan believes that Kashmiris have suffered a bitter life of poverty and subjugation since the British left the region in 1947. In 1965 during the war between India and Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the foreign minister of Pakistan delivered a speech in which he said, *“The people of Jammu and Kashmir are part of the people of Pakistan in blood, in flesh, in life, in culture, in geography, in history, in every form. We will wage a war for a thousand years, a war of defence.”*¹³ While Pakistan reiterates Kashmir as its “jugular vein,” India heralds it as its

“crown.” To the international community, Kashmir has become a “tragedy for its divided people and a continuing source of danger in a subcontinent inhabited by a fifth of the world's population....the offspring of bitterly divorced parents. Pakistan aches for it but will never possess it. India will never let it go. The trouble is that both sides define themselves by this feud.”¹⁴

The dispute of Kashmir began in the year 1948 as India and Pakistan came into being, the then-ruler of Kashmir was undecided about accessing either to Indian or Pakistan and was inclined to stay independent. However, following an invasion by Pakistani militia¹⁵, he was forced to accede to India. This accession was based on conditions of retaining autonomy in all matters except defense, currency, and foreign affairs. Since gaining Independence from British rule, India and Pakistan have fought three wars over Kashmir. The United Nations brokered peace between the two nations, which resulted in a cease-fire line and deployment of the U.N. Military Observer Group on India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in the region.

The valley of Kashmir, including the province of Jammu and Ladakh, came into India's control while far northern and western areas of the state went under Pakistan's charge. The Cease Fire Line drawn at the Karachi Agreement of 27 Jul 1949 was accepted the de facto splitting of the region into two separate entities – two Kashmir's one held by Pakistan and the other by India. The Pakistan administered Kashmir or Azad Kashmir became an autonomous entity within the Pakistani nation. Gilgit-Baltistan also came under Pakistani control. Aksai Chin an uninhabited border strip and the territorial belt running to the southern tip of the Indo-Tibetan border in East Ladakh were taken by China. Aksai Chin is a 38,000 km sq in the Ladakh sector, of which 5,180 sq km were handed over to China¹⁶ by Pakistan in 1963. In this handover, India lost some

strategic passes¹⁷. Currently, India and Pakistan are in a face off on the Saichen Glacier, the highest military post in the world which is enclosed by the Soltoro Ridge (which India holds).

In the last 63 years, the region of Kashmir has seen three major confrontations or a full scale wars between India and Pakistan. The last one occurred in 1998 as the nations were poised to declare themselves as nuclear powers. The nature of the violence especially in the valley administered by India, in between these full scale battles has been that of a latent resistance and a tumultuous polity. Since 1989, there has been an explicit armed militancy against the Indian rule.

The armed struggle depending on the source has been described as an insurgency, a low-intensity conflict, a proxy war, organized violence, militancy, a guerilla war, state terrorism, an occupation, an unresolved dispute, an invisible war, and a war in all its major connotations. In 1947, the U.N. resolutions proffered plebiscite to settle the dispute, which India shuns, on the basis of holding national elections in Kashmir. Pakistan still supports the UN mandate for self-determination and plebiscite. The Kashmiri masses and combatants however demand that independence should be added as a third option.

The armed movement of 1989 is not the first time that Kashmiri's picked up the gun against India. It was in 1965 that the Al Fatah movement started in Kashmir which can be traced as the roots of armed fight against India.¹⁸ "The modus operandi of this low profile armed resistance movement was to highlight Kashmir issue internationally by giving it an indigenous shade without involvement of Pakistan, having its own guidelines, preamble, finances and most importantly[sic] political moves hoping to seek diplomatic support of Pakistan and its friendly countries" (Ali 2012: 57).

In 1964 members of the Students and Youth League laid the foundations of the armed movement in Jammu and Kashmir. The group was intended to assist the insurgent groups who

spearheaded Pakistan's 1965 war with the Indian state. The Al-Fatah group drew attention in 1967 when it published a map of Jammu and Kashmir in red, proclaiming it an independent country.¹⁹ During the war of 1965, the core members²⁰ of the group threw grenades at police and burned down government buildings. These operatives were arrested and released in 1966, as part of a deal which became a first of its kind in the litany of deals that government of India has tried to cut out with Kashmiris to give their ideal of independence. As has been the norm with the coercive politics of brokering by India much focus was on compromising the sentiment of Independence. In this process quite a few prominent names of the Al-Fatah movement turned pro-India.²¹ The Al-Fatah movement was thus, successfully diluted²². In 1975 most of its members were released from jail after a historic accord took place between a between Sheikh Abdullah, a stalwart Kashmiri leader who was famous as the Lion of Kashmir and the first Prime Minister. A major member of the Al Fatah group Fazal Haq Qureshi who rejected the accord was arrested. In 1980, utterly sidelined and destitute Qureshi resigned his membership from the separatist and the criminal charges against him were dropped by the state.²³ Facing a hard time Qureshi resumed his government job.²⁴ Qureshi's fate serves as one admonitory example amongst many – that manifests the consequences of being tackled by the Indian state policy in diffusing and exterminating the separatist sentiment. The Al-Fatah was neutrazlied in under a decade. Such tactical strategies against Kashmiri sentiment for Independence have been the hallmark of Indian policy. The saga of Kashmiri uprising against India is laden with instances of commitments as well as cop-outs, but the seeds of independence from India have continued to germinate in the backdrop of administrative and developmental investments that India has implemented in Kashmir.²⁵

Weighed by the mantle of being the largest democracy in Asia, India has deployed the politics of elections in Kashmir, making the process notorious as “rigged” to set-up puppet governments. Elections in Kashmir have been utilized as a tool to seal the region as part of India. In the elections of 1987 many separatists ran for elections under Muslim United Front (MUF). After what is seen as a norm in the politics of elections in Kashmir, a concerted rigging led to the MUF losing to the pro-India parties. It was soon after that the armed struggle began. The significance of this loss for the armed struggle to begin has become a part of political discourse and election polemics in India. In Many analysts propagate the idea that the Kashmiris especially the ones who had participated in the elections and lost had picked up the gun because of rigged elections (Bose 1999). To the chagrin of many separatists, this point is debated in the global discourse on Kashmir that most of the founders of the armed movement in 1989 resorted to gun because democracy was not allowed to flourish in Kashmir. The separatists reject this debate as ‘typical election politics’²⁶ and say that the only reason they fought election was to bring educate masses about the freedom struggle, pass resolution in the assembly for freedom of Kashmir and endorse public sentiment. After the debacle of 1987 elections, Fazal Haq Qureshi again tried to form a new party and was arrested while an old comrade Abdul Majid Dar went on to secure Pakistani support for the idea and later co-founded the Tehrik-e-Jihad Islami, which in 1991 merged into the Hizb ul-Mujahideen an active guerilla outfit and one of the major players in armed struggle along with Jammu Kashmir Liberation front which has now disarmed and several other groups.

The dispute over Kashmir and the clamor of its people for Independence is ebbing and flowing, with periods of armed flare up and latent dissonance. The separatists do not single out

1989 as a moment of disenchantment with Indian elections but as “one of the chapters of Kashmir’s struggle for freedom which is a process laden with phases.”²⁷

In the international arena India remains adamant in maintaining that Kashmir is an “internal matter” while Pakistan terms explicitly calls as it a dispute which is under the mandate of UN resolutions.²⁸ True to the definition of a long running conflict, Kashmir is a “deep-rooted problem which seems to involve seemingly non-negotiable issues and is resistant to resolution (Burton 1993).

While Azad Kashmir has its own issues the situation in the Indian held Kashmir is exacerbated by the heavy Indian military presence that engages in extreme counterinsurgency policies and the ensuing communal tensions in the region.²⁹ The tussle between India and Kashmir has been likened to the battle between an elephant and a mosquito, where the former is strong, while the latter “engages elephant (stealthily, secretly and furtively)—to others it looks like a lame man attempting to scale Mount Everest (Ali 2012: 58).

The nature of war in Kashmir in such quantifying terms is difficult to typify³⁰. There is a guerilla war going on against the Indian forces, and there are skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani military on the borders which have come to the brink of war more than one time. There are an extremely high number of casualties (killed, maimed, displaced, widowed, orphaned, and disappeared). The region is a maze of militants and Indian army; gun battles, ambushes, bombs blasts, and an overall siege-like atmosphere prevails. There is a perpetual war indistinguishably woven into the civilian life. The violence exists in main cities as well as the borders and remote regions where the Indian and Pakistani armies stand in a face off (engaging in skirmishes even in quieter times). In her analysis, Cynthia Cockburn (2005) states that it is legitimate to call the situation in Kashmir a civil war, since the Indian Army is engaged in military action under an

emergency law called the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Kashmir.³¹ The AFSPA along with other laws give the military supreme powers, especially to kill with impunity.

It is in this backdrop that the Indian politics of integration of Kashmir into the rest of dominion has been playing out. There is a deep contrast between a sublime nature of Kashmir's beautiful landscape which is much hailed as the "Switzerland of Asia" and the utter political misery of the people. Reiterating this Josef Korbel, in his book "Danger of Kashmir" writes that Kashmir is "cruel contrast between the nostalgic beauty and power of its scenery and the frightened dark eyes of its countless poor."

The Military Apparatus

The Indian state's military governance penetrates every facet of life. The sounds of war haunt mohallas (neighborhoods). The hyper-presence of militarization forms a graphic shroud over Kashmir: Detention and interrogation centers, army cantonments, abandoned buildings, bullet holes, bunkers and watchtowers, detour signs, deserted public squares, armed personnel, counter-insurgents, and vehicular and electronic espionage. Armed control regulates and governs bodies³².

In 1990 India imposed the Armed Forces Special Powers Act on six districts in the Kashmir Division and two districts in the Jammu Division were declared "disturbed areas". AFSPA gives the armed and paramilitary forces sweeping powers which facilitate arbitrary arrest and detention and extrajudicial executions and reinforce the impunity of offenders acting under it. Based on six sections the act is notorious for creating conditions enabling human rights violations in the regions of its enforcement, where arbitrary killings, torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and enforced disappearances have happened.³³ Since it is virtually impossible to identify the fighters, who had local support, civilians were subjected to terrible abuses by Indian forces. The Indian army and other state forces carried out large numbers of summary executions, custodial killings, torture, "disappearances," and arbitrary detentions" (Human Rights Watch, 2006). The judiciary and the administration also do not consider

violations in Kashmir in the light of relevant international humanitarian law i.e. the Geneva Conventions (1949), the Additional Protocols (1977), or international criminal law, as India has not yet legislated on crimes of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes. Domestic Indian law does not even criminalize —Enforced Disappearance or —Torture, which means that it is unable to prosecute perpetrators of such crimes, thus depriving the people of appropriate instruments to force prosecution.³⁴

India is highly militarized. Its total national armed forces, with about 1.1 million soldiers, are the third largest in the world. Its air force is the world's fourth largest. This massive military machine confronts threats to security that are both external and internal. Externally, its neighboring countries of Pakistan and China are the main perceived enemies and Kashmir sits strategically in the middle of this mix. The Indian military is a steadily increasing presence in Kashmir since 1947. In 1989 when the armed struggle against broke out, the number of troops began to swell even more. Currently the number of Indian troops in Kashmir is around 7 million in a state which the population is around 7 million as well. The India army not only mans the demarcating lines with Pakistan and China but has spilled from the borders, barracks and cantonments into villages, towns, cities and enclaves – snakes into alleyways, orchards, schools and neighborhood buildings, deserted homes. A major portion of India's defense budget is directed towards Kashmir. About 700,000 Indian military and paramilitary personnel are stationed in the region.³⁵ The personnel come from different formal units as well as the Special Operations Group (SOG), a notorious vigilante militia locally called Ikhwanees, which is formed of surrendered militants and the armed Village Defense Committees (VCDs).³⁶ In addition, there are about 70,000 state policemen drawn from local populace.³⁷ The soldier-to-civilian ratio is roughly one soldier for every 20 Kashmiris, which is the highest in the world.³⁸

The soldiers, armed with all kinds of live ammunition, are a ubiquitous presence, housed in sand bag bunkers that are squeezed tightly in alleys next to neighborhoods and official buildings. There are checkpoints everywhere with continuous patrollings. People are routinely frisked and their identities are confirmed through documents usually with an Identification card³⁹. There are frequent crackdowns, cordons, encounters, and raids. There are ambushes and gun battles between the military and the armed fighters, which result in casualties including combatants as well as noncombatants. Thus, a complex web of a war system pervades over entire Kashmir and provides context to the life of Kashmiri people. Approximately the Indian troops occupy 250,000 acres of state land with a market value of Rs 25,000 crore (Navlakha 2009). As of writing this the paramilitary force CRPF is working on acquiring hundreds of *kanals*⁴⁰ of land in three districts of Kashmir to set up four permanent security installations and bases in addition to the sprawling installations are already existing.

Kashmir has been caught in this continuum of violence for the last 63 years. Like a chronic political illness between Pakistan and India, it has periods when battlefronts are actively engaged in war, and times when an uneasy peace prevails. In this chronically violent system, a perpetual ebb and flow of visible and invisible (but continuing) violence exists. Lurking in the social margins of the Indian state, Kashmir, in what Carolyn Nordstrom refers to as ‘the shadows,’ exists as part of the formal state but is also excluded from it, such that the violent realities of everyday life, and the legal and extra-legal networks that support them, are caught up in layers upon layers of invisibility (Duschinski 2010). A culture of fear is perpetuated in Kashmir, where everyone is caught between the consequences of acute militarization and dealing with the notion of living within a seemingly democratic set-up, which further complicates their day-to-day life.

The violence in Kashmir as it exists now has come to become a structure of experience, a form of conflict, a pervasive experience (Elshtain 1987) and a war system (Goldstein 2001). A war system is seen as interrelated ways in which societies organize themselves to participate in potential and actual wars. In this perspective war is less a series of events than a system with continuity through time.⁴¹ The enmeshing of military and civilian life, military spending and attitudes about war, in addition to military forces and actual fighting all contribute to making Kashmir a war system.

Within the Indian federation which is the largest democratic union, and with its growing economic and military power, Kashmir is often ignored as an authentic aspiration of freedom for an independent state (Robinson 2013; Jahanara Kabir 2009). Negating the human rights violations and aspirations of people India reiterates Kashmir as an internal dispute, an insurgency, or a domestic matter. There is a failure to convey the violence that it brings upon the civilian populations. “Kashmir is often called the unfinished business of partition. Explanations of the dispute paradigmatically begin by recounting the origins of the territorial dispute between India and Pakistan (Robinson 2013: 33). As a result in the international arena Kashmir has rarely come into limelight as an authentic aspiration for Independence for the dominant narrative of Indian and Pakistani narrative which makes it look like a territorial issue. In 2008 during his campaign Barack Obama called Kashmir a “diplomatic tar pit” and proposed a special envoy to deal with Kashmir which he admitted was crucial to the stability of South Asia.⁴² In response India successfully lobbied to leave India out of the account of Richard Holbrooke, the diplomatic envoy appointed by the transitioning Obama administration to deal with the Pakistan and Afghanistan (and what would have been the region of Kashmir).⁴³

Kashmir has more or less remained in a status quo (Bose 1997); under siege in a war system which creates much more complexity than an explicit war which is easier to comprehend. Any contemporary war, be it like the visible one in Iraq or a silent one as in Kashmir, is not limited to battlefronts but spills into populations as a mortal danger and a source of critical shifts in societies. The militarization of Kashmir in its social, political, psychological and political dimensions has become a war, which is invisible internationally just because the two countries are not fighting on the borders but by proxy.

The war system in Kashmir has acute militarization as its hallmark and the military itself is getting “invisibilized” as it aligns with the the administration and enmeshes with the civilains and everyday sociality. It is in this backdrop that enforced disappearances of combatants and non-combatant Kashmiris has taken place. In this dissertation, tracing the phenomenon of enforced disappearances using the lens of gender also illustrate how the state normalizes the interconnected ‘disciplinary techniques’ or punishments India uses to regulate the Kashmiri population and how militarization is made into an accepted norm within the democratic set-up. The Indian state has imposed numerous counter insurgency laws which grant immunity to the armed forces against being held accountable in Kashmir. Enforced Disappearances started in 1989 at the start of Kashmiri militancy. It is the army, police, and informal militia that cause the enforced disappearances. The crime of Enforced Involuntary Disappearances is not codified as a distinct offence in Indian penal laws.⁴⁴ India has signed the International Convention against Enforced Disappearances in February 2007, but did not ratify the convention. In the next chapter I illustrate how in such violent times how women exhibit agency and struggle for memory and memorialization. I trace the engagement with the return of the disappeared which becomes a politics of mourning. The chapters ahead trace the hauntological interiroization and affective

processes which are critical to understand how the women, within APDP and individually struggle.

Chapter 2

Work of Mourning: Hauntology, Affective Law and Spectrality of Justice

Doors, Mourning and Haunting Specters

Husna lived in the historic old city of Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar. Her home was a small tenement with two rooms which she shared with Syed Ahmed's 30 year old widow and Naseema her 10 year old daughter. It was a cold winter in 2009. I was visiting Husna for the first time. Her home was surrounded by piles of frozen trash. Stray dogs were razing through it, trying to loosen out bits of food. As I entered Husna's home I tried to close the door behind me. "No, no, leave it a little open" Husna shouted at me somewhat firmly. I was taken aback because it was very cold. At that time most Kashmiris were sealing the cracks in windows with plastic sheets to keep the chill out. Not thinking much of it, I tried to stay far from the draft that continuously whipped in through the open crack during my entire visit. As I grew closer to Husna I realized that she always kept the door to her home a little ajar.

During my fieldwork, the door attained an enhanced ethnographic quality in the empirical narratives. It stood out as an animated space of extreme potency and eventuality. The motif of the "door" began resonating with potency in my fieldwork from the day Husna did not let me close it fully and braved the cold chill that came through. My other interlocutors also had a telling relation with "doors" in the sense they did not feel comfortable in locking "their doors" when they went out. Most of them, Husna included, made it a point that someone stay back. They would say "what if someone was to arrive when they are not home," often repeating a common Kashmir maxim, "a door should never be closed." This phrase is used to convey a compassionate openness and a desire for helping people at all times; indicating a ready state of

altruistic reception. For the families of the disappeared, this habit had taken on a heightened intensity and meaning, for they were always in a state of waiting for the disappeared. One interlocutor named Sadaf whose husband had been disappeared by the Indian army, always kept a key under a brick in the yard. They had this arrangement before her husband disappeared if he ever returned home in her absence. The irony was that Sadaf lived in a rented room, where she had moved after her husband's disappearance. If he ever returned he would not know the new address, much less expect to retrieve the key from the designated places as before.

The engagement with the door as a symbol of “return” and the physical return of the disappeared becomes an endless work of mourning. In what follows, the first section will illustrate how the “door” as a site of loss and mourning where the disappeared becomes a continuous absent presence – a revenant (Derrida 1994: 7). The door transformed from the realm of the mundane to the realm of hauntology¹ (Derrida 1994); a spectral space, the threshold of being and presence, life and death, specters and ghosts, of departure and return. The significance of tracing the hauntological interiorization around the door became necessary to for me understand how the process of a sustained search begins. The space of the door becomes an extraordinary spatiality which manifests mourning, memory, haunting, affect and waiting, as well as succumbing to the authoritarian state. In this chapter I specifically want to ethnographically illustrate how the spectrality of the disappeared person is established and how it fuels the search by the women who till the disappearance occurred led very private lives and have very little formal education. I offer the paradigm of “affective law”, for the lack of a better term. The term law invokes the specter of sovereignty with its rules of conduct or action that connect the citizen to the state which has a limitless control on almost every aspect of living.

In this chapter I deploy the word law not in its hegemonic setting of the state apparatuses but situate it in an unlikely place, where powerlessness and victim-hood may seem to be more relevant terms. Law is a “binding custom or practice, a rule of conduct or action prescribed by a controlling authority”. This “affective law” becomes an edict of continuous commemoration, of memory symbolics or memory “alternatives” or and counter-memory² by the subaltern. It becomes a claim for a modicum of control; of agency born of spectrality.

I describe it this law as “affective”, which more than any altruistic plan for citizenry comes from a deep interiorization to address a certain lack, that of the ideal of law, thus inaccessibility to justice. The term “affective” here refers the deep emotional engagement with the disappeared. It manifests in an endless mourning of the loss, seeming as if it occurred a day before and not years back³. I trace the affective law and its genesis and the way it creates a maze of affective struggle, of memory and resistance towards the search of the disappeared men. I argue that affective law manifests primarily in counter-memory in various modes, and appears as a nuanced version of instinctive as well as deliberate resistance to the powerlessness induced by state terror. In that the response of performative protest and the modes of commemoration are ways of memory which seems to be the most thwarted in the environment of fear and coercion. The category of gender as an analytic in the paradigm of affective law draws attention to another layer of subalterity, that of women within the social setup. In situations of violence, gendered practices become important (Das 2007; Aretxaga 1997) because gender is important for making connections between the national and the domestic; and its centrality illumines the deep connections between the spectacular and the everyday (Das 2008).⁴ The affective becomes the genesis of subjugated knowledge becomes crucial to relations, practices, and politics since gendered actions are socially and culturally mediated (Mascia-Lees & Black 2000; Moore 2007).

The paradigm of affective law illustrates how gendered processes exist in context as opposed to the stereotypically stable and passive gender roles attributed to women (Moran 2010; Bernal 2000, 2001). Affective law reinforces that resistance flows in every direction within the social fabric and not just one specific point of power and does not follow rigid principles of subversion which is often construed as overt confrontation (Foucault 1997).

Husna's door or the hauntological engagement with waiting, becomes a symptom of affective law which shapes counter-memory as a form of resistance. In anthropological research such symbolic dialectic is seen as providing witness to death and destruction but it often falls through the cracks of history (Spivak 1988, Visweswaran 1994, Das 2006). Under the state terror and violence which infuses the traditional roles as mothers, wives, and sisters with new eventualities, the process of affective law brings into relief women's experience, survival skills, and everyday acts of resistance. In a situation of conflict the culture and tradition undergoes a series of transformations where women begin drawing upon social and political categories (Peteet 1991: 99). The analysis of intangibles like emotion and affect as part of understanding resistance through affective law offers not only a new way of understanding resistance and memory but also the struggles of women, and how women construct and inhabit their gendered identities within the social and political discourse through embodied practices and dispositions; and how they adopt the political, social, and cultural situations (Merry 2010) to attain their goals and survive their everyday.

On a theoretical level the motif of the "door" resonates with "gate/door" which is a key site of events in Kafka's parable "Before the Law" (1915). In Derridian treatise (1994) on Kafka's tale of the same title the motif of the door unleashes an exploration of the nature of law, resistance and justice. In what follows you will see, the door becomes not only Kafkian in its

paradoxical and deferred relation to law, but ethnographically, it becomes as an interstitial space where resistance can be seen congealing, and counter-memory can be seen “becoming” against the institutionalized narratives and not necessarily to dismantle them but provide “memory alternatives” or counter-memory.

Enforcing Disappearances

In the Indian administered Kashmir, Husna’s son Syed Ahmed left for work one morning in 2002 and never returned. Witnesses claimed he was picked up by Indian troops and whisked off to an unknown location. Thus, Syed Ahmed became a victim of a tacit policy of enforced disappearance that has been in effect since 1989, when the Kashmiri militancy against Indian rule started (Mehmood 2007; Duschinski 2010; Mohammad 2013; Qazi 2010). Husna moved from pillar to post in search for her son but found no clue. The army and administration all denied any part in enforcing the “disappearance.”⁵ Witnesses came forward, even identifying the army regiment that had picked Syed Ahmed up, but they recanted after being threatened by the army and the police.⁶

The enforced disappearances⁷ in Kashmir are reminiscent of state enforced disappearances in Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, the Philippines, and also Punjab, in India (Fisher 1989; Arditti 1999; Daniel 1996; Sanford 2003; Mahmood 2007). Approximately 8,000 to 10,000 Kashmiri men, including combatants and non-combatants, have been disappeared⁸ by the Indian state forces so far (Qazi 2010). Almost 2500⁹ of those disappeared were married (Dabla 2007). Since the armed insurgency started the Indian state apparatus has imposed counter insurgency laws like the Disturbed Area Act, and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, which grant immunity to the armed forces against being held accountable for any act of impunity in Kashmir. Mass disappearances are often the result of a political approach to national security.¹⁰

In many places, as in Sri Lanka and North India, the use of forced disappearances has been an approved counter insurgency practice. Enforced Disappearances in Kashmir have also been used as a tool for counter-insurgency by the army, police, and informal militia (Mathur 2012).¹¹

Under the Indian penal system, the First Information report (FIR) is a requisite initial compliant which needs to be filed with the police, so that an investigation in any case can begin. In case of disappearances as well as other cases of human rights abuses by the Indian forces, lodging the FIR with the police authorities in Kashmir has been difficult or nearly impossible and there have been no investigations (Duschinski n.d.; Mathur 2012). Husna's FIR for Syed disappearance was also rejected, and no investigation commenced¹². The refusal to accept the FIR has been a confirmed policy decision that every police station tacitly followed especially during the initial years of the armed struggle.¹³

Thus, Syed Ahmed like other disappeared persons was annihilated not only physically but also materially. There was no documentation acknowledging the disappearance. Technically, due to non-existence of FIRs there are no "disappearances." It appeared that the state has made conditions perfect for "disappearing" the "disappearance" as well. Official documents which could take the chain of compliant forward have been hard for the families to procure from the state authorities¹⁴. The forcibly disappeared person suffers complete material and documentary annihilation. Husna says,

"Three days after Syed Ahmed was disappeared, we all, me, Niqab and Haseena sat our throats parched outside the army camp. Haseena was a just a year old, she cried for milk. We had not eaten in three days, all we did was to move from one thana (police station) to another, from one army camp to another, no one listened, it was as if we had lost a toy, no one seemed to care. They told us to go home and forget, saying it was dangerous for women to be moving around like this. One army officer said my son might have run away with another woman, another one said he must have gone for arms training. No one heard us. Niqab packed his lunch tiffin that morning, he had a huge painting contract, he was finally doing well, that evening he promised to bring warm clothes for all of us.

that is what he said while leaving, and they tell em tales, there is no law, all they ask us is to forget”

Thus, in the time of such violent erasures and unspeakable violence, it seems that great barriers exist in accessing law and justice. The state has put in place mechanisms which make make disappearances appear as a forgotten aberration of dubious origins. In this context, not only accessing legal means becomes impossible but the struggle for memory and memorialization is thwarted as well which does not mean forgetting or that no one remembers or does not strive to.¹⁵ Even under the most dictatorial regimes there are social movements which became part of memorialization, justice and human rights (Fisher 1988; Taylor 1998; Gordon 1997; Arditti 1999; Sanford 2006) . These movements “keep the disappeared alive...in an effort to bring the perpetrators to justice” (Gordon 1997: 140).

One of the central engagements of this chapter is to understand the deeply affective process which enables the women in Kashmir not only to initiate the struggle for searching for the disappeared but also sustain the movement for resistance and justice. This movement is unique in that it is heavily dominated by women and that no other such initiative exists in Kashmir of this nature or one that has such a high profile. What makes women’s participation unique in the movement also is that women in Kashmir do not have a strong precedence of being at forefront of social movements, though their participation in all walks of life has been modest and increasing post-1947.¹⁶

Kashmir has been a patriarchal society where women led very private lives. Mourning and grief was a closely guarded affair and the emotions around bereavement were discrete. Families liberally shared their pain with each other and friends, but the mourning was limited to the four walls of the home. After 1989 as the human rights abuses at the hands of Indian army

began increasing women pushed aside most traditional and decorous barriers. They were at the forefront of visible activities like protesting and demonstrations against human rights violations. They did not refrain from entering interrogation centers, prisons police stations, military camps, courts, and morgues; places that previously were an anathema to them.¹⁷ As Parveena the co-founder of APDP puts it, “women came out on the streets, to mourn and search for their loved ones, throwing aside their scarves, open-faced” and scoured spaces that were not seen as fitting for women.

The movement of APDP is similar in many ways to that of the Madres de Plaza Mayo (Mothers of the Plaza Mayo) in Argentina, who began a movement to search for their children who had disappeared during the Dirty War. The women individually and collectively as APDP pursue court cases, stage demonstrations and conduct workshops to increase awareness about the issue of enforced disappearances. This work is dangerous and many of the women have face threats to their life and been harassed by the police and state authorities. In the early 90’s, a pioneer activist Haleema Begum was shot dead along with her son by unidentified gunmen. Some local observers link her assassination to her with persistence for tracing her son (Amnesty International 1999).

The increasing participation of women in public protestation and the heightened visibility of their mourning in public is a telling rupture that has occurred in Kashmiri society. In case of the forcibly disappeared, the women initially connected in an informal network of parents, relatives, and other concerned people. In 1994, Parveena Ahangar and a human rights lawyer-activist Parvez Imroz formalized the group as the Association of the Parents of the Disappeared (APDP). Ahangar is the mother of a teenage boy who disappeared in custody of Indian army. APDP became a pioneering group of human rights defenders; it was mostly women. Currently

the APDP has bifurcated into two groups, one headed by Parveena Ahangar and the other by Parvez Imroz and both groups are dominated by women. Women are the forerunners of the APDP movement and also its primary activists.

The disappeared as a revenant

A door seemingly is just a contraption of wood and metal, with hinges and latches, and countless openings and closings. There seems nothing special about it. During my fieldwork, the door stood out as a telling symbol of the struggle of the women who before the disappearance lived sheltered lives and possess very little formal education. As is illustrated by Husna's life the engagement of these women with the physical return of the disappeared becomes an endless mourning. Mourning as originally defined by Freud (1917) is creating a relation with an object. It can occur by integrating the memory of the lost one into a self-memory or a selfhood, which is introjection, or by refusing to accept the loss of the other, which is incorporation. Both the options de-cathect the object and transfer the cathexis to someplace else. As per Derrida (1994), mourning exists between introjection and incorporation. He takes this distinction and uses it to understand the way that justice is an attitude of both melancholy and mourning; of a refusal to let the past cease being a part of the present, and a recognition of haunting.

Husna seems to have absorbed Syed Ahmed into her self-memory as well as showing a refusal to accept his loss. Her mourning manifests as a state where she might be "fragmenting, wandering but staying faithful to place, self, and memory precisely by testifying to their spectrality, their taking-place in a slipping-away and a dislocation" (Derrida 1994: 151). Derrida suggests that "a faithful one is someone who is in mourning...mourning itself is affirmation (143). Husna may seem melancholic because she does not accept closure, but her condition differs from melancholia, in which there is a sustained and painful dejection, cessation of interest

in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, and inhibition of all activity (Freud 1917: 253). Husna's condition appears as a chronic mourning or even a "hopeful melancholia" for she always remains firm that she will "see" her son and does not want to die before his return. She does everything she can to retrieve and memorialize Syed Ahmed. The motif of the "door" in this process becomes infused with potency and spectrality. It becomes a threshold through which Syed Ahmed is established as a specter, always hovering outside, and waiting to come in. He is a continuously absent presence – one suspended in a state of returning, without ever arriving; a haunting; a phenomenon irreducible: a hauntology, which conveys understandings of the constitution of space and time, presence and absence (Derrida 1994: 7). The lingering present-absence is not seen, but felt around oneself or the door. Syed Ahmed is "invisible between his apparitions, enacted as a kind of invisible visibility" (7). He becomes a revenant who is hovering nearby always, and returns as persistently as he is "disappeared" everyday. A revenant as Derrida says is a status of the ghost a spirit that keeps coming back. For Husna, Syed Ahmed also begins by coming back, as a dead man who may return and "somewhat a ghost whose expected return repeats itself over and over" (10).

The disappeared body in its non-existence (or complete annihilation) becomes an extraordinary event for the kin and the rest of the people to behold. The open-endedness of the disappearance, the element of intrigue and secrecy, and narratives conjuring the ordeal that the condemned body must have suffered all contribute to the making of the spectacle. The figures of the victims of the disappearance make their "presence known to outside by mournful moans, terrifying agony" (Gordon 1997). The "disappeared" body appears as a ghost that not only sustains authoritarianism but also fuels resistance (Gordon 1987; Taylor 1997). The symbol of

the gaping door makes “established certainties” about the enforced disappearance of the person “vacillate” (Davis 2005).

Kafka’s Door

Husna will often say, “I can never fully close my door. If I do, I feel as if I am being choked, it gets dark before my eyes; I keep my door a little open... I feel like Syed Ahmed is just outside, waiting to come in. I have to make sure the door is a little open for him.”

Parallel to this physical door of Husna’s home, which resonates with the specters of the disappeared, is the “door” from Kafka’s parable. In this story the door of “law” is a place where a country man comes and requests to be admitted. The gatekeeper tells him that entry is “possible but not now,” initiating a deferral. The countryman spends his entire lifetime expecting to gain entry at some point. He also tries to bribe the gatekeeper with everything he has. The gatekeeper takes the offerings saying he was accepting the bribes only to assuage the man that he was doing all he can to gain entry. Towards the end, the dying man asks the gatekeeper why he saw no one else ever come to the door or pass through it. The gatekeeper says, “This entry was meant only for you. I am now going to shut it” (Kafka 1915: 184). There are many varied and different readings of this parable that try to understand the striking and paradoxical relation of man’s liminal position to law. I use this parable to trace how Husna’s work of hauntological mourning morphs into affective law producing modes of counter-memory, both embodied and archival. Her relation with the “law” becomes pivotal not in getting justice *per se* from the formal institutions but rather in formation of counter-memory, which becomes her private mode of justice; a rudimentary reprieve.

Unlike Kafka’s countryman, who sits outside the door of the law the entire time, I see Husna as alternating between sitting inside the door of her own home and outside the door of

formal institutions of law. When she is inside her home, she forbids closing of the door, thus becoming a “reverse gatekeeper” of her own affective law. The door emerges as ethnographically fecund with endless mourning for Syed Ahmed’s return; who she perceives is outside all the time; embodying a convergence of the present, past and the future. When Husna refers to Syed Ahmed’s presence, she steers clear of Kashmiri words like *jinn* (ghost), or *ruuh* (spirit/ghost) commonly used to refer to the a dead person’s ghost. She calls Syed Ahmed her *saya* (shadow/specter), often saying, “I feel he is prevailing on me, he is besides me.” The word *saya* not only means shadow but also connotes being under the influence of a specter. This specter can also be understood as a demonic presence which might take possession of one’s body and make the person possessed do extraordinary actions. Husna’s referral to Syed Ahmed does not overtly suggest the demonic specter but more as a benign affective shadow which marks his presence and possession over her. Syed Ahmed is lodged in her and on her body, thus making clear that she does not treat him as dead. His return stands imminent as well as deferred. Husna recounts the occurrence of one morning when she had strongly felt Syed Ahmed’s presence.

“This morning, when I woke up, the curtain moved, it was as if someone came in, then I heard a noise behind me, it could not have been anyone here, everyone was asleep. A mother can always tell about her child, the cord is never broken, he tries to come and tell me he is ok, waiting for me to find him. Wherever he is, he tries hard to send me these vibrations, he meditates, he knew a lot of Quran, he was well taught in knowledge of “unseen” (mysticism), we are Syed’s¹⁸, we know how to travel without even lifting a foot”

Husna’s psychic imaginary conjures Syed Ahmed’s specter, as always by her side or waiting to arrive inside. Syed Ahmed gains phantomic attributes, but he has to be read for real and not just as a figment of imagination, an illusion or a superstition. Husna begins a phantasmatic and material reconfiguration of Syed Ahmed through an interior experience of

mourning -- of refusing to let go. This refusal and adherence coagulates as an affective law and the necessity to recognize loss, sustain grief and memorialize.

The door is not simply a place of refusal but inherently a place of physical and psychic mobility towards aspiration of justice. Husna's "door" embodies a form of politics of mourning. Although metaphorical in its aspects, Husna's keeping the door open not only imagines Syed Ahmed coming in but also fuels her passage into the world of "other" doors to seek justice; such as the door of the sovereign's law. Husna does not sit immobile waiting for Syed Ahmed. Ever since Syed Ahmed disappeared she, initially by trial and error and later with deliberate strategy has left no stone unturned to find her son. She has filed cases against the state in the high court and also the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC), which is a recommendatory body set up by the state to investigate, promote or protect human rights. Husna is an active member of Association of the Parents of the Disappeared Persons (APDP), which is first human rights group in Kashmir and comprised mostly of women who are seeking accountability for the disappeared men.

Husna, despite her age, is a key participant in all the activities of the group. She is always present in all the events and is one of the main lamenters in the protests. Along with Parveena and other women she relives her agony through eulogies, commemorative songs, and lyrical critiques about the state. The APDP holds the protest in one of the busiest parks in the capital city of Srinagar, opposite an office block that houses most of the media bureaus in Kashmir. The authorities do not allow the protest to go on too long, and the police ensure that the women disperse within a stipulated time that is conveyed beforehand. Although the women are not allowed to make speeches, the chairperson Parveena may give a small speech about future

activities and comment on the state apathy. Her words are often camouflaged¹⁹ within songs and eulogies.

The women wear black gowns, headbands displaying a featureless man's profile, and pictures of their disappeared kin. These are amplified versions of the mourning rituals which most of the women including Husna usually follow in the privacy of her home; weeping, singing eulogies and lullabies is part of the mourning repertoire. This work of public mourning²⁰ becomes instrument for memorialization, protest and intensely political. It appears as a form of capturing means of justice, as a refusal to let the past be, and a "simultaneous recognition that one must strive for some kind of practical, legal, and redistributive form of justice," which can be the an "experience of the impossible," but as Derrida suggests that without it, "one might as well give up ... justice" (Derrida 1996: 65).

Before "Other" Doors: Modes of Spectrality

Husna is steeped in the tradition of visiting shrines of saints, which is a practice very common in Kashmir. She knows the name and address of every shrine, which are mostly located in the historic downtown and strewn across the valley. Many shrines are high up in the mountains, which has not kept Husna from visiting these places. The women activists sometimes make collective visits to a particular shrine for supplication or may even share the contacts for diviners who they think might be of help.

Husna declared one day, "they (the saints) are the ones really ruling Kashmir, and the entire universe; they are invisible, their *saya* (shadow) is on everything." They have the power to return my son. I have lost all hope in the judges, lawyers, and the officers. They are bound by their laws. They cannot get up from their chairs without an order. Their doors are guarded so that

no one can enter. But my saints can fly, even pass through closed doors, even if they are made from the toughest cedar wood, they can perform miracles.”

The shrine of Amir who Husna considers her patron saint is close to her home. She even rented her home in the area to be closer to the shrine, which she visits several times in a day to offer prayers. Husna would often say that “she gets peace by sitting at Amir’s door and weeping.” This is nothing out of the ordinary. Most Kashmiri men and women will make such remarks to indicate their humility and reverence for saints. Husna’s shrine ritual is a traditional mode of practicing Islamic worship. It is supposed to bring peace and absolve sins. For Husna it is also a focused supplication for Syed Ahmed’s return. Husna perceives Syed Ahmed’s birth as a reward from the saint and his disappearance as a punishment for her sins.

Alongside going to the shrines Husna visits faith healers as well. Most faith healers in Kashmir use holy Quran, animal sacrifices and alms giving to aid divining and addressing the concerns of their devotees. Some faith-healers resort to other traditions like magic and invoking ghosts to appease the wishes of their devotees.

Husna has been visiting a renowned faith healer for many years. I accompanied her on one such visit. The faith healer gave her eight *taweez* (written talismans).²¹ Each of the *taweez* invoked divine charms for Syed Ahmed’s return. The healer wrote them in front of Husna on small rectangular shaped pieces of paper. He asked her names, birthdates, and other details of all her family members, in the manner a clerk working in a government office would while filling an application. The question of how this *taweez* differed from the *parchi* (note) or official applications loomed large in my mind, and in some measure was answered by Husna some days later.

Husna's *taweez* ritual involved a lot of effort that has become an invisible and a routine part of her life just like breathing, eating or drinking. Once I came across a few carefully wrapped *taweez* with the official documents in Syed Ahmed's file. They lay neatly in a clear plastic bag, very much like any other note in Urdu except it was calligraphically different. When I asked Husna what she thought of putting the *taweez* among official papers, she said "it is better than those, we give applications in offices, we never know what happens to them, at least this *taweez* invokes Gods name."

The 8 different *taweez* that the faith healer gave Husna were to be dispensed in different ways. One was to be embedded in the ceiling, the second and third one mixed with food and water, the third, fourth and fifth ones were to be placed under a stone in a graveyard, near a jail and a government office, the sixth one was to be thrown into the river, and the seventh one was to be kept in the file with paperwork related to Syed Ahmed's disappearance. The last one was to be burned on a candle while Husna gazed into the light chanting verses from the Holy Quran and keeping Syed Ahmed's photo in front of her. After this she was to tie a knot in her scarf. A knot has a special significance in supplication rituals connected to shrine traditions in Kashmir. A prayers knot denotes a wish. People often untie the knots and make offerings after the wish is granted. Husna's prayer scarf it seemed was all knots with little left to cover the head.

The different dispensations for each *taweez* traced the geographical and psychic contours of an imagined recovery of the disappeared man; invoking his retrieval in whichever form he had potentially ended as. It extended from jail to graveyard, and from life to death. I did not dare ask Husna what she thought of the specific dispensations. But there was enough indication of the expanse of Husna's hope and fears; which are clear in the following anecdote.

Once Husna went to her ancestral village to stay with her relatives for a fortnight but returned only after four days. When I asked her why she came back prematurely, she said that she was scared because wild animals were coming down to attack people. I had heard the news about wild animals prowling not only in villages but also in towns, but Husna's firm insistence that they came down to "only to attack people" intrigued me. I asked her why she did not think that the animals were lured by the cattle and livestock. She answered by saying "I am from the village, the wild animals would never come down to attack our livestock, they have enough food in the wild; it is only that they have tasted human flesh, with all the boys who were thrown in jungles. They want human flesh, which is why they come so often, they come to eat people. I could not bear to stay there."

In the recent years in Kashmir there have been reports of increased wild animal attacks and maulings²². With the discovery of more than 6000 mass and unidentified graves²³, the idea of bodies being thrown or buried in jungles is becoming more and more foregrounded in people's minds. I did not know how right Husna was in connecting the wild animal incursions into habitations to the lure of human flesh but it illuminated the depths of her tragic imaginaries.

"The crows were all over the forest, and those vultures, they did not rest, they flew in the evening as well, wonder what they were waiting to peck at," Husna added with a lost look in her eyes. "My brother would prop the door with wooden blocks, their door is flimsy and they are afraid, the door needed to be closed tight, I felt choked, I wanted to run from there." It seemed though worried for her safety at some level, Husna was more disturbed by the closing tight of the door which thwarted her affective longing for her son's return.

Not even death does us apart: Affective Law and Affective Justice?

The apparitions of the disappeared haunt the contemporary psychic and cultural landscape of Kashmir. This haunting and the waiting prevails till the last breath as the life and death of Mughli illustrated. Mughli was a 70 year old mother who had been searching for her son for almost two decades and was a very well-known APDP activist. She was fondly referred to as “Mass”, an endearing term reserved for mother’s sister or a mother-like figure. She was at the forefront of sit-ins, vigils, demonstrations and meetings to protest and seek justice for the disappeared. She lent her voice to many news reports, interviews and documentaries.

Mughli lived in a small house in the innards of old city. She had confined herself to a single room which doubled as her kitchen and living room after her son, Nazir Ahmed, a teacher was disappeared by the Indian army in 1990. She had raised Nazir as a single mother and was deeply attached to him. After his disappearance she always kept afternoon tea ready. Everyday she hoped that he would return and the two would sip the tea together which had been a routine with them. When Mughli would leave home for something, she would always wonder if she should stay back in case Nazir would return while she was away. She did not entrust the key to her house to anyone because her nephews were eyeing her small home. They wanted her to bequeath it to them after death but she steadfastly stood her ground saying it was all “Nazir’s” to take after he returned.

Mughli died just some hours short of the 27th of October²⁴ in 2009. In her last days she was bedridden but she did not stop from giving interviews and meeting other activists, for even in her last days she stood firmly for “speaking for the disappeared, so that they could be taken account of through her photo, through her words”. Parveena and some other close confidantes from APDP met with her regularly. Mughli would ask them about the protests and urge them to

keep on fighting. One evening holding Parveena's right hand between her hands, she made Parveena promise that she will keep up the search for Nazir and the other boys. "She prayed hard to Allah, she cursed the Indian and Kashmir government to her hearts content" says Parveena. After a couple of days Mughli passed way. The way Mughli transcended into the realm of death becomes very significant in tracing the hauntological aspects of the politics of mourning and affective law to which Mughli had adhered to most of her life.

In her final moments Mughli²⁵ saw visions of Nazir near the door, entering the room. She had said "Maine Nazira, aa kha" which can be roughly translated into "My Nazir, you have come / or have you come?). "Aa kha" in Kashmiri is used to acknowledge someone who arrives. It is also rhetorical and sometimes may be used to elicit an affirmative response from the addressee; that can even be a simple nod. At the moment of its utterance it involves only two people acknowledging and addressing each other.

At the deathbed by uttering this phrase Mughli performs this spiritual imaginary and thus conjuring retrieval. This hauntological persistence becomes crucial to understanding the affective law and its purpose towards resistance and agency. Nazir's arrival becomes possible through a hauntology that instigates affective law. Not finding him in life, she does not give up in death and in an incorporeal sense even finds him. The preservation of the revenant remains an imperative till the last breath. This affective law is at the heart of the politics of mourning. It becomes a personal and intimate form of justice.

Transgenerational Mourning: Waiting at three doors

Waiting at the door, the conjuration of the return of the disappeared has become a part of life of the kin. The specter is always hovering near the door. Haseena Husna's granddaughter is about 10 years old. She was less than a year when her father was disappeared. Growing up she

has witnessed her grandmother and her mother and searching for her father no end. She has waited hungry and unwary at the doors where Husna would be waiting. An unwary little girl she accompanied her grandmother and mother to the protests and has been in countless interviews. Haseena goes to school and does not show much progress. In fact, she has been put into a younger grade so that she can catch up. She has frequent backaches which are unlike children of her age. In other aspects she is impish and a happy young girl who likes to dress up. She attends a nearby school and has participated in many APDP run workshops for trauma and therapy. In one such workshop Haseena made two paintings. In one she had made a house in the middle leaving the rest of the space empty. She explained her drawing, as “my house, my home with a garden” and when asked more she said she liked flowers. The doctor prodded beholding the almost empty drawing which had nothing but the house drawn on it “but I see just the house, the rest is empty”. She replied, “the flowers and trees and the garden, its all there you just can’t see it²⁶”. In another picture, she had drawn three doors. On asking why “three doors” on such a small house, she said, “I am waiting for Papa”. The doctor asked her, “why 3 doors?” Haseena replied that “I am waiting for papa at 3 doors; there are 3 doors for his coming back”. The counselor urged, “why 3 doors”. She whispers, “I do not know, but there are 3 doors, and I am waiting at all 3 doors”.

For a little girl who is waiting for her father and watches her mother, grandmother, waiting, she suffers a *multiple waiting*. It’s a surfeit of waiting at the doors. While Husna and Haseena have lived with the memory of Syed Ahmed’s life as well as the event of his disappearance, Haseena is living in a post-memory (Schwab 2009). Thus the intergenerational transmission of the phantom” created by trauma’ can be seen as what Abraham and Torok (1996) have described by using the word “nescience” to describe the phantom effect. It specifically

refers to the gap in knowledge where the trauma resides and 'the "phantom" at the door represents a radical reorientation, where Haseena's symptoms do not spring from the individual's own life experiences but from someone else's psychic conflicts, traumas, or secrets'. She lives her father's life and eventual disappearance through the memories, photographs, pictures, Syed's old clothes; these are handed down to her by her parent and grandparent. She lives through turbulent flashbacks that her mother and grandmother get while they sometimes cook collards and meat to relive how Syed Ahmed relished the dish, and sometimes are repulsed by the thought of cooking it in his absence. Haseena also likes collards and meat like Syed Ahmed. It's the day she will have her meal with gusto, otherwise she is a sparse eater. Niqab, her mother will often insist how she is exactly like her father in habits of eating, sleeping, talking, whereas in my observation Haseena reminds me of Niqab herself – physically and behaviorally; they in fact look like sisters.

The multiple waiting that Haseena internalizes manifests in the three doors that she draws. Haseena becomes the recipient of her families lived memories as well as their somatic memories. She reads her mother and grandmother for "silences" (Schwab 2009), for laughter, for words, to trace the memory and make meaning of it. These memories become somatic imprints on Haseena. She suffers frequent backaches which the doctors find odd in a child of her age. Niqab and Husna both suffer from backaches as well as a host of other ailments. Haseena watches the spectrality around the "door" of her home, which her grandmother always keeps hanging open and her mother follows the ritual without fail. "Amess chu Damm Gatchan, Wan chu meteh Gatchan/ She is claustrophobic if we close the door, the same happens to me and Mommy too" says Haseena.²⁷ In this aspect of mourning, Haseena relives the specter of her father three times over.

Haseena will often walk with her grandmother to the shrine of Amir, holding a small plastic bag of corn. Once we went together and she first went to one side of the compound to feed the birds. “this is what Ami (Husna) does”²⁸ she tells me. Husna rests on the raised platform nearby giving Haseena the responsibility of feeding the birds which is important in the ritual of supplication rituals of Syed Ahmed’s return. “She says that feeding the birds is a good deed and which will help in God listening to our prayers for Abu (father)”, and as an afterthought adds, “I like to feed the birds, I should feed them faster, they finish so quickly, they are pecking at my toes”. While she is feeding the birds, I can feel her joyous laughter, the routine child-like glee which has everything to do with a pure joy of feeding the birds, momentarily delinked from the burden of her father’s return. She looks at her grandmother and promptly jumps over to other side, where a smattering of pigeons is pecking at the grain. She has to feed the birds on both side of the compound as per her grandmother’s routine, to be fair to all groups of pigeons waiting in the compound. Haseena seems attuned to what her grandmother needs to be done; her routines are affective laws not meant to be broken. Haseena does as needed but I can sense her reluctance as she looks back at her favorite group of pigeons she was already feeding.

As the second generation Haseena not only lives a violent history through her own experiences of trauma and deprivation but keeps receiving it constantly through her mother and grandmother. In one picture that Haseena has drawn and which occupies the pride of place in their room is of herself, her mother and father. Her father has a big watch on his wrist. On asking she says, it’s the watch that he wore when he was a mahraaz/bridegroom. It is a big “yellow”/golden watch which Haseena has never seen for Syed had to sell it before Haseena’s birth. She has probably heard of it or gleaned its existence by a few pictures of her parents wedding. The cap in the picture has the word Batman on it and it is same kind of cap Syed

Ahmed wore the day he disappeared (Niqab mentions this to me). Haseena probably has heard a description of it.

Haseena's memory of her father becomes a bricolage of broken narratives that come in spurts from her grandmother and mother. She is through her optical unconscious, which is constantly picking up cues and nuances and has imbibed as a somatic memory from the verbal and nonverbal language. She patches up history of her father's life that she had never witnessed; it is in fragments, overlapping in multiple renditions and one which never has really lived but only experienced in flashbacks and traumatic flare ups of her mother and grandmother. She has not seen her father nor has she experienced the immediate aftermath of his disappearance for she was too young. She uses whatever props she can find stories that her family tells her, pictures and add to it "silence, grief, rage or despair or sudden unexplainable shifts in moods handed down to them by those who bring them up". Haseena receives violent histories not only through the actual memories or stories of parents (post memory) but also through traces of affect, particularly affect that remains integrated and inassimilable. She lives through a multiple waiting. The different valences that waiting has for her mother and her grandmother and which in a way have collated as they recall Syed Ahmed's life and disappearance and construct the revenant over and over for Haseena.

Affective Law, Gendered Agency and Resistance

Husna's lingering pain around doors, Mughli's haunting at death bed and the transference of the revenant to Haseena is about endless waiting and manifests the apparitions of the disappeared that haunt the contemporary psychic and cultural landscape of Kashmir. As is illustrated in Husna's life Syed Ahmed exists as a waking apparition in the day, and his visitations in dreams during night, which she does not treat as illusory. Husna emphasizes that

Syed Ahmed comes in her dreams, especially before the protest. She sees the same dream every time where Syed buys bread and then vanishes. Husna finds herself chasing after him through forests and graveyards and he finally gets lost in a crowd. She says that this crowd reminds her of the APDP protest. Husna insists that whenever she feels tired of her long struggle, Syed Ahmed's *saya* comes forcefully "he brushes against my shoulder, I feel like turning and catching his hand, it is hard to give up" she says. Syed Ahmed is a constant haunting, a phantom pain pushing her to act, through meager spaces that are available for a limited action inside the oppressive Indian regime and social norms for women.

The logic of haunting ensures that Husna's work of mourning creates an affective law and counter-memory to preserve the revenant, and its coming. The *saya* of Syed Ahmed haunts Husna's lived experience and it is productive in restructuring Husna's self in the present social moment. By enacting and directing this haunting the bodies of those living, like Husna become sites of meaning which lead to modes of memorialization and resistance to oppressive measures. The "disappearance" of the body could be considered as "unmaking"²⁹ or decomposition of the body" (Taylor 1997: 150) by the state terror. On another hand, affective law ensures Husna embarks on the remaking, or re-composition, to makes the body visible; through forms of counter-memory which becomes visible in various forms and objects (discussed in chapter ahead). In this process Husna's door becomes the exordium which is leading us: to learn to live with ghosts and this being-with specters would also be, not only but also, a politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generation" (Derrida 1994: xviii-xix). Husna's struggle emerges from this originary spectrality, around which the processes of mourning, memorialization, counter-memory and human rights take place. Husna's grief and mourning, her weeping and worship, her body, waiting outside the doors, protesting, her relationship with law, state institutions and

documents all become a complex hauntological transactions; insignias of affective law; a subaltern power, an agency, a resistance.

The paradigm of affective law traces the ignored lives, the most unlikely forms of subversions, especially gendered ones, rather than large-scale collective insurrections which become forms of resistance which may not challenge systems or ideologies (Lughod 1990). In the ambit of feminist anthropology affective law becomes a tool which yields a nuanced exploration of resistance through women's experiences even when they continue to be seen as “politically ambiguous” (Petet 1991:128) and stereotypically “passive” or agency-less (Aretxaga 1997).

Previously, there has been focus on studying resistance rather gendered resistance and agency as only confrontational to power which often led scholars to interpret instances of ideological conformity as evidence for women's lack of agency (Frank 2007) . To explore a more nuanced modes of resistance and agency has come to be an important issue across disciplines (Mcnay 2003; Ahearn 2001; Fraser 1992). The ethnographic analysis in the chapters ahead presents resistance as appearing in varied modes, not as one rigid definition or as synonymous with resistance which is solely confrontational³⁰. It contributes to understandings of resistance, counter-memory, agency and documenting the range of gendered roles during violent disruptions and conflicts (Das 1990; 2007; Aretxaga 1997; Merry 2009). The chapters ahead also explore and analyse the category of gender as to how it appears and evolves in the process of resistance.

Conclusion

This hauntological process of affective law and counter memory is gendered and a concrete response but which lurks in the shadowy spaces created by the blinding lights of institutionalized histories. Pertinent insights that are revealed in this ethnographic analysis in this dissertation are connected to understanding how everyday resistance, specifically gendered resistance and agency might manifest in face of oppression, what forms it takes, and how these actions are perceived? And what are the underlying philosophies or beliefs that motivate them? How can they be normative and encompassed by the mainstream understanding of counter-memory and resistance?

Husna's door or the hauntological engagement with waiting as a symptom of affective law manifests a politics of mourning which often gets lost in Western normative understanding of female agency. It manifests a form of counter-memory as a way of private and intimate resistance. The roles and activities that women take up willingly or are forced to under a situation of violence brings to test their old experience, their survival skills, and the affective resonance they have with family and kin and to which they are traditionally seen as deeply connected to. As women undergo these unnaturally tragic events and transform they draw upon the social material available for them to manifest their social and political aspirations. Affective law become an analytic to capture the intangibility of emotion and affect and see how resistance and forms of private justice evolve when nothing seems to offer any comfort or solution.

Chapter 3

Haunting Performance & the Politics of Visibility

Disappearance as a Spectacle

The disappearances in Kashmir are reminiscent of similar abuses in Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, the Philippines, and elsewhere¹ where the state implemented this policy to root out dissidents and create a representational threat for the people. Even though the state focuses on total annihilation of the person and creates a threatening void, the “disappearance” ceases to be hushed away. In the first chapter I traced how the body of the disappeared in its non-existence becomes a specter, a haunting – an endless wait that fuels the kin to keep up the search. The narratives around the “disappeared” body invoke the spectacles of the scaffold in the social imagination. The disappearance of the person stretches the imaginaries into bottomless pits where there is no limit on the pain and the torture and the disappeared instead of dying once, dies over and over. Affective law establishes the specter; a hauntology that spawns resistance. After the enforced disappearance of the person, a slew of processes for searching for the person are launched by the relatives and other concerned people. The painstaking search begins and never ceases.

In this chapter I aim to establish how the “disappearance” instead of being “disappeared” becomes a “spectacle.” I focus on performative activism of the women in APDP. In this politics of visibility the motif of performance or performativity² becomes important as a metaphor through which “one can consider things that are in-process, existing, and changing over-time” (Phelan and Lane 1998: 365). The performative politics that is engaged in this movement has the dramaturgical elements of costume and dialogue, where the body the disappeared as well as that

of the women activists becomes a performative site. I trace how the women in APDP perform their activists identity in order to garner a fine grained understanding of agency which may not appear only in stereotypical confrontation forms but as nuancedly cultural which may be overlooked as “passive” in Western feminist interpretation. In mainstream feminist understanding agency is often seen as aggressive and openly subversive, but in case of APDP activists it appears nuanced, hence different than just a simple notion of resistance to oppression (Das 2008; Peteet 1991).

I make exemplary the narrative from Parveena Ahangar, a mother whose son has disappeared and who is the co-founder of APDP within the ambit of discourse politics which forms one aspect of the Foucaultian paradigm of “micropolitics” and which becomes effective in understanding how the women become agentive. I analyse the cultural motifs which she pegs that not only carve her public role as an activist but also convey a redefined and improvised adherence to social expectations. The other aspect of Foucaultian micropolitics, i.e. the bio-politics becomes manifest in Sadaf, a half-widow, who is attempting to break from the grip of disciplinary powers and to reinvent the body as she negotiates social and political constraints. I argue that the emergence of the activist women is based on an affective politics of mourning. In this endless mourning the women utilize accepted subject-positions to customize an identity which manifests resistance and also has the potential to subvert the construction of normalized subjectivities and becomes agentive (1980b: p. 157).

At the heart of this “performative spectacle” of the “activist” is the notion of “*Asal Zanan*”. “*Asal*” in Kashmiri means good and “*Zanan*” means “woman”. An *Asal Zanan* can be described as an ideal woman; caring, patient, obedient; one who dresses modestly and pays heed. An “*asal zanan*” is expected to appear demure, modest, caring, and responsible. Sadaf, an

interlocutor put it succinctly “one who is not seen” or in most aspects even heard. This is a common refrain heard in connection to being an “asal zanan” in Kashmir. Ironically, the work of APDP goes against the notion of “not being seen”, for it entails seeking a heightened visibility in public. In what follows I trace how the women, as they become a part of the bigger spectacle of disappearance, perform smaller “contributing” and individual spectacles that manifest “performative accomplishment” (Butler 1990:141) in order to sustain their activism and simultaneously undo the damage visibility inflicts on their status as “asal zanan” by improvising a culturally amenable “activist” identity. This manifests how women become visible it also traces (or even reinforces) the motifs of their social invisibility. The spectacularity of this entire process also invokes ideals of theatricality³ in many aspects; in its links to how the state and the citizenry behaves.

Foucault (1977) asserts that the modern penal system shifted its focus from spectacle to surveillance.⁴ He suggests that the disappearance of public executions marks the decline of the society of spectacle and that modern social relations are "the exact reverse of the spectacle" (1977: 86) and, thus, the modern Western⁵ society has become one of surveillance. I argue that the spectacle is not completely eliminated but becomes a part of the surveillance. Therefore spectacle and surveillance are not mutually exclusive.⁶ The nature of this punishment of disappearance appears as an implicit part of the surveillance system through which the state seeks to discipline bodies and crush any form of dissent.⁷ In the process of making the body an exemplary receptacle for disciplinary techniques by the state apparatus, the women of APDP perform another spectacle in which the body of the disappeared and that of the women themselves become pivotal sites. The search for the disappeared by the kin: their individual and

collective struggle as APDP becomes a part of the bigger movement for justice and human rights, which can even be perceived as a counter-spectacle.

The invisibility and absence of those forcibly disappeared becomes a symbolic and spectacular site, but more so for the state towards production of sovereign might than for allowing the the counter-spectacles of resistance to bear fruit or take root. The spectacle of disappearance makes the state's political logic manifest as well as underlines the subjectification of the people. In this process other kinds of "disappearances" come to light – such as the disappearance of the community as it knew itself and of women in the prevailing and evolving gender dynamics which I discuss in chapters ahead.

Performing the Spectacle: Politics of Mourning

Partap Park is one of the most centrally located parks in capital city of Srinagar in the Indian administered Kashmir. It is at all times bustling with people from all walks of life. People from remote villages taking rest, schoolboys cutting class squeezing close to laborers eating lunch while young lovers might be slinking behind the bushes, furtively holding hands, pretending they are not seen by anyone. It is interesting how the most public places grant visibility and invisibility at the same time. It is in this park that the women of the APDP hold their monthly protest. The choice of this park is strategic; not only for being centrally located but also because it is close to where all media bureaus in Kashmir are housed. The women agree that the park is the best choice for the protest, "we need to be seen by the whole world, we do not come out to hide ourselves." Parveena makes it clear that easy accessibility and proximity to the media outlets is a big factor, "people can get here easily, and the media we want them here, it is convenient for them, we want our message to be carried out."

The arrangements for the protest are not elaborate. Here I describe an average protest that took place in somewhere in *Fall 2011*. As soon as the women begin congregating scribes and photojournalists descend on the venue in no time. The women sat in a group almost huddling close surrounded by signage calling against disappearances, the perpetrators and the state. A banner with collage of pictures of the disappeared became an instant shrine in the corner. Most of the women were dressed in black gowns. Everyone wore headbands which displayed a profile of disappeared person. They hung the pictures of their disappeared kin with the name and the date of disappearance from their necks.

The photojournalists slithered with familiarity around the women. Their elbows nudging into the cold winter earth, their hair falling over their eyes as they contorted their bodies around the women to catch their every crease and every fold which puckered in emotion. The smell of the aftershaves from the photographers brought a sense of regulated work and routine wellbeing into the congregation where most women were red-faced from crying, sniffing into their scarves and smelled of smoke and coals from their kangris (hot coal braziers) which they used to keep warm. The women were not unnerved by the activity of media people. They shifted - sideways and forward, close and far, to accommodate the photographers' need for different angles and answered questions from the journalists. The mix of journalists was interesting which comprised of local as well as foreign journalists. The women did not seem to mind answering identical questions, thus, repeating their answers word to word several times in a row.

A contingent of police men hovered around the scene. The APDP volunteers get the permission to hold the protest beforehand. They usually have an hour or more to hold the protest. The time begins when the actual sit-in starts which is not till all the members arrive which takes long as many have to come from remote villages. In the initial years there would be arrests or

altercations with the police and army but of late such incidents have not occurred. Now a predictable routine has been set. The women congregate, and conduct the protest, there might be minor issues about timing but nothing more. In a way this protest, which is the most visible part of this human rights movement has become one of the normal “aberration” in the state’s routine and thus can also be understood as “invisibilized” for the administration more or less ignores the event.

In the last 24 years APDP has grown in strength and visibility, it has formed networks with international organizations. Countless human rights interneers, researchers and writers come from outside Kashmir to volunteer with APDP and lend a helping hand to documentation that they are doing. Despite, this type of progress no information has been gained regarding the disappeared nor have the perpetrators been brought to justice. The space that APDP has been given by the government almost seems like part of the deferral. It harken back to Before the Law in Kafka’s parable where the door to law is open, and here the women can protest, but justice never arrives. In this manner, even the protest become part of the performative politics of the state to establish the patina of its democratic sovereignty, dispense “deferral” and remain unmoved on its policies.

Spectacular Protest

Till the actual sit-in begins the women make small talk. Their conversations extend from discussing the progress of their court cases to enquiries about weddings, funerals, betrothals, sickness and other family affairs. Almost everyone is called by a fond name. Parveena is jiji (aunt) to most while the other elderly ladies are referred to a “mouji” (mother) or “dedi” (another name for mother), younger women are called “didi” (elder sister). Many children take part in the protest and they sit with familiar ease.

As the sit-in begins the women arrange in a formal group, displaying the photographs of the disappeared. After a few moments the silence gives way to a resounding lamentation. Suddenly the park appears to be a funeral site. Parveena as the chairperson and some other senior members take the central role.

*“We stand for the disappeared, our loved ones have been kidnapped and disappeared, but my comrades, my sisters and me are here, we appear in public for them, we are before the world, shouting at the top of our lungs, return my son, return all our sons, return the husbands, fathers, return them all, the state cannot hide it for too long from the world that it has disappeared our loved ones deliberately, they were innocent, they had done nothing wrong, we have paper to prove it”*⁸ says Parveena forcefully, standing up. After this evocation Parveena sings a folkloric elegy, “Where have you grown my rose” to which other women respond. Habba who passed away in 2009 would often sing an emotional lullaby *“I will rock you my darling, where have you hidden my crescent moon.”*⁹ A documentary on enforced disappearance that has Habba as the main protagonist has been given the same title.¹⁰

The scene of the protest is replete with songs, eulogies and open weeping. Often some women faint from exhaustion. Rehti, whose son disappeared 13 years ago often does. She has hypertension and has been advised to stay away to avoid stressful situations by her doctor but she still attends the protest. “I have to be here for my son”. “I want to tell the government what they have done to me, to us; this is my life now, this tension, anxiety, fainting spells, panic, waiting has become my fate since they disappeared my son; they are responsible for it; I cannot stay at home and be quiet, like they want us to; they need to see what happens to me, my body, and my family who have to go through this torture everyday”. Rehti also brings her granddaughter and grandson to the protest.¹¹ “They don’t remember their father. This protest has

become their father; this is how they see him, remember him and meet him every month. How can I deny it to them? We have to come, to remember him, to keep him alive month after month, that is our life now”, she says

The women make sure every detail in the protest is documented. When a new member broke down as she spotted the picture of husband in the picture collage. Husna made sure she drew the attention of a photojournalist to it saying, “see see what is happening, tell those tyrants, she has just seen her husband’s picture here for the first time, tell those tyrants we won’t forget.”

Since the protest has become a hallmark of the movement, most media interviews with the women take place around the protest. An Italian journalist who did not speak any English was waiting to get Parveena’s interview. Parveena answered the journalist’s questions through one of her volunteers who had been rendering this service to Parveena for many years who knows only Kashmiri and some Urdu. While answering to the questions Parveena wept copiously. Husna and some other women sat close to her and occasionally leant sideways to wipe her tears and whisper words of comfort, even though they were crying themselves. Azi a mother kept repeating “Dying is a tragedy once, not being disappeared”.

Parveena narrates her story to the journalist, word by word the same as she has done to countless media persons, researchers and filmmakers till now.¹² She says,

“I have been saying this story for the last 24 years now. I can say it in my sleep. You can read it everywhere. All the foreign newspapers have interviewed me, but I know it is important to say it again. I remember that time like last night’s dinner, I see it clear, even today, it was close to midnight. I checked the doors and windows again. I closed the curtains; they always smelled like firecrackers. The grenade blasts near the alley was like our daily incense; sometimes as many as three would burst nearby. My older son called me. “Is phamba¹³ staying out today? Yes

I said, my youngest, most gentle boy. He had an exam and wanted to study in peace. His Uncle's place was quieter than our volatile neighborhood. Our homes were weaved with bunkers and army trucks. Skirmishes between soldiers and militants resulting in cross firing, grenade blasts: boys arrested, protests, crackdowns - we lived in a battle zone. At that time I thought it was better for Phamba to stay overnight at his Uncle's house to study.

For some reason I felt restless. My left eye was twitching – I felt like something would go terribly wrong. My left arm started to pain. I could not sleep. My body was already warning me; it always happened to me when something was about to go wrong. I felt it in my gut. I was hearing sounds, noises. When I fell asleep for a few minutes, I felt like slipping into a deep dark hole. I awoke with a startle; I heard my brother's voice calling, "Jiji Jiji, he yelled your son has been taken away by the soldiers". Tears were flowing down his face. He was red faced and in tatters having been beaten as he tried to free my son from the soldiers.

My gentlest boy, one who would do household chores lamb-like; he was like a dutiful daughter¹⁴, was taken away in the middle of the night, in his underwear, no proper clothes, nothing. He was dragged from his bed by his hair and beaten. He was mistaken for another older neighborhood youth of the same name. My friend who had watched the entire scene from her attic said my son was pleading with the soldiers; his face was bloodied, as they dragged through the alley. When he was pushed him into the vehicle she had heard him call me, "Jiji Jiji¹⁵, save me, I am innocent", he had said. How can I sit at home and forget him? I have other children too, but he was not a toy; that you forget if it gets lost. I gave him birth - he is made from my flesh and blood. He is a human being, he needs to be found. I know the name of the regiment and the officer that kidnapped him. I have filed cases against them although it has been languishing

for the past 23 years. I will not yield till I see them behind bars, disappeared to the world and till they reveal where they kept my son.

Between pauses, Parveena repeatedly urged her translator, *“Tell her, I have said this before to many media people, she should read those interviews, it’s out there in writing, she can also see my papers, I have the entire file¹⁶, a complete file, I can show it to her, we have been treated cruelly, we are on the path of truth, we won’t budge, we are iron, no one can break us”*.

Even though the activists want to relate their story to as many people as possible there is also a sense of frustration of having to repeat it over and over. Parveena also feels the repetitions are taxing but soldiers on with her narrative. Her references to her other interviews and documentation are not to avert any answers but serve as a way of indicating the long-standing credence her story and struggle has in public.

As the interview was progressing a young bearded police man with a baton in hand and a rifle carelessly slung over his shoulder kept coming over to where Parveena was sitting, half-murmuring that the time was up. He was with other of 6-7 police men who were patrolling the venue. A group young boys who were probably skipping school, piled on each other’s shoulders saying to no one in particular *“they do this every month, I wonder if they wear the black gowns at any other time”*. Another kid answered, *“I don’t think they do; these are their protest dresses; I think, they are like costumes, like in a school play only they are same, all black.”* A man close by pulled his lips wryly looking at the women turned to me, asked me, *“what do these women do?”* Without stopping for my response he continued *“poor poor women, what can they do, they are weak and powerless, look how much they are crying, they come here shed tears, beat their chests, lament, yet they cannot move the heart of one single person in power, they have nothing else to do but to come and mourn. What can a bunch of women do to a big country like India*

which is bent to kill Kashmiris and keep Kashmir for themselves?” The man moved away clicking his tongue.¹⁷ A crowd which was hanging on the fence of the park watching the protest was thinning out.

The policeman again moved closer to where Parveena was sitting and this time loudly issued a diktat to no one in particular and without meeting Parveena’s eyes, *“Time is up, they know they cannot sit this long”*. He moved towards his colleagues who seem listlessly looking towards the protestors. After a few minutes, they all come together towards Parveena with the younger bearded saying *“time is up, please finish fast”*. Parveena who by then was ending her interview said, *“we are have to answer the same God, or are you answering to a different God my son, am I not your mother, those disappeared are they not your brothers?”* *“My apologies mother, but I have my duty, my officer will suspend me, all I ask is to wrap up within time, I have no control beyond that, I am just a servant of the state.”* Parveena turned to the Italian journalist, gesturing resignedly, *“He has his work, we have ours, he does his part, and we do ours, this unfolds like a TV program, its become like yesterday’s dinner”¹⁸, every time,”* she said

In a matter of minutes the staffers of APDP cleared the park of all signage and other traces of the protest. The black garments and the headbands were stuffed in a box. The laminated photographs are kept back with the documents that the women carry with them in ubiquitous plastic bags¹⁹. When the journalist asked Parveena when they would leave the venue she said *“anytime we want, the signs are gone, they don’t care now, we are just ordinary women sitting, but we don’t have time to sit around, there is so much to do”*.

With the disappearance of the paraphernalia of protest and the women trickling out the policemen also vanish away. The photographers keep clicking even till the women disappear into

the crowd, making sure they have “touching” and “human” images for the numerous photo-essays that will later be published in Kashmir and outside.

The Spectacle of Maternal Surveillance

As the armed struggle started in 1989 Kashmir became a place of extreme mayhem. Every day was a battle zone; survival was the sole priority. In an autoethnographic moment I can draw upon my own experience of growing up in the Kashmir valley and witnessing the violence crash heavily upon the social order. Killings and arrests; beatings and combing operations were a routine and it is in these circumstances that Parveena’s 17 year old boy Javaid Ahmed Ahangar was arrested by the Indian army. A simple homemaker with little formal education, Parveena was thrown into an unfamiliar world of searching for Javaid. Initially she followed the same routine which countless people in Kashmir do when someone is arrested which was to try to search in jails, police stations and other such places. Parveena was tossed from one place to another like driftwood and all in vain. Gradually she met other parents and families in similar situation. A couple of lawyer-human rights activists especially Parvez Imroz took their cases pro bono and began to guide them.

“In the courts, I met other parents and family members of disappeared, same happened in jails, we would be waiting together for hours on end, and slowly we began to go around together. Then we started meeting monthly over at my home”, Parveena recalls about her initial days when APDP was not formalized. Finally in 1994 Parveena and Parvez Imroz co-founded the movement of the Association of the Parents of the Disappeared Persons (APDP). Parvez Imroz is a human rights lawyer who worked on human rights cases pro-bono. In this section I make Parveena as exemplary in order to trace the discursive politics she engages to construct an “activist identity”. I analyze the cultural ideals Parveena pegs in her narrative and which

illustrates the performativity that establishes the spectacularity of the “disappearances” and the women activists. While these ideals enable the spectacle of the activist to appear on the public horizons, they also underline the gendered invisibility of women.²⁰

Following is the description by Parveena of events soon after Javaid disappeared,

“After he was taken by the soldiers, his call kept ringing in my ears. I still hear him cry ‘jiji, jiji, (that’s what he called me) save me, I am innocent’. That morning I was not the same woman, I was ‘badliyy’ (different). When I went out of the home, to search for him I was different. As the sun rose that morning, I got the feeling of a long battle that needed to be fought, I became ‘sanglaat/iron’; nothing could hold me back. Not even my husband. He would for many years berate me, he would threaten divorce every day. He would say ‘forget that boy, we have other children, stop wasting time in the protests, stop bringing shame to the family by sitting in public’. He would say I had ruined the entire family. He was right too, when my other children needed me I was not around, as a result I could not support my children in their dreams, they were affected badly, I would always be out. My husband would say that this is not what an ‘asal zanan/good woman’ does? My relatives would turn their faces the other way when they saw me in the park or on the streets- they would say Parveena is a gone case, she is acting like a loose woman now. On the street they would avert their eyes ignoring me. I am a mother; a mother is a mother, she cannot let go. What rules can one cling to when a son has been stolen from a mother? If some one steals my earring I will search for it, and people will think its ok, this is my son, how can I not search for him? I had to go out and find him. I had to make a ‘buth/face’; this face is a ‘face’ I chose to make this (she points to her visage). Otherwise they would not let me survive. I am a mother. How can a mother sit back? A mother is

a mother? If I am not a good mother, how can I be a good woman? I am not a father, a man, who can erase his feelings like he cleans his behind in the bathroom.

When I see in the mirror, a miserable mother looks back at me who is pining for her son. The old me, she appears very vague under all this pain, she is half-erased. I used to laugh and make others laugh. I was “zindeh-dil”l (brave) but now I am not that woman anymore, I have changed. I feel like I am not just any woman after that incident. What else could I do, my pain was too great. I left that hearth which gave me happiness. I was the most joyful woman, I was most happy when home, cooking, and cleaning, but after Javaid disappeared I gave up that joy, it did not hold any meaning, my dreams of new house, children’s education and marriages were all gone. How can I live normally when I still feel he is outside the door, or the window, I get panic attacks, I keep watching the door even if it’s the wind, I keep thinking he might be the one knocking. How can I forget him? All I hear sometimes even if I am sitting in midst of a noisy wedding is his voice calling me. His saya (shadow) is close to me, I hear him. I often hear voices, thinking he is calling me. In winter when the snow falls from the rooftops in small thuds in the night I can’t sleep, it feels like footsteps and I sit near the door, waiting for the knock.

I hear him, often in a nightmare, I wake up in the night answering him back, yelling I am coming. I would wake up the whole household and they would get angry at me. I was unable to sleep for many years. A local singer who is my son’s friend would come over and sing songs to comfort me. Instead of falling asleep I would end up crying more but it was soothing to hear him. But nothing helped me, as much as trying to find out where Javaid could be. I am not the one to sit back. I had to find my son.

I had to make a “buth”/face to search for him. I stopped wearing a burkha²¹. I bared my face, I was not the same woman, I became “sanglaat/iron”. I sat in the streets, I ran after army

officers and politicians, anyone, everyone who could help me find my son. The men looked at me thinking I was crazy, they called me “pagal maouj/mad mother”; yes I went “mech”/crazy; Yes I am a “metch”. How can I be sane, even God will forgive me. I am a mother, I gave him birth; my heart has been gutted out, they have wounded my womb, they have scarred me; I do not care if my hair is showing. I would have stayed inside the four walls of my home with joy, but the pain of losing a child has dragged me out into the streets. These soldiers they will know one day what it is to disappear people, they too will suffer, so will India, as it leaves Kashmir with its tail between its legs, defeated. God’s justice is invisible, it will come. Now see I am not alone, we are hundreds of women and thousands of families, all united, and we have more people supporting us now, we won’t cower down, not anymore”

In this discourse Parveena employs important motifs which constitute her identity as an activist building largely on already established social categories. She says that in the wake of the events of disappearance of her son, she did not stay the same woman she was “vague”; “half-erased”. Here she establishes a transformation through partial erasure, which follows with her becoming sanglat²². Sanglat in Kashmiri means “iron” and is often used as a figure of speech to denote strength and mettle of a person who shows extraordinary strength. Sometimes it can be used to indicate to a hardened heart as well. Parveena denotes her transubstantiation from a woman – a flesh and blood person who was a sheltered homemaker into “iron”. She establishes the change that takes place in her not only to indicate the extraordinary emotional and physical resources she has to use to search for her son but also a way she is transmogrifying herself from a woman who is supposed to maintain a private role and has now been pushed to face public pressure.

She says she only sees a “pining mother” in the mirror underlining that she did not see the “woman” society expects and that she had to make - “buth/face”. Buth in Kashmiri is the word for face. It is also used to convey various meanings in which one wants to convey a change of “face”, “attitude”; mostly alluding to a confrontational attitude. A face, when someone “wears it or makes it” might suggest becoming an antithesis of what he/she is or he/she is expected to do; it also as a theatrical connotations. Parveena employs the making of “buth” to suggest taking on sterner, unrelenting, and a public role. To make a “buth” denotes to put a face, in order to face “something”. Many times “making/doing” buth can also mean scolding or being nasty or reprimanding. The making of “buth” also traces the moment of erasure Parveena’s wholesome “asal zanan” identity²³ she enjoyed before the disappearance of Javaid. Thus “buth” becomes a symbol of Parveena’s visibility and partial erasure, where her identity appears as a palimpsest²⁴. The legible traces of earlier “asal zanan” are still retained as the activist identity of Parveena is inscribed on top. Parveena is a “good woman”, foremost a mother who has been forced into public space.

Parveena accesses a specific category of “crazy” when she says she turned in to a “metch”.²⁵ A metchh (masculine category is known as the Motth) in Kashmiri can be used to define two categories of women; either it is a one who has lost her mental balance and is also given to wandering or another type who is ambulatory as well but more of a born mystic, or a seer.²⁶ A metch is supposed to be outside the “normal”. Often a metch, especially the mystic may renounce her home, and wander in streets.²⁷ Such “metche” women in Kashmiri culture have been accorded much reverence and respect. Since a “metch” is seen as divinely ordained people often turn to such women for healing and prayer. Kashmir has a long tradition of “metch” women who renounced the world and were immortalized as saints. A “metch” is often perceived

as not being constrained by their gender or “femaleness.”²⁸ A metch may behave with gentleness and care as or she might be given to swearing, cursing, and beating people (which will not be held against her). Many times the receivers (men as well as women) of such behaviors from the metch consider it to be portent of good fortune for them. In the past many metch women have been known to renounce clothing and roam naked which did not affect the reverence people had for them.²⁹ In the hierarchy of different mystic orders associated with Sufism metch are believed to hold a specific status and are known to be free from the bonds of propriety and cultures and one with “baatin” (unseen/invisible – alluding to the divine). The motif of metche is reminiscent of the shaman.” A Shaman (in performance studies) has been often equated with an actor where they share the codes and signs of theatricality, costume, gesture and voice. The metch in Parveena’s narrative like “shaman” creates a spectacle for the spectator and “tells a story” (Postlewait and Davis 2003: 8).

Parveena uses motifs which name, by reference to the law of culture and the accepted norm, code, or contract and thus, makes an “ambient” activist identity in an embattled culture where contingencies of militarization threaten anomie at every step. In making this activist identity it becomes social reality (or identity in this case) is not a given as Butler says, but is continually created as an illusion "through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social sign"³⁰.

In the performative trifecta of “mech”, “sanglat” and “buth” Parveena traces her transformation and in some aspects elevation from being “just a woman”. As a speech act Parveena’s discursive performative practice “enacts or produces that which it names”³¹ which is an amalgam created out of the available social idiom and which, in her view is to be perceived as

acceptable norm within the sociality. This identity becomes unique in its subversion while borrowing heavily from what is considered socially amenable.

Motherhood is established as an undisputed category, which not only is a mark of a good woman but also goes beyond any “gender”, which connects it to the divine order of “metch”. The category of metch is also heavily imbued by “maternal” markers. In the past metch like Lala Arifa who was a poetess-mystic was accorded the mantle of “mother” and is popularly called Lala mouj/Mother Lala”. She is heralded as the spiritual mother of Nund Rishi a poet-mystic who is widely regarded as the patron saint of Kashmir. Thus, maternal affect permeates all of Parveena’s behavioral codes. She insists that as a mother, “she is not a father who can erase his feelings like he cleans his behind in the bathroom”. Her implicit claim becomes that “asal zanan” is essentially a good mother, who cannot forgo her child at any cost.

In her search for Javaid, Parveena also gave up wearing the Burkha, which becomes paradoxical. Burkha is a knee length cape with a face veil, worn by observant Muslim women. Burkha, as is commonly understood is used to convey piety and is a marker of segregation from the opposite sex. For Parveena when her son disappears she is forced her to step out of the home and initiate contact with all that was previously an anathema to her, especially the man’s domain in courts and police. Thus, she forgoes the Burkha, saying “*what was the use of such a dress when I had to seek these brutal men out deliberately, find their addresses, do everything that I as a woman had never done, and talk to them face to face, sometimes alone in their office, nothing what I had done before, what was the use of Burkha, of hiding my face.*”³²

One way of interpretation of her giving up Burkha could be a just a routine transgression of social norms. Parveena does offer other explanations which may or may not be mutually exclusive. “*What Burkha would I use, and why? I lost sensation of myself, I did not know who I*

was, I was numb, I was a flesh-doll without any sense of who was a man or who was a woman, and who was I, I did not care, I was on the street looking for my son, how would I care what I looked like or what people saw? I did not care what I saw. I just stopped caring.” By the virtue of being a “metch- mother” Parveena rises above the category of being “just a woman.”

Although Parveena traces a nonchalant attitude to how she dresses, in real life she covers her hair carefully and also uses a shawl to drape around herself making her dress most modest and age appropriate.

The Spectacle of the Good Half-widow

On one hand we have the “mothers” of the disappeared men, and on the other we have the half-widows. Half-widow is a term that has been coined by the media to refer to the wives of the disappeared who have been left behind. The APDP has a strong membership from the half-widow. Around 2500 of the disappeared men were married. About 91% of these women have not remarried and continued to search for their husbands (Dabla 2010).

Sadaf was one of the half-widows who is also the spokesperson of APDP. The first time I saw Sadaf inside her home I did not recognize her immediately. Although she has an unmistakably beautiful face, I saw different. She was a vision of youthful femininity in a red dress, with a matching scarf thrown carelessly over her hennaed hair. From this point onwards, I watched how she transformed herself for the trip outside into what I was used to seeing her as. Sadaf changed into an ill-fitting dress in a print which is distinctive of older Kashmiri ladies. She topped it with a hijab (fitted scarf) and a shawl. Her feet hidden completely in black shoes and a large bag bulging with documents completed her look. The only parts that remained visible were a small triangle of her face and her two hands; the rest was purposefully hidden under the layers. Although socially and hierarchically women as a gender are invisible but bodily they are

“visible”. It appeared that Sadaf de-womanized herself, so that she “appears” as “not seen”. The spectacle of a “hidden woman” which Sadaf performs in public makes it important to ask what Sadaf makes visible and invisible at the same time.

I make Sadaf exemplary to trace the bio-politics of her emergence as the “half-widow” activist. For Sadaf grief, loss and mourning imbue everything. Every moment she mourns the loss of her husband and her love; the loss of a father to her 3 young teenage boys. Manzoor, her husband is an invisible presence who hovers in the house and outside. Sadaf takes most decisions with him in mind, even though it has been a decade since he is missing. Manzoor’s ghostly presence hangs around Sadaf and her home like a heavy cloak. At every dinner she lays out a plate for Manzoor and she puts out an extra cup every time there is a visitor. She even has some of his shirts folded with her clothes, as if he could turn up any moment and would need something to wear. She still keeps his music collection safe from children so that he has it like he left it when he comes back. While she does all this she has also requested her mother-in-law to keep a space reserved for his grave in his ancestral graveyard where he had wished to be buried.

Since the last 13 years Sadaf has prodded and plodded through social and political landmines crisscrossing the expanse of her marginalized existence for survival and justice. Sadaf was 24 when Manzoor disappeared. She had no one to help her find him. She was estranged from her well-to-do family because she and Manzoor who came from a lower middle class background, had married without the consent of their families. Also with Sadaf’s parents died, her brothers were in no mood to help her. Manzoor’s family had also been against the match so they refused any help. Manzoor’s mother even fueled the rumor that Sadaf had made a ploy to “disappear/murder” Manzoor. Sadaf had no support in finding Manzoor’s whereabouts as well as providing for her children.

Initially a few neighborhood elders came forward but with time they backed off. Sadaf's ritual of searching involved the same as Parveena's or Husna's or other like them. It included making rounds of government offices, army camps, police stations, interrogation centers and almost all jails in Kashmir and outside. Rumors about sightings of Manzoor kept Sadaf endlessly busy but a year and a half of search yielded nothing. The few witnesses who had come forward recanted their statements after being threatened by the army. The court, police, administration and army became rigmarole of paperwork, endless wait, referrals, and misinformation, not to mention sexual harassment.

Sadaf's health began to deteriorate and she would often need to be hospitalized for different symptoms like fainting or high blood pressure. Sadaf is on an array of medication. It is tempting to see her as a hypochondriac because every little ache and pain will cause her to consult doctors, and she insists of more medication. Sadaf has also been diagnosed with depressed. The episodes of depression play ritualistically 1 to 3 times a year. During the episodes she lies in her makeshift bed refusing light, surrounded by old photographs and medicine. She calls these bouts of depressions as "kuni kuni saateh gactchan" (happens sometimes). Even in the deepest depressive episodes Sadaf talks about the future and the need to "recover fast" so that the "children would not suffer" and "she could keep searching for Manzoor".

Apart from the legal routes Sadaf's seeks spiritual interventions into Manzoor's retrieval. She visits Sufi shrines and faith healers. She pledged many sacrificial offerings on Manzoor's return. On the other hand, her superstitions have intensified. Something as trivial as the throbbing of an eye which is often considered ominous depending on a person's previous experience sends her into panic mode. The day Manzoor disappeared Sadaf's eye had been

throbbing and now whenever she gets a throbbing eye she shuts herself and her children in the house, believing they might be taken away.

After Manzoor disappeared, people were sympathetic to Sadaf but with protracted search led to complications. Being a single young woman with a missing husband became problematic in ways she had not imagined. Sadaf had worked small jobs before Manzoor disappeared but she best liked to stay at home. Sadaf's life with Manzoor was a happy one. After their eloped to marry they went to live in New Delhi. They both found work in a garment factory and stayed on for 6 years. Manzoor cared deeply for Sadaf and she says he treated her "like a queen." He got her clothes and jewelry; "he loved to see me all dolled up", Sadaf would say. He always paid attention to her nutrition and grooming. Sadaf remembers when she was returning home after delivering her second son Manzoor made sure she had a dress complete with a matching lipstick. He even cooked her a traditional post-delivery dinner of meat cooked with dandelion greens, "to regain her strength". Since Sadaf loved make-up and dressing up she at Manzoor's insistence took a few courses in make-up, beauty-care and tailoring. Even though they enjoyed living in Delhi, they always wanted to return home. After their third child was born, they moved back to Kashmir. Within two years of being in Kashmir, Manzoor was disappeared by the army.

Sadaf was clueless about how to search for Manzoor. Her parents had died and her brothers refused any association with her. The procedural intricacies (or lack thereof) in the courts, army camps, and police stations baffled Sadaf. She would say³³, "I had seen those places only on TV; I did not know what to do, I had not seen so many together in place before. I did not know what to do with forms, and how to fill them or write an application, I had had forgotten how to read or write properly." A local masjid helped Sadaf with her expenses while she tried to look for work. Sadaf kept hoping that her travails were temporary and Manzoor would reappear

miraculously –“I thought it was just bad phase and he would be back, as suddenly as he had disappeared”, she said.

Sadaf would dress the way she had always dressed up, but now people would snicker behind her back about her “dressing like a bride, not befitting a woman whose husband is missing”. Her complexion had always been rosy but now it was speculated if she still wore “make-up.” Sadaf began to use steroid ointments to tone down her naturally red cheeks to avoid appearing “made-up”. Sadaf had not envisaged such issues. She did not yet see herself as a widow, who traditionally dresses up demurely and tries to stay out of light-hearted activities. Although Islam encourages widow remarriage Kashmir is weighed by customs where widows for the most part lead a marginalized existence. Sadaf was in no way ready to become a “widow”; Sadaf said, “I had no body, I had no proof he is dead, I still have hope.” As per law Sadaf does not become a widow till 7 years after the disappearance. A half-widow such as Sadaf cannot remarry or qualify for any widow-welfare programs. Islamic scholars in Kashmir have shortened the duration for remarriage to 4 years³⁴. The time duration, be in 7 or 4 years indicates a potential “return” which makes it hard for the families to consider the men dead.

“People wanted me to appear as a widow, I tried to dress as I always did, I had bangles on my arms, earring, and toe rings, Manzoor liked me like that. I did understand what people were trying to tell me about my face or clothes. After all we are very conservative people, and widows are supposed to grown demure overnight. After Manzoor disappeared, I seemed to become the center of attention in the neighborhood. In the offices and police stations I visited no matter how I dressed I was harassed and picked on when I went to offices or police stations. It was not only me, all women like me were harassed, one was attacked by a soldier but the case was hushed up, she never talks about it anymore” said Sadaf.

Sadaf said that “most men in position to help would want me to meet them after office hours, sometimes they would ask me to come to their home”. She has once even been molested, but never told anyone. A renegade- militant stalked her for a long time. The renegades are former militants who have surrendered and changed sides to the Indian forces. Initially a loose group of militia-men, in time the state government formalized them into a dreaded force known as the Special task Force or STF for short. They are also derogatorily known as Ikhwanis or Nabdi’s in Kashmiri after a village from where they first emerged as a counter-insurgency phenomenon. Since the 1989 the army has used the renegades for extrajudicial executions of militants (besides human right activists, journalists and other civilians) and later conveniently dismissed as "intergroup rivalries." Many of these groups have been responsible for grave human rights abuses, including summary executions, torture, and illegal detention as well as election-related intimidation of voters. They are never arrested or prosecuted and go scot-free.³⁵

Being in cahoots with army the renegade had a lot of information about disappearances and killings in the area. He refused to divulge anything until Sadaf gave in to his demands. He would intimidate her by threatening and beating her sons. He also began harassing the entire locality creating pressure on Sadaf to give in. The few times Sadaf went to meet him trying to plead with him gave rise to rumors that she was having an affair with him. Some said that she had turned an informer for the army. A neighbor told her clearly, “we understand your compulsions, but it is not helping your reputation; you are inviting only more trouble from the army and police and people around you will also be harassed.” Sadaf’s relatives ostracized her. Despite the constraint of the 4 year waiting period, Sadaf brothers were restless to force remarriage on her and forget her husband.

Biopolitics: Mechanics of Agency

Sadaf said that, “suddenly everyone became my husband, even the military-wallas told me what to do”. The “disappearance” of Manzoor’s body makes Sadaf’s body hyper-visible.³⁶ Not a routine widow, her course is uncharted in both the political and social maze. She is part husbanded, part bereaved and the possibility for being either is real. She cannot have the luxury to mourn within her home because no one is dead yet; there is no “body” and in whatever state, she has to find it. There is an unending mourning fueled by love, guilt, unanswered questions and hauntings that force Sadaf out of her home every single day. The social and political forces lay claim on her without offering any solution.

To counter the vilification that her outfits were garnering Sadaf came up with what she at that time thought was an “asal khayaal/a good idea.” “I wanted to appear as an “asal zanan” good woman, so that no one would raise a finger at me”, she said.

This move was not well take, as people began to wonder “why did she need to hide her face?” It turned out that Sadaf had overlooked Burkha’s notoriety as a cover by women who indulged in some socially unacceptable behavior like meeting a lover. In the 90’s Burkha had become associated with women who worked for the armed struggle as carriers and also with women who were army informers. Thus, wearing Burkha gave a more dangerous hue to Sadaf’s activities. A friend advised, “stop wearing the Burkha, people will mistake you either working for militants or the army, either ways you are in danger and will bring danger upon others; it would be better to stop this search, raise you kids quietly”. Others advised Sadaf, as she puts it “sincerely” that “she must stop the search altogether or they might have to distance themselves from her.”

For Sadaf venturing out of the home was unavoidable. She had to earn an income and also was not ready to give up searching for Manzoor. “I wanted to appear the good woman I was. Tell me, which good woman will sleep during the night and forget her husband? Manzoor is my “haq-i-khoday” (rightful possessor or a right divinely ordained), my haq (my right), how can I as a good woman just let go and forget and remarry. I had to keep going out, so I began to wear an Abhaya.” Abhaya is a middle-eastern version of the Burkha. It is a long gown worn with a head scarf and an optional face veil. This has been adopted by a lot of young modern educated Muslim women in Kashmir.

Once there was a rumor that Manzoor was detained in a nearby army camp. There were graphic descriptions of him, his gaunt face and his injuries which convinced Sadaf that someone had really seen him. She decided to meet the commanding officer of the camp for any information. An army camp is seen a terrifying place where even Kashmiri men fear to tread. People will take a detour around an army camp, which is quite impossible for army camps are enmeshed into most streets, alleyways and roads in Kashmir. Still people are always careful not to venture near them, for they represent humiliation, beatings, torture, rape, and killings for most. “we even fear the thought of a camp, but I had to go and it was my first time” said Sadaf

When she has to visit places which she perceived as too risky Sadaf would take one of her sons with her. She said it made her feel as if she was not alone and “ also I looked like a mother rather than just someone’s wife but I am always scared for my child, and myself as well, anything can happen.” Raju the youngest would often be chosen by Sadaf to accompany her for two reasons. The first reason shows how deep the fear and danger of associating with army is when Sadaf said she felt he was too young to be harassed or detained by soldiers since that

danger was always there. The other reason was much lighter-hearted in that she felt he caught up faster with the missed schoolwork than his older brothers.

Inside the camp Sadaf said, “it was a long walk through the camp; the office was in the middle of nowhere. The soldiers bobbed their heads from the pickets, some whistled, I was scared.” When she quickly tried to negotiate the camp dotted with bunkers and leering soldiers, Sadaf tripped several times over the billowing Abhaya. The meeting proved futile as the army officer denied the rumors about Manzoor, but he asked her to come again.

On the next visit, Sadaf chose to drape a shawl instead of the Abhaya and instead of loose pants she wore a Suthan, a “jodhpur” style trouser, tight around the leg. “I wore a “suthan” because it is tight around the legs, something that I could run in to avoid tripping, the soldiers scared me and the camp has thorny bushes, I did not want to get stuck. I had these visions that they would jump at me, and I would have to run and Abhaya would make me trip”.

The visit proved futile since the officer gave her no information but instead he tried to give her a bag full of groceries and candies to her son (who refused). He talked at length about Sadaf’s financial situation and how she must be suffering along with her children. He tried to pass a wad of cash to her and openly suggested that she “work” with them Sadaf said *“He was telling me to become an informer, and in time they would help me find Manzoor’s whereabouts.”* *“I was seething inside but maintained a “buth/face”, I did not want to anger him, he could have me killed or worse, my son was with me, so I kept quiet. I wanted to spit at his face, but what could I do, I made “buth” and left the place. On the way back I ran like a mad woman, I did not know what came over me, Raju ran after me, crying, the sun was about to set, I feared for our lives and honor”.*

While Sadaf's trip yielded nothing, a neighborhood acquaintance commented on her wearing the Suthan as her "becoming too modern" and she indicated others had noticed it as well. Since "suthan" is a non-traditional garment and is commonly worn by modern young Kashmiri women, it was seen a hint of transgression in Sadaf's case even though she would wear it when Manzoor was around. This entire rigmarole of fine-tuning her look was weighing Sadaf down on top of her financial worries and futility of her search. "People did not know my struggle, their worries were also genuine, women in my situation had been used by the army, but I was trying my best to appear as an "asal zanan" who was only trying to find her life partner. How can I be a good woman if I sit comfortably without wondering what happened to him, he is my haq (right)" said Sadaf.

Overwhelmed by the gossip and confrontations, Sadaf moved from her native village to the Srinagar city. She was a trained aesthetician but decided to teach embroidery instead because the beauty trade was not considered "asal" (good). Sadaf's fears were not unfounded. The older women in APDP display their distaste for beauty trade "it was a kind of job which invited sin" and suggested she could do something decent³⁷ like "sewing and tailoring or making paper-bags". The interesting thing is that the younger women in APDP go to Sadaf for beauty treatments and also send her clients. She would do these treatments in the privacy of her own home for extra cash. Three years ago after Sadaf lost her job as an embroidery teacher she became a full-fledged aesthetician, but she would be careful not to divulge the nature of her work to most, especially to men.

In the last 10 years Sadaf she has not visited a gynecologist despite having debilitating menorrhagia because it might raise questions about her going to a "pregnancy" doctor. Conversely, she does not mind highlighting her depression and other stress related conditions.

The erosion of her health and frequent hospitalizations enhanced the spectacle of the good-half widow, which is not to consider her very real ailments as imaginary. Sadaf avoids getting into confrontations or even raising her voice, which is not a mark of “asal zanan”. On one hand Sadaf performs the use of “markers” of “asal zana” such as studied silence and careful words and on the other hand she has also become the spokesperson of the APDP. It is under her name and signature that the issue of disappearances takes space in local and international media every month. This is a strange dichotomy which illuminates the nuanced performance that Sadaf utilizes to appear as an “asal zanan” activist and not be branded as “kharaab” (bad). Sadaf’s performance is layered, where motifs associated with “asal zanan” are made hyper-visible; dramatized even and the inner layer of her actions as an activist is not foregrounded.

The onus on “appearing” or “visibility”, and thus important is palpable in Sadaf’s own thinking. Despite the unprecedented work that she does as an activist with APDP, Sadaf often reminisced how “modern” she was in her early life. Being modern in this phase of life, is entirely connected to “how she looked”, “how well she dressed” which Sadaf connect to how “she would listen to no-one”, although in this phase as a married woman Manzoor did oversee her behavior and he was on the liberal side. Sadaf felt that in her current state she is not free “to appear as she likes” and hence, she is “listening” to everyone (which is true only as far as her appearance goes, for all other decisions like moving to the city, working and activism she has blazed her own trail). Sadaf mourned the “disappearance” of her earlier self, but she did not entirely submit to external social regulation. Like the rest of the society she also associates innovative dressing or “modern” appearance with make-up as “not listening to anyone.” Sadaf also reveres the ideal of “asal zanan” “who is not seen” and wants to be “seen” as such. When she was inside her home, it appeared as a Goffmanian backstage (1969), for a brief moment - supposedly free from external

surveillance, Sadaf dressed differently but nevertheless always in the process of perfecting her external appearance. Thus, the surveillance in the creation of the good-half widow is not only external but also internal and self-regulated.

Sadaf's childhood friends commend the changes in her. They perceive her metamorphosis from a colorfully dressed young woman who resembled "Shilpa Shirodkar" a popular Bollywood actress to someone who now looked "older than her years" as loyalty to her husband and her honor as a good woman. The micropolitics of performing the half-widow is portrayed as "listening to everyone" when in reality it can be a statement on inverting society's strangle-hold. Sadaf's performance as a good half-widow can be read as an aboveboard response to the state terror, which even the male activists largely have failed at and appears visibly palatable to the floundering patriarchy.

In this vein, being an "asal zanan" remains linked to "appearance", and the "visibility" that Sadaf gains as an activist remains subservient to the performance of it. Performing agency in this mode is harder since it must remain apparently undetected and still do what is needful. Sadaf's agency cannot be bound in one rigid definition or made synonymous with the trademark "confronting" face of resistance. The notion of agency in this regard encompasses more possibilities than just resistance to relations of domination, or subversion of norms. It includes conscious goal-driven activities, and the propensity to make choices between pathways of action. The capacity for action is also understood as that which the historically specific relations of subordination enable and create. Sadaf apparently conforms to what the social mores demand of her. She molds her face and body, and bends like liquid metal running in the labyrinthine streams of sociality. However, she is in "action", in a constant "performance" always, wherein her body remains central. Like a Bollywood starlet who takes items of clothing off one by one to gain

visibility, Sadaf adds layers to become the spectacle in order to attain the visibility that is necessitated and the invisibility she needs to sustain it. The spectacle of a good-half widow is a performance which accommodates both the power of social constraints as well as political constraints and the capacity to act situatedly against them.

This spectacle of a “hidden visibility” of Sadaf points to Foucaultian bio-politics where individuals attempt to break from the grip of disciplinary powers by reinventing their body to create a pathway of action for whatever the goal might be.

The Spectacle of Gaze

On the front page of the newspaper published from Kashmir is a picture of a woman, to be more specific it is a half-widow. This is a very common photograph that can be seen in media both inside and outside Kashmir. It has become almost a generic image. The woman has a voluminous scarf over her hair, body and face, revealing only her eyes. Her gaze is downcast and tearful. In this particular picture, in one hand she holds a photograph of her husband with a name and date written across it, and in another, she has a placard which says, “Half-widow: Return my disappeared husband”. A young boy of about 12 is sitting at her side. There will be numerous pictures like this featuring other activists who might be mothers. Often the activist may look directly into the audience or in an entreating or a questioning gesture. Media presence is very pivotal to the women’s protest. They know that media not only carries but also magnifies their presence. In my discussions and observations I noticed how much they value media and how they are projected. In this section I explore the notion of gaze that comes into play through the images that are taken of the performative protest which is the highlight of the women’s activism. The performative protest becomes a spectacle of mourning - of the disappearance and of the “appearance and disappearance” of the women activists as well.

An ideal question here would be to ask how is the mourning activist captured by the gaze of the camera or the gaze of the “onlooker”? Or a better query by the reader would be to ask why the question of gaze at all and what does it do? I see the gaze as a manifestation of the spectacle that the women perform with an affective certitude. The functions of the gaze again come under the context of Foucault's analysis of the rise of surveillance in modern society in which I argue that the “spectacle” becomes inherent. It is within this paradigm of surveillance through an amplified visibility of a “photograph” where I see this spectacle of the “activist”. Here rather than talk about other electronic images I will focus on the photograph, which promotes 'the normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them' (Foucault 1977, 25). Although in controlling the image, the photographer (albeit temporarily) has power over those in front of the lens, a power which may also be lent to viewers of the image. Thus, the camera is often used to represent a 'controlling gaze' but here I point to something more nuanced and subtle, that is how the women turn it into a gaze “controlled” by them. Moreover there is a dichotomy in the “controlled” gaze that points to nuances the women adhere to in this activism as half-widows and mothers. This gaze focuses more on “*what is being seen*” than just “*who is doing the looking.*”

There are many images of the protest that proliferate throughout media both print, electronic and online. They can roughly be categorized as ambient and visage shots. The ambient shots include the general vignettes from the protest, and visage shots, include close-ups and long-shots of individual activists where the focus often is the face. The mothers or older (half-widows) will most often look directly into the camera while the younger women especially the half-widows appear with averted gaze, downcast eyes and mostly their faces will be hidden.³⁸ The

mothers during the protest when mothers wail louder and are more vocal while the half-widows will maintain a low profile, shed tears discreetly and most of the times their faces will be covered with a scarf leaving only their eyes visible. Many may wear Burkha only for this event.

In *Ways of Seeing*, by John Berger observes that *women appear (while men act)*. Women watch themselves being looked at and mostly this awareness has to do with “being seen by a spectator’ (Berger 1972) by implication the spectator is male. The women of APDP also have an engagement with how they are appear on the public horizon. The gaze these women are aware about reflects a “gendered code” (Evans & Gamman 1995) which they know is “judging” them.

Within the paradigm of maternal surveillance, that Parveena and Husna establish their use of direct gaze reflects in their conversations where they may even sound “admonishing” towards the people (audiences) who have to be made aware and told about the disappearances. In the earlier chapter I mention how Husna directs the new member who is a mother to sit upright and show the picture of her son in a proper manner so that “he can be seen”. Even Rehti, who I mentioned earlier, says she wants to show (to the state) what is happening to her and her family and is not afraid of the cameras. “Let them take my picture, what will they see? a mother pining”, says Husna, a similar refrain can be heard from Rahti or Parveena. The mothers’ use of *direct address* to the viewer and enter into a parasocial relationship buttressed by facial expression and gestures and actions.³⁹ They might at times be depicted looking ‘out of the frame’ but it is inferred as if they are looking at the viewer, with associated gestures and postures and copious tears.

On the hand there are the young half-widows who refrain from as Sadaf would say “to be photographed and splashed on the front page of newspaper, which is not a good thing; it is not what an “asal zanan” does, people judge you, they will say she is loose, and shows herself off in

public”. Half-widows and young women members use the *averted gaze* (even with face covered) which depict person’s noticeable⁴⁰ avoidance of the gaze of another, or of the camera lens (and thus of the viewer) - this may involve looking up, looking down or looking away (Dyer 1982). This *indirect address* represents an *offer* in which the viewer is an invisible onlooker and the depicted person is the *object* of the look. In Freudian terms which is reminiscent of the Lacanian gaze and the sardine tin can, the young women direct their gaze outwardly at their surroundings and they are aware of the resistance they exist in to their actions. And as they scrutinize their surroundings, the scrutiny “turns around” and from “I look” becomes “I am looked at” (Freud, 1997)⁴¹. The averted gaze of a young Kashmiri woman anticipates an audience and a resistance; her conscious look directed outwards is also a self-consciousness which returns an anxiety in relation to the scrutiny of an externalized anonymous audience (Other). This gaze by the women is reminiscent of a study of the stereotypical images of female models who typically avert their eyes to express modesty, patience and a lack of interest in anything else while the male model is mostly seen looking up. A male model look often suggest an interest in something else that the viewer cannot see - it certainly doesn’t suggest any interest in the viewer. It is not supposed to acknowledge the viewer, whereas the woman’s averted eyes do just that - they are averted from the viewer which underlines the presence of a viewer.

Here two things become palpable. One the older women, often engage in the direct gaze somewhat reminiscent of the analysis of the models. It traces the elevated status that the mothers in this activism assert. They reinforce the role as a mother beyond gender and in some ways maybe seen as an equivalent of men as well. As far as the gaze of the female pin-up is concerned which returns the viewer’s gaze but is usually some kind of smile or inviting becomes equivalent of the usually tearful glance, and a sad melancholic stare into nothingness by the half-widow or

younger women. The women “engineer the gaze” to appear as “activists” they need to be in the existing situation, based on the substrate of the “women” they are expected to be socially.

Conclusion

In this chapter I established how the disappearance becomes visible as a “spectacle”, through performative activism and how the women perform constitutive “spectacles” and establish their activist identities. The Indian state’s violence in Kashmir has corralled women like Parveena and Sadaf and others like them within a grueling routine, with no recourse to justice. While their activism for human rights is a significant process it is also important to keep in mind that it has had very little results. In many aspects this movement has become “theater of mourning” within the state’s oppressive apparatuses. This deeply performative process of the protest has in a way become an end result in itself where justice has remained elusive due to the state’s policies which not only ignore but negate the demands of APDP.

The performativity which forms the core of the APDP movement protest is not to insinuate that the APDP activists are acting⁴²? All human thought and behavior cannot be explained by the single idea of performativity. Performativity’s motivation is not the same as that of acting, which is an essential difference. Performance becomes a theoretical crux rather than only “an object or a practice (Taylor 2002). Consider a dance, a ritual, or a political demonstration which requires bracketing or framing that differentiates it from other social practices surrounding it, which does not imply that the performance is not real or true. On the contrary, performance distills a truer truth than life itself (Taylor 2002). The use of performance to many might seem derogatory, or suggest artificiality or a “put on...antithetical to the real and true” but in a more complex reading performance is recognized is coterminous with the real. The idea of performance acts as an organizing principle capable of offering the fullest perspective on

human thought and behavior. In first instance it appears as a referential to the artificiality of something but in my understanding performance functions as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated or what Richard Schechner has called "twice-behaved" behavior (Taylor 2002). It traces a process which occurs in the present, and becomes itself through its disappearance (Phelan 1993) for it is not captured and is evanescent. Performativity or commonly performance is everywhere from ordinary gestures to macrodramas (Schechner 1988: 282). In order to understand the formative processes or social and human behaviors the focus has to be on the public shows, the Goffmanian performances of the everyday and also on the brain events, microbits and bits that pre-exist performances of large magnitudes (282).

The micropolitics of behavior, dress and manner in the activist women illustrates the spectacles that the "activist" perform countering the state instigated enactment of "disappearing" men. The "spectacle" of the disappearance which the state seeks to "disappear" thus gets sustained through the spectacle of endless mourning. There is no precedence for women human rights activists. This ethnographic tracing becomes illustrative of the discursive contentions around women activists and brings to fore the faultlines in the gender politics. It is within this violence ridden sociality that Sadaf's and Parveena's "spectacle" of the "good woman" is performed. This performativity is not an episodic process but an ongoing one which involves the theatrics of mourning emphasizing a "complex transaction of body and language" (2007:59).

The society has no precedence to deal with the contingencies produced by militarization which includes a forced public role of women in the environment of state terror and overall social distrust it instigates. It dogs women not only as beleaguered mothers but also as half-widows who belong not even to the margins of the society but to the peripheral uncategorized

blurs therein. While it is no excuse, it is easy to see how a social fabric, like that of Kashmir which is already worn-out from more than 60 years of militarization and 24 years of armed violence, comes apart. Gender inequities are exacerbated and biases are heightened and this works to the advantage of the state because it recedes as the “direct” aggressor while the social hierarchy intimately cracks down on the women. Enforced disappearances, thus, not only enable elimination of the politically deviant but also unravels the social fabric in unique ways, creating lacunae’s which can neither be filled nor kept empty; disappearing the community as it knew itself; creating an anomie.

Although the APDP activists have to be understood in the context of their embeddedness in power relations, which means that their capacities for freedom and autonomous action are necessarily limited, but it cannot be negated that the women actively deploy the techniques and models of self-formation that are ‘proposed, suggested, imposed’ upon them by society (Foucault 1988b: 291), to creatively transform themselves and in the process supplant the normalization operating in pernicious modern technologies of the self (Sawicki 1998: 105). Foucault has called such a nuance process as a “practicing freedom” which can also be understood the way women in this context show resistance or agency. Tracing agency in this mode adds to the mainstream understanding of agency and resistance in Western feminist paradigm where agency appears as mainly aggressive. In this process where many behaviors can be considered as passive in superficial manner are not so passive but nuacely subversive as is the use of mourning as politics. The Foucaultian “micropolitics” traces the use of cultural motifs, which are redefined and improvised to carve identities out of socially accepted categories but are subversive and pushing the boundaries at the same time. The emergence of the activist women based on an affective politics is based on a “performative spectacle” of the “*Asal Zanan*”.

SECTION 2: INVISIBLE SPECTACLES/OTHER INVISIBILITIES

Performing the Spectacle

She says,

“there are enforced disappearances of the other kind, like the one which is mingled in my blood like a family disease, where I erase myself to find you and only to lose you and myself again – It is here that I have all the tools of being and not being, of visibility and invisibility,

I know women should not be seen, so should I hide?

And women should not be heard? So should I be silent?

But then who will look for you?

(ather zia 2014)

Chapter 4

Enforced Disappearance of the Other Kind

*Zanan Gatche nay Boznay Yewan, A woman should/is not be seen, An old adage¹
Asal Zanan Ma Gatche na Bozne Yen, A “good” woman should not be seen – Sadaf, half-
widow-activist*

Invisibilities

In this chapter I specifically deal with another kind of disappearance, that of gender. Rather than directly go to my ethnography to look into complexities of gender and its visibility in various forms in contemporary war ravaged Kashmir, I meander purposefully a little into history in order to excavate a certain discursive disappearance of a particularly famed woman. Through this I focus on the enforced disappearance which is “enforced” on the historical and the cultural memory in Kashmir; that of Habba Khatoon, the legendary queen-poetess of the 16th century. Habba Khatoon is a well-known figure who suffers a kind of historical disappearance. Although in popular culture Habba permeates every lyrical nuance many historians debate whether she even existed. What does Habba Khatoon’s probable non-existence or this discursive “enforced” disappearance do? What does this speak to or speak of in relation to the women in Kashmir today? How can this disappearance be traced into how women exist in Kashmir and in the movement for searching for the disappeared. This discursive “disappearance” also speaks to the larger invisibility of women which is noticeable in many other cultures around the world (Peteeet 1991: Lughod 1991).

In what follows I use Habba’s historical disappearance as a device to identify the socially enforced disappearance of women. Paradoxically this gendered and enforced disappearance, though meant to disappear the entity in focus, also allows a visibility by “negation”, which becomes an “appearance” albeit inversely. I connect Habba’s enforced disappearance with a

phrase which many Kashmiri women as well as men often use, “*Zanan Gatche nay Boznay Yin/ A woman should not be seen.*”² This sentiment ensconced in this saying; about how a woman should be (it also underlines that “being not seen” is not her natural state) reflects in the narratives and lives of almost all women and the met I met during the course of this research. There are not many Kashmiri women, who will not have heard of this phrase. As a young girl growing up in Kashmir, who was more on the tomboyish side I often got admonished³ for climbing out of windows, laughing loudly, and even walking fast; all of which could be equated with “unfeminine” acts, bordering on ones that garner “negative” attention thus making oneself unduly visible to others. A woman’s lot was to be “zanan-paeth/like a woman” which entailed quietness, grace, docility and reluctance to be seen in public eye⁴, modes of operation which were considered feminine exemplars. A woman with such graces is seen as the epitome of femaleness or the “asal zanan/good woman”; honored not only by men but also idealized by other women.

It the backdrop of this, I trace the women in their enforced social “disappearance” as they search for men. I argue that this aspect of women resurging on the surface, in protests, facing the army and streets, does not manifest empowerment but it exposes the patriarchal nature of the society as well as the military apparatus, which does not see women as equal adversaries, thus, emphasizes their social invisibility. “On one level this chapter traces how women are “disappeared” or “invisibilized” “or “erased”, at the same time this forced invisibility should also be seen as a mode of operation or agency and not just symbolic violence. The entire project of making invisible becomes a “visibility” in invisibility. Again a manifestation of *sous rature* or erasure; in Derridian analysis erasure comes from Heidegger, who often crossed out the word Being (Being). He then would let both the word and its erasure stand. In a way here, both the

invisible/disappeared “Habba” and the visibility stand. The “disappeared” always carries traces of other meanings and this everything must then be studied as under erasure although the meaning is always deferred.

A Discursive Disappearance

Habba Khatoon was born to a Kashmiri peasant named Abdi Rather and his wife Janam in village Chandhara village of Pampore town by the bank of river Jehlum. Legend says that she was blessed by a mystic who gave her the name Zoon⁵ meaning Moon in Kashmiri. Zoon learned the Holy Quran and under the guidance of spiritual mystics she began to compose poetry. She had a mellifluous voice and would often be found singing in the saffron fields that are still grown over the dales and hills of her village. Habba Khatoon is remembered as a extremely beautiful woman and a natural poet, whose lyrical songs are etched in the hearts of Kashmiris. To this day Kashmiri women choose her exquisite laments to soothe their chore-ridden bodies. They yearn for the return of their careless girl-hood; the loving nurture of their mother’s hearth and father’s home not with their own words, but with Habba’s songs. Every Kashmiri lover traverses the path of love singing Habba’s passionate lyrics that she threaded while walking in the saffron fields and pine forests. On one of these poetic wanderings Habba enamored the last native king of Kashmir named Yusuf Shah Chak and they fell in love. Initially Yusuf did not divulge his real identity to Habba. When the rumors about her love affair with a stranger grew, Habba was forced by her family into a marriage with Aziz Lone a local peasant farmer. Habba’s husband lacked any appreciation for her poetic inclinations and she had to face harsh treatment from her mother-in-law who had little patience for her poetic preponderance. Habba’s countryside wanderings were not easy to fit within the farming household. Habba’s mother in law punished her by giving taxing chores and very little to eat. Habba, not happy with marriage adamantly refused to

consummate her marriage. Due to this ill-treatment from her new family continued to grow. After a long drawn battle with her husband and his family, Habba was finally sent back to her parents. By then Yusuf had revealed his true identity and proposed marriage to her. Yusuf Chak's father refused to grant his son permission to marry a commoner and the couple had to elope in order to marry. In the coming years, Habba Khatoon graced the court of Yusuf Chak as the queen consort. She enjoyed some blissful years with Yusuf and by some historic accounts even gave birth to a daughter. Yusuf Chak was struggling on the political front against annexation from the Mughal rulers in Delhi. He was facing a threat to his throne and wrangling with many intrigues. Ultimately he was duped into visiting the Mughal court in Delhi and imprisoned. He was sent to exile in Bihar where he later died.

Left behind, Habba turned into a fugitive and almost lost her mental balance. She would wander from village to village asking people if they had seen her "Yusuf". People called her "maetch" (crazy) and children would run after her trying to rile her. Much is not known about her day to day to life during this period, but her poetry from this time is popular and suffused with hauntings of loss and separation. These songs are open laments and dirges loaded with enormous pain she felt at being away from her beloved.

Many songs such as the following expressly call her beloved husband, "*Naad haa layey, Myani Yusufu wallo [I am calling out for you, come my Yusuf]*". In Habba's search for Yusuf there is a strong resonance with the women, mothers and of course the half-widows searching for their loved ones. In fact, if the illegal detainment of her husband and his exile and her ignorance about his predicament is kept in view, Habba becomes the symbolic first half-widow in Kashmir's fraught history. It's not surprising that many APDP women will sing Habba's song of pathos and pain, but that is not my primary concern in this chapter. What becomes pivotal for

this chapter, is that despite Habba Khatoon's evocative history; amidst all the reverence and love from Kashmiris, there often doubts about her existence. Every few years scholars debate whether she was real or a figment of historical imagination.

Historical records have paid a mere nominal regard to Habba Khatoon's life. The same can be said of her poetry most of which is lost except a modest body of her work has been saved through oral tradition. There are not many accounts of her life in formal written historical renditions but there is no dearth of her persuasive mentions in oral traditions like folk lore and poetry. Unfortunately oral traditions are often disregarded as legends and myths by the doyens of the written word. The lovers of Habba's poetry have tried to glean modest mentions of her in historical records, which have in recent times been enough to alleviate the apprehension around her existence, but still doubts loom. If anyone is interested in knowing about Habba Khatoon's life, it has to be extrapolated from the historical accounts of Yusuf Chak's rule.⁶ This becomes very telling of the invisibility imposed on Habba's life, as a woman who is sidelined despite her massive literary contribution not only in shape of poetry but also Kashmiri poetry's lyrical grammar.

There can be numerous questions about why historians paid so little attention to Habba in the formal accounts, despite her status as a queen consort and a renowned poet. There are many ways to respond to this question.⁷ In the following discussion there might emerge some possible answers as to why the historians and sociologists working on that time period have remained "uninterested" in her? This discursive disappearance of Habba Khatoon resonates with the "disappearance" of Sabina Spielrein, a psychoanalyst (though she is hardly remembered as that) from a photograph. Avery Gordon uses the absence of Sabina Spielrein as a methodology to address women's social "disappearance" or invisibility in her book *Ghostly Matters: Haunting*

and the Sociological Imagination (1997). Gordon's analysis is triggered by Sabina Spielrein's absence from a photograph which was taken at a psychoanalysis conference in Weimar in 1891. Gordon does not see Sabina in the all-male photograph from the Third Psychoanalytic Congress which Spielrein was supposed to attend. Gordon treats Spielrein's absence as a matter of gendered invisibility. She traces Spielrein's professional trajectory from being the first psychoanalyst to write a paper about the death instinct to becoming an insignificant footnote in the history of psychoanalysis as Jung and Freud, the male psychoanalysts took over her idea. Spielrein developed other ideas as well which Jung and Freud borrowed and initially they also gave her credit but Sabina sank into near anonymity as the men grew in eminent. Before becoming a professional psychoanalyst Sabina had been a patient of Carl Jung. They subsequently fell in love. Jung called off their romance though they maintained a professional relation. Gordon traces Spielrein's presence in the writings of Freud and Jung; in one letter Freud refers to her as the 'little Jewish girl.'

The absence of Spielrein in the Weimar conference photograph, that Gordon notes resonates with the discursive absence of Habba Khatoon from the annals of Kashmir's history. It becomes a motif of the "invisibility" or "absence" which is imposed on women and which in many cultures including Kashmiri, is often brushed off as a "women's lot". The modest historical accounts about Habba's life do not seem to be proof enough for many male historians to prove that she did exist. Many metrical innovations in Kashmiri poetry are attributed to Habba, which the skeptics contend could only be the forte of a male poet. The shadow of being a folkloric bordering on mythical character looms large over Habba, especially for scholars who seek accuracy for every date and word, thus, creating dilemmas about her existence. No doubt, extrapolations from the historical records of Yusuf Shah Chak's court do point to her existence,

but such accounts often underline another narrative which also insinuate that Yusuf Shah was a “lover-king” who lost his throne while pursuing arts and romancing Habba. Habba in these narratives emerges as an alluring epitome of feminine charm and an enchantress potent with sexuality.

In her last years of life Habba searched for her husband throughout the length and breadth of Kashmir, lamenting, waiting, and praying for his return. It is said that Habba died a half-destitute along with her young daughter, who is buried beside her in the quarry town of Athwajan in South Kashmir, which is on the way to her parent’s village. Habba’s gravesite lies amidst the noisy foothills of the mountains constantly blasted for stone. Nowadays, the noise from breaking of stones into small obedient chunks, and a few males give company to Habba’s and her little daughter’s grave. These males include the poet Laureate of Kashmir named Mahjoor, who lies buried closed by. Mahjoor had been buried in his ancestral graveyard but was exhumed in order to be buried next to Habba, as he had originally willed. Also often times, the Indian soldiers can be seen on Habba’s grave as they take breaks from manning the busy highway which connects Kashmir to the rest of India.

Despite her grave being a heritage site and the company of a poet laureate who was born under history’s full glare and whose authentication of her existence should carry some weight, Habba’s discursive disappearance looms intermittently within the scholarly debates. This, without doubt is often times overruled by the emotional attachment to her legacy in popular tradition.

Constant Erasure and Visible Invisibility

In this section, I return to my ethnography to trace the contours of the gendered invisibility, how it is reinforced, accepted and molded by women on ground. One morning Sadaf,

her youngest son Sajju and I along with our driver Shabir were travelling to Baramulla, a famed district in Kashmir, to visit a family of a disappeared person. The main part of Baramulla is almost a garrison town, which can even become a micro-illustration of Kashmir as a disputed state. At the very entrance, contiguous to the army camps is the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). It's distinctive because of its sky blue walls emblazoned with its name. The UNMOGIP is stationed in various parts of Kashmir and yet remains as the most invisible between the Indian army and the state administration in the dispute. The UN fortification is behind high walls and only its main headquarters in the Srinagar city is its known location because in the early 90's it was a popular destination for demonstrators who would submit memorandums trying to invoke UN's role in Kashmir dispute.

As the famed colonnade of poplars immortalized in many Bollywood films as a lover's highway ebbs, one enters a road which opens up like two callused hands that had been stuck together in an unanswered prayer. Baramulla town is an assortment of military bunkers, and soldiers are patrolling. The local populace and businesses seem huddled in the center, dusty and dilapidated. Some new buildings are coming up in the dusty maze. The walls of the army camps on the either side are pockmarked with recent stone pelting between Kashmiri youth and armed troops. The high brick and cement walls protect the army camps, fortified with angle irons covered with masses of barbed wires from which empty liquor bottles hang like limp notes of glass and below huge framed pictures of tulips, pansies in Mughal gardens, idyllic shikaras on the Dal lake are hung. These framed pictures seem hanging on the camp walls is a contrast and appears as an extremely digressive act of beautification of the military encampment; an inverse camouflaging to make the military installation "visible" as less hostile looking to the Kashmiris.

I ask Sadaf about what she makes of these innovative decorations hanging on the army camp. She pulls her lips down and shakes her head, “Karaan/they do” and after a while “Karin/let them”. These phrases are often used to convey “futility”. *“People will not forget those cries/what favors are they doing now/I still remember my trips there searching for Manzoor and the blood on its walls”*. Sadaf reminisces about her travails and the continuing abuses that the troops were meting out to the people.

A little ahead, an Indian soldier sits on a tree stump talking to a butcher who is busy dressing meat for his customers. It seems the soldiers, bunkers and armored vehicles are enmeshed into the civilian life and almost “not seen” and “invisible” due to the quotidianness of the militarized nature of life. A few other soldiers stand a few meters apart near an “auto-stand”. Auto is a three-wheeler vehicle, a common mode of transportation in Kashmir. The young auto-drivers stand away, puffing at their cigarettes and talking in low voices. In the early 90’s the auto-drivers were the most persecuted demographic in Kashmir by the army for their ties to militancy and many still become easy suspects due to the mobile nature of their jobs. Usually the bunkers and auto-stands in a neighborhood are in close proximity due to which they are almost in constant interaction with the army. Just in the way the army is entwined in the lives of auto-drivers, it is in face of other civilian life.

Our car stops in front of a bunker which oozes into the road like a sludge. It is a mix of mud streaked sandbags and concertina wires which is speckled with windswept rags. Besides this makeshift structure rises a brick and mortar check-post. Soldiers stand alert; one is peering out of the small hole of a window, the muzzle of his gun pointed towards us. In the initial years the bunkers used to be made of sandbags and wire, but now at many places have been replaced by concrete rooms or more permanent double-storeyed structures with look-outs.

We alight from the vehicle, and Sadaf nudges her son to take out his identity card. Sajju is only 14, but is taller than his age. He has an identity card issued by his school. An identity card in Kashmir is a must. It is a document of immense importance in Kashmir which the soldiers demand to see in order to ascertain a person's identity. This card looks much like a calling card, only it is bigger and thicker. People refer to it as just "card" pronounced as "carddh". People employed in the government departments and other sem-public offices are issued official identity cards. People who are self-employed or other skilled workers like plumbers, carpenters, bakers, or laborers usually use the generic identity cards that are available in the market. These cards have a place for a photograph and details of a person's residence and profession, which they get notarized by a government official. Many times the identity cards will only have a person's picture with details and no official vetting.

There are 6 million army troops in Kashmir, and the civilian movement is heavily curtailed and surveillance is heightened in every aspect. The ID card has become a tacit ritual between the Indian troops and Kashmiris, who have to be ready to confirm their identities at any time. Failing to produce an ID card can result in beating, imprisonment even death. While the card conveys quite a bit of information about a person it almost tells nothing, yet the soldiers have made it mandatory to carry at all times. Talking the politics of "ID card" and its mechanics may not seem to link directly to the theme of "gender invisibility" in this paper, but it is strongly connected as the following anecdote will prove.

Sajju is ready to show his ID card followed by the driver Shabir. Sadaf sighs and places her hand on Sajju's shoulder as we inch forward towards the soldier who was frisking the person ahead of us. Sajju extends his hand, and the soldier takes the card, and in a blink returns it. After a while we get back in the car with Sadaf heaving a big sigh, relieved *"I always get nervous*

around the soldiers; God knows they can do anything with or without ID”, she says. “It is always safer to keep the ID card even if it a school going child; woe is me, look Sajju is growing hair on his face, he looks older now than he is.” Sadaf is pained for she worries that looking older will mean heightened danger of becoming a target of the ire of soldiers, more likely to be stopped and harassed.

“Don’t you worry Didi (elder sister)”, says Shabir or driver. Shabir is a smug 27 year old man. *“He will be fine, look at me”*, he tries to assure Sadaf. Shabir shows us his set of 7 different ID cards issued from different institutions. It is an appalling thought to have a set of 7 ID’s sitting in your pocket all professing differently⁸ but it is not uncommon in a land where proving ones identity is a matter of life and death and also for many young men like Shabir has become a game.

Shabir says that his use of a particular card depends on location. If it’s a government office or a police station he is likely to use one of the two cards he has procured from two pro-India political parties which designate him as a member. I ask him how he got those, *“they are happy to show their bosses in Dilli they can get names in Kashmir, I am a fake-member, I don’t even know who they are, I got these because I had contacts there”*, answers Shabir preening. One of Shabir’s cards is from a little known political party named Bahujan Samaj Party. It has absolutely no clout in Kashmir except on paper.⁹ When I ask Shabir if he knows anything about the party, he says with a chuckle *“may all these parties catch fire, may they go to hell, I need their card for safety, it sometimes dupes the soldiers, they bother too much after seeing this.”*

Two other cards are expired from the schools Shabir attended many years ago. He still carries them around. Is that not dangerous to do, I ask him? *“I don’t use them, it’s only to show I went to school once, besides the soldiers do not know how to read”*. The Indian troops in

Kashmir are notorious for being barely literate and severely constrained even in reading and writing English.¹⁰ The 3 other cards Shabir has are from the various stores where he had worked as a salesman. Shabir told us about a friend who had designed fake ID cards for bogus organization. On a dare he printed one that said “Government of Independent Kashmir” and he had even used it once. *“They are blind”*, says Shabir scoffing. On another occasion he had pasted a picture of Rajiv Gandhi a long dead ex-prime minister of India on his card instead of his own. Given he looked a little like him, but it was still surprising that he was never caught the few times he used it. In Shabir’s narrative and in those of other Kashmiris, the encounters about with the ID cards¹¹ were caricaturized which hinted at them being mere devices to instigate discipline rather than serious investigative tool. Shabir summed up, *“They just ask for the card to create fear and bother us, otherwise what does it prove? It never saved anyone from getting killed.”*

While the two men, Shabir and Sajju both younger and far less accomplished than the women they accompanied i.e. Sadaf and me, had to face the travails of proving their identity, we stood on the side having our baggage rummaged through and no proof of identity was asked. As a matter of norm, it is seldom that women are asked to prove their identity but they are thoroughly searched. I ask Sadaf about it. *“they don’t ask women”*, she replies *“Why do you think they do not do that?”* I persist. *“why, what is the need, I am woman, just a woman, a mother, what can I do”* she says simply, and after a pause add nonchalantly, *“What will they see, and get to know after they read my card”*, she arched her brows.

The way Sadaf says she is a “woman” is assuming of a certain harmlessness, bordering on being powerless; seeming as if unlike men she is incapable of any subversion.¹² In this mode Sadaf conveniently undermines and even overlooks her status of a highly “subversive” human rights activist with the APDP. Given that she cannot carry an ID card from the APDP because it

could be a security risk¹³ and she would be unduly harassed if the soldiers to know that she was an HR activist and that too from APDP. Most male human rights activists from APDP or other groups will try to hide their identity as HR workers to escape persecution.¹⁴ Most HR activists work undercover in the field using general ID cards designating themselves as “social workers” or “self-employed”.

In Sadaf’s case, her saying “*what will they (soldiers) see*” becomes very telling. She does carry an ID card from her beauty shop, but she seldom uses it, not because she does not want to but that she is never asked to show her ID. The issue here becomes not only to understand how the invisibility is imposed on Sadaf (by the soldiers who will ask a mere 14 year old boy for a card but not a full-grown woman), and the kind of gender “visibility” that prevails, but also how Sadaf chooses to “attain” visibility and “invisibility”. She carelessly asks “what will they see?” It hints to the complexity of the visibility she has achieved, which is nuanced and layered, and quite hard to comprehend. There is also a sense of resignation, in that the soldiers (as men), can only see her as a weaker sex (a woman). Countless times, while passing through check-posts Sadaf says, “*I always struggle to cover my bosom, they stare like anything, and walk steering clear of them and their hands, you never know.*”¹⁵

On one level “*What will they see?*” has to do with her “visible invisibility”, that she is just a woman; another level, is the “invisible visibility” that she has achieved for herself as a human rights activist who is conveniently hidden behind the woman/mother façade so that she does not want to jeopardize her work. Another aspect of hers is that of a genuinely worried mother, who appears apprehensive about her son’s safety and most uncaring of how she is perceived, even “ignoring” the leering gaze of the soldier whose eyes dwell on her body long enough to make her uncomfortable as they pat down her son. “*I always forget myself when my*

sons are near the soldiers, till we move far I don't even remember anything except we should move as far as we can from them and their guns."¹⁶ On one level women like Sadaf grapple with a visible negation and Habba Khatoon, the queen-poetess of medieval Kashmir, posthumously suffers, social invisibility even when her songs continue to permeate the air of Kashmir.

What will they see?

One important aspect is the phenomenon of exhorting Kashmiri women by Kashmiri men, to come out on the streets to protest. When an arrest or a killing takes place in Kashmir the men will make announcements from the Masjid (mosque) loudspeaker calling women out into streets to protest against an army atrocity¹⁷. Paradoxically, women who are supposed to "not be seen" in a conservative patriarchal set-up are requested to come out on the roads and that too by using the mosque pulpit which would stereotypically be seen as one from which women are constrained in their roles. In exploring this phenomenon several aspects come to light: one why the movement of APDP is dominated by women and by implication where are the men and it also fleshes out the changing dynamics of gender under extreme militarization.

Due to intense security discrimination against men, initially women would lead the demonstrations and sit-ins that took place after arrests or killings. In the case of movement like the APDP men would help with the paperwork and engage in behind the scenes negotiations with the class of people who emerged as brokers with the army or the administration. Nevertheless the dominance of women in APDP struggle underlines the gender equation that has continued to evolve in Kashmir since militarization¹⁸ intensified where men have had to rely on women for support which was unprecedented in the society. It is also telling of the historical subject position of Kashmiri men vis a vis the army in the always unpredictable and volatile political situation of Kashmir.

Rehti a mother whose son has disappeared says, *“How can I ask my husband to search for our son, how can he even stand in front of an army man, will they not kill him without blinking an eye?”*¹⁹ Rehti’s apprehensions are not unfounded. Men become direct recipients of violence, but it is not as if women are not targets of direct violence, but they are willing to take a chance. In the initial days of the armed militancy, in 1989 when the first bomb blast went off which signaled the start of armed uprising. Things unraveled fast after this as India pumped Kashmir with troops and ammunition. A massive web of bunkers, camps and make-shift interrogation centers came up on the already militarized region. The violence against civilians who more likely would be men reached an all-time high as the guerilla warfare heightened. (Choudhury and Moser-Puangsuwan 2007) Mass combing operations, cordons, crossfirings, and curfews became a routine. Incidents like mass killings, custodial killings and disappearances, mass rapes, torture and incarceration involving noncombatant civilians became a norm.

Since 1989 it has become a norm for women to flock to be part of *dharna* (sit-in) or demonstrations to *“save their men”*. The brazen security discrimination against men forces women to go on the forefront and present a “non-threatening” face of citizenry. The “threatening face,” the men engage in background processes of redress such as in Syed’s disappearance, Husna’s husband would meet politicians, army, and police while Husna went out in protests. Eventually Husna took over all the processes, both public and official by herself. *“I told my husband to leave this all to me. He had a full time job, he had to earn for the family and importantly, not get killed. If men protest, it is more likely to become fatal, the soldiers will shoot without thinking twice, not that they spare us when they go berserk but still”* says Husna²⁰. Sadaf says, “it was a time when I would not let me husband out of my sight, if he went out I went with him, it also added to my worry that I gave birth to boys only, boys were the first targets, their life

wasn't spared". Not only Sadaf but a common reality at a time was when men when out, the women of the house a mother or a sister or even a grandmother would be taken along (even if the man would not ask the women would insist to go along). So why exactly do women accompany men? This can be misconstrued as an evidence of women being treated leniently by the Indian troops. However, that is not the case. The women have been as vulnerable as men, if not arrested or disappeared, they have been victims of mass rapes and other acts of harassment and molestation against women and also deaths at the hands of troopers.²¹ The women have not faced any safer situation than men but still they accompany men even if they felt vulnerable and in context of public protest garnered the psychic mobility to become the front runners in organizations like the APDP.

In this process while the security discrimination against men and their economic urgencies get underlined, it also reinforces the social invisibility of women as the so-called weaker sex, who will not be "killed or arrested" as readily as men since they may not be perceived as equal adversaries. The women however face dangers like molestation or rape and getting killed for them is even considered as a better predicament socially. In the public demonstrations women find strength in the collective which they hope will decrease the chances of being physically harassed. Husna says, "*in a group chances of "badtameezei/uncouthness" are less, but they will push or pull at scarves, still a lesser risk than men getting killed without a thought, we face the risks, but what is the other way?"*²² About getting killed Husna says, "*who knows a bullet may hit me inside my home.*"

In such a situation of violence women's lives become crucial to relations, practices, and politics. Thus the gendered politics of mourning emerges from a "*subalterity within subalterity*" i.e. women within the larger non-hegemonic Kashmiri patriarchy who cower under the Indian

military regime. Seemingly unproductive to many, politics of mourning becomes instrument for resistance and memorialization. I argue that this aspect of women becoming chaperones of men or become the face of public protests like in the APDP do not underline any laxity, or deliberate leniency by the Indian army towards women in comparison to men, but it further underlines women's invisibility. It serves as a showcase for their social roles and emphasizes their status within the patriarchy, that of the Kashmir and the one to which the Indian military bulwark belongs. *"If I, a woman, am with my husband, it hints that my husband is a family man, or I used to accompany my son, to show he has a family and is not loitering, sometimes it worked, sometimes it did not help either"*, says Rehti²³ of her chaperoning the men in her families. *"I was not afraid for myself, I left everything to God, if they killed my husband, my life was over anyways"*. While this norm alludes to the socially ineffective roles that women have it also must force us a little into understand that there is also a sense of credibility that the company of a woman is attributed with and what that says for the deeply entrenched male-female roles in Kashmir and India in general.

Visible Invisibilities

One afternoon in the summer of 2010, I was sitting inside Parveena's kitchen, as she talked on the phone and kept an eye on boiling tea. Outside the city was aflame with mass protests and stone pelting incidents against the Indian army and some parts were under curfew. The Indian authorities had declared that the militancy in Kashmir was at an all-time low but on the other hand, a grassroots resistance to Indian rule had steadily burgeoned since 2008. It had started with mass rallies against what is now known as the Amarnath Land Row that quickly turned into pro-freedom demonstrations, which in 2010 were on the upswing again.

Despite the changing face of resistance which was largely non-violent, the response of Indian troops continued to be lethal resulting in more than 200 dead and more than 2000 maimed for life. A fresh cycle of protests began in early June 2010 after Indian troops killed a boy named Tufail Ahmed Matoo in down town Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. It is widely reported that Tufail was an innocent bystander who had left home for attending tuition classes and was not a part of the crowd protesting against the extra-judicial killings by the Indian army in Machil a border village. A tear gas shell hit Tufail's head which resulted in his death, which was followed by vigorous demonstrations and angry protests by the public. That summer Kashmiri youth turned the movement to alternate methods of resistance like demonstrations and protests. A faction styled themselves on the Palestinian intifada making pelting of stones ("Kani Jung/Fighting with stones" or the "Kashmiri Intifada") at the army their mode of fighting against the Indian state.

As we sat waiting for the tea, we heard a commotion outside and came to know that 3 boys who were part of a stone pelting crowd had been arrested by the troops. The air crackled with the sound from the public address system in the local mosque. Instead of the Azaan (call to prayers), a noise of hurried throat clearing pierces the air. A male voice in near panic, announced in Kashmiri, *"I appeal to all mothers and sisters to come out in the street to protest"*. Parveena shut the gas stove and began closing the windows. She instructed her nephew to sit inside the house while we along with the other women of the neighborhood rushing into the street.

The reason why women have to take the center-stage in these protests is quite nuanced and involves understanding the complexities of not only perceptions about genders but also the bearing they have on the evolving gender roles under militarization. I ask Parveena about why she was the one taking part in protests, and not her husband or other sons, *"I cannot risk sending*

them out to face these dogs, it is me who has to go out, they see women as weak, as non-combative.”

As far as the men are concerned they inhabit a space of non-hegemonic masculinity wherein their public role becomes complex. In order to understand these complexities we must pay some attention to the evolving gender relations under militarization. Usually men are not a part of the sit-ins or demonstrations which take place immediately after an arrest²⁴ or even in the ones that are established ones like the APDP's monthly protest.²⁵ While this may be interpreted as patriarchy's hegemony over women to subject them to emergency protests but it actually points to the security discrimination which the men suffer and the “male” desperation that has become a norm under the Indian occupation. In the past, no man would force a woman to go for public protest. If anything, a traditional male showed his strength by imposing private roles on his partner. During the armed militancy women flock to “sit- ins” (called dharna's) or demonstrations not only of their own accord but with male consent. Since men face fatal security discrimination, it seems women are pushed to the forefront to project the “non-threatening” face of Kashmiris to visibly confront the soldiers or authorities for releasing the boys, while men: “the threatening face” are engaged in much more discreet and formal processes. Like in case of Husna initially when Syed was taken, she would go out in demonstrations with women from the neighborhood while her elder son and husband would be involved with “behind the scenes rather very discreet processes of searching for Syed's whereabouts, which included meeting a politician, an administrator, the army people and police. Although later on she took over all the processes by herself. “I told my husband to leave this all to me, he had to earn the daily bread and stay out of danger” says Husna. These sentiments are echoed by other women who say that

men could not carry out the search since they faced greater danger of being killed or jailed, and even if they would still take the risk they could not commit fully for they had full time jobs.

The taking of the center-stage by the women thereby occurs because men cannot become pivotal, and also underlines the social invisibility of women as the so-called weaker sex, who will not be “killed or arrested” with the same readiness as men would be and that there will be some restraint (this has not always been the case). There are tacit agreements on the dangers that exist while the women present themselves before the soldiers but the women put their faith in the collective nature of their protest which to some extent decreases the chances of being molested or raped (again this has not always proved to be correct).²⁶ As far as being killed is concerned “*who knows the future, (when one will die), I can be hit by a bullet inside the house too, only my honor should be saved*” says Parveena. Thus, safety of life is not an issue, her honor is the priority.

It is important to understand the nature of the demonstrations which women lead, as part of the first response to an arrest which may end in a disappearance or a killing (in some cases the person may be released due to the protests). Dharnas often start with the women sitting enmasse near the army camp, suspected of apprehending the person. A dharna can be led by an older woman, usually someone who evokes the maternal symbolism. Sometimes young but mostly married women will lead the dharna. Younger women, wives and sisters are usually in the back and there can be little girls and boys too along with the adults. In case of a prominent combatant or a well-known non-combatant, women from other localities may join, but if it is a small time militant or a non-combatant then it will remain confined to the neighborhood.

In the demonstration that Parveena led against the arrest of the 3 boys the women congregated near a bunker and raised slogans. They used many slogans against the state,

including a common one “*release the innocent (boy)*”. It is interesting that this slogan was said in Urdu whilst the language spoken by these women is Kashmiri. In this language their direct address are the soldiers clearly, most of whom speak or understand Hindi, which is a close cousin of Urdu. In many case, as in this one, the dharna leads into a verbal match with the soldiers who pretended ignorance about the arrest or having no authority to help and tried to beat the women away. They badmouthed them and even hit them with sticks. In the initial days of the armed struggle the women were more cautious in their confrontation with the soldiers. The years of conflict have taken its toll and there is less chance that the women will hold their tongue. There have been similar instances of incidents of stone pelting or other demonstrations where the army troops, police and the crowds engage in a war of words which includes swearing and inventing lyrical insults. Many such instances have become part of the popular folklore. When I ask her about the verbal sparring Parveena says, “*what will they do, kill, let them kill, haven't they killed before?*” When the confrontation with the soldiers yields nothing, the group stepped up the sloganeering, “*hey tyrants, oppressors, quit Kashmir*”. This is said in Kashmiri as well as “*down with India.*”

Most of the time the women, as in this one demonstration, were not successful in knowing anything about the boy arrested and they returned home without getting any information. However, on this day the media swooped in and the news was carried the next day's paper with the women's picture on the front page. Later one of the boys disappeared in custody and his body was found on the bank of the river.

I asked Parveena if her husband ever objected to her protesting or stopped her outright or offered to take her place. She says initially he tried to exert all three options. She simply resisted because she did not want to give up the search for her son and she also did not want him to be a

part of the protest, “*I would not allow him to become a target*”, for “*he is man; they will shoot him first thing.*”

This much nuanced reversal of the male-female roles is notable, as is the fact that Parveena is almost allowed to get her way without serious complications. This is telling of the interaction of Kashmiri masculinity with Kashmiri femininity not only during the times of violence but also the era preceding it. For the men to pursue the behind-the scene-processes can also be interpreted as women being engaged in informal, thus less significant processes such as “shouting slogans in front of the army”. This Manichean reasoning might not apply because in the earlier stages of a search for a disappeared/arrested person it is a routine that men will band together to appeal to the authorities. Usually it will be an elderly revered local, maybe an Imam (religious leader) who will lead in meeting the local Member of Legislative Assembly (local politician) or army personnel. The men will often take a woman figure, like a mother or a wife along to illustrate the trail of suffering that the person’s arrest has invoked. Many feminists may object saying that this token inclusion of a woman is demeaning, but it is important to note that not just old mothers or wives are included but also ailing fathers or children of both sexes. The primary thrust of this endeavor is to illustrate the suffering without much regard to the significance of genders. In the case of Parveena when her son disappeared, initially she was also made part of such expeditions but as the duration of the search lengthened the men dropped out, including her husband who had to return to his day job and also tried to stop Parveena from searching further – in order to return to normal life. Parveena categorically resisted, and encouraged him to go back to his work. “We had 3 more mouths to feed” says Parveena, “we had to keep earning, who will work if not him.” The responsibility of the search was left almost entirely to Parveena. Parveena was also concerned that if her husband became too visible he

would be at a greater risk. In a way, she was happy that he gave up on his own accord. “that he permitted me is big deal, what else can he do, he is helpless?” Parveena adds.

This aspect of male inclusion and permission is slightly different in the case of half-widows like Sadaf, whose husbands are absent and they may be living under the male patronage of a brother or a father, even if putting up in separate houses. In my ethnographic work, I saw that Kashmiri men have not posed any formidable challenge to the women to stop their activism against human rights atrocities, and second they also support the women behind the scenes especially in getting paperwork required to make their struggle emphatic through the court cases etc. This is evident in the APDP especially where most women, especially the mother-members are not formally educated and depend on the men in their family to at least get them started with the office procedures. This is not to say that men have given their support voluntarily or deliberately. Most of the gender mainstreaming that has happened in Kashmir, by way of human rights activism or other professional domains has been catalyzed by the violence in the recent years as more and more males have been killed, arrested and incarcerated, disappeared and maimed.

In case of the more thought-out and formalized protests and not the reactive ones which take place immediately after arrest or killing, there is a more nuanced play on visibility. Sadaf and other women in APDP, especially the half-widows or young girls put impetus on not being seen, even if they are in the protest. They will cover their faces, or turn their back to camera, or use other ways to make themselves unidentifiable in the pictures. When asked they often answer using the same maxim that “a good woman should not be seen” (in most extreme versions the phrase also includes should not be heard), to convey their constraints in showing their faces. Even in a public protest they must remain invisible²⁷. The significant implication in this phrase is

“performativity or performance” of the asal zanan. Almost all version of this adage, imply “chana or gache-ne/ must not or should-not” which implies that it is prescriptive. It is assumed that she must not or should not be seen; and it is within this discursive formation that woman perform themselves to appear in “invisible” ways, to stay the “asal/good”.

This “visibility” of women gets juxtaposed with the forcibly disappeared men who become “visible” in their “invisibility”.²⁸ Invisibility here becomes the very condition of visibility; for the “disappeared” men and the women who “appear” as “invisible.” I am not in any way equating the “disappearance” of men caused by the Indian forces with the Kashmiri patriarchy (or as most patriarchies are wont to do around the globe) which prescribes the social disappearance of women through symbolic and direct violence. Rather I would like to understand these enforced disappearance, be they physical like of the men, or discursive like that of women, within the norms of hegemonic power. The demands of power are to create coercions in order to find sustenance, and in that context the receiver be it a woman or man, gets treated by imposing or performing of some kind of invisibility.

While trying to trace how the “disappearance” comes to exist, I contend that the social invisibility that is imposed upon women is not only the result of hegemonic narratives and power’s unholy forcedness. If its “condition of possibility” becomes the unequal power equation, its “condition for implementation” becomes the acceptance by women not only because it is prescriptive but also that it allows them visibility which they require to sustain their activism and attain their goals. Women perform this invisibility; there is willingness, an agentive-ness in this process. Many feminist scholars will consider this as a mode of symbolic violence or even regressive as the women seek restoration of their traditional families? However, if we consider the outcomes of this process while it does show the dominance of men over women, but it also

traces changes either consciously or not, brought on by everyday practices of how paradigms of gender and visibility exist in Kashmir.

Performing Motherhood: The Notion of Apolitical

In this section I try to understand how women including half-widows foreground motherhood, and what it entails for issues of agency and how that bears on women's social invisibility or visibility. One of the most prominent modes of protest has been "maternal activism" as we see in exemplars such as Husna, Mughli or Parveena, mothers who form the core of this project. Motherhood is a major site of ethics (Aretxaga 1997:59) and women in the APDP come together often times because of a shared conceptualization of maternal morality. The half-widows are also a part but they as I note in many places reiterate their role as "mother" to the children as foregrounded. *"I am a mother, I had to"* is many times used as a shortcut to many questions about search for the disappeared, society and femininity. The law of moral obligation to family becomes superior to a political law that commands obedience to a higher moral power²⁹ and thus motherhood not only becomes a device thwart the state but also the social norms. This becomes a manifestation of the affective law, which is socially recognized as the ethos of motherhood, but at the same time invisible in the gendered agency it produces.

Motherhood is the prime motif of "asal zanan". The hyper-visibility of the "mother" in the APDP activism is symbolic of this, and it is also important to trace how other aspects of womanhood get subsumed and often times erased under it. However, I like to argue that the erasure is never complete, it is always partial. A complete erasure would mean no remnants of who they were. While the women may perform their role as mothers, they retain a consciousness which makes them accept these erasures for its productivity and reclaiming some social equilibrium.

When women network outside formal organizations like in APDP, since they often lack connections to official power structures (Thornton 2000), most like to define themselves primarily via their social roles as mothers. Other prominent examples of this are Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo (the Madres - Argentina), Committee of Soldiers' Mothers (Russia), China's Tiananmen Mothers, Mothers of the Disappeared (CO-MADRES - El Salvador), and Hibakusha women in Japan. Even when half-widows form part of the movement they also many times project themselves more as the protagonists of the children that are left behind, rather than for their own desires of retrieving their spouse. This evocation of mother-activism-agency³⁰ appears as a mechanism to bypass restrictions of their traditional roles. As nurturing woman they get the power to act in public (Warren, 2005). This can become an example of social motherhood (Miller 1991), which is seen as framing and legitimizing the political activity of women and reaffirming the belief in women's higher moral standards and maternal instincts (Richards 2004).

The women activists of APDP are not only perceived as apolitical but even they themselves say that they have nothing to with "politics". On the surface this can be read as the women markedly separating themselves from the larger aspiration of Independence of Kashmir, which often is highlighted by the Indian media's framing of the APDP movement. However, the answer is far more layered and more nuanced than this depiction. One way of understanding this is to go to the word for politics itself. Politics in Kashmiri is "siyasat.". In the Machiavellian political environment of Kashmir being part of "siyasat" or being a "siyasat-daan" are considered as "slurs" worse than being a "murderer or adulterer" as one activists lady puts it.

Most politics "siyasat" is associated with the people in pro-Indian politics, which culturally is seen as "traitorous". On the other hand the people associated with pro-independence politics are not perceived as "siyasat-daan" or politicians and are referred to as anything but. The

pro-resistance people do not have any particular word to define them but the terms used for them include leader or specifically “hurriyet leader (hurriyet being a conglomerate of the 28 separatist political parties) or tehreeki (loyalist of the armed movement), or plain “ahlaidgi-pasand” (separatist). In asking Parveena or other women if they “have a politics” or are a “political organization” in itself is tricky terrain. Formulating these questions using the Kashmiri word for politics did not seem fully contextual because I realized that the English word “politics” is actually used far more than the Kashmiri word for it and is equally notorious. The word “politics” pronounced “paalitiks” colloquially is seen as demeaning to any mission leave alone that of the APDP.

I asked the question in varied ways using the Kashmiri word and substituting it with the English word and the responses were pretty much the same. “Are you a political party?; do you have a political goal; what is your politics; is APDP a political organization; how do you see APDP as a group amongst the political and separatist groups?” “no, no, I am not political, nor what we say is politics, we have nothing to do with Indian or Pakistan, it is clear enough what we need, and want, we want our children back, we want an enquiry, an independent commission to investigate this” said Parveena. All other women including Sadaf, Husna, Rehti, Haseena, and Ruhi also answered in negative, “that they were not political nor was APDP a political organization”. All echoed each other’s sentiments “we fight injustice, we remember our missing dears from the core of our heart, and that relieves us from our pains and problems”, they said. Of the politics of Independence of Kashmir, they said “*our mission will end in tangles (khurr), we keep away from that*”

It was clear that there was a deliberate “keeping away” from larger politics which in itself becomes telling of the kind of politics of “apolitics” and of the existing realities of state polity as well. One of the earlier versions of the APDP mission statement explains them as -

“The APDP technically is not a human right group but the association of the sufferers wronged by the functioning of the state, who are campaigning for knowing the whereabouts of their missing relatives. Any person victim of the disappearances could be the member of the association. The association has no political affiliations or political positions. It is an independent group seeking justice from the state.”

While, this mission statement persists in many ways till date, the APDP has lent support to causes picked up by the many separatist and social organizations in support of illegal detainees, custodial killings and during the uprisings of 2008 and 2010. Notably these programs have been conducted under the overarching banner of “Independence” from India “occupation”. In private conversations, the aspiration of Kashmiri independence and the “nafrat/kharaan” (hatred/abhorrence) for Indian statement runs strong, as does the fear of reprisal from the state conveyed as “yemi maran/seyath anan” (will create problems or kill).

Another aspect which must be kept in mind that the APDP activists all are no doubt accidental activists³¹ where their activism largely results from an immediate injustice and not from a pre-existing ideology for political solution of Kashmir. Clearly it has taken years of activism for many to trace to the contours of their mission and understand its larger ramifications. This is very clear in case of Parveena, who as the leader of the group has come to realize the merit they hold as a symbol for the resistance of Kashmir. Again to make sure that they are allowed to continue without many complications, the APDP does support pro-resistance outfits but they are not overt about these associations. These women are comfortable in being

perceived as apolitical by not only the state but also by the Kashmiri community, although slowly they are being seen or even becoming as agents for social change.³²

The bystanders around the APDP protest when they explain the nature of protest and the women, often use phrases like “*poor women*”, “*what can they do India*”, or “*they have no choice for anything more forceful except crying*”. While it may have started as such the movement of APDP and its women activists have not been constrained to this only. A relevant analysis of mother's activism comes from Judith Butler who says it is a sign of “agency and subversion...a site of refusal and revolt” (Salih 2004:10). Maternal surveillance is seen as “virtuous disobedience” (2004:10). This performance of gendered activism is a tool used to forge ahead, congregate in public not against the patriarchal formulations but appearing as in synch with traditional gender roles to mobilize around motherhood for protecting their children as part of the divine order (Goldstein 2001).

The gendered-activism, such as that of APDP has also been central to the dichotomy, often replicated by social scientists, that divides movements into feminist or strategically oriented that challenge women's oppression, and feminine or practical movements that help them fulfill their traditional role (Lynn 1995).³³ There have been vigorous debates about the relationship between motherhood and agency,³⁴ some of which reprised the older naturalizing arguments but more importantly raised the issue of “moral maternity” as a basis for women's solidarity and organizing (Ruddick 1989). Feminists recognized the strategic value of such moral claims but worried that they played into the essentialized femininities that had long been excluded from the male realm of politics. In case of women's grassroots movements for peace, crossing class and sectional lines was credited in some instances with almost phenomenal

success, not always accurately. Some of these movements undeniably led to new forms of agency (Moran 2010).

The motif of motherhood also underlines a very large white elephant of “sexuality” that no one wants to face. In this the disappearance of “activist” women and even Habba Khatoon can be traced clearly. Why does motherhood as a category congeal so effectively? Why this tells a lot about the motif of motherhood, it also tells a lot about what it hides, i.e. female sexuality.

To explore this I will again turn to Habba’s disappearance for a while. The disappearance of Habba in historical accounts can in very black and white terms be attributed to, one, she was considered “just a consort” of an exiled king, thus ignored or as the power of Mughal rule grew hardly any historian would pay attention to a “fugitive fallen from graces” queen even if she was a great poet. In addition, we can also to some degree think since Habba lived in a more oral tradition such oversight can be possible. Although this does not hold water for long for we have evidence of another woman named Lala Arifa who has been well recorded despite being born hundreds years before Habba. Habba was mentioned sporadically despite her significance in Kashmiri literature, but on the other hand, let us look at the iconic figure of Lala Arifa, a poet-mystic who is very well known. There is a rough difference of two hundred years between the two women, with Lala preceding Habba. Lala Ded came from a Hindu family and uncannily shares some initial struggles of life because of her intellectual and mystic inclinations with Habba as well as the travails of her married life. Compared to the non-existent number of books of Habba, Lala Arifa currently has proponents who are pushing for “Lala Arifa” studies” as an area in Kashmiri scholarship. So what could be the reason of this vast difference between how these two women are treated? The exploration of this brings us back to the issue of feminine visibility, as to how a woman should or should not be seen.

How Lala Ded (Mother) became Visible

Lala like Habba was given to wandering and versifying with little interest in household matters. She left her in-laws and came into her own as a Hindu Shaivate mystic under the tutelage of a well know Guru of the time. She wrote about oneness of God, against the ritualistic apathy of the social order and social ills. As opposed to Habba whose poetry overwhelmingly has been portrayed as of longing and loss of everyday travails and a beloved's grief, Lala is read as more divesting of earthly desires and even at some level pushing against the bindings of her gender as a female and trying to reach a state of "asexuality" a "non-gender" or even a "non-woman". She goes head to head with the stalwart male mystics both Hindu natives and Muslims who at the time were pouring into Kashmir from Central Asia.

She also begets the title of a mother, as she recognizes the patron saint of Kashmir, Shiekh Noorudin Wali as her spiritual heir. The legend has Noorudin a native saint who established the reputed Reshi order was born after a divination by a Hindu saint who blessed his mother. When Noorudin was born he would not suckle at his mother's breast. The worried parents turned to mystic Lala Arifa who visited the newborn. The legend says that she held him in her lap and said whispered to him "*you had no shame in coming to this earth, why shy from suckling*". Some legends even go as far as saying she nursed him even though she was not lactating; such is the sway of her spiritual miracles. This incident is treated as a proclamation of Lala Arifa as a saint-mother-patroness who had deep spiritual ties male Muslim and Hindu saints and scholars of the time. In this paradigm she is seen in a different light that Habba, who was more known for her beauty who "enamored" a king and became a consort and died pining for him.

Lala is categorized as a mystic who has been appropriated by both Muslims and Hindus in their own ideological frameworks. She is characterized as an iconic “metch”, a category of divine human which is described in detail Chapter 3. Lala often becomes a motif of unified syncretic plural ethos between the two religious communities of Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir and sometimes underlines the deep fissures amongst them. The legend has it that Lala wandered naked and did not care for people watching her. Some take affront to it saying she never walked nude, while popular legend also says that “Lala grew flesh that covered her privates”, almost like she was wearing a suit made of long skin to cover her woman “skin” underneath. There are also “disputed” anecdotes about her, which allude to (or in some perceptions prove) her nakedness, one in which she jumps into a furnace out of “shame” of “seeing a man for the first time” who happened to be the exalted Iranian Muslim saint from Hamadan, Syed Mir Ali Hamadani under whose missionary efforts brought Islam into Kashmir.

Many scholars believe that Lal’s “struggle as a woman has been largely overlooked and her mystic status has been more exalted. She is portrayed as a feminist in the sense the term is understood today, who showed the courage to resist the oppressive structures of patriarchy and refused to play the traditional role of a submissive daughter-in-law. Lal spoke against social tyranny and challenged the orthodoxy and eschewed the rigid codes of dress and decorum. Rather than follow any gender binary she pushed against social constraints³⁵. In the narratives around Lal, which are all genuine her contribution to the mystic traditions, her appropriation of these traditions to push against social evils, her intellectual and spiritual relations with saints and scholars, her frustrations around the gender constructions, and her “love” for God have become hallmarks of her historic status. In comparison Habba’s life, who is no doubt hailed as a great romantic poet is seen as the one whose social elevation came from her association with

Yusuf Chak, and ended as a woman pining her way out of the mundaneness of tragedies that befell her. In Habba's life, her youth, her beauty, her poetry of longing and love created a person which foregrounded her female-ness or her femininity by implication innate "sexuality" that overwhelmed her literary and sufistic persona. From a stalwart of literary tradition she was memorialized as the lovelorn nightingale of Kashmir. Habba was not just an ordinary woman of her time. She was raised under the tutelage of a mystic sage who mentored her in spiritual, religious and literary traditions. She was well versed in literary traditions, holy Quran and other Islamic texts which she poignantly flags in her poetry as she documents her personal travails and those of women in her time. But everything stands overshadowed by her "love" for a man who she pined for.

Conclusion

The discursive disappearance of Habba who came after Lala and was more under the glare of written history, and who suffers a sort of documentary annihilation can be attributed to the aura of "sexuality" as a woman in love not with God but with a flesh and blood human. She pens lyrical longings for him, and likens him to a "guest" who is feasting on her as a "naemat" which in colloquial tradition connotes a "delicate cuisine." Through her romanticism her status is underlined as a woman through and through and thus, who could be negated, ignored or disappeared easily. Where Lala overcomes the constraints of her gender and kicks almost all traditions by her deep engagement with mysticism and supernatural love, Habba remains the beleaguered consort. The fact that she was a hapless wife of an exiled king who fell into disfavor did not help her legacy either. History claims the victors and in that being the wife of a exiled king Habba and Yusuf were both put on the backburner for a long time in Kashmir history. Gradually Habba's poetic merit made her rise to the exalted title of a "Khatoon"

(lady/woman from a royal family) and Lala became as “Arifa” (well-educated) or Lala “mauj” (mother). The former was an easy legacy to lose in history while the latter in her proximity to man-like nonchalance and association with male stalwarts of her time, and her paens to divinity has become a resurgent motif of enlightenment and motherhood. It is in this paradigm of exalting woman as a mother, the foregrounding of mother-activism and by implication the notion of “apolitical” can be traced. Maternal becomes a safe place, a non-threatening space of assimilation of all that womanhood appears for patriarchy, within its ramparts “lawful digressions” happen and what Butler calls the “virtuous disobedience.”

Motherhood also becomes a place where agency as we understand in its confrontational form gets subsumed. While it becomes a motif of how women empower themselves it also exposes their deeper engagement with patriarchy and the modes through which they overcome it. While women are “disappeared” or “invisibilized” socially their agency is not only constrained as a response to or a motif of symbolic violence. It has to be kept in mind that Kashmir as a society is deeply shackled under acute militarization. While the project of Indian state is to curb the armed struggle through direct violence, it also uses other means known as humanitarian militarism as a tool of counterinsurgency. The effect of the humanitarian militarism, as it exists in Kashmir is illustrated in the next chapter. While tracing how the military interweaves its apparatus with that of the social fabric, the underlining question in the next chapter also becomes if the oxymoronic military humanitarian can even exist, if at all.

Chapter 5

Disappearing Sociality, Humanizing Military

In this chapter I trace the ethnographic contours of everyday life, relations and linkages that are formed under acute militarization in Kashmir. Kashmir's militarization as the continuum of foundational violence operational to consolidate of the nation-state project of India that started in 1947. There are many references to Kashmir as the unfinished business of partition. As discussed in the introduction the continuously strenuous and forced assimilation of Kashmir into the dominion of India can be read as forced inclusion, an ethnonational struggle to consolidate Indian nation on what were previously heterogeneous territories including that of Kashmir. Foundational violence obliterates established social relations, in comparison to structural violence which exploits. Foundational violence creates destruction not only by direct violence but also what can be considered as peaceful means or heartwarfare, such as the Sadhbhavana/Goodwill process.

I focus on the army's intense networking within the communities through overt counterinsurgency tactics as well as using what has been called as a heartwarfare in form of Operation Goodwill or Sadbhavana in Hindi. The humanist forms of counter-insurgency become a policy to prevent "incipient terrorism" and an attempt to normalize the brutality of the "realpolitik" (Fassin in Bhan 2013:9). The Kashmiri aspirations become subservient to national security. The project of Sadhbhavana has not changed the military but has remained an attempt to make the military appear democratic and shed its colonial persona" (Bhan 2013:134). The Indian military's contrary goals of human security and counterinsurgency have given rise to anxieties in Kashmiri society, an issue that is addressed in depth in chapter 4. The Kashmiris perceive themselves to be in an adversarial relationship with the army who, in essence, are

engaged in conventional warfare and not welfare. This bipolar nature of militarization has produced a very complex state of exception where democratic structure - overridden, enmeshed and undermined within the military apparatus - has unleashed an “obliteration” of social givens and created sublime divisions in society. Operation Goodwill produces perfect conditions to trace this obliteration. I understand obliteration as causing “to become invisible or indistinct; blot out.” The obliteration unleashed by the foundational violence does not merely distort reality but annihilates the meanings permeating a pre-existing reality. Within the state of exception which is created by the acute militarization that is delving into humanitarian work, routines transmute, meanings are inverted and subverted.

I argue that this obliteration of “givens” produces a “partial erasure” of the identities. A Kashmiri identity finds itself in a flux; dilemmas; moral complexities and confusions become the psychic inmates of everyone’s private panopticon fashioning behaviors that are most of the times aimed to “kill the snake and not break the stick” as Asadullah, one of my informants puts it. The erasure is never complete, the army and administration might be able to coerce people to behave a certain accepted way but the traces of aspirations for Kashmir’s independence and resistance, hope and survival are retained just like in a palimpsest.¹ It is within this context that the participation in processes of state administrations and expectations from citizenry can be understood.

The politics of visibility or invisibilization works by bringing the military within the discourse of goodwill, where the constructs of power and normativity unite to invisibilize the military might. In incorporation of the significance of discourse of aid and humanitarianism into an analysis of power along these lines rests particularly well alongside the political project. This project of Goodwill has identified the ‘crucial role of the humanitarian discourse in its capacity to

produce and sustain hegemonic power. There is an erasure involved; of the military as it knows itself and of the Kashmiri subjects which emphasize the exclusionary impulses of the modern nation-state. There is an erasure of identities, solidarities, and whole modes of life by forcible or “peaceable” methods (Cocks 2012). The increasing engagement of people with the soldiers outside the ramparts of the camp or barracks or the places which are seen as repressive, gives a new spatiality to their presence.

The direct violence perpetuated is so persistent that it has almost become normalized. At the same time cultural violence is also becoming palpable through institutions such as the Sadhbhavana. This operation enables understanding how militarization sustains and perpetuates structural and cultural violence. The network of complex and interconnected ‘disciplinary techniques’ through which the army exerts its power; through which the state operates to lay foundation for new and newer regimes of ‘truth’ and ‘normality’. Thus, the newly normalized people are made to conform with prioritized social ideals like that of development, security amongst other things making ideals of liberation from India seeming like abnormal desires. In securing the compliance of the people, processes like Operation Sadhbhavana are subtler in their operation than traditional manifestations of power relations by the army, which have assumed an essentially negative and regulatory function. It has become normal for the Army Chief to be on the front page, talking about development of youth. The army holds seminars on Human Rights and even pontificating about “Kashmiriyat” – a syncretic ethos that Kashmiris treat as their legacy and has been appropriated by the army as a means of its greater integration with India. The patina of parliamentary democracy and extra parliamentary violence are fast becoming norms in many parts of the world (Galtung 1991), and which we see manifest in India’s policy in Kashmir. There is an orchestrated violence exercised by the army. In the recent years the protests against Indian

administration by Kashmiris involves peaceful demonstrations and stone pelting. The army authorities claim that there are less than 200 armed fighters operating in the valley.² The current movement in Kashmir is not dominantly gun-centric, but stones; yet the government issues a directive for the armed forces to show “maximum” restraint while dealing with youth who are pelting stones mostly and not bar the forces from using bullets. The politicians who set the parameters for such a war-like exchange would require unconditional obedience from the army which is dedicated to creating panopticonic and carceral conditions, a militarized hyper-ghetto for the people. However, that is not be; the army and the civil administration is in serious power struggle with each other. This is manifest in civil administrations' clamor for removing the draconian laws from some places and the army persistence in tightening the laws further which gives them an upper hand. The ambiguous logic of security has blurred the boundaries between policing and counter-insurgency which has added another dimension to the militarization. There is not only militarization of police but also the policization of military which in utter hilarity can be seen when a soldier is directing traffic at a congested road. While the direct violence is responsible for curbing the people and inflicting fatalities, programs like Operation Sadhbhavana or the heartwarfare to curb people's aspirations.

In this chapter I follow the obliterations and erasures ethnographically, tracing their occurrence in the on the bodies and psyche of Kashmiri people, while they negotiate with the interpellations of the Indian military apparatus. The laser sharp daggers of militarization and counterinsurgency draw over and coerce the social fabric in myriad of ways; in what Primo Levi calls that grey zone of half tints and moral complexity. This volatile social maze becomes a mix of victims, perpetrators, benefactors, and most of the times the categories are blurred (Theidon 2012). Tracing the veins of the brutal counterinsurgency regime in Kashmir for the last 24 long which has

left more than 1 lakh people dead, 10,000 disappeared and thousands maimed, orphaned and widowed – brings into relief the visible and particularly the invisible connections that have been formed in the social and cultural fabric become palpable. I argue that while the obliteration by foundational violence achieves a partial erasure of a Kashmiri every day and every moment, the military is also under a deliberate kind of erasure. This erasure marks a process of invisibilization, of assimilation of the military into the Kashmiri every-day, so as to make the bulwark amenable under the democratic patina that India maintains in Kashmir. Within this politics of visibility (Feldman 1991), this invisibilization appears as a part of the foundational violence which bears the seeds of cultural and structural violence; and of course the direct violence which does the first obliteration. The archetypal violent structure of the military has become a centerpiece of the democratic set-up that is prevalent Kashmir where army is involved in highest decision making authority with the civil government³. Within the Indian politics of democracy (Galtung 1990) military works its way into the very political fabric of Kashmir. Contemporary political theorists have emphasized the exclusionary impulses of the modern nation-state, it is the erasure of identities, solidarities, and whole modes of life that is the modern state's pre-condition. Indeed, erasure—whether by forcible or “peaceable” methods—is the calling card of all foundational violence, which thereafter repeats itself in the ghostly form of the erasure from memory of the fact of that original erasure. The Indian state not only uses direct violence, but also appropriates peaceful means of “winning hearts and minds” (Bhan 2013 and Agarwaal 2004). Kashmir has become a war system (Goldstein 2001) as explained in the introduction in which war is less a series of events than a system with continuity through time. The military and civilian life enmesh in numerous ways.¹ While the direct violence is responsible for outright impunity and killings

¹Snyder, Jack L., 2002, Anarchy and Culture: Insights from the Anthropology of War, International Organization, Volume 56, Number 1

humanitarian militarism in shape of Operation Sadhbhavan becomes a subliminal performance, a spectacle of soft power with a hard core agenda. The ways in which the military creates inroads into the social fabric and performs as a humanitarian organization becomes illustrative of how the administrative apparatus of Kashmir has come to exist under the Indian democracy. While it tells a tale of militarized democracy in the region of Kashmir, it also reveals how people create ways of resistance, survival and sustenance. The implementation of military humanitarianism also manifests as an attempt to whitewash the military presence in Kashmir. The excessive suppression of Kashmiris through draconian laws also reveals how deep seated the political aspirations of Kashmiris are and also complicates reductionist narratives about Kashmir as a simple border dispute between India and Pakistan.

Godill-I Maer (Goodwill is killing us)

It was the middle of a record breaking cold winter. The chill pierced through the window which was covered with plastic sheeting. The unfinished house we sat in belonged to Shabir Mir. Shabir is one of the elders of the village and the matter at hand is the dental treatment of 17 year old Mubashir, son of Ruhi. Ruhi is a half-widow.⁴ Her husband Siraj a militant was disappeared by the Indian army 12 years ago. The other people in the meeting are Asadullah, Ruhi's Uncle who is a village elder and a very close friend of Shabir who is the torture survivor who I mention in the introduction. Shabir's wife Taja is also present, and two other men from the village.

Ruhi's husband was a celebrated pro-freedom *mujahid* in the early 90's, the initial days of "Tehreek" which means movement in Kashmiri, as the armed struggle is popularly called. Siraj was arrested by the Indian army in 1999 during an encounter and subsequently disappeared in custody. Nothing has been heard of him since. In the manner that has been established in the last 24 years to search for the disappeared or detained, Ruhi went from jail to jail, from one army

camp to another, from one officer to another; leaving no stone unturned in trying to find her husband but she yielded nothing. She began the life of a half-widow with two kids. Her Uncle Asadullah helped her find work, while Shabir opened his house, lending a room for her to live. This arrangement lasted a couple of years. Shabir Mir also helped Ruhi secure a spot (after a few bribes) at the local dispensary to train as a mother and child welfare aide. This ensured she earned a small paycheck.

Ruhi's eldest son Mubashir was stricken with gum disease since 5 years of age. He needed surgery and an expensive dental aid, which costs more than 5000 Indian rupees. Ruhi does not have a penny to spare. As she was sitting in the dispensary one day, she received a call from the commanding officer⁵ (CO) of the army camp, which is one of the largest in region and right in the middle of the village. The CO pronounced as CEE-yo in Kashmiri offered to get Mubashir treated in the army hospital with a minimal cost or even free. Ruhi heard the officer with great trepidation; she then confided in Shabir and Asadullah. They decided to consult a few other people and discuss the matter, which is what the meeting at Shabir's house was about.

The prospect of the Indian army providing help did not seem the best and the look of negation on everyone's face was eerily similar. Their eyes were crinkled; lips pursed and twitched noses made it seem as if they smelled something foul. Asadullah, propping his face with a thumb and forefingers ponders, "how can we kill the snake and not break the stick as well." This aphorism indicates to the dilemma of every Kashmiri in this moment in history as they negotiate their life amidst chronic and deepening militarization. As they navigate the capricious terrain of Indian politics laden with counter-insurgency policies in which they are all implicated and entrenched, survival is a moment to moment decision of how to "kill the snake and not break the stick."

Shabir realizes the importance of a good and timely treatment which he himself had lacked for the grievous and life threatening injuries he had received after being tortured by the army. Ruhi not comfortable with taking help from the army says, “Do we really have choice, we are wasting time, if I do not accept their help they will think I am resisting them, that I am a Mujahid’s (warrior/militant) wife; and Mubashir will suffer doubly; he will lose his teeth and maybe his life, they are after him anyway, they want him to prove he does not have the same loyalties as his father. Their *Godill* is killing us in new ways now.”

The “Goodill” that Ruhi refers to the Operation Sadhbhavana/Goodwill an army project which was started in 1999. This project has been started to win the hearts and minds of people and works on the lines of a humanitarian assistance program. The army publicizes it “making dramatic and visible impact and served to heal the scars on the collective psyche of the traumatized people of Jammu and Kashmir.... the projects undertaken have yielded enormous dividends and the people have understood the benefits of development, peace and tranquility and the follies of terrorism”. It emphasizes improving the “lot of women and children and ameliorate their sufferings since they had borne the brunt of terrorism”.

Later in the month I went to visit Mubashir in the hospital with Shabir and Asadullah. Ruhi whispers, “I told you there was never any choice”. It turned out that the CO had called her and asked her to check Mubashir into the army hospital for the operation. “It was like an order” she adds, “very similar to arresting or being called for questioning.”

In Palhalan, where Shabir, Ruhi and Asadullah live there is a large military camp inside the village and an even bigger one outside on the highway.⁶ The military, as in most Kashmir exerts a direct control over the population through various methods of surveillance which include operations like frequent patrolling, area combing, frisking and crackdowns. Even while Goodwill

is operational these processes continue implying that the army is in the combat mode. Encounters with militants, killings, harassment and coercion of civilians, pillage and beatings continue⁷.

The village of Palhalan is a strong pocket of resistance. A good chunk of men of have joined the movement from here. Since 2008 militancy has waned and another phase of the movement has started. This is a more grassroots type of a movement which includes demonstrations and protests and the hallmark of some youth factions has been “stone pelting”. During the 2010 uprising there was a 40 day curfew and there were many casualties. The civil administration has declared Palhalan as a “Model Village”, a move that designates it for developmental works to generate employment and create infrastructure. It has been 5 years in the making, and Shabir remarks, “they are trying to keep us busy, they want to engage youth, shove road down our throats, when we want freedom; there is only digging going on, turning earth from one part of the village to other, this will yield nothing”. The amalgam of direct violence and humanitarian assistance produces a mystification which conceals, distorts and sanitizes a structurally violent social order. While people are able to discern these patterns they are not free to escape such mystifications and most of the times in the obfuscation become part of it; are implicated and acted upon.

Tracing Goodwill

When I met Shabir for the first time, I observed that he sat with his elbow constantly pressed into his abdomen. I knew Shabir is a torture survivor but had no idea about the extent of his injuries. Twenty years back, Shabir was 30 years old and a farmer with young kids. He was held in esteem in his village because of his religious demeanor and progressive outlook. His travails started in 1991 with what is notorious as the “midnight knock”, that is when the soldiers come calling. More than a knock Shabir says it sounded like ramming of an iron bar.

The state, too, works within such logic and Feldman traces this process in examining arrest and interrogation, along with other spectacular forms of state performance (raids and such). “Predawn arrests are spectacles that elicit subject positions by commanding complicitous silence and passivity. The predawn house raid by the counterinsurgency forces is a display of colonizing power and the command of territory; it reclaims a temporality and geography of subversion” (Feldman 1991: 89). Intrusion and assassination at the home became a particularly terrifying instrument in their ability to transgress particularly closely held cultural constructions of the home as a sanctuary space. State forces arresting someone at their home was also a way of isolating that “compromised” family and the space of their home from the broader community, a socio-spatial *cordon sanitaire*.

His wife gathered the kids and hid in the corner. Mustering all his courage Shabir opened the door to the soldiers. Shabir was a known face in the village being one of the elders in the community. He knew the CO quite well as he would often accompany families looking for arrested or disappeared boys. He like other villagers knew most of the soldiers, for most of the time by face, as they were often on duty in the main bazaar and patrolling the village. He like others had developed a perfunctory routine of guarded greeting with them. People called the soldiers “Sir”, with a diffidence that seemed required because the soldiers would get irked without reason.

Shabir was told to announce a crackdown on the village from the Masjid’s public address system. A crackdown is described by most Kashmiris, as a “humiliating” process which includes lining up people for identification and searching homes for militants or ammunition. Later along with the other men, Shabir was herded into the local school compound by the soldiers while the women and children are left inside the homes. A few minutes later Shabir and a neighbor of his

were picked up from the line-up. This indicated that the “cat” (informer – usually a former militant) had identified the person as a militant or militant collaborator. Shabir was kept inside the schoolroom where he was ruthlessly tortured. He heard his neighbor also being interrogated in the other room. Shabir was beaten with sticks, and asked about “how he was helping the militants and what they were planning to do next”. The soldiers call out specific names, which were known to him.

Shabir tried to answer logically, “If you think I do not know those names, I’d be lying; we all know the Mujahid’s in Palhalan but I do not know where they are or their plans. No one in my family is a Mujahid; I am not helping anyone; you all know me”. The beating did not stop and every time Shabir uttered the word “Mujahid”, they pummeled him and ordered him to say “terrorist” instead. Shabir said he desisted at first but as they got increasingly brutal he began to use the word “terrorist”. They also made him say “militancy” and not “Tehreek”. Shabir says, “they seemed intent on tearing me apart” and that is what they did.

They held Shabir upside down and poured kerosene down his rectum. Crying with pain, he tried to put his hands up to save himself from further onslaught but two soldiers held him fast, while a third one thrust an iron rod into his rectum and kept on twisting. The pain was numbing, and he fainted. When he regained consciousness blood and feces was oozing out. His abdomen seemed to be on fire and pain racked through his body. Shabir pleaded with the soldiers to take him to the hospital but they said they could do nothing without orders but they gave him some pain medication. Even though badly wounded the soldiers continued to kick and beat him. They would hurl abuses at him and the other prisoners.

Shabir’s predicament in custody with his whereabouts unknown to his family is detailed in the introduction. Shabir remembers how one day after many months of detainment he

alongwith two other detainees was left behind like garbage in a makeshift interrogation center which his captors suddenly vacated. Shabir recalls waking up in the civil hospital where his stay lasted 3 months. He underwent 4 surgeries and a botched colostomy that left him with a hole in his abdomen that continually oozes feces for the last 21 years.

Shabir removes the gauze before me, and I see the yellow pus like ooze. “When I am in the mosque, going for frequent ablutions to clean myself, men avert their eyes, the bulge under my shirt is a reminder of the danger that lurks”. Shabir’s body is both an object of surveillance and a physical conduit for the inscription of military power. Penetration of Shabir’s body becomes symbolic of the material force of state power. Shabir’s life is constrained by the open wound of torture; he cannot eat well, or travel easily. He is restricted; “as if I am under an arrest of some sort; I am in a prison”, he says. Shabir is always apprehensive that the wound will ooze and he will suffer an embarrassment. At events while attending to the whims of his wounds, he becomes the focus of conversation. Shabir’s body has been inscribed with by “political action” (Feldman 1991) and his wound has gained a material significance and circulates as spectacle, hidden yet visible. The power here is that it is seen without being seen. The body, with its “inscription” of a wound becomes a primary political institution through which social transformation is effected (9) which seems to be the project of the state. (Foucault). The reenactments for the simulation of power takes place each time Shabir’s wound is viewed or mentioned or even his treatment or life discussed.

Asadullah says, “ he is an ‘innocent/without sin’ (implying a non-combatant), he is well known, he has been bored with a hole in his stomach, what will they (army) do a common person”. Using the word “begunah” which means free-of-sin or innocent becomes fraught. Apparently its indicative that the militants/mujahid’s are guilty and deserve the punishment

while people like Shabir “sin-free” should not undergo this predicament. However, the use of this word should be understood with the circulation of other words such as “Mujahid/holy warrior”, “Tehreek/movement”, and “Azadi/liberation”. Asadullah says “seeking Azadi (liberation) is not a crime, you fight gun with a gun; that does not make one guilty”. However, the use of the word “begunah” points to the fraught turf of obliterations that the foundational violence causes. A mystification is caused which is not ideological, but hints to the symbolic violence that manifests through use of certain words and ideas, such as “begunah”. These words are unleashed by the state and the army apparatus in tandem. The usage of these words and images goes a long way to conceal, distort, or sanitize a violent social order, especially one that over the years has become structurally violent. An example of the word “begunah” points to how the institutionalized modes of “discipline and punishment,” as Foucault noted have acquired a “kind” of positive or acceptable social value, without much further thought about the violence involved in these practices. Further, it also obliterates the “motivation” for picking up the gun in the first place. Alluding to Bourdieu this “obliteration” creates a “misrecognition” which allows symbolic violence to hide itself within the dominant discourses of the state as “people begin” speaking it out of coercion and fear, as psychological and other forms of violence as these are applied to bodies.

As military being increased in numbers and activity both for counterinsurgency and as part of the administration; the cultural and structural violence ensure that direct violence increasingly appears as India’s beneficence on Kashmiris rather than the original violation of peace. Feldman⁸ calls such ministrations of a state as ‘scopic power’ which creates an anxiety for potential targets (and wider populations) about being monitored so that preferred norms are internalised as a means of shaping behavior into forms more amenable to the goals of the

counter-insurgency project (Feldman 1997: 41). Cultural violence becomes rife, as the society opts for linguistic sanitation and distortion; and by blaming the “victim of structural violence who throws the first stone . . . stamping him as ‘aggressor.’”⁹ The more fundamental form of cultural violence inherent in this foundational power is the eradication of one set of meanings animating a way of life to clear the ground for another set, and/or to pursue interests that can only be satisfied once the obstacles posed by that way of life are removed.

People try to achieve a linguistic sanitation for what Asadullah calls as “killing the snake and not breaking the stick.” People when confronted by the soldiers may change to calling the Mujahid’s as “Milton” (a version of militant in Kashmiri) and earnestly call the soldier as “Sir” face to face but once away the language is replete with malediction for the soldiers and the state.

Layers of Obliteration

The army describes Sadbhavana as an effort to “win the hearts and minds of the population long ravaged by “terrorism” in Jammu and Kashmir. The direct translation for the word terrorism is “dahshat-gardi” and for a terrorist it is “dahshat-gard”. The state radio station uses these words in their news-reports and for most part people refer to militants as “Mujahid” and the armed struggle as “Tehreek”.

The publicity literature of Sadhbhavana categorically terms the armed struggle as terrorism and the militants as terrorists, who are generalized as “foreign” operators from Pakistan and Afghanistan but many are natives. The “tehreek” is throughout mentioned as “terrorism” and portrayed as a “deliberate attempts to strike at the very core of the secular and liberal, socio-political system of the State”. The “terrorists” have wreaked havoc on Kashmir and that the military “at this hour of need is launching a concerted counter terrorist operations which emphasizes operations in a humane and people-friendly manner to ensure minimum collateral

damage” and “simultaneously, through Operation Sadhbhavana...(the army command) is “extending “their mandate and made concerted attempts to apply the healing touch to win over the people by promoting development activities focusing on their basic needs¹⁰. Operation Sadhbhavana and activities of the State administration have been “amalgamated harmoniously to generate synergy, with a clear focus to bring a palpable improvement in the quality of life of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.¹¹” Sadhbhavana is conveyed as a project which “help the people to help themselves and efforts are made to fulfill genuine local aspiration” and as a “facilitator and catalyst for development projects”. Under Sadhbhavana there is an integration of military-civic activities, the state administration and community development plans. Sadbhavana focuses on are education, religion, culture, women’s welfare, and health. The Army insists its presence in planning, supervision and concentrating efforts at all levels.¹² The pervasiveness of Operation Sadhbhavana is telling tale of the new face of militarization; a kind of Militarization 2.0; something which is meshed into culture of the place, thus, an “invariant presence, a permanence” (Galtung 1977).

The army seeks a greater level of entanglement with the community. The Palhalan denizens demanded a hospital from the state administration, which was authorized after many years of clamor. The people were not able to come to a consensus on the location. The state government officials were left on the backburner as army began to lead the arbitrations. This meant that the meetings took place at the army camp which was troubling for the people. Such access into the camp was tinged by a normalization routine and not the way Shabir and his fellow villagers were used to going there, which would often be to find the whereabouts of the arrestees or meet the detained or sometimes be detained oneself. Shabir says that it was surreal to be sitting on a chair in front on army officer and not be cowering. Only a month back Shabir had

been to the same camp to plead for a boys' release who was later killed in custody. While these visits whetted the memories of brutality, Shabir points out that they are "just a ruse to mingle with people, make it normal for us to engage with them for everything".

The army overrode all suggestions and proposed that the hospital be constructed near the camp. The area they located meant that people would have to cross the camp to reach the hospital. "No one could say yes to that. It was a very clever way of making people greet them first and then the doctors". The proposal for the hospital is still languishing.

The army organizes various programs under Sadbhavana. During the holy month of Ramadan (fasting), they hold "iftaar" (breaking fast) meal. Shabir says, *"Is that called breaking fast? May God forgive me, it is like breaking fast with shit, or eating pork, God forbid, inside our young-lads are bathed in blood and outside shove food down our throats, none of eat really, we just lurk there like 'bhoot' (specters), watching, talking, smiling on cue. It is an agony being with them. I even think direct beating is way better. What can I say a some soldiers even pretend to be Muslim and pray with us, then we come to know that they are from some other religion, makarel hez makarel (hypocrisy/playacting, I say, nothing but hypocrisy/playacting)." The word "makar" in Kashmiri is used for a person who is a hypocrite; someone specifically with a covert agenda and is not upfront about it and uses sly tactics. Such a person is considered to engage in "makarel," sort of repertoire or playacting without appearing confrontational or adversarial to peddle a selfish agenda.*

Shabir adds wistfully, *"One day they would beat me black and blue or my neighbor, or harass a young boy, the next day the CO would call us to ask about what they can do for the community; more like how they will put their leg into everyones pants; that became our everyday. How do you escape that?"* A young boy recalled an interesting anecdote. Once at a

dinner hosted for breaking fast with the community, a soldier was raising the ladle to put food into the plate. The boy reflexively whipped his head back thinking the soldier was about to hit him. As a result his lentils splashed all over his shirt and that of the soldier. He was surprised that the soldiers said nothing but handed him a napkin to wipe his clothes. *“Outside I would have been killed, that time he merely smiled, that was weird, he even smiled at me”* the boy says lightly.

The army will arrange cricket matches for the youth and the soldiers may even participate in these games. Ruhi’s younger son Adil plays good cricket. The CO often calls him to the camp for a “talk” with a “bright young boy” who will one day “play for India”. Ruhi says, “Adil is not that good, they just try to brainwash him, I cannot do anything, we listen”. The army tries hard to keep the young generation involved; talent shows, sports, educational scholarship are organized. The young students are taken for “Bharat Darshan” (Viewing India) to show them the beauty and diversity of the country. Alongside the Goodwill, direct modes of combat like raids, crackdowns, random frisking, checking identification cards and other random acts of surveillance continue. Twice in a week the men and boys of the village are ordered to stand in an open ground without any purpose. If anyone asks the reason he gets detained or beaten. During this time they are not allowed to communicate with each other and they have to switch off their mobile phones.

Under Sadhbhavana the military has made forays into projects dealing with health and education, conducting talent shows, cultural shows, sports and other programs to cultivate relations with the local population, outside the realm of interrogation centers and jails. The engagement of military with governance and civil aspects is normalizing their presence. In any case they are a constant presence is routine in the physical landscape. The soldiers are in close proximity with the people on the streets, in the fields and orchards. It is not odd to find a

contingent of soldiers standing guard while people are close by working in the fields or busy with their trade. Through Sadhbhavana project they are “invisibilizing” their presence by becoming a part of governance and civil administration. Shabir says that through Goodwill have their leg in every kind of community issue, be it water, property, or marriage dispute, state administration project.

Shabir had another event in his life that took a heavy toll on him. One day he unearthed a dead body of young boy as he was preparing soil in his orchard for planting season. His first reaction was that it might be a boy from the neighboring village who had recently disappeared in custody of the army. Shabir raised a cry and straightaway informed the family. It turned out that the dead body belonged to a family from another village. The army detained Shabir for not informing them first. A case was filed against him for being in “cahoots with the militants” who according to the army version had killed the boy. The family maintained that their son was arrested by the army. They had tried to register a case but the police had refused because as a matter of tacit policy such reports are often ignored by the local police. The family has a case languishing in the high court as well as the State Human Rights Commission.

Shabir was released as suddenly as he was arrested, and subsequently picked up by the army two more times for “*Pooch Taach*”. “Pooch Taach” is a euphemism for a detainment, primarily for “questioning”. In “Pooch Taach”, there are imminent if not immediate hopes for release, for broken bones if not death (though there are no guarantees). During this time Shabir’s home was raided and his family including his old father was beaten. “It was like they would want to remind us every day, how much at their mercy we were”, says Shabir

Shabir’s debilitating condition had made farming impossible. He started small grocery shop which the soldiers would often ransack during the raids, as they did the other shops in the

bazaar. There were times when he says, “I never put the goods back knowing they would ransack the store again, I would ask people to pick what they wanted from the pile”. For some time he came under fire for selling incendiary literature. Shabir says “anything in Arabic script was illegal; sometimes everything bothered them, they always wanted to create “dahshat” (terror)”.

Under the Operation Sadhbhavana was started Shabir was offered medical help by the commanding officer of the army camp. Shabir says, “how could I refuse, so I made rounds of the same doctors I had been to before, this time with a note from the CO, they promised me money but I never wanted that”. Shabir’s case against the army filed in the high court or the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) are languishing. The army does not respond to the cases but sends him informal proposals about monetary compensation and settle out of court. Shabir’s quest for bringing the perpetrators to justice gets overshadowed by offers of treatment. Thus, torture stands “medicalized” adding another layer of obliteration to the primary incident of the brutal interrogation. It deviates and disconcerts the narrative and makes the original incident opaque; as the ones who inflict violence become the ones who aid finding treatment. The “mode” of conversation changes from “torture” to “treatment.” These new interpretative actions are used to “justify or legitimize” the military’s intervention into Shabir’s life and obliterate the earlier reality of illegal detention, interrogation and an enforced disappearance. There is attempt to change the moral color of the originary violence. Such attempts of normalizing military presence are woven into the lives of people like Shabir and others. The acts or patterns of military practice are being changed from wrong to right or at least acceptable in order to make the reality ambiguous, so that the acts of impunity are seen as somehow not violent.

By entering the arena of aid and assistance the military is constructing a discourse, which enables its “invisibilization” through a normalization of its presence. This harkens to what can be

attributed to Foucault's asserts about power being essentially normalizing and not just appearing as a repressive force. Although Foucault alludes to the productive aspect of power, here we can see it manifest "repressive". India tries to foreground the invisible mechanisms of normalization while continuing direct repression. While the direct violence is involved in the forcible penetration into Kashmir, the structural violence which underlines the politics of democracy, which India engages in can be read as a mature form of colonialism and a part of the coercive project of Indian nationalism.

A Quagmire of Coercion

When I visited Asadullah with Ruhi and Shabir on the 10th anniversary of his son Najeeb's disappearance, before anything we were served tea. Sahar, Najeeb's half-widow put biscuits and tea in front of us. As Sahar handed me a glass, Asadullah pointed out, "*See, see these glasses, we have about 80 of them; I open my house, and dare them to come, no matter how many, and they demand tea, we have enough cups to serve them, otherwise it becomes tedious*".

¹³ The unusual act of stocking 80 glasses seemed natural for Asadullah. In the last 25 years in Kashmir, be it patrolling soldiers in the alley or those conducting crackdowns or raids have often made demands for tea or other portable footstuff from civilians. Asadullah's home was often raided, and he would face demands for tea from the large contingent of soldiers which required a good number of cups. "Earlier I would go collecting the large number of cups needed from the neighborhood, but slowly I realized I could stock them for we often needed the cups during raids" explained Assadullah. To him this action of stocking cups for the soldiers who came for the purpose of arrest, interrogation and ransacking seemed to be natural or even needed – "or as "not wrong" as Galtung would say (1999). This seemingly inane and practical gesture on Assadullah's part reveals the cultural violence inflicted by militraization which also captures the

first-order decimation, or erasure instigated by direct violence and the simultaneous structural violence which underlines the system in Kashmir. The second-order mystification of that decimation or the “partial erasure” of people’s identities as they get molded under coercion and threat to their lives involves deploying new meaning-laden practices, like storing of glasses for ease during raids despite the fact of beatings and humiliations which accompanied the event. This act of storing glasses becomes naturalized for the duration of raids. This is a motif of structural violence and the opacity it creates for subjugated people. The violence is not obvious in storing the glasses; it cannot be clearly traced back to the violence to the concrete persons who are the actors – the military. The “violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power” (Galtung, 1975: 113-114); layers of opacity are created. In contrast to just direct violence “where there is an actor that commits the violence” is “personal or direct”, whereas violence “where there is no such actor” is “structural or indirect.”

Asadullah’s son Najeeb was a constable in the police department. Asadullah had secured the post for him after bribing a few officers. Married with two children Najib was also an active member of a local religious group which propagated ideals of Islamic penitence, worship and moral codes. “it was nothing political” says Asadullah “but he grew a beard which I told him not to, but he was adamant, saying it was sunnah of the Prophet peace be upon him”.¹⁴ After becoming the member of the group Najeeb began complaining of being harassed by the soldiers when he would attend the Masjid pre-dawn or late in the night. “But what can we say he was in the police, he was technically a man of the state, but still we Kashmiris are suspect in every situation” said Asadullah

One morning Najeeb left home on his bicycle to get children’s clothes, from the tailor and never returned. Prior to this the army had called him to their camp and also a few witnesses

had seen him talking to soldiers near the bunker in the market square. The family went through the usual rigors of searching for Najeeb. Their report was turned down by the police and the army, who in turn accused Najeeb of being a militant and alleged that he had gone into hiding. His status as an active policeman who attended his duties daily did nothing to convince the army or police. The accusations against Najeeb oscillated between him being a full-fledged active militant to his crossing the border to Pakistan for arms training. Both the options did not sit well with Najeeb's routine with his job. But the rumors persisted, fueled by the Nabdis, or the renegades or the Special task Force or STF. The renegades initially were a rag-tag militia as described in chapter 3 (in context of harassing Sadaf). This renegade militia composed of surrendered militants and also small time criminals who were employed as ill-paid counterinsurgency group. They worked in mafia-style and indulged in extra judicial killings and extortion backed fully by the army and aiding them.

While Asadullah and his family were dealing with the pain of losing Najeeb, the army subjected them to constant harassment and raids. The army behaved in the way that it seemed like they believed their own fictional tale about Najeeb. "They would come on the pretext of looking for Najeeb". Such was the force of the army visitations, that even Asadullah and his wife began to doubt Najeeb whereabouts. Asadullah and his wife spent 3 months posing as beggars in the mountains to get any clue from people about having seen Najeeb cross the border to Pakistan or if he was in the remote region living as a militant. Although they knew Najeeb was being framed they still tried to follow every lead to find him.

The army kept tabs on the family. "In the last ten years, they must have had tea by barrels at our house and must have broken hundreds of glasses. They come unannounced as if it is their grandfather's home. When a new CO takes over, he will see the file and come over for fresh

interrogation; we now expect it and even prepar for the visit. I make sure I am around; I do not want the woman-folk to be alone. My younger son Basit would even take leave from his college knowing the new officer will come to our home. Most often he will be beaten up so he will keep a leave in advance. When they come they hold us in different rooms in our own house. I would be most worried about Sahar, she has been harassed a lot, she goes through enough pain of losing her husband and then this, over and over”, says Asadullah. “They ask her where we meet him, when he comes home – but God is our witness they disappeared him and now they just use it a pretense to create terror, in our life and the village”

When Najeeb disappeared, Sahar’s younger child was just a few months old. She had earlier had a miscarriage and was diagnosed with uterine cysts. Over the years, her pains got worse and she would often need treatment. Such was the surveillance that the day Sahar went to a gynecologist that very evening the army would descend on them. Once they took Sahar to a separate room despite her pleas to allow her mother in law to accompany her. The CO interrogated her alone; her in-laws and children were rounded in the kitchen and made to serve tea. Sahar was questioned till midnight about why she needed to visit a “lady” doctor, if she was pregnant and when she met her husband. This incident is narrated to me by Asadullah and Zaina, when I asked Sahar she only repeats, “zyadti hez karekh/they “forced” me. Sahar has not said much about the incident but Zaina whispers to me that “her tunic was all torn in front”. Asadullah had scuffled with the soldiers when he heard Sahar crying, but he was beaten as was his younger son. They were taken into custody and released after the 3 days. No one ever talks about that night in the house.

The family battled the army’s constant harassment while they pursued the usual channels of searching for Najeeb. It was during this time a neighbor encroached on their paddy land. The

neighbor had moved the divider between the two fields, and usurped a few feet of land from Asadullah's portion. Asadullah needed someone to intervene on his behalf especially because his neighbor was backed by a notorious renegade, who worked for the army. Asadullah tried to approach the police who refused any help, which would have been of no use since the renegade was technically part of the police force.

Asadullah ended up losing the little strip of land to the neighbor after no one came to his rescue as people were too frightened to intervene. The renegade at the behest of the army began to call Basit, Asadullah's younger son to the camp often, trying to talk him into joining the STF. The renegade gave Basit many reasons for joining: it would show that the family did not have loyalty to the movement, it might even absolve Najeeb of the allegations or help them finding his whereabouts and more importantly the army might stop harassing the family. Basit had finished his Bachelor's degree, but he had not found a job and was in the process of starting a fertilizer business. He was deeply reluctant to join the STF. Scared he left the village for some months hoping the matter would die a natural death. During this time the renegade wreaked havoc on his family alleging that Basit like Najeeb had run away and joined militancy. Asadullah had to bring Basit back and he joined the STF. Asadullah needed help to get Basit out of the militia. He was scared that Basit might not live; "they would kill him like they did the Machil boys"¹⁵. Asadullah referred to a case where young boys were promised jobs and then disappeared. Later they were killed in a fake encounter. This case exposed the army and renegade nexus of using innocent Kashmiris and planting them as militants in fake encounters.

Asadullah had nowhere to go but figured that his cousin Yasin Ahmed, a pro-India politician could help him bring Basit back. Like the rest of the community, Asadullah had severed all ties with Yasin after he had joined politics. At first the army and the renegade totally

ignored Yasin's intervention. As Asadullah pursued Basit's case, Yasin began priming him into becoming representative of the party in the village. It was a dreaded position to be in: a humiliating proposition for any most Kashmiris who consider pro-India politicians as "Gaddars/traitors" and ally to the Indian brutality in Kashmir. People with pro-India stance are under threat from the militants and many have been killed by them. Most people with associated with politics live under round the clock security and have homes in the securitized zones in the city. Asadullah decided to take the risk; "I needed someone to back me, anyone: and he was the only one here who could pick up a phone and talk to the army people, even if they did not listen to them, but still...I hate India, but I needed help; who can I go to complain, there is no one, no one even to listen to us."

Asadullah's life events and decisions are illustrative of obliteration inherent in foundational violence that manifests in physical as well as non-physical violence. Kashmiris like Asadullah suffer a continuous "partial" erasure of their identity, in constant transition. At the heart of their aspirations for Kashmir be it - independence, merger with Pakistan, there is a well known overlap of their abhorrence for the India and its army inside Kashmir. Kashmiris who are considered incompatible to the project of consolidation of India are constantly stripped of rights as citizens, and expected to behave as "citizens." In order to survive Kashmiris make attempts at "behaving" like citizens. The obliteration, the partial erasure occurs surreptitiously and not always attended by direct violence even though instigated by it. The foundational violence utilizes direct violence as a basic layer to pave way for cultural violence obfuscating by further counterinsurgency tactics that aim at making military a part of daily lives. Apropos to historic cowardice that was attributed to Kashmiri character, the Kashmiris are portrayed with tendencies for physical violence, and irrational desires like for Independence from India.¹⁶ Face to face

with the direct violence and the “invisibilization” of the militaristic apparatus to “normalize” it, Kashmiri subjectivities become fractured. Many like Asadullah wallow as “covert” resisters, and reluctant collaborators. Some like Shabir walk as what they see as an upright, quiet dignified resistance and not making any position overt. They are never whole and live in a schizophrenic state. They become a palimpsest of occupational surveillance; under partial erasure ready to be written over and changed while bearing what was written on it before. Asadullah’s overt behavior reminds me of his earlier remark of “killing the snake and not breaking the stick”. It’s a means of survival; a morally complex situation where there are no easy answer and analyses. There are no marked categories of assignment to collaborators with the state or even those who resist. The question here becomes how do we understand collaborators and resisters, in such a complex and contested zone where life and death play musical chairs?

Basit finally was able to leave the STF due to Yasin’s persistent intervention and involvement of other higher ups in politics. Yasin became a source of help anytime Asadullah would run into problems with the renegades or the army. Asadullah kept a box full of cards, hidden behind a cupboard full of shoes. These are visiting cards from media people who have met him over the years. He keeps in touch with them and they call him as a trusted source anytime an incident occurs. He is careful not to expose this liaison knowing the army is suspicious of media. Anytime a media person or a researcher visits Asadullah’s home the soldiers come soon after. Over the years army has destroyed all the paperwork in their home, especially that pertaining to Najeeb’s disappearance. The only remembrance of Najeeb they have is a laminated photograph that hangs high near the ceiling. Sahar says all his clothes and even his police uniform was taken away. Many times during the raids money, jewelry and other valuables would also be taken away. *“They even tore my grandson’s home-work, every last piece of paper*

in this home, they left no sign” says Asadullah pointing to the visiting cards and slips of paper, and a small phonebook he maintains. These I keep safe; /I am not naïve/I know what needs to be done” he says. Asadullah is pivotal in bringing a site outside his house near the river to the attention of media and some human rights workers. “I have with my own hands opened burlap sacks with bodies cut into pieces” he says pointing to a raised mounds by the riverbanks, that’s where we would bury them. They need to be exposed”, he says

In the gray zone of covert resistance and reluctant collaboration with Yasin, Asadullah has become a “troubling” figure. On one hand he suffers the army and renegades. During his daughter’s wedding, a contingent of soldiers cordoned off their home for 4 days. They said they suspected Najeeb would attend his sister’s wedding. The bridegroom’s family was too scared to fetch the bride. Yasin intervened but the CO said to him, “tum bhi dahshat gard ho, desh-bhakti ka drama karta ho, sab andar ek jaise hain Kashmiri saleh/you are a terrorist, you are just pretending to be a patriot, the Kashmiris are all the same inside/fuck-their-sister.” It was with great difficulty that a few people from the bridegroom’s family were convinced to come and take the bride. On the other hand, while people reach out to him in times of need, they still snigger after him and berate him for his ties to pro-India politics. At the same time, due to his alleged links with militancy through Najeeb he is never assimilated in the politic circles. Basit’s brief connection with the STF has heightened Asadullah’s isolation from the community as well as Basit’s. Basit is thinking of moving out of the village despite having no options elsewhere.

“My close friends, they distanced themselves from me; they understand but what can they do? Being a Nabdi is a horrible thing. My time with them was a torture, I thought I was gone for good, they were always plundering and looting” Says Basit. Basit had preferred to work in the mess, cooking and serving food while with the STF. *“No one will realize how hard it was for me*

to keep out of the killing and lootings but I am branded for life; I have a mark of evil, I am an outcast,” Basit says grimly.

Shabir encourages Basit to leave the village but Asadullah is insistent that he work on the farm as he has no prospects elsewhere. Shabir’s son Aala had faced a similar situation. The renegades would send for him and try to talk him into joining STF.¹⁷ For some reason, they gave up on him. After college Aala started a photocopying business alongside his father’s grocery store which was not running well. Aala had qualified for a government job but he was not accepted for he did not get a “no objection certificate”, which is a part of the background check. Aala then thought of taking up a job overseas but like his father and many other Kashmiris tainted as dissidents, he did not have a passport, nor could he get one for clearance from security agencies was hard to come by.

Conclusion

Operation Sadhbhavana lays bare the precariousness of territory, life, and community as well as the Indian democratic structure. The subjectivities that emerge within militarized governance in Kashmir valley have been subsumed and how Sadhbhavana and such covert tactics are operational in village and the cities have not been a focus of much scholarly attention. In the frontier regions the Operation Goodwill has been studied by Ravina Aggarwal (2004) and Mona Bhan (2013) specifically Ladakh region. These studies show how the Indian military relies on civilians to fulfil the wartime agenda and maintain routine institutional strength. The frontier communities became incorporated into the body politic, mainly through warfare rather than through democratic routines, like electoral politics. In juxtaposition the situation the valley is much more complex. While in frontier regions like Ladakh it is easier to sift how the frontier communities are governed by the army. The military’s hegemony in these remote regions keeps

multiplying, for they have access to the remotest regions as well as extra funds through *Sadbhavana* to expand their reach. The military apparatus has overtaken the civil administration in these regions after denouncing it as incompetent and corrupt. The civil servants operate minimally and as studies show they are unquestioningly subservient to the army's high-handedness. While it is fairly obvious to see how military is enmeshed in the governance of frontier communities, it is very complex to trace explicitly all the interrelated linkages and entanglements that military has produced in the main cities and towns of Kashmir valley which pivot around the capital Srinagar. In the recent years there are increased tensions between politicians, and state administration with the military. There are reports of confrontations with the army over implementation of AFSPA and the army's general high-handedness in their intrusion into state administration. It must be kept in view that there are two serving military corps commanders who act as the security advisors to the Chief Minister of Kashmir. "Thus the same agency namely the army which is carrying out the operations in Kashmir, is in fact the highest decision making authority..the civil government is tantamount to proxy military rule."

A year after the armed movement broke out, in 1990 India introduced an indirect rule, locally called "*Governor Raj*" which lasted till 1996 when election were held. These elections were similar to the ones held in past which have been notorious for being rigged. The overarching Indian democratic and electoral policy in Kashmir has been historically termed as "subverted and permanently retarded" (Bose 1991:27) and "flawed" (Navlakha 2009). A case study reveals that "in 2008 elections a total of 1354 candidates stood for just 87 seats, making voting by the public arduous and the process unnecessarily complex. Also, despite the fact that militants halted all activities obstructing people from voting, the government had still sent 538 companies of central para-military forces and 60-70 companies of the Central Reserve Police Force for election duty.

The army presence was hence grossly disproportionate to the need for security and hence merely served to curtail movement and actions by imposing curfews and patrolling the streets” (Navlakha 2009). The Indian government has suppression political will of Kashmiris by intensifying militarization. Even though casualties like killings and disappearances have lessened in the past few years, the minimal use of lethal force is thereby compensated by increased manpower, a nature of warfare that is more pervasive and intimidating (Navlakha 2007). The cities, towns and villages like Palhalan which are closer to the capital are weighed down by army presence, thus, not just through surveillance but also direct incursions into state administration.

The Indian military has a pervasiveness presence in Kashmir which is normalized; and in the paradigm of foundational violence which produces cultural and symbolic violence it is only obvious that military becomes hypervisibilized and routinized at the same time.

SECTION 3: MEMORY, SUBJUGATED KNOWLEDGES, AFFECTIVE ARCHIVE

MODES OF COUNTER-MEMORY

Archiving Grief, Performing Memory

She says,

I must make you again, not in my womb for that would need love, but in this makeshift paradise for those who have made it a hell, I must make you from my body parts, tears, and pieces of government paper. I must get signatures that say you were born from me or that my children would not have been here if you had not, I must prove you lived and walked the earth – in ways other than what is important to me and I swear I will.

I find myself walking in alleys, trying to carve you from the wind near the bunker where you turned into a ghost, where you were terrorized the first night, where the neighbors still cannot forget your cries pleading innocence, and when you admitted resistance, nor can they forgive.

I keep walking, then look over the creaky fence you had last repaired before the soldiers kidnapped you, then I step outside the wobbly little gate, into the street, and forget to close it, I sift through the pages on the streets of the books that have been torn – I may want to rewrite them; I collect the pages, palimpsest of old histories, I will make a new book, with an old needle and thread that lies in my grandmothers attic, rusted and forlorn, my mourning is blackened ink like the soot of the faces of soldiers who warmed hands on my burning home, I will read this new book, and return back to from looking for you and finally finding myself.”

(ather zia 2013)

Chapter 6

Retelling and Remembering - Memory in times of an Invisible War

Habla sat in the middle of sun-filled courtyard. Her eyes rheumy, with pupils translucent; she gazed at the turnips that she was cleaning for dinner and humming mechanically. Her family said that she had always been good with stringing ditties and songs which made her a sought after guest in wedding soirees and funerals where such skills were required to hail the event. This skill had become her solace after Rafiq her son disappeared. She would spend her day versifying loss and pain while doing chores.

*“I am bearing the pain of my heart burnt to cinders,
“I am calling you day in and day out”
She sang, as I sat in front of her listening.*

“My son went one morning, to the city, I gave him rice in meat-gravy instead of tea for breakfast, thinking he will get hungry on the way; he could never bear hunger, he said mother I am going to pick four medicines boxes, it’s a new medicine, it will be good for my business, people need pain medication, you see he had opened a pharmacy recently. He never came back, I was wounded; ever since then my wounds are untreated, blood is oozing; I was left untreated, the consignment of pain medicines is still in arrival, it never reached me, my heart is full of pain and my body is all puss,”¹ Habla pulled at her phiran (robe) exposing a little skin, raw and red, with crusts that hint an infection underneath. She clawed over the already present wounds, drawing blood. I had earlier heard from her husband that she wept copiously, beat her chest, and face. She would keep stringing heartbreaking songs that she hummed all day. When I offered that we could arrange someone to come and write them down she shook her head, saying *“I lost the most beautiful poem of them all, he was written by God himself, all I write is fit to*

disappear, only if he would appear, I have all the papers, we have all the right words but no justice.”

On Habla’s side sits the ubiquitous plastic bag full of documents concerning her son’s disappearance. She opened the contents of the bag before me, and pointed to the bag full of medicine in blister packs. She looked at me expectantly pushing the papers in front of her. She said *“look at his certificate, he was good at his studies, he never failed a class, see all this here, these are documents, very important words, my rafiq is lost, now this my son Rafiq* (friend), but there is no Rafaqat (succor)*”*.

These papers and momentos that Habla put before me are a constant presence with the kin of the disappeared. Habla expected me to go through the papers, see, read, ask questions, while she cried and held each paper as if it is the ultimate proof of Rafiq’s existence as well as his disappearance. She called the papers her “Rafiq” which is her son’s name, she used it for its meaning as well, which is “friend” and she reiterated that she has received no “Rafaqat” (succor) from anyone. She told me that the papers are useful but her narrative only illustrated how useless they had been. Towards the end of our conversation, she brings out Rafiq’s album and showed me the trips he made to a ski resort two years before he disappeared. A grandchild lurks nearby and she marked that Rafiq had the same eye color as the child and who would remind her of “his Uncle.” She then returned to the plastic bag, and pulled out circulars and memos pertaining to the disappearance of Rafiq. She handed me each one and I read them listlessly. In that courtyard, although it was just us two and members of the household going in and out but it seemed like Rafiq was the most vital of all presences, and Habla traced him in everything her eyes fell on. The papers, the place and even the turnips she was cleaning, “He simply hated turnips, were he here, you would not find me cooking them” she said to me.

Amidst the dense matrix of enforced disappearances in Kashmir memory manifests in many ways. Sometimes even the very act of forgetting becomes foundational to memory making. In Habla's case, and many women like her, memory becomes an analytic to understand its making. While the acts of remembrance may not be confrontational to the state, the kin of the disappeared constantly cull the matrix of the state be it the courts, police and bureaucracy for shards of evidence, a document here, a document there. In this context memory becomes pivotal in shaping the resistance to state oppression.

The Indian state is averse to any resistance, be it a formal confrontation or even invoking a memory. A decade back the families of APDP raised some money to buy a piece of land for a memorial park for the disappeared. The land lies in shambles with weeds overgrow the brick-and mortar epitaph which was planned as a memorial. It has been built several times only to be dismantled by the state police and soldiers. The women have lost count of how many times they got into scuffles with the police to let it stand, which has not been beyond a couple of hours.² Resistance to state violence has severe repercussions which can result in death or imprisonment. There are many examples in how the state thwarts such efforts. The case of a lawyer who was killed has become symbolic of the consequences that the Indian state is prepared to mete out. Jalil Andrabi was a prominent human rights defender, who was arrested and then disappeared till his body was found nineteen days later, trussed up, floating in River Jehlum. *"He had been shot in the head and his eyes gouged out. He had been dead for at least a week when his corpse was found"* states a Human Rights Watch report.³ Another instance is that of Haleema Begum. Haleema was one of the founding members of APDP. She was shot dead along with her son in September 1998 by unidentified gunmen. *"Many local observers link the killing to the*

persistence with which Haleema Begum sought to trace her son” states an Amnesty International report (1999).

In face of silencing, how is memory produced; how does it stay and inform? In a time of unspeakable violence, it seems like there is no space for memory, which does not mean forgetting⁴ or that no one remembers⁵. The state is in the process of thwarting memory; it is bent on repressive erasure (Connerton 2011) which produces counter-memory (Foucault 1977). How counter memory come about; is it a way of remembering or selective forgetting; does it remember, retell or commemorate? Does the subjugated knowledge (Foucault 1977) that counter-memory produces make visible the “disappeared” or makes invisible “that what must not be seen/what the state does not want seen”?

In this chapter I prod the ethnographic terrain to trace how memory of the disappeared is made in Kashmir. The response to state coercion becomes visible not always in open confrontation but a resistance in invisible forms, interwoven in life’s daily rituals. The way the disappeared are woven into life by the living is an act of patience and rage, one that cannot be comprehended by the state for it is subtle, and one that is taken as natural by the community for the loss is never forgotten. The act of remembering like Habla’s become spectacles for all to behold and contrary to what the state wants people to remember. Thus, counter-memory emerges as resistance and⁶,

“a way of remembering and forgetting that starts with the local, the immediate, and the personal. Unlike historical narratives that begin with the totality of human existence and then locate specific actions and events within that totality, counter-memory starts with the particular and the specific and then builds outward toward a total story. Counter-memory looks to the past for the hidden histories excluded from dominant narratives.....counter-memory focuses on localize experiences with oppression, using them to reframe and refocus dominant narratives purporting to represent universal experience.” (Lipsitz 1990:213)

While the state laws provide no help for retrieval and in fact are designed to even disappear the disappearance, and before that make possible its occurrence, there is also a lack of precedence about how to socially comprehend the disappearance or commemorate the disappeared person.⁷ There is every “possibility” that the disappeared might be alive and, paradoxically “dead.” Between these two extremes the families, like Habla do not have any form of acknowledging the event of “disappearance” or the “disappeared.” Mary Douglas says, “there are some things we cannot experience without ritual” (1966: 80). Disappearance is one such event, where the kin cannot accept the loss till they at least find the body and socially acknowledge the tragedy. When a person is killed in custody or combat, the family receive the body and they get some form of closure if not justice. The rituals of funeral and other symbolic activities around bereavement assuage the families that a life has now ceased. Being mostly Muslim, Kashmiris follow Islamic and cultural funeral rites. Different sects of Islam follow different timelines for mourning spanning from 3 to 40 days. This period includes rituals around worship, confinement, and food. The family and friends organize elaborate funerary rituals which include collective lamentation by women and prayers meetings for men. The lamentation is entirely a feminine forte and a well-established repertoire of songs, gestures and eulogies exists for mourning. People also visit faith-healers, shrines and saints with offerings to pray for peace for the departed and the emotional healing of the family. Such funerary engagements have universally been known to serve the purpose of laying the dead to rest and easing the grief of those bereaved.

In case of person’s killed (combatants or non-combatants) by the Indian troops are treated as martyrs. A common slogan during the funeral of martyrs is that “*a martyr’s death is the life of a nation*” and that “*a martyr never dies.*” The religious edicts attached to the

category of martyrdom, which I term as *survivalisms* become means of closure. These *survivalisms* include promising eternal life and heaven to the martyred, and honor to the family. Thus, the *survivalisms* attached to the haloed social life of a martyr after the physical death ensures the family some form of closure. On the other hand, there are no *survivalisms* attached to the category of the disappeared. Enforced disappearances by the state as punishment is not new in form, but was unprecedented in Kashmir till 1989. The families of the disappeared in Kashmir cannot even begin comprehending the event. Since disappearance of a person was not usual, there is no social practice of commemorating the person who may for all practical purposes turn up alive. The disappeared person is dead and alive, both at the same time, but more dead than alive, and sometimes more alive than dead.

A mother named Gul of a disappeared militant is forced even to think if she had a sixth son that she accused the army of disappearing.⁸ On the same note, they would tell her he was not disappeared but hiding and she was trying to frame them army.

“The army-wallah said I was in cahoots with militants, and wanted to create trouble for them. They denied ever taking my son, even when they took him in the raid, they counted my children, 5 boys and 2 girls, saying I never had a sixth son, that my militant husband was forcing me to frame them, I know well that my son was taken in place of his father, to snare him, I did bear 6 sons from my womb, the army man even said who has so many kids anymore, what if one was lost, I still had more children than what other people.”

Gul, when I met her put a mass of documents in front me, like most of my informants. She wanted me to read everything that bore her son Suhail’s name. She wanted to show who he was as a person. I saw photographs and then the documents she had procured to fight the court case. She seems in an outright battle, fighting not for any bigger cause than to preserve the memory of her son which was threatened on all fronts. In this section I trace modes of counter-memory and ways of remembering as a way of resistance and agency. Based on two chapters, the

first chapter follows the archive, the documents amassed as a central motif of memory, power and loss. Cultural theorists, most notably Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, see “the archive” as a central metaphorical construct upon which to fashion their perspectives on human knowledge, memory, and power, and a quest for justice. In the “episteme” of “surveillance” (Foucault 1975) which Foucault underlined in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault attributes behavior, presented here as performance of everyday as a mnemonic, which has an impact on diverse cultural artefacts including modes of social organization and on the body and embodied practices. The “micro-physics of power” are based on knowledge, which for Foucault is always “power/knowledge”. The somatic practices inescapably implicated in a politics of social control which manifests in the way these women wield archives (writing/knowledge) in tandem with their bodies acting like biological archives (Taylor 1997). Over the years the women have garnered assured onlookers in writers, researchers, media and the general public.

In this chapter I trace how the embodiment of the disappeared animates the present, reconstructs the past and foresees the future. I use the paradigm of archive (Derrida 1994) and repertoire (Taylor 2003) to understand the modes in which counter-memory manifests. The word archive⁹ brings Derrida’s expositions on Arkhe in mind (Mbembe 2002) with the images of documents, order, neat, categorized, housed in a building of some architectural worth connected to the state. However, the archive I talk about is not housed in a stately building and safe vaults, but the records I trace as archive here is often found in plastic bags that over the years of being carried around have even lost their crackle. I understand this archive as a site of preservation of a traumatic history. These archives are painfully collected copies of the official record of the person’s life and documentation in connection to disappearance, which become a representation of mourning. It is a part of a repertoire of this politics of mourning, as the next chapter illustrates,

how it becomes a performative site where memory is embodied and engages in “act of transfers” (Taylor 1997).

Archival Impulse

I was sitting in the sun-dappled room at Hameeda’s small home listening to what I had heard said many many times before.¹⁰ Only the words changed, the faces changed; the settings changed – everything else, the tears, the pain and loss remained the same. Everytime I heard a mother or wife talk about the pain of disappearance, the heinousness of the crime only continued to increase. Hameeda’s son Manzoor had disappeared in the custody of Indian army 13 years ago.

“What can you do, what can the empty assurances of higher ups do for me, these words are meaningless, I have been been tricked, its like that trickster in the circus, my son has been taken before my eyes, and now I am told that I cannot even look, I have to prove that he even existed, how does one deal with that kind of doubt, my son has been made to vanish into thin air, now all he is, is here, this is the bag which has everything that Manzoor ever did, and this is what he remains as in the offices that are bent to make sure he disappears again, his trace, but this”, Hameeda pointed, to the bag of documents, *“this is a treasure, ye heyeakh baej (this will take account),* she ended firmly. Hameeda puts her hand tenderly on the bag, and said *“but they are even eyeing they want to disappear these documents, but that won’t happen”,* she trailed off.

¹¹ “God willing, we will make them come to their knees, I have hope, every knock that comes out of the ordinary I think of him coming home. These ten years have been spent in waiting, I always feel he is on his way home, I have every intention to make extra cup of tea, but then it goes waste, I cant even bear to drink his share, its been ten years”.

The agony of disappearance seems unlike any other, it is multiplied, manifold – it is full of hauntings, moments of treating the person alive and dead at other times, sometimes both together. In case of a killing, the body is received in whatever state of torture (full, half, torso only, head only, limbs chopped, viscera missing, eyes gouged out) and is interred and the family has a spatial connection not only to the presence but the symbolic site of annihilation - the gravesite. When a body is interred by the family, it is consigned to disappearance from the world for ever. But this disappearance is a given, it is only natural and accepted through rituals of closure. The family has a sense of control on what is meant to happen to the remains.

The disappeared exists as a specter; a perpetual “living” dream, that lurks by the door, that knock always about to come. The disappeared is really round the corner, accessible if only one can go out “find that one powerful person the army or police” and “look properly” and find a clue. The disappeared is always within reach; lurking in the entrails of the carceral systems or recorded in rosters of jail lunches or dinners. The family always imagines the disappeared to be only a flip of a page away. They urge each other, *“if only a Xerox copy could be obtained, through some channel: a jail clerk, a police constable, a two-bit informer, anyone”* that they could confirm from if they had seen or heard their loved one.

Every shadow that trembles in the snow and sunshine is the disappeared - always outside the window, “cold and hungry, and wounded” or “hot, thirsty and bloody”, always waiting to come in. Since the disappeared is nowhere, he is everywhere, a strange presence, looming inciting to action, and memory. The memory has to remain “now”. It is not in the past; the disappearance might have occurred in the past, the disappeared is not, he is always present. In this chapter I enter the realm of memory in the form of counter-memory, which undergirds the nature of everyday these women live and the kind of activism they do. The knowledge that is

produced by the subaltern is counter to what the state is recording or erasing and disseminating against the people who disappeared or outright rejecting that the disappearance were effected and in some cases the denial is so severe that the kin is accused for alleging disappearance of a person who probably did not exist.

The Specter of the File

It's a matter of common and tragic notice to see the women of the APDP carry bags bursting at seams with them at the protest or when they leave home in connection with the search. They refer to the documents in the bag as a "file"¹², adopting the bureaucratic word for a collection of documents pertaining to a specific case. At first the bag does not seem to be significant, except for its ubiquity for "zorath ma laggi/might be needed." Once one gets to know the women and the families this bag (or the file) takes on a heightened presence.

This bag most often contains a collection of documents pertaining to the disappeared person – copies of legal paperwork, police documents if any, office memos, circulars, any piece of note ever written in connection with the disappearance referred to as "*parchi*." Many have extended the portfolio of this file including birth certificates, school records, transcripts, diplomas, commendation certificates. The families make sure they procure copies, sometimes after pleading with clerks, sometimes paying bribes or evoking pity which is then housed in plastic grocery bags or an odd fancy one but sturdy enough to hold the increasing pile of papers. Most bags that I handled were worn out and distended by the sheer volume of "kagzaat" (documents) collected over the years. The motif of this bag or the file encapsulates a routine presence that hangs in the house and outside as it dangles from the women's bodies.

I began to notice the bag early on when I met the women from APDP. I remember Hameeda displaying the contents of what she referred to as "Manzoor's file" when I met her for

the first time. Whenever I would ask her a question she would rummage for a paper or report or gesture towards the bag as if to reinforce the veracity her narrative, “it is all written, I have the document” became a refrain that I heard more than often from Hameeda and others. The file”it all here, in the file, document talks.” began to emerge as a touchstone of every “detail.”

The file became a layered and an artifact laden with affect. It was a form of being which bore the seal of the state and also situated the disappearances within the paradigm of affective law. It is of note that most of these papers, “the file” has not been useful in progress of the cases yet they are held onto with regard. It seems to become a “utopian space of comprehensive knowledge . . . not a building, nor even a collection of texts, but the collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable” (Richards 1993). This mobile archive was a “presence” of the “disappeared”.

“Tareekh (Next Date): Before the Sovereign’s law

Husna laments in Kashmiri tinged with Pahari accent, for she originally belonged to a border region and moved to Srinagar with her late husband about 45 years ago. Her husband was a watchman, “he would guard the entire strip in the main square, he was trusted by the big businessmen, he had keys to big stores, nothing was lost under his watchful eye, and now see his own son is lost”.¹³ She would wail, “How do I remember my *yaar* (friend-confidante-lover)? I have no grave, no jail, he is everywhere, yet nowhere, what do I hold onto, how do I tell who he was, that he existed, it is as if he vanished in thin air, now all he is, is here.” She points to her chest. “We were left with nothing, no body, no signs, no paper, no clue of what had occurred,” said Husna, adding: “They did not allow me to lodge an FIR, I kept going there for years, sitting at the door of the police station, the cops threw me out.” Thus, before the law, outside the

unproductive spaces of the doors of police stations, offices, courts or army camps Husna like Kafka's protagonist dwells in a zone of indistinction where the law exists even while it does not exist (Derrida 1994:205). Law itself becomes a specter; an invisibility.

Husna's case is languishing in the court and the State Human Rights Commission. She has made petitions with almost every official in the administration and politicians who might be remotely amenable to helping her. In one notable instance, Husna tried to get an audience with a politician 20 times in a span of three years. "I would be sitting at the door," she says "the door was always shut to me. You know those big doors, made of solid wood, they don't budge...I was always asked to come next time." Like Kafka's countryman who is given a stool by the gatekeeper to sit on, Husna was asked to keep waiting. On her last visit, fed up she began to push her way inside the door, only to be told the politician had left the premises. She was given a *parchi*¹⁴ (note) by one of the staffers which he said was recommendation for her case. Husna took the note to an army officer, who crumpled it and said it "meant nothing".

This *parchi* which Husna preserved was a just regular piece of paper with no proprietary letterhead. It bears a generic request for help which states "the bearer is a poor destitute mother looking for her son, Syed Ahmed. Please help as deemed fit". The extravagance of the signature, its size and flourish seemed to have been deemed enough to establish authorship and influence the reader, but it offered no clues. The note seemed to insinuate a deferral similar to the ones that Husna faced in the court of law where there is no progress but all she gets is the *tareekh* (date) for the next hearing.

"Only Tareekh (date) arrives, nothing else", said Husna. Continuous deferral has become a part of Husna's life. Despite knowing the hearing for her case gets postponed, Husna makes doubly sure she keeps herself free to attend the court. In a similar manner she makes sure to

attend on time other offices where she has made petitions. Husna's relation with the law becomes one of "infinite deferral" the suspended expectation of "not now" just like Kafka's protagonist (Derrida 1994). Like in Kafka's parable the path to the door is not blocked, in fact the door is even slightly open and the gatekeeper also invites the countryman to take a peek; but ultimately there is no entry into the law. Husna's new *tareekh* becomes a trespass prevention tactic which not only ensures her obedience but also her return. Husna is left waiting indefinitely *before* the law. The unconsummated relationship of "not now" or "not yet," the ever-deferred state of law in itself becomes an emptiness, an invisibility and an absence, like "the present-absent" specter which Husna tries to capture (Derrida 1994).

The paradox of law is that Husna is forced to access rather she has nothing else to do but to turn to the very law which has enforced the oppressive regime of death and disappearances in the first place. Husna accepts the hegemony of law when she seeks admittance into the doors of courts and offices. The emergence of a subject or subjection (in this case Husna's), in Judith Butler's (1997) terms is paradoxical. It can be seen as a symptom, power, which works through incitement of desire, in this case to retrieve the lost son by accessing the ideal of law, and in evoking this desire it enlists the subject unknowingly of course (Navaro-Yashin 2012)." Coming back to Kafka's parable, Husna like the man from the country seems certain of the law's universality, for the "door" is seemingly open and she is free to seek entry. It becomes a routine where she seems to overlook (or ignore) the fact that it is precisely the law which creates the conditions of possibility for the disappearances to occur. This absurdity is the fictional foundation of the law, which Derrida (1994) calls "law as fiction" specifically as "law of fiction, and the fiction of law."

The perpetrators who have affected the disappearance have the law on their side. The sovereign India has formally declared Kashmir as a Disturbed Area under which every Kashmiri, including Husna, is a potential “suspect” along with the combatants. The armed and paramilitary forces have been given sweeping powers which facilitate arbitrary arrest and detention and extrajudicial executions and reinforce the impunity of offenders acting under it. The law allows Indian forces in areas declared “disturbed” to “arrest without warrant, any person who has committed a cognizable offence or against whom a reasonable suspicion exists that he has committed or is about to commit a cognizable offence and may use such force as may be necessary to effect the arrest,” including the power to shoot to kill. It is within the ambit of these laws that the Indian armed forces have carried out large numbers of summary executions, custodial killings, torture, “disappearances,” and arbitrary detentions” (Mathur 2012; Duschinski 2011).

Counter-memory and Embodiment

Although Husna faces the abjectness of deferrals she also culls something very unique from the entire process. She collects all the documents that are issued in connection to the “next date.” Notifications and cause-lists that denote the date has been postponed. Although officially these documents carry no weight; but for Husna it is a contribution towards Syed Ahmed’s archival retrieval. Not only these papers but Husna collects copies of every document like applications she files, assorted official documents, circulars, notifications, media reports and other genre of publications pertaining to disappearances into her or many times referred to as Syed Ayub’s “file.”¹⁵

Despite the non-existence of basic papers that establish Syed Ahmed’s disappearance in “front” of the law, Husna’s “file” stands in as a mark of the “disappearance”; it becomes a sign; a

counter-memory. While these infinite deferrals and official notifications give no relief to Husna, she gleans these visits for bits of documents of little formal weight. “These are a testament to my case against the state; the state admits each time, it gives me a new tareekh/date that I am accusing them of disappearing my son,” she says with a firm voice. At this liminal space before the law, Husna’s affective “law” ensures that she fills the archival gap despite physical irretrievability of her son. This moment in her affective law might even be termed as spectral, as it is almost invisible and will be overlooked if not sought with ethnographic vigour. This set of papers called as a “file” manifests Husna’s trauma and loss and by implication also becomes Syed Ahmed’s archival embodiment.

The compilation of “file” in context of the disappeared becomes very important and recurring. Husna and all her counterparts in APDP have made a copy of the “official” file that exists (with or without the FIR) in the police stations, courts or other official places. The entity of a file has been discussed at length by Mathew Hull (2012) as what he call as a “technology for materially enacting an authoritative decision, for making decisions out of various utterances and action (127). The file Husna and other families have made contains *kagzaat* (documents) procured from the cases in the court, the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and applications at various government offices. While the formal FIRs have been declined by the police stations, the petitions made by the families at the SHRC or the court have become basis of many unfinished, “untraced” never-pursued investigations. In many cases these petitions and applications have been substituted in place of the First Information Report, which is crucial to begin investigation in any case.

Husna would say, “Who will listen to me; who will believe me; documents talk, documents are taken seriously.” She adds like many other women say, “Even if they kill me, the

file/document will not die.” This refrain captures the “not dying” attribute, the life that the documents have; and which animates the “disappeared” in their “absence.” Amongst the families of the disappeared, opening a file formally in an office, a process commonly called *file kholen*, is an important step towards the search for the disappeared. Every new member will be advised to “urgently open a file”. Husna can often be seen reminding new members if they “opened the file”. Opening of a file becomes almost like a “conception or conceiving,” the seeding after which the “case” can only gestate. The growth can be positive if there is an addition of useful documents towards the search of the disappeared person which is a rarity or it can be a retarded or negative growth by way of the state suppressing facts, or purging or hiding documents which can help in moving the case forward¹⁶. In any case, opening a file in any state legal institution it is seen as an important process even if unproductive.

Every family makes sure that they possess exact replicas of the official files or versions close enough. Most of the kin, like Husna, will take a great time to display and explain the contents of the file. I have witnessed this “performing of the file” many times during my fieldwork. This performative aspect of this archival process often includes explaining each document at length interspersed by retelling about the life of the disappeared – often from birth to the event of disappearance. The file seems to “stand in” for the disappeared and assign a space, offering visibility to what was made invisible. Husna like the other kin always carries this file to various offices in a plastic bag, cradling it like she would a baby. Many times when I offered to carry the file for her, she declined, holding it closer.

The “performing of the file” becomes a repertoire, buttressing the archival inscription which fills in for the absence of the disappeared.¹⁷ Even when the legal and official processes mean nothing but deferral, the file becomes a trace, a sign. In face of documentary annihilation,

the mere possession of these documents seems to substantiate, for Husna and other families, that disappearance occurred and by implication that the person “did exist” even if the papers say nothing to that effect but make liberal use of the word “alleged” for explaining the nature of the complaint. This form of archival retrieval of the disappeared by the kin becomes a mode of counter-memory.

On the other hand, the operational life of official file within the administrative system seems dismal. The file keeps moving, gathering more notes from officers, their requisite initials and going up and down the bureaucratic entrails for delayed perusals and action which always seems deferred. Officers write muted orders in passive language, taking care to attribute any action to the authority of their position and absolve themselves of any proprietorship¹⁸. A file “does not die” like my informants said but rather becomes a hauntology, lurking in the labyrinthine entrails of the state bureaucracy, like a specter (Derrida 1994). Even when it is annihilated or unproductive the file remains in form of signs and insignias that have been entered into the core of the states bureaucratic archives. Thus, the file which becomes crucial to the affective archival memory, is a haunting which “implies places, a habitation” and the state archives becomes a “haunted house,” and so does any place where the file exists, even the homes of the disappeared.

Archive: An Undying File and the Talking Document

Hameeda’s file was pegged on to the wall and as she offered it to me, she said “*sambhal/hold with care.*” She gestured me to be careful, raising her hand, as if I had to ease a baby or porcelain onto the floor. The bag was marked “Very Nice Kashmir Stores” probably the name of a grocery store. It was distended and worn out. Hameeda wanted to find copies of documents for her upcoming hearing in the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC). We

spread the contents of the bag and begin sifting. There was a silence in the room, somewhat like in a library, which hangs like an extra layer adding to the darkness. The role of men in procuring these documents is important and points to a gender dynamic which has evolved. It points to the obliterations that the militarization and oppressive regime has brought in the social set-up where non-hegemonic maleness as become a norm.¹⁹

Hameeda like Husna would often repeat “the documents (kagaz chu khath karaan)”. I heard this refrain from others, repeatedly, as they visited offices to check on the progress of their cases. The emphasis on the life or voice that is possessed by the document and which Hameeda “does not have” is not unique to her. It is manifest in other conversation on how much trust is reposed in a written word.

One remarkable fact about almost every file that each family has is that it has the most important documents that can be taken as a direct proof of disappearance missing. They are not missing because the kin could not procure copies but because they were never written in the first place. The First Information report (FIR) like what happened with Husna, was never accepted. No criminal or civil compliant was ever accepted by the state authorities.

This absence of FIR becomes an analytic in tracing the file becomes a site of performance; a part of the repertoire of memorialization. Hameeda illustrates the absence of the FIR by tracing every event she remembers to reinforce its unavailability. She filled the lacunae of the FIR in the archive by performing its absence. She mentioned every little detail, takes me along the roads and innards of trying to reach out to everyone possible to allow her to lodge the compliant. “*They would shut the doors on me, threaten me, no FIR, who is missing, he must have run away, go away, they would say to me*”, said Hameeda. She performed the complaint; lodging it, albeit inversely each time she answered the question about the non-existent FIR. Hameeda

embodied these absences in the archive she collected. Like Husna and others like her Hameeda performs the “file” which is part of her repertoire to trace the disappeared through an imaginative reconstitution²⁰. The archival impulse “as a proffering of counter-memory... for what is counter-memory if not the act of making the diminished, forgotten, and repressed, visible?” (Tello 2011). The archive of documents becomes an important part of the “disappearance” through the repertoire: of the performative protest staged in public, in their homes or wherever questions about the disappeared arise; with the archive becoming part of the repertoire to be performed.

Archival Artists

“Su file Karekh Ghaeb/they disappeared the file”, is a another common disappearance which also animates the archival impulse. Archival artists seek “to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present” (Foster 2004) and the APDP women not only lay claim on the “archive” but also to adopt it in their repertoire. Their work is reminiscent of the an archival artist²¹ collecting scraps of information relating to an incident, gathering narraives, retracing, to trace the “the absence.”

The file that is put together has no particular method but it plays an important role in offsetting the silence which surrounds the disappeared and the manner in which every effort to recuperate the disappeared gets lost. The file becomes a site of memorialization in the bureaucratic set-up which is constricted by a circulatory dialogic network filled with stamps, notes, memos, and other paraphernalia of state apparatus and which often formally yields nothing of substance. Even then, the file in its sterile presence within the state apparatus becomes a graphic embodiment of an issue. That is, a single file contains all the graphic representations that reference a particular matter, at least during the period when the matter is under

consideration (Hull 2003). The file becomes an embodiment of the disappeared in more ways than one. The archive becomes an important part of the discursive repertoire.

I heard a new member-activist once complaining how her FIR (first information report) was not accepted at the police station but she had been successful in submitting an application at the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC). An older member she was talking to asked her “File khol-heya/did (they) open the File (at the SHRC)”. The new member said yes, and the lady exclaimed “then not to worry” and added “did you get a personal copy (of documents)?” This assurance connects to the widespread belief that a file once opened in the records in any of the state’s administrative department it becomes an irrefutable and in many ways an indestructible presence. Even when depleted through pilfering and destroying of crucial documents to bolster the state’s denial of disappearing the person, the file still leaves a trace (Derrida); a haunting which refuses to go away. The “file doesn’t die” becomes an ironic parallel to something that does (the disappeared). The parallel file with the activists also acts as a safeguard to the disappearance of the file itself from the records of the state.

The disappeared, in their erasure are continually dying, but the archive, the assembly of files becomes a “hauntology”. It becomes a spectral a *priori* neither present nor absent 'in the flesh,' neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another." This archive begets the properties of a phantom and can be seen as a call to action.

Husna was an avid collector of copies of applications, circulars, memos, media reports and other genre of documents pertaining to disappearances into what she and her counter-parts who engage in a similar activity call “a file.” While these deferring documents give no clue of Syed Ahmed Husna calls the documents a testament. This move for archival “retrieval” is also spectral; a subaltern move of not much importance and in danger of being overlooked if not

sought with ethnographic vigour. This set of papers, which Husna and her counterparts in the APDP collect and call a “file” manifests their trauma and loss and becomes an archival embodiment of the disappeared.

Husna would often say, *“Who will listen to me; who will believe me; documents talk,”* adding, *“Even if they kill me, the file will not die.”* This refrain that I heard amongst other members as well captures the “not dying” attribute, the life that documents have and which animates the “disappeared” even when absent. For the kin of the disappeared, starting a file formally in a government office be it a court or police, called *“file kholen/khulawen”*, is an important step towards finding the disappeared. Then they embark on creating personal copies of the files in official circulation. New members of APDP will be advised to urgently *“open a file”* in any valid state institution and to *“make a personal copy”*. Veteran women activists always remind the new ones if they “opened the file”. This move “to document” is a verb and an important activity (Riles 2006) even if immediately unproductive. *“File kholen/Khulawen* becomes almost like a “conception or conceiving,” the seeding after which the “case” can only gestate. The growth can be positive if there is an addition of useful documents towards the search of the disappeared person which is a rarity or it can be a retarded or negative growth by way of the state suppressing facts, or purging or hiding documents which can help in moving the case forward. The personal copies also serve as a safeguard against the state deliberately “disappearing²²” the file to dilute any evidence against it.

The compilation of “file” is recurring and every APDP member keeps a copy of the “official” file or versions close to it. The file contains *kagzaat* (documents) from the court cases, institutions like the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and other government offices. Most files are missing the FIRs which would acknowledge the complaint from the kin that the

disappearance has been caused by the Indian troops. The files also contain paperwork pertaining to the life of the disappeared such as birth certificates, proof of residence; employment confirmations even school report cards and diplomas. These documents do not help the case but they enable building the life-narrative of the disappeared.

The file is usually seen as a technology for materially enforcing an authoritative decision out of various utterances and actions (Hull 2012). While in the official circulation the file passes through the innards of state administration being read and re-read, it takes on a different life altogether in hands of the kin where it is not “read” but rather “performed.” In the hands of kin, such as Husna the file becomes a means of exegesis of the “disappeared” person’s life and “disappearance” by the state. It becomes part of the repertoire of mourning. *“This is Syed’s certificate from the cricket team, he played well, sometimes he got very hurt and I would have to massage his back for days”*, Husna said to me as she thumbed through the file recollecting memories of Syed; her body animated. Since she cannot read she identifies each document by a seal, signature or a symbol. She shook her head, and gestured towards the file and said, *“there is no FIR, they never admitted my complaint.”* The absence of FIR is heightened by Husna’s retelling of not being able to file one. Thus, Husna enacted the contents of the file: both that are present and those absent. Each enactment focuses on reinforcing the “being” of the disappeared and challenging the state’s negation of the very event of the disappearance. The “performing” of the file conjures a vivid picture of the disappeared person – of his life and the disappearance. It essentially becomes a “stand in” for the disappeared; an artifact of memory, as assignation of space; a counter-memory - offering visibility to what was made invisible.

Husna like the other kin always carries this file to various offices in a plastic bag, cradling it like she would a baby. It always occupies the safest place in the room close to the

ceiling, away from easy reach. The mere possession of these disparate papers seems to substantiate the “disappeared” and his “disappearance.” Most documents say nothing to that effect that the “disappearance did occur.” The notes made by officers use the word “alleged” liberally to explain the nature of the compliant by the kin. As the file becomes a form of intimate memory in the hands of kin, its operational life in the bureaucracy and judiciary remains dismal. It gathers more notes and initials from the officers, going up and down the bureaucratic entrails. Deferred perusals, delayed actions and disheartened delegation become the hallmark of activities around the files. Each file displays arrays of muted orders written in passive language where the officers don’t identify their personal selves’ and only project their authority to absolve any proprietorship. The file which is a potent symbol (even if ineffective in the long run) that “*which does not die*” for the likes of Husna also becomes a hauntology albeit of a different kind lurking in the labyrinthine entrails of the state bureaucracy (Derrida 1994). Bureaucrats treat files as a “time bomb” (Hull 2012:129) which can come to haunt if they write something specific connected to their own person especially in a politically volatile scenario of Kashmir. The file which becomes crucial to the affective archival memory of the kin becomes a haunting in the state archives where the files stay dormant, awaiting operations deferred endlessly.

The files as a haunting politics of mourning instigate the kin like Husna differently. They allow a physical and psychic contestation against the crippling nature of power. They enable subjugated knowledges that is relational to power; not in a position of exteriority as Foucault would say. Contesting power in this manner indicates a spectral “jumping out” of the web of power; of individuality and agency before the eventual deference to power occurs. Husna’s resistance and that of her counterparts is not “solely” a negation of hegemony but a search for a technique, a form of power through daily symbolics of counter-memory which may or may not

challenge order. These acts are often based upon a complex subaltern ideology expressed in private transcripts which are usually for most part hidden from the dominant group (Bhabha 1984; Scott 1985). These modes of counter-memory often remain invisible to mainstream perspectives. They have precarious subterranean existence that renders them unnoticed by most people and impossible to detect by those whose perspective has already internalized certain epistemic exclusions (Medina 2011).

Affective Archive, Performative Archive

After I find the paper in Hameeda's "archive"; I make note of it and meticulously put the papers back in no particular order. All the while Hameeda is watching while Sara her granddaughter peers over my shoulder and Jozy, her daughter-in-law listlessly stirs the collards on the stove. "*Saree thawtha/did you put all (the papers) back?* Hameeda asked me. She took the bag and carefully peered inside, as if confirming even though she cannot read or write. This archive is not unique to Hameeda, nor is the eagerness to collect documents that might be of "help". Hameeda has collected the documents she has from court, government, police, army, media, human rights organizations anything that relates to Manzoor's disappearance. Once I had mentioned a new report on human rights in Kashmir and Hameeda asked me if it mentioned the disappeared. When I said yes it did, she asked me for a copy calling it "*kaepee*"²³ for it "might be of use someday."

Almost all of the kin, specifically the members of the APDP build their "archives." Hanging on the highest nail on the wall where no child can reach in, sometimes slotted amongst the planks in the ceiling hidden from everyone, or the highest shelf on the cupboard and even metal boxes. Mughli also kept her "kagaz baeg/documents bag" behind the bolster against which

she sat. She was as careful about the bag as Hameeda is; like a mother would be for a vulnerable child or a curator for an ancient glass artifact. Parveena Ahangar has a cupboard full of “her files”, which I have often perused under her supervision. She was never comfortable enough to let me borrow the files but was generous with taking pictures or photocopying that she would get done herself. She says “I have collected every word about the disappearance of my son and as APDP grew about other disappeared people.” Parveena has extra file which is based entirely around her work and the awards, photographs, certificates that she has received for her work as a Human Rights defender.²⁴

“See this, the world knows of my son was disappeared, not just his kidnapping, but this is proof for all our disappeared men”, Parveena said while she showed me the card she had received in Dublin at a ceremony identifying her as an International Human Rights Defender. In the early days of her search for Javed, Parveena said “they did not have a “tilim”/shred of a document”. She and Parvez Imroz²⁵ the co-founder of APDP would obsessively collect newspapers which had reports of disappearances to record and identify cases. Parveena said, *“That is the way we made our basic record of the disappeared, from the newspaper reports and legal petitions. I keep all the files in my records; documents are important; otherwise everything will disappear. A human being is temporary, we will have nothing to show; file talks, it does not die. It is so difficult to even get a small paper from a government office, so it better to have a copy with yourself, not that it helps in the long run.”*

Even when there is a strong realization that the file does not prove effective, what then does this archive do? What does it manifest or reactivate? Why do the families hang onto these spectral documents which the state undermines by implementing draconian laws where the army can get away with impunity?

The “not dying” of the file is an important metaphor in many ways. It is not only a haunting repository for producing knowledge about the disappeared but also fulfills a discursive and spatial lack of the disappeared individual; this is an “affective archive”. In *Archive Fever* (1994), Derrida marks archive as the space of difference between “a natural psychic apparatus, an interior somatic space of memory, and an artificial documentary apparatus, a technological space of deposition, an extrasomatic site”. This affective archive is what an outside archiving can be said to commence; it conserves the trace of the disappeared, a spatiality, and a discursive reflexivity which has otherwise been foreclosed. This affective archive becomes an “inscription written on paper simply the most visible, outermost layer of a foliaceous stratification” (Derrida 1997).

Derrida calls this force to collect an "archive" as "conservation drive," and diagnosis it as a condition of “archive fever”. Derrida’s archive fever harkens back to the Freudian archive. It might seem erroneous to connect archives as a repository for records, manuscripts, files etc, and Freud's delineation of private memory as a problem of the individual mind's interior inscription and preservation. Derrida works through Freud's language of material inscription and archival preservation for thinking about archives. Derrida has made this connection productive in thinking about archives as representing the internal dynamic of psychic life and memory.

Thus the affective archive becomes a memory; a shrine, a monument. Freud says that whatever individuals finally externalize or publicize serves as a screen for another, authentic, scene of "writing", which is internal memory itself. External signs, like the ubiquitous bag hanging on the crooks of arms of the kin of the disappeared are surface traces of “texts/memories” which lie buried and sometimes forgotten, yet indelibly registered and preserved, in the interior memory, in the subconscious and externalized in the records that many

times prove “toothless” and depleted of justice in the realm of law and state. The most meaning they carry is in the realm of memory; but then memory is resistance, which is a step short of justice which never arrives and is always arriving (Derrida 1994). So this archive is resistance, a fight against forgetting, a step towards justice.

The archive becomes an outside memory; a presence personified, a subversive museum sometimes filled with artifacts which the state itself has endorsed like memos or decrees or reports or vapid media write-ups. The affective archive may have generic or unique artifacts. There might be all sorts of papers; media reports, birth certificates, police reports, referrals, legal documents, copies of court orders, photographs. Many will have school transcripts, certificates that ascertain character, references etc.

Performative Archive

Sakina entered the room carrying two two bags: a plastic one with documents and a cloth satchel full of mementos and framed pictures. Sakina’s young school going boy named Faysal was disappeared. The bags occupied a place on Sakina’s side just as Faysal might have sat as a young child; an appendage on her shoulder. As we began talking Sakina arranged the artifacts in front me. Weeping noiselessly, she seemed adept in keeping the trophies and other contents of the bag in a neat line even though her eyes were blurry with tears. She kept the photographs lined up against the wall. In one Faysal was receiving a prize for best debater, another showed him playing cricket, while in the last one he looked intent into the camera.

Silent at work Sakina appeared like a curator of a mobile museum, a subversive ensemble of inscriptions and mementos. This affective archive is a “trace” inscriptive, descriptive and spatial. Faysal occupied nearly 1/4th of the small room. In this act of outside memory the essential difference between a museum and an archive collapses, as does the line between

archive and the repertoire. In Sakina's performatives the archives become propos to transmit the gaps that documentary absences have left. The choice of these artifacts constructed Faysal as he appeared to his mother and I became a witness to her imaginative reconstitution. Here the spatiality also became discursive; appearing by way of absence. This archive stood in for Faysal, his "innocent" existence. No doubt Sakina must have seen some documents as archivable and some not, thus, objectivity does come into question, but there is hardly a place where objectivity does not come into question. Any archive is fundamentally a matter of discrimination and of selection. This affective archive can be treated as a status, as in any other archive (Mbembe ?).

In this performative act of mourning the archive begins to appear as a "system of discursivity" (Foucault) that establishes the possibility of what can be said or what needs to be said about the disappeared person or the disappearances. Here the transcript which is usually understood as a written document embodies also the repertoire which grants the social actors, like Sakina or Hameeda an opportunity to arrange the characters in a parodic and subversive ways. The archival evidence, which is considered a prized system of memory is not credible enough to become a proof of existence.

The women straddle the gap that lies between what the documents manifest and what they don't. The tension between the archive and repertoire has been constructed as one existing between written and spoken word. The archive is supposed to include but is not limited to written texts and the repertoire contains verbal performances like songs, prayers, speeches, as well as nonverbal practices. In this ethnographic narrative, the telling here is as important as writing, the doing as central as recording, the memory passed down through bodies and mnemonic practices. In these practices we see the archive and repertoire enmesh and intermingle. In Western culture, whether spoken or written, language claims epistemic and

explanatory power here we see how the repertoire and archive, both systems mutually produce each other; neither is outside or antithetical to the other. The repertoire also becomes a memory path as much as the documented records retain what others forgot. It does become pertinent to ask that between this tension, whose memories disappear if only archival knowledge is granted permanence and valorized? (Taylor 2003).

The affective quality and the spatiality associated with this archive are unmistakable. When the contents of the archive are spread like Sakina does, the disappeared becomes visible, in the inscription, on the paper, in the memento. This archive is a trace; a hauntology, a specter that not only identifies the contours of what is lost and its composition but also exhorts those remaining to agency. The archive is a counter-memory, which becomes a mode of power, in the limited way. This archive works within the contours of the overarching power structures of the state and what it can yield in this quest of justice tangibly is not enough.

That paradoxical relation to the state is palpable when Sakina negates the state's right of "disappearing" anyone and in the same breath she "vets" state's power by proving Faysal's through the evidence of a "character" certificate by issued by the same state. All the inscriptions, the ones which are considered authentic and emphasized are the ones issued by the state. It is here the double-bind of state manifests. The women preserve the "documents" that are considered lawful and valid issued by the same state, which disappears, or whose hegemony over lives is resisted. In this paradox "the basis of a double bind is a message with two contradictory demands functioning on different levels of logic or discourse. The message cannot be ignored, and whatever the answer to one of the two demands might be, it automatically entails failing with the other (Bateson 1987). This paradox is at the heart of governmentality, of any person living in a modern nation state, where the regime of inhabiting citizenship unfolds validating and

disciplinary processes which one might be working against. Here the women are denouncing the state's hegemony over their lives, and claim innocence of the disappeared, and are using state documents as evidence. At the same time, while some documents are used to reinforce the arguments or used as proof some are denounced as "not true" and yet the non-existence of others is performed.

Archive of the Body

Sakina narrates the story of Faysal's birth; she has pictures, tiny baby clothes and a prescription from a doctor for cough. "We both caught a cold, Faysal and me, the doctor asked me to take antibiotics, because Faysal was too little, and the medicine would reach him anyways through my breast milk", Sakina said. She points to Faysal's weight at birth: 1 kilogram and 1 ounce. She reminisced about the length of her labor and how easily he had slid into the doctor's hands like soap. She had "felt" painless at the moment of his birth. Now she "felt" in perpetual pain; like in labor of his second "coming". The way Sakina touches her abdomen, raking the inscriptions that being pregnant with Faysal have left on her body; she presents her body as evidence: a body-archive of Faysal's disappearance and his existence in this world.

Hameeda's story of Manzoor's delivery is similar. She had been alone at the time of her delivery since her husband a night-watchman out on duty. She had held the baby in her own hands with the umbilical cord attached, her elder son watching helpless, till the neighbors heard her cries and rushed to her aid. She reminisces how quick he had been to nurse and how she had constantly held him in her lap and nursed him for 17 days when he had developed a fever. She clasps the back of her neck "this, this area, it almost went numb and my neck developed problems", she says, connecting the vitality that Syed Ahmed gained from her body with the pain that still embodied. In the birth, quick nursing, a 17 day fever, constant holding and her ailment

she connects Syed Ahmed's body with her own. In these "antique imaginings" (Steiner 1984) Hameeda and Sakina appear as primordial mothers (Grand 2007), who know the body of their infant, ever since the infant was in a state of unknowing, contained as a fetus within their body. Their performative narratives fill in the gaps in the archives, embodying the disappearance that has no evidence, by projecting their bodies as part of the missing inscriptions. They evoke traces that are left behind in their body as they conjure themselves as the umbilical body. Sakina makes the "disappearance" an inverse pregnancy, which starts from the "invisible"; a gestation, a waiting, an anticipation of the child's appearance. It becomes an unending pregnancy, the pain of labor is ongoing and there is no "coming" out. Sakina is in pain all the time, unlike the moment when Faysal was born. While talking about Faysal, as I sift through papers in her file, Sakina touches her abdomen as if rubbing against a convexity even when her belly is flat. She calls it a "like pregnancy" waiting for Faysal to be born again, appear.

Her umbilical body is inscribed upon. It's a Derridian trace where it is not only a record of birth, but also by implication of the disappearance of what "emanated" from it. Her body is a palimpsest, reminiscent of Freud's mystic pad; which records the disappearance and what preceded - the birth. It is also infinitely receptive, when the inscription of the birth is erased, how another inscription of disappearance overwrites, but the traces of old inscriptions are left behind. In this manner the psychic system records the "the appearance and disappearance of the "erasure," which is similar to "the flickering-up and passing-away of consciousness in the process of perception" (Freud 1925:230).

Sakina's body bears a private inscription, like the mark of circumcision that could constitute the original archive, a mark both exterior to the person but inscribed on the body and therefore always with the person. In case of the mothers mentioned in this chapter, their private

archive materializes in their birthing of their child or them envisaging their “disappearance” viscerally. The discursive embodying takes place in many descriptive ways. Hameeda says “mye chukh jigar cheteth/my liver has been ripped” on Manzoor’s disappearance. Manzoor is conveyed as a part of her body and his “disappearance is etched in her heart with a dagger”. The absence becomes part of the body as an absence, a trace, missing viscera. The body becomes an archive which is biologically and physically inscribed upon. Parveena Ahangar recounts an incident when an officer in hurry and lack of paper, scribbled a permission into a jail where she suspected her son was held on the palm of her hand. This inscription was the only piece of writing in the long chain of documents which Parveena acquired that alluded to the army not admitting but accepting albeit in a inverse way that her son was lodged with the authorities. “Alas! Those days we had no camera phones, I would have taken a picture to record it, it washed right off, and even with that writing on my hand that meeting never materialized”.

This strategy of verbalization is the language of agency (Scarry 1989) which seeks to make the pain visible.²⁶ The body becomes an actual turf of “record” of that which disappears. “Even my body was written upon, it washed off, but my heart has been inscribed upon (of Javed disappearance). The body of the mothers becomes a part of the archive where inscription is a central act. In her ethnographic work on the Sikh massacres of 1987 in New Delhi (2007; 2008), Veena Das also comes across such complex transaction of body and language through which women provide witness to their destruction and engage in a symbolic language to remember the atrocities through their bodies (2007: 55). Das’ Sikh women use bodily language to express their predicament, using phrases such as “drinking all pain” and “digesting the pain,” which are metaphors of pregnancy – hiding pain just as a fetus is given a home in a body. These metaphors suggest that women imbibe the pain in their body. In this effort, however, their intention is to

metabolize the pain and continue with everyday life. Thus, in this aspect of invisibility the gendered body is wielded as a place of holding and mourning, and ultimately as a site of agency.

In case of the half-widows like Sadaf, they lament the loss of their “deka”. Dekha means forehead and in Kashmiri culture it is used as a metaphor for husband as the most prominent and elevated part of the body. Tanveera another half widow will often mark how her identical twin sons look like her husband. She points to their nose, their hair and the moles on their temples which they have exactly like their father. She has only two small hazy photographs of her husband and she says she does not feel the need to have more as her sons remind her of him and as they grow they increasingly look like their father. Her daughter, she says also shares her father’s looks as well as his mannerisms. “Zan che temsinz chaap yeman manz/it is as if they are etched in his likeness”, Tanveer says of her children. Tanveer is one specific case where she has almost no documents which belong to her husband. He belonged to a remote village and did not have any birth or school records, nor was she able to get an FIR filed. All she had were copies of her applications to various offices. In absence of any documents, Tanveer seems to recapitulate her husband’s existence through her children and also through her husband’s only surviving brother who would come to visit her and she would make sure she pointed out his features which resembled her husband.

The bodies of the women during the protest become manifest inscriptions of the disappeared. They wear headbands displaying a faceless man’s profile – symbolic of the disappeared person. They wear long black robes and hang the photographs of the disappeared from their necks or hold it in front: standing in for the disappeared person. Their body becomes an archive of psychic inscriptions making the invisible visible.

An interesting archival process of note here is visual documentation of these women in the last 25 years. These activists have been photographed in every possible manner of visibility in which they are comfortable. They have been focus of articles, books and documentaries – in which they themselves have become part of the archives – from the realm of material to film. A simple google using “disappeared in Kashmir” pulls up images and articles on these activists. Thus, they themselves have become part of archival memory. The bodies of these women are archived as an important facet of the disappearances in Kashmir. The metaphor of inscription on the body and of the body - makes the body of these women an 'inscribed surface of events' (Foucault, 1984:83). The women’s bodies become “psychic archive” (19); whether as “visceral” metaphors or inked on their hands or as photographs or film.²⁷ The women as psychic and bodily inscriptions become an extension of the “archive” that they collect outside.

Mis-en-scene: a Living Archive

I climbed the pitch dark stairway to Zareefa’s room on the upper floor of a dilapidated building which she rents at a small sum but exorbitant for her meager income. The tottering trek up to her rooms could rival imaginings of an expedition into search for some ancient and exclusive archives. After the debilitating darkness, I entered a low and dingy room. The walls and ceiling are covered with newspaper, probably to create insulation against the harsh Himalayan winter.²⁸ In one corner is the kitchen area where Zareefa’s daughter-in-law Shakeela sat hunched over the smoky stove boiling collard greens. Her granddaughter Sara sat near Zareefa, who leans uncomfortably against the wall plastered with news-paper which seemed like a failing combat against the winter.

The room is a telling mis-en-scene. Zareefa was a small withered figure, her skin paper-thin and crinkly beyond explanation. Her eyes were discernible only because of the glasses, one

eye of which was broken and the other side was held up by thread. She was dressed in a pheran²⁹ which at some point must have boasted color but now no more. Her greyish-blackish figure dissolved into the newspaper collage that has been glued onto the gaps in the wooden walls to fight the cold seeping through cracks. She could easily merge as a picture on a newspaper's front page. The headlines from the newspaper collage surrounding her are eerily relevant: "revoke AFSPA and all the draconian laws", "release all prisoners", "machil fake encounter hearing postponed," "protest outside high court, mass rape case dismissed," and such like. I was sure that the pages of newspaper had not been chosen. They had been randomly picked as Zareefa later told me and had become a telling convergence of the generic news that permeated everyday Kashmir and which paints a chilling picture. There was one news item though which Zareefa had deliberately pasted. It featured herself, Shakeela and Sara at the APDP protest. It is outlined by a marker, probably by Sara, who goes to school and is the only one who can read and write in the family. In the picture Shakeela is holding her disappeared husband Munib's photo, while Sara sits beside Zareefa who appears to be weeping. Zareefa said they had an extra copy and they felt happy to paste it there "People who come to interview us take photo of that" Zareefa says, "They take photo of photo with us sitting around it", she added after a thought. Sara laughed.

In this instance I discern the archive and repertoire collapses. It becomes a productive scene which frames and activates the sociality around disappearance. The small room becomes a space of "practiced place" as Certeau calls it; and that there is no such thing as place for no place is free of history and social practice (1984: 28). For a moment, I feel like I am watching a performance installation. The newspaper collage, the women hung as if in a broken timelessness. The room is without much modern affectivity; if we hid the printing on the wall, the small stove, and the stainless steel cups the room with its emaciated inhabitants could be from old time

Kashmir. Munib's picture hangs near the ceiling. It is a black and white picture against a blue background, mounted on an inexpensive laminated cardboard. It is an exact replica of the pictures other families have of the disappeared and one that is used during the protests. Zareefa does not like to keep the picture in front of her but prefers it away from her eyes. She cannot bear "looking at him" when in front of her. As for Shakeela she is sitting close to the wall, too close for the picture to be in focus for her. A photo-journalist visiting from New Delhi joined us. She was doing a photo-essay on the "disappeared". She took pictures of the family, the room, and the photos of the photo, as Zareefa had already divined. She also took pictures of me as I sat amidst the family members. With the click of the shutter, the entire scenario becomes an archive consigned to iterability (Derrida 1994) including me. The traces of the disappeared, it seemed remained in those left behind, and who will be perused as archives.

Resurrection: The Power of the Archive:

In this section the archive unfolds an instrument of power and a tool of subjugation. According to Foucault the archive is a center of production of meaning or interpretation of narration. It becomes the law of what can be said. Foucault's archive underlines that "storage, organization, and redistribution of information are never passive or innocent; they always inform political and historical discourse" (1991). Can archive be seen as power? What kind of power does it wield? It is after all associated with knowledge or knowledge-production. Inherently the dilemma of the kin of the disappeared becomes what has been the dilemma of every knowledge producing field of study, that of representation, interpretation and meaning making.

The archive in the Foucaultian as well as Derridain perspective becomes a vessel which shapes and controls the perception of history and the manifestation of political reality. "There is no political power without control of the archive or without memory" (Derrida 1996: 4). In what

follows in this chapter, we see how the archive manifests. The kin use the archive to sustain the haunting, and through it the power of interpretation and aiming for justice if not getting it, for justice is always in arrival (Derrida 1996). In this section of the chapter, I illustrate three narratives which manifest the ways in which the archive exists, is used and how it remains unused and unproductive as well.

First what follows is a verbatim account from Aziz Gilkar, a 47 year old man whose brother Riyaz was disappeared. Aziz has been a constant companion of his mother who was following her son's case. My first visit to Aziz's home was in late December 2011. A few days' worth of fallen snow stood in hardened heaps, creating blocks that would become muddy puddles once the sun decided to show its face. In this small town in South Kashmir Aziz sat pouring warm cups of salt tea. Aziz has a deeply tanned face; his big black hair runs into his abundant but well-groomed beard. The only disruption in the darkness of his face is his glistening eyes. The small low ceilinged roof got cozier with the warmth from the Kangris (coal braziers), and masses of warm blankets that covered a small group of people listening to Aziz.

Aziz spoke in low tones for he did not want his mother to hear him talk about Riyaz. He said his mother was in fragile physical and mental state. I was never able to meet the mother, but she was always a part of our meeting, even in her absence as Aziz would talk about their search. Aziz said she was in precarious mental health and Aziz feared that she would "backtrack" if she were to meet me and face questions about Riyaz's "disappearance," who Aziz insists is "incarcerated" since 19 years. Riyaz had been a college going student and the youngest of the siblings. He was detained during a crackdown along with 3 other young boys from the vicinity. The 2 boys arrested with Riyaz were released after a few days but Riyaz was retained in custody. Aziz's mother began to search for Riyaz. Being the eldest son Aziz thought it was his

responsibility to accompany his mother everywhere she went. *“Till then the only outing she had done was from the paddy fields to home, she had never been to the city even”*, said Aziz. Below I produce a verbatim account of Aziz’s narrative which we listened to in rapt attention, interspersed only with customary affirmative guttural sound on my part, which is also a respectful sign of attention. We had a massive sheaf of papers before us. They were documents collected over the years; and what has become as Aziz calls it *“Riyaz’s zabardast file/ Riyaz’s forceful/powerful file”*. The reason I produce this narrative verbatim has a reason. This narrative underlines many dilemmas and grey zones which a disappearance produces. I feel this entire narrative becomes a haunting which allows entering the depths of mourning, melancholia, agency, memory-making and resistance. I urge that readers should note the figure of the mother which permeates most of the efforts undertaken by Aziz. Her precarious mental health and her physical absence is telling of how agency and resistance come to be in an utterly constrained environment a penal colony.

Aziz continued,

“We have “made” such a file, God willing, our “record” is such that every officer is amazed. They are surprised. It has taken years, but with the help of the Unseen, the supreme divine, the invisible, his intervention has been pivotal for me to find success. We proved everyone wrong. My brother was friends with a young teacher, they used to play cricket together. This teacher later became a Mujahid (militant). My brother was picked up because of this connection. Otherwise he was innocent. The file proves this. It has all the papers saying that. No FIR was accepted after he was arrested, I just filed one some months back, after almost 19 years they accepted the complaint on behalf of my mother. I am in contact with the District Commissioner, the army majors and generals, I have made deep relations, even with politicians, they respect

our work, our struggle, our file is formidable; it can put them all in (jail) forever. My mother gets tired so now she stays home. She told me this morning that she feels Riyaz will come back this year. If the divine Unseen wills it; yes, why not?

Every army officer fears Riyaz's file. When I met top police officials they would be left gawping. They would ask, where did you get this file, these papers, even we cannot make a "record" like this? In the beginning we had nothing, not even an FIR, but we have been successfully in piecing together evidence. I have several copies of this file at safe places. I am always afraid there might be a raid and they might disappear it all.

My mother was on death-bed, after Riyaz was disappeared. She needed to know, be convinced he was ok and would return. It was hard many times we even recited the kalima³⁰ on her. I am the eldest son, I would go with her everywhere, to every politician's house, to meet every army officer, but nothing came out of it and her health diminished.. She went into deep depression when she began to think Riyaz might be dead after the other boys were released. I could not take the risk; I realized I have to keep her alive somehow, to assure her Riyaz was ok and in jail somewhere. I had to do something to assure her, I am the elder son.

In the initial 3 years, I saw Riyaz 12 times. He was lodged in army camps and interrogation centers around this village of ours. These would be random events. It took me days of sleuthing and acting like a moron with the soldiers to get permission to enter into army camps. Tragedy being that at these times my mother would not be with me. So I know he was alive and well but she never saw him with her own two eyes. I had to convince her that I had seen him and that he was alive and being moved around.

I followed a guy who was released and who had been with Riyaz. He told me Riyaz would lead the prayers in the jail, and that he had grown a long beard and was reading all sorts

of religious literature. My mother would always be happy to receive such news, but after the first 3 years no such news came anymore. Our breakthrough was when one day a Superintendent of Police (SP) who I had been hounding for months agreed to meet me. My mother and I pleaded with his assistant, praise be to Allah. The officer was saddened to see her state and wrote a note to the army officer to allow us to meet my brother. She assured him that I had seen him 12 times. He trusted our version. That was the first time someone actually indicated on paper that my brother was incarcerated somewhere. It was a miracle. He pitied us and wrote a permit for us to be allowed to meet Riyaz. Till then everything was in air. It became an important foundational document in our case. It became proof that Riyaz was with the authorities alive. Wasn't it an admission of sorts?

When we took the permission to the army officer, he gave us no information. He made us return week after week. Promising he would find Riyaz's whereabouts and allow us a meeting. In hope, my mother would cook a chicken, and get new clothes made. We would go shopping together to get things for Riyaz, this would make mother immensely happy and her vigor would return. If nothing, I felt such incidents built her hope and her will to live.

The army officer gave us no further information so we went back to the SP. The SP asked us to sit in the plush sofa in his room, not the uncomfortable chairs, and gave us tea. He made some calls, and asked me to show him the note he had written last time. He added nothing but "with compliments" to it and sent us to another army officer. I told my mother it was good sign "with compliments" is a good sign, isn't it? The army officer we met did the same thing to us as the earlier one. He made us visit several camps but nothing came out of it.

One day I saw this officer on the street in his bullet proof jeep and I went to greet him. He told me to stay calm, wait and be quiet, and not talk to many people. He also made me visit

the camp a few more times with my mother. My friends became apprehensive for me, saying my mother and I could be accused of being army informers if we would talk to army officers so openly or meet them often. But I did not care, my mother needed to know Riyaz would be found. After waiting for several months, nothing came out. My mother fell ill and she could hardly come out of the bed. She fell into deep depression. I was also in the midst of a divorce. My wife was not happy with me. I was exhausted with her endless complaining about me becoming obsessive about my brother's search. But it was not only about Riyaz, it was also about my mother. Anyways, I agree our continuous search for Riyaz contributed to the stress on our marriage. By then many people began to call me crazy. My wife thought so too. No one believed me I had seen Riyaz except mother. They said I suffered from hallucinations and that Riyaz had been killed within days of his arrest. But I am not a child, they did not know what I knew. They did not see the paper I had.

The boys who were taken with Riyaz said he was alive when they were released. They said the ones who had been killed were killed on spot and the ones who they did not are still in jails and that includes Riyaz. The boys are all alive. Safe in jails, till a solution to Kashmir is found. They are being held as ransom or something. I told my mother so. She seems to be convinced. I had a divine intervention a miracle from the Unseen. I was worried about my mother. By sheer coincidence I met a mystic of great elevated status; he became my peer (spiritual guide). I took our "application" for Riyaz to his "offices". He is a bigger king, bigger than Chief Minister or the President of India. He assured me my brother was ok and gave me a little piece soil. The very next day I met a mysterious man who told me where my brother was. I followed that clue and it led to "success". I showed my brother's photograph to a few kids in a neighborhood who were frequently taken by the army for forced labor. They knew the camps like

the back of their hands. One kid recognized Riyaz and told me which camp he was in. I asked the boy if he could tell me what he wearing on his feet. He said he did not see. Anyways, I was convinced Riyaz was there. It was a miracle of my Peer. I sighted Riyaz through this divine intervention.

I know that Riyaz was made to go out for crackdowns. Although he was proven 100% innocent; “He was innocent”. All the papers that I collected; from his college, his principal’s letters, even the character certificates from the state’s own officers proved he was just a college going young man. But the army treated him as if he was a militant, and wanted to make him an informer. I had strong reports that he was resisting becoming a Cat (army informer) and was beaten frequently.

Going back to the earlier story, I did not meet Riyaz in the camp where the boy said he was but I was able to see him from afar. I went into that camp on an excuse to meet an officer. A soldier I had befriended on the street outside the camp told me that all the prisoners are taken out into the ground at lunch time. I saw Riyaz in line holding his plate, it was very far and since I know him well, I could make him out from afar, otherwise for anyone else it would be difficult to identify. This news about sighting was enough to bring my mother back from the dead. She regained her health. My Peer assured me that we would get success and we did.

My mother had filed a case in the high court. The army major was after us. They wanted us to take the case against them back. They raided our house; I was beaten and taken to jail. I did not tell my mother, but they would come to harass me at work. They rounded up my mother in the paddy field and threatened her.

One day by the miracle of my peer, we were in the secretariat³¹ in the office where a letter came from “above”. Mark the coincidence; we were randomly in the office pursuing some

other paperwork for Riyaz when this letter comes in. The clerk looked funnily at me, and I knew something was up. I pleaded with the clerk to let me make a copy of the letter. My mother wept in front of the officer, telling him to let me copy the letter. I told them if nothing the letter would keep my mother alive. The letter was enough to indicate that the officers were taking our plea to meet Riyaz seriously enough and that he was alive somewhere. In this letter one officer was ordering another to intervene on our behalf with the army so that we are allowed a meeting with Riyaz. This was the first time anyone, so high up the administration had seconded that Riyaz was incarcerated and alive. This letter made mother happy, but as usual nothing happened. But don't you think this letter was enough to silence those who said I was crazy³²? The politician whose help we had sought to get this order told us to wait and "stay quiet". He appreciated the file we were building in defense of Riyaz but nothing more happened. This was devastating for my mother.

Then another miracle happened. A top bureaucrat, the District Commissioner (DC) gave us a piece of document which became a dangerous proof against the army officers. It was so threatening that the Brigadier of the army told me not to follow the case. He said they would help me secretly to find Riyaz and suggested we give up the court case. The DC who I had been also meeting in this connection took pity on Mother and held our file for a solid half an hour. He leafed through all the documents. He kept on sighing. He said we had worked very hard and suggested not to take the case back from High court. He was a good man, he said we could find something if we pursued the case. There are not many officers like him. He gave us a letter addressed to the Brigadier saying he had discussed my brother's case and that we be allowed to meet him. He had emphatically indicated that the subordinate army officers be directed to enable our meeting. What more proof did we need of Riyaz's incarceration and his innocence? It

became a big documentary proof. We celebrated this event at home with a big prayer gathering and a feast. One of many in the coming years and it made mother so happy thinking we had proof of Riyaz being alive. Sadly the DC was called by the Governor and this I heard from the street that he was reprimanded for issuing such an order. When I met him, he said he had done all he could and had gone through a lot for us especially for my mother.

He told me that he was almost fired. "What a strong file you have made, this kind of record is made once in a lifetime" he commended me. He also said that Riyaz would not be released because the army sources (local informants) were insistent that he was involved, but I know that was not the truth. But we were happy that Riyaz was alive, no matter what.

This letter from the DC was big; it became a proof that he was somewhere in the jails. Did it not hint to the fact that he was being moved around to different places where I had seen him. The letter categorically stated that we should be allowed to meet him. This document became a proof. It indicated the detainment of Riyaz. Mother was hopeful he was alive. What is being alive anyways? Everything is invisible.

I also began to realize that our work was futile; nothing was happening in the court or through the official route. Everything that had happened was a miracle of my peer and the Unseen. It is all up to God, no one can help except him. I made my application directly in his "durbar/court" through my spiritual guide. Everything is done by God and his spiritual heirs. Do you think we or you or these officers run the world, they don't, they cannot do anything, it is the invisible divine power that runs all of us.

What can the officers do? They cannot do anything. My spiritual guide is a king; he is a sovereign. He has command of everything. He can do everything. I now go to him only. My mother does too. The courts, the SHRC, the offices are all subordinate to the divine invisible

power and my spiritual guide is a conduit for God, his great power. He is capable of anything. Ever since I followed him, I have had success. I have a strong file. Our records are a proof of our Riyaz's life and innocence. These army officers have made a fool of me many times. Once they asked me to get the militant who my brother is accused of being close to. The officer said "get the militant and we will find your brother". I said how can I? The officer responded "you made such a file, why can't you? Even God can't see you brother, but you have been persistent, get the militant and we will find him for you". How could I find the militant?

What is "human rights"? What happens? Who is the Chief Minister? He is just a "turban on a stick"; everything comes from Delhi and he just nods. I have lost faith in everything. I was once kept in custody and threatened. The army officer said I should stop searching for my brother. I told him on face that I knew Riyaz was in their camp. He told me how did I know Riyaz was not dead? I said I had seen him many times. He scoffed at the idea calling me naïve and crazy. He kept me for some days and then released me. I was a thorn on the army's side. You know why I have not been killed though I was a target.

I kept connection with all the officers and politicians and would meet them often and tell them what was happening to me. They would get into trouble if they touched me. Above all my spiritual guide has protected me. His power is unseen; he might not have a big office but he is supreme. He will sit on the roadside and perform big miracles that the officers will not even understand. His is another kind of "ilm/knowledge". He does not need to sit on a throne to show he is the king, but he is. He can move mountains. My brother being alive is his miracle.

I have been called mad, crazy. I do not blame people. They do not see what I see; they do not know what a strong file I have. The day this file begins talking, everyone will be released.

My mother is convinced now.

My spiritual guide took me to meet another man of elevated mystic status. He said be happy. There is no reason to be unhappy. A clerk in the police I had befriended told me that army had made me a target. They would kill me. They would do anything, but my peer was my protector. See how many smart, intelligent men like the Director General of Police, Additional Secretary of Home, District Magistrate everyone endorsed the fact that my brother was detained in so many places and that we should be allowed to meet him.

The jail officers are now indebted to care for my brother's life. I came to know he gets weekly medical checkups. I met a boy who was jailed along with him. He said my brother had been offered a briefcase full of money to talk about his association with his friend turned militant. But Riyaz refused. He is an upright noble young boy.

He is safe. He is at a good place now. I do not look towards any officer now. Nothing will get him released. It's just the dua/prayer. I have only one thing to say for my success with having such strong papers, my "peer rehbar / spiritual guide". If I can't kiss my spiritual guide's feet, I feel absent (gair-hazeeri mehsoos). I follow his ilm/knowledge. People without spiritual guides are unlucky. They do not know there are different ways of waging your battles.

The army and the civil officers told my mother to apply for ex-gratia relief. She refused to get any money? I said if I piss on that money, my piss will get dirty.

We are a lost nation. We are hypocrites. We tell on each other.

I am called crazy without knowing what I have seen and known; everyone loves to talk about what they do not see; the file, my struggle, my mother's struggle.

After Riyaz comes back, everyone will see. But I know till truth manifests, the world will have turned into ashes. I have records in many places, if they take all the copies, I will still have extra copies. I write to everyone; every little letter and document is copied to everyone in

administration, army, politics. I have written to every Prime Minister of India, Chief Minister of Kashmir, presidents of political parties and politicians. I would send my papers by post but they would get lost. The intelligence would intercept and not let them reach anywhere. Now I send by courier. That ways I have proof.

See I have another file. It has entirely different set of correspondence, but this one is stronger.

Looks at these “Riyaz ahmaden kagaz” (Riyaz’s document), they are zabardast (forceful). People call me crazy, they call me mad, no, no, I know, I know when they whisper behind my back. But I have all the files in my record; everything here, every little bit says my brother is alive, I can be wrong, but these papers do not lie, they think I am mad, and I must be, to think my brother is alive for the last 19 years, I know he is being transferred from one jail to another, he is not kept in one jail for more than a few years, that all the disappeared are safe, they are in custody and their release is connected to the final solution of Kashmir.”

If Aziz’s narrative seems confusing and meandering - it is. I will offer some explanation in order to put this rendition of Riyaz’s disappearance and Aziz’s and his mother’s search through the bureaucratic and military maze into context. I was able to stitch this explanation together after talking to other people about Aziz’s case including neighbors, relatives and a family whose son was also disappeared by the Indian army and with whom Aziz’s mother maintained close relations. After Riyaz disappeared, Aziz’s mother was distraught and went from pillar to post to find Riyaz. Aziz could not see his mother in agony and tried to do everything he could as a powerless Kashmiri man to find some clue.

From Aziz’s narrative I figured that Aziz and his mother would follow soldiers patrolling around the camp or try to connect to policemen. As time passed Aziz began to strike

conversations with soldiers in hopes of knowing something about his brother. From his neighbors I came to know he was seen as a nuisance by the military personnel, administrators and other low rung officers for he would try to meet them multiple times, mostly accompanying his mother.

Aziz starts his narrative mentioning “success.” The question that arises is what is the meaning of “success” here? Success in this case should have been tied to either finding the disappeared alive or dead. Aziz and his mother have not been able to know much about Riyaz. From 19 year old struggle through the maze of official procedures a tiniest sliver of inference, which is not even a direct reference to Riyaz, has been drawn. It is through a chain of documents that span the entire duration of the struggle, that Aziz deduces (primarily to convince his mother) the possibility of Riyaz being incarcerated and not “dead.” This deduction starts with a small note from a police officer which states “*complainant would like to meet her son Riyaz. Please hear her and take further appropriate action.*” This remark does not specify anything but that the family wants to meet their son. It does not mention enforced disappearance, apprehensions about the status of the person, whether dead or alive. The writing is steeped in the bureaucratic tradition of not giving the text enough proprietor-ship which creates an impersonal tone, and eliminates information about who is responsible for what (Charrow 1982). In the super charged political conditions of Kashmir no one wants to be held accountable for making decisions. An assigned word (by implication a file) is viewed as a time bomb which can go off any moment and any note of some official worth is considered dangerous. Thus, precise specification of authorship often becomes a source of considerable anxiety to government officers, which is evident in the way the note has been put together. During the last 63 years of Indian rule in Kashmir, the civilian government has become increasingly sluggish, which has touched chronic

levels since 1989. Volatile politics, armed violence, military interventions have created an tense and complex atmosphere where officers are afraid of myriad forms of penalizations like transfer, early retirement, or dismissal of officers and staff tied to the former ruling party.

From what I could piece together after talking to the police officer who had written the note, was that Aziz and his mother must have been pleading with him for months. According to Aziz they had been successful in convincing him that Riyaz had been sighted 2 times by Aziz himself. Aziz would insist in a distinguished manner using the Persian word for eyes say he saw Royaz, “yemow chesmow/these eyes.” It could even have been that the officer was giving in to the persistence of the mother son duo, and taking pity or it could have been that he made enquiries on his own and found out that Riyaz was truly incarcerated in the area’s army camps. When I met the officer (now retired) he did not specifically remember anything about Riyaz’s case. Instead he said he had met countless such families, and had written many notes to help complainants. According to him it was just a generic note of not much import. On the other hand, to Aziz and his mother it had been “foundational” “parchi” (note) which implied that “*Riyaz was alive somewhere for the officer had validated that possibility by hinting that they should be allowed to meet.*” The document once it was processed through other offices, and as officers mechanically began making remarks only if to push it further ahead without any tangible intervention, the note was steeped in bureaucratic jargon based on one little assumption that the family be allowed to meet. By implication the note, written without much thought became the foundation of Riyaz’s alleged “alive/incarcerated” status which became pivotal for Aziz’s mother’s recovery, who had till then been sinking deeper and deeper into depression thinking Riyaz had been killed. This was priceless for Aziz.

Another officer had written a similar note that stated *“The fact of the custody has been conveyed to concerned officer by the Riyaz Ahmed’s mother and brother to the said official who has recommended permission for meeting the alleged detainee. Hence, it is requested by the undersigned that the matter may be taken up as due.”* This note in its elaborate memoing also deferred proprietary and authorship. In order to reconstruct the authorship of a decision developed through such memos becomes a complex task which would demand gathering separate artifacts dispersed in different locations (Hull 2003). To identify authorship entails accepting some level responsibility and none is provided in the note. Riyaz’s file was passed up by the officers for “comments” to other departments of administration which were always “concerned” (Hull 2003) but as usual non-productive.

While the officers avoided having to make a decision and escape any consequences in future, the file made many rounds in the chain of command, and got entered each time in the office record dairy. This recirculation left trace upon trace and while gathering confusing and unproductive memos, thus, becoming a foundation on which a seemingly evidence-based narrative of Royaz’s incarceration was based. Although nothing meaningful about Riyaz’s status emerged, the chain of documents, the trace upon trace became an originarry of “Riyaz’s detainment”. Thus the file “inextricably linked to power and power-relations (Foucault 1991) with its numerous acknowledgments, signatures, metatext and copies became meaning-producing where Riyaz was assumed as “detained” and not disappeared or dead even though no one has seen him for 19 long years, nor has any jail/army camp ever directly admitted to detaining him. The flimsy inference that is drawn from less than 300 words on official note-pad becomes a credible founding document for proving a person was alive, and upon which a massive set of documents “the file” was constructed.

Riyaz's existence is traced in the set of documents which mark his subjection as well as objectification and also manifest as a mode of power, not only indicating the power of state but also of the family as archival artists (Foster 2003). Archivization produces as much as it records the event (Derrida 1996: 17; Foucault 1987) and here Riyaz was being reanimated by connections between documents, juxtapositions and a matrix of citations.

Riyaz's file is complicated through the circulatory procedures, which entail deferrals of decisions and irrelevant delegations; authorless generic memos, all the processes that make the travel through the bowels of bureaucracy slow and converge into red tape. These are unhelpful but it seems these deferrals help as well. A slow moving sludge in which everyone is caught, the family and the administration and seemingly everyone is implicated into its uselessness deliberately. This chain of documents all of which further what the first police officer had written enmeshes with the army procedures which produce blocks and dead-ends, and finally putting an end to everything that was recorded through a single note addressed to the Ministry of Home Affairs; after which nothing happens.

Thus, even though Riyaz is materially disappeared, these documents which are the Official Truth³³, Riyaz is resurrected or recuperated through the motif of a "file/document/archive". Archive here becomes a "center of interpretation," similar to "courts of law psychotherapeutic encounters" (Osborne 1998). The archive functions as a system of discursivity (Foucault 1972). This particular archive functions as evidence of Riyaz being alive, which becomes a mode of power for the kin and allows a certain power of "representation, interpretation and reason with questions of identity, evidence and authenticity (Osbourne 1999)³⁴. Foucault describes the archive vaguely, and it can be gleaned from what he thinks the archive is not. It is not "the library of all libraries" nor is it "that which collects the dust of

statements that have become inert once more, and which may make possible the miracle of their resurrection”, instead he thinks it is the first law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events” (Foucault 1979) which in this case becomes Riyaz’s incarceration.

The archive is a product of excesses of the power; “made possible by the death, aggression, and destruction drive originary finitude and expropriation.” The archive is driven by destruction, by its relation to death. The archive in its finitude at once destroys and preserves Riyaz and renders itself spectral. Riyaz’s archive is an archive which is visible for anyone to read through and at the same time, it is hidden in its subversion. Preservation of an archive is made possible by disappearance, an invisible annihilation. Riyaz’s file is a trace, a ghost of the “*anarchivic*” the one disappeared, one whose erasure is not meant to be preserved, nor the trace acknowledged or recorded.

There is a fear that Riyaz’s file may be seized –rather “disappeared” is the word that Aziz used. He has made several copies of the file which are in different places. In its spectrality this archive has become ineradicable; not only with its metatext, but also multiple haunting as countless places in the state archives and informal hiding places. In case of many archives that have been courageously put together by families, the administration³⁵ has to exert against itself to hide the documents so as not to implicate the state. Thus, even when the file is destroyed, it continues to haunt.

The power of the file is paradoxical: it has the potential to hold the state and its machinery accountable but at the same time it cannot help despite the “proof”. Riyaz’s case is facing a dead-end both in courts or the administration. Aziz says they are focusing on divine intervention - the Unseen and taking hope from a different “ilm/knowledge”, which they consider

is above the state machinery. In this space, the state ceases to be run by the administration and is the responsibility of the order of divine mystics³⁶. It is in these “durbars” that Aziz and his mother are submitting their “arzi/application” for Riyaz’s re-appearance.

The Tale of the Looted Archive

When I met Masuda Parveen she was guarding a tin trunk full of papers. “This is all I have left; my treasure and this is what I will take to Geneva, God willing”, she said alluding to the International Court of Justice. Masuda’s husband Mohidin Regoo was very well respected in his area. He was a practicing lawyer and ran a saffron³⁷ business. On various random suspicions, Regoo was subjected to numerous disappearances before finally the army killed him in custody. The tin trunk amidst the squalid little tenement which is Masuda’s residence since she began following the case seems like a graveyard haunted by documents and files. Masuda uncannily said “God-willing these (documents) will haunt India. *“This treasure is vast, it will capture India’s sin against Kashmir. I have saved all the documents that the state tried to kill just like they killed my husband. God willing I will take my case to the International Court. I have all the evidence I need, these papers are my treasure. I will not let it go waste”*.”³⁸ Masuda Parveen’s “archive” becomes a testament to archival violence; of how the archive itself can be killed and looted.

Masuda’s husband’s story was not unique. He had been plunged into deep debts after he lost money. His business partners did not take responsibility and demanded he repay them. Mohidin sold his land and property to repay his partners but they claimed he still owed them money. The partners approached militants³⁹ from a local guerilla outfit to kidnap Regoo and pressurize him into paying the remaining amount. Masuda took matters into her own hands and braved meeting the militant commander. She successfully pleaded Regoo’s case and even

produced evidence to show that they had paid the amount in full. Convinced the commander released her husband. However, this brush with the militants had long-standing repercussions. The Indian army arrested Mohidin alleging he was in cahoots with the militants.⁴⁰ He was released but it also became a routine for him to be arrested. When he was in custody Regoo's whereabouts would be unknown with the army often denying they arrested him. Regoo told Masuda that he suspected there was a bigger plan attached to his kidnapping, which came to light in 1996.

In that year when the electoral process was being rejuvenated by the Indian government and many proxy candidates were being fielded, army had begun to arrest Mohidin with increasing frequency. Masuda came to know that Mohidin was being harassed by the army to stand as a candidate for elections which was not a willing decision that any Kashmiri would make in those days or even after. Masuda's said that he was told that "being a respectable lawyer people would be inspired to come out to vote, he would become a member of legislature and he would move up in life, and all his needs would be taken care of, and his debts repaid."

Once when Masuda went to meet an army officer pleading for his release, she was told "*to convince Vakeel Sahab (respected lawyer) to stand for elections, make him agree,, we will give you all you want, money, school fees for kids, and if he saidf yes we will let him go that very minute.*" Mohidin did not want to join pro-India politics. He was staunch supporter of Kashmir's liberation from India. He began secretly planning to move out from Kashmir but this could not happen since he was killed in custody. "His 6 foot tall frame was half the size, his limbs had been hacked," Masuda said hinting the torture on Regoo's body.

Masuda said that the army as they picked him up from his home began interrogating him instantly. He was hit continuously with an axe and dragged from room to room leaving a trail of

blood. *“They had the intention to kill that night, without reason, to make “dahshat (terror)” nothing else, they want to shut Kashmiris up, he was just an unlucky scapegoat, in a way his credentials, his bad luck in business all contributed.”*

After Regoo's killing Masuda filed for action against the army in court. She launched a judicial fight in the Kashmiri courts to the Supreme Court of India. Initially her writ petition pivoted around ex gratia compensation that the state paid. She said that “I did not know better about how to get justice, I did what I thought everyone did, I was naïve.” Later the scope of the case was expanded to curb the “special powers” that the army enjoyed under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. A sympathetic Indian lawyer agreed to represent Masuda's case in the Supreme Court, which she said was confident of winning. The respondents from the army did not produce the original police record and only produced a shadow file which had several significant passages missing. This was put on record, and Masuda's counsel inferred that an attempt was being made to conceal the truth. The police did not produce any documents either to prove that Regoo was a Pakistani trained militant or that he had any association with the militants which the army had been using as their defense in the custodial killing. An independent report states,⁴¹

“During the numerous hearings that took place in the Supreme Court over the nine year pendency of the writ petition, several orders were passed by the Court directing the State of Jammu and Kashmir to produce the original records relating to the inquest under section 174 CrPC. Not only did the State of J&K disappear from the scene for several years, when it re-surfaced, it produced a ‘shadow file’ (which did not contain several important documents/records which are usually part of official police case file) on the pretext that the original file had been ‘lost’.”

The Army produced a shadow file in which important documents such as post mortem report were not included in the papers tabled. “The shadow file was created in no time and it was presented in an even greater hurry. The precedence is that when such a case is filed in

court, the documents produced should also be accessible to the opposing party. However, in the case of Regoo, as soon as the shadow file was produced the court delivered its verdict without fulfilling the necessary formalities.⁴² After 9 years the Supreme Court pronounced its judgment dismissing the writ petition on the ground that there was “not an iota of evidence to support the petitioners’ plea”. Disregarding the incomplete nature of the ‘shadow’ file, it stated “we have the army and police record pertaining to the incident which clearly show that Regoo was indeed a militant and that the circumstances leading to his death were as per the circumstances put on record by the respondents.” The Supreme Court of India supported the army’s version that the deceased had been a ‘militant.’ All evidence that proved that Regoo was not a militant was disregarded. Thus the state committed a double murder; first they killed Regoo in custody by torture which is totally contrary to Geneva conventions and then they killed the documents which could have been pivotal in proving Regoo’s non-involvement with militancy and his illegal detainment.

Considering the documents that Masuda preserves, even the ones that were not present in the army’s version prove how it is impossible to “un-archive”. Masuda says she is certain not only her, but the documents have left a trace, “even the ones that have been disappeared” in their multiple inscriptions in the state archives. Masuda has many copies of her documents stashed which she will use when the “time is on her side.” Even when documents disappear from state records they still “lurk”, leaving traces, though dispersed, hard to find and thus, hard to exterminate completely⁴³ waiting to go off against the state. The power is also the basis of nationalism – the desire to kill and burn other’s memory, to silence and delete traces of traumatic events within the archive (Derrida 1991). The state of India has destroyed the archive to save the army personnel indicted⁴⁴. The Indian state disowns the killing of Regoo and transfers the

attributes of this death so that “they cannot if they are permitted to cling to the original site of the wound of human body (Scarry 1990). In this archival war with a Kashmiri widow the state of India remembers to save the army and erase Regoo.

We got his death certificate, now pray he is alive: The Useless Archive

The “archival repertoire” collected, performed and preserved becomes a powerful tool. It is used as an analytic to understand how memory works around documentation; how the discourse around the archive transforms *memorabilia*, and memory-traces to make them worthy of becoming political and social recollections. This archive enables the women, as historical subjects keep alive the cultural memory that is around these documents, which will otherwise disappear. There is another side to the archive. In its circulatory process of being generated and pursued from office to office, in the struggle to procure it; the lives of kin become routinely enmeshed with that of the disappeared for a long time to come. Instead of dealing with mundane rituals of physical presence, like cooking or cleaning for a person, it becomes “getting a certificate” to prove he passed high school or a note from some officer to recommend the case.

While the “disappearance” entails subtraction of most rituals of routine mourning the archivization seems to fill this gap by creating a new kind routine. It becomes a protracted mourning in case of an unprecedented predicament, the “enforced” disappearance, of which retrieval is a significant component even if impossible. The archive has a special place in this routine.

In the following section I trace the life of a half-widow Fateh Jaan, a 40 year old half-widow. One afternoon, Faten meets me under the Chinar trees opposite an army bunker near the famous Poloview road in Srinagar. It was after years of running between offices for which I was also a facilitator that she was finally able to procure a death certificate for her husband, who was

disappeared by the army. Looking past me Fateh said to me, “*Hum ko unn ki maut ki certificate mill gayee, ab dua karo woh zinda hoon/we got his Death Certificate, now please pray he is alive*”. It was an oxymoronic expression. Fateh enmeshed a decree of death and wish for life in the same breath for her husband Naseeb Khan, who had been “disappeared” 10 years ago. Fateh’s life became an unending paradox; straddling the world of hope and despair; where despair mostly had the upper hand.

Fateh Jaan received the death certificate for Naseeb after proving that he had been “disappeared”, which included registering an FIR after much wrangling with police who for years refused to lodge her complaint. She took her case to High court and the State Human Rights Commission where she received a favorable judgment as far as proving the disappearance in custody was concerned.

Fateh showed me her certificate. She was in a hurry to get to the other part of the city. She wanted to meet *Baba*, a mystic seer who she went to, specifically for divining Naseeb’s predicament and prayers for his safe return. As she leapt towards a bus, I imagined Fateh putting the talisman that Baba would give her in the same satchel that held the death certificate. She would then proceed towards her home where her 5 children awaited. The youngest one Zaina who has never seen her father, will once again dream of him coming back. She will wake up in a screaming fit, and in a few moments the entire household will melt into tears. Hardly anyone will go back to sleep. Fateh will lament Bashir’s disappearance; curse “Hindustan”, the “Hindustani” army, her fate, and the apathy of the leaders. This is the pattern in Fateh Jaan’s household since Naseeb disappeared and which I have watched from close quarters.

Fateh Jaan lived in a small hamlet outside Srinagar. Her tiny unfinished brick house nestles in the foothills of the Zabarwan Mountains, overlooking the velvety paddy fields below.

When you looked at Fateh Jaan's house one would expect ruddy faces and happy smiles emerge from the doorway; but what welcomes you is Fateh's deeply lined face, the starkness of her home and the near nakedness of her children with pasty, chapped faces in the approaching Himalayan winter. Roughly 40 years of age, Fateh looks years older. Her eldest daughter Rubina was 17 years old. Hanief, her second-born was 15, followed by Nauman who was 14, Ayman 13 years, and Zaina was around 11. Fateh's husband Naseeb Khan disappeared in custody of the Indian armed forces in 2002. Naseeb was taken by the army from their "kotha", a temporary residence in the mountains which Fateh's pastoral clan takes in summer to tend the flocks of big cattle farmers. One afternoon, Naseeb was sleeping when soldiers showed up which was not unusual. It was routine for the soldiers to beat and torture the men in their own homes. The women also received beatings, but more than that they had to face obscenities, ogling and physical harassment. When Fateh remembered their behavior which she labels "besharam/shameless", she grows tremulous with anger. She remembers some easier visits when the soldiers would only demand water or tea and resort to mild kicking, slapping and badmouthing. Fateh said, "It was very unpredictable, I would just keep chanting holy verses from the Quran to get it over with."

The army would show up at people's doors at any time especially during night enquiring about the guerilla fighters. In the early days of the movement till late 90's the fighters would seek refuge in homes. People would acquiesce for various reasons. There was fear of the gun - of retribution if refused, but many felt proud to shelter militants from the Indian army. The army on the other hand, was viscerally abhorred. The soldiers were seen as a brute occupational force that would descend on them at any time. They would bring the entire neighborhood under crackdown which included identification parades and house searches. Harassment was a matter

of policy, which the soldiers dutifully followed. They did not hesitate to go on a rampage, ransacking homes and beating people. They not only were after the fighters but vengeful towards the common people as well. Fateh Jaan's house, unfortunately just by the road would often turn into a makeshift interrogation center. Fateh would shiver at the memory of the cries of men and the wounded people they had to retrieve in the aftermath.

When Naseeb was taken, Fateh thought it was the routine "*Pooch Taach*". "Pooch Taach" is a euphemism for a detainment, primarily for "questioning". In "Pooch Taach", the family harbors hopes of imminent if not immediate release, for broken bones if not death (though there are no guarantees). During earlier detentions, Naseeb would return badly beaten, barely alive. In her mind, Fateh was readying herself to nurse him back to health. She knew he would be tortured despite his non-involvement with militancy. It would take him days to recover and the family would fall on hard times. Fateh had already taken to doing small jobs in the neighborhood to make ends meet.

To find Naseeb, Fateh began the excruciating routine which countless Kashmiri wives, mothers, or families undertake to find their missing kin. Accompanied by a few elderly neighbors and her brothers Fateh went to army camps, who denied any arrests were made in the area. The local police station did not accept her FIR (First Information Report) and suggested she go back to the army camp. The camp officers refused any information and sent her back to the police. Utterly defeated Fateh returned home.

Nights had always been challenging in the village. The soldiers would come knocking, demanding tea or a room to rest. As a result, Fateh's entire family would leave their home to spend night in the safety of some other home. Fateh says, "*The soldiers would be drunk, and unreasonable, they would swear at us, they would barge inside, and keep us under siege, those*

moments were hell". Fateh believed that the soldiers had ulterior motives; asking for tea or questioning was just a "*Bahana/pretence*". They would always be ogling at her and asked for Rubina, which was unquestionably suspicious. Gradually as fatigue set in, the family stopped shifting to other people's homes for the night. Only Rubina would shift for the night, because they feared for her the most.

Fateh passed the first night of Naseeb's arrest in vigil with a few family and friends. She mistook every creak for either Naseeb returning or the soldiers. At dawn, they all left for the police station where Fateh's compliant was again rejected. She was forced to go back to the army camp, where instead of getting any information her brother was detained. After his release a week later they came to know his arm was broken beyond repair during the interrogation. He never regained the use of that arm.

The officer at the police station had acted sympathetically, "*do not budge from the gate, and try to talk whoever enters or leaves the camp, especially the officers. Take all your kids with you, show them your husband is a poor man with many mouths to feed, they might take mercy, if they do nothing, ask them for some parchi (note), then come again, someone might help*". Fateh scoffs at the memory. "*That was mere play-acting. That police-walla had ulterior motives; he pretended to be concerned with my children. He said he would provide money for food and books. The army-wallas tried the same. Some pretended they could get Naseeb released and then they would show up in the night; why did they need to come in the night? They would hang around, demand tea, asking where my daughter was. I got in their faces and would shout at them, I was at the end of my tether, I did not even fear for my life but fearing worse my brothers advised that we not stay at the house during nights. The soldiers were angry that I had filed a case in the high court, their officer came to give me money saying I would get nothing from the*

court, but he would help me.” Not being home during nights became a source of harassment for Fateh. The soldiers counter-alleged that Naseeb was a militant in hiding and not disappeared as Fateh claimed. *“You do go to meet him in the night, don’t you?”* they would say their words laden with innuendo, *“you should come to us too, you make us walk this far for nothing”*.

Days passed into months. Fateh continued her search while all others moved on with their lives. Naseeb passed into the lore as the *“geab/disappeared”* man; one more name in the litany of names whose death and disappearance stood unquestioned in more ways than one.

Ever since Naseeb’s disappearance Fateh wakes up with a strange dread, *“My eyes open and I find myself drenched in sweat. Every sound makes me squirm, I feel as if people are bringing his dead body, or sometimes I think it might be him”*. Fateh has raised her children on the hope that Naseeb is alive. Zaina often dreams of her father coming back, even though she has never seen him. Fateh takes these dreams seriously. After every such dream she visits Baba, who asks her to offer *Tahri*⁴⁵, an offering of yellow rice.

There are times when Fateh broods over the fact that Naseeb might be dead. *“Would he not try to reach out to his children even once, if he was alive somewhere?”* she questions no in particular. *“He loved Zaina so much; he would hold her in her lap as if she was our first child. How could he live without knowing what was happening to his children? He was a loving man; he could never go on without letting his children know he was alive”*. Fateh’s dilemmas often became long monologues because whoever sits nearby has nothing to offer except an ear and a smile that had nothing to do with happiness.

In the initial years Fateh kept up her struggle on all fronts to find Naseeb. She “opened a file” at every state office which would entertain her complaint. She filed a case in the high court; the state human rights commission (SHRC), and became a member of the Association of the

Parents of the Disappeared Persons (APDP). Year after year as Naseeb's "file" grew, her challenged also mounted. She was on the brink of destitution. Hanief and Rubina stopped going to school and began work as laborers.

Hanief often unable to find a job would return home despondent and angry. He was listless and got into fights. Rubina looked for work nearby as she was also responsible for watching her siblings when Fateh would be out working. The younger children attend a government school but without proper nourishment and clothes. Fateh found it hard to keep them motivated. Her meager income was not enough even for basic necessities.

At one level, she felt vindicated that she was able to pursue Naseeb's case at the court and administrative offices, but on another her family was suffering. In a fit of desperation, Fateh applied for government's social welfare plan for widows. Being a half-widow, whose husband was disappeared and not "dead", she found out she was not eligible. Half-widow has become a unique status which lurks between the rough edges of spousal life and death. These women occupy a strange place; a no-man's land, rather a no-woman's land. Amidst the world of disappearance, the possibility of the husband being alive, languishing in some unknown jail is as palpable as his being interred in some unidentified grave or worse, his body thrown into river or jungle for no one to know. Fateh, like many other half-widows does not have the luxury of having a dead body or the privilege of knowing address of any jail where the person might be. So their imaginaries are constantly on the run between an unceasing Safa and Marwa⁴⁶; between what the need of the moment might be; a hungry child or yearning for the person to return; relief or justice.

In order to become eligible for the welfare plan, Fateh needed to become a “full” widow which meant she was in a way contradicting Naseeb’s disappearance. What happens when she agrees to him being dead when she was fighting his disappearance?

Even though as per Indian statutes any married man disappeared for 7 years or more can be officially considered dead, Fateh considered a death certificate an anti-thesis of everything she had done so far to find Naseeb. I had tried explaining that if she got the certificate it did not mean annulment of her legal fight, but it was an uncharted terrain and there was very little precedence of such cases. Many half-widows, who had procured death certificates to get financial assistance from the government as widows, also had their cases at courts and the SHRC. As one half-widow put it, “there is nothing happening anywhere, all of this is a bunch of papers, we pick a sheaf from one desk and put it on the other, and repeat the process and have been for many long years, the only thing different would be my husband returning, and it has not happened so far, so if my case is under appeal in court or at the death certificate office it hardly matters”.

There is very little precedence of half-widows seeking welfare either because they do not know they can get it after 7 years duration or the sum is too paltry. More importantly women whose husbands were militants in most cases do not approach the state. After taking many months to get convinced, Fateh applied for welfare. After two years of intense wrangling with the clerks and officers over every little piece of document, tiny bribes, endless referrals and recommendations Fateh got the Death Certificate and became eligible for a miniscule remuneration.

For days after she got the document, Fateh would ponder in despair, *“I do not know whether to celebrate getting the certificate or mourn Naseeb’s “kagzi mauth”⁴⁷, am I a widow*

now, should I be happy, how can I not believe that Naseeb isn't alive somewhere, I never saw his dead body, how can he be dead, how can I be a widow, how does this paper change things?" She would assure herself by saying *"what will a document do, it does not mean he is dead, it is only for help"*. The assurance however would not comfort her for long. *"It seems I have sold Naseeb in lieu of this money, which is not even enough to buy food for a week, two days at most"*, she would regret. With each passing day she became guiltier, *"what can I do, I am desperate, I know I opened my palms before the same authorities which is an accomplice in disappearing Naseeb"*, Fateh rued.

Before seeking widow welfare, Fateh's well-wishers had persuaded her to apply for the ex-gratia relief program which the government has for victim families whose kin has disappeared or been killed. This can only be given if the victim was not linked to the militancy and the family had to give an undertaking to that effect and in case any links to militancy showed up the amount had to be returned and same for if the disappeared returned. Fateh abandoned the case, because it required a lot of time to pursue the papers from one office to another and also she did not have the money to pay the corrupt officers who would not move the papers until their palms were greased. There was another reason Fateh felt guilty about applying for ex-gratia, *"It would be like selling Naseeb, I want justice not relief"*.

Along with the ex-gratia case Fateh also gave up pursuing the case in the high court. Although Hurriyat Conference, which is a 28 pro-resistance party conglomerate founded in early 90's, helped her file the case, Fateh Jaan she was unable to spare money for the trips to the city. She also faced problems in leaving the children behind as she had not one to watch them. Fateh is waiting for Hanief to find a stable job and then intends to revive the case, but she is skeptical of getting justice.

“It seems like a drama on TV, these courts and offices, I won the case at SHRC (State Human Rights Commission), then what happened, no compensation was given, no one was punished, we never found out what they did to Naseeb”, Fateh says.

Fateh has won a favorable judgment in the case she had filed against the army with the SHRC. The case had drawn on so long, and she was brutally cross examined by the defense. “*I stood by my words, even when they tried to force me into saying incorrect things*”, says Fateh. She did not recant any statement of hers against the army officer and the battalion whom she faced as a witness to Naseeb’s disappearance, despite the threats she received from the army. She identified the army regiment as well as the officer as the main perpetrator in disappearing Naseeb. The SHRC judgment confirmed that the Naseeb had been picked up the Indian “*security forces*⁴⁸”; an oxymoronic term if ever there was one.

Fateh’s case joined other cases which proved that enforced disappearances were a matter of policy in the counter-insurgency technique used quite rampantly in the 90’s and early 2000’s. The SHRC statement borrowing from a Supreme Court judgment states in a very discreet way they were “*mindful of what is frequently happening during these days. Persons are kidnapped in the sight of others and forcibly taken out of sight of all others and later kidnapped or killed*”. Nevertheless, on the question of punishment to the army men who arrested Naseeb the SHRC remained silent, except mild chastising without taking the authorship and tracing it through the Supreme Court judgment. It did however refer to the army’s behavior as tantamount to “cover-up” for justifying the disappearance. Rehabilitation for Fateh Jaan was recommended. This judgment came in the year 2008. Fateh Jan never received any compensation or any other form of relief, nor was she interested in receiving any. The fact was that the SHRC is a recommendatory body and cannot penalize anyone. What did come from the judgment was that

the army tried to get Fateh into covert negotiations through police and informers to accept a certain sum of money and take the case back from the court, which she refused despite their overt and covert threats.

After getting the death certificate Fateh fell into a major depressive episode. I visited her in the early winter, and a 16 year record breaking cold was descending on Kashmir. Fateh's house was cold. In summer the entire family had pitched in to layer the ceiling with mud to create insulation against the cold. Seemingly it did not work; now the ceiling was flaking and a cold wave seeped into the house. Fateh lay in a ragged quilt, shivering and mumbling, *Naseeb will not come now; he was killed twice, first by the soldiers, now by the document/paper; what could I do, I have kids to feed, I do not want the younger ones to stop school too?"*

Towards the mid-summer she was recovering. She had resumed her visits to the mystic-seer who had assured her that all will be well. He had divined that Naseeb probably was alive but in a dark pit like room and his skin was sallow. Naseeb and the children talked about it, the younger daughter tried to identify the place that Baba might be talking about. Hanief in a smug fashion chipped in, "all jails are dark, it's a no brainer, he could be in any jail". Fateh whispered to me, *"I fear he said a pit like room, could it be a grave, but then he said his coloring is sallow, if it was a corpse he saw it would have no skin by now, am I right?"* I nodded while Fateh indicated she was visiting the Baba again in the coming week.

In the end, Fateh she did not receive any monetary assistance through the widow-welfare because there was still paperwork required by another associated office and Fateh just did not care to pursue it further. *"Bey-raham (merciless) from every angle"* she called the procedure, *"We will work harder, I do not need relief, let us see what happens"*.

On 11th of June 2012 which was the 10th anniversary of Naseeb's disappearance, on Baba's behest Fateh has cooked Tahri (an offering of rice cooked with turmeric. It was a milestone year and he had asked Fateh to add a whole chicken to the rice and distribute to the needy. Fateh joked, "*the best is to keep it to ourselves, who is needier than us*".

While the children ran to distribute the Tahri to the neighbors in chipped plastic bowls and to the pedestrian's outside, Haneif was talking about "when Papa's return". He was excited to show me Naseeb's death certificate, which he prodded out from the ceiling where it was kept in a plastic bag with other paperwork. The girls sat close, curious to see "*Papa ki certificate/Father's certificate*". They touched the pale sheet of paper gingerly, running their fingers over the government of Jammu and Kashmir insignia with "Certificate-e-Maut" (Death certificate) emblazoned on top: the two words an awkward amalgam of English and Urdu. A plate of yellow rice sprinkled with sea salt and fried onions, sat in our middle, an obeisance for Naseeb's safe return – someday. Fateh urged me to eat and take some home. The thin line that separates the real and the false seemed blurry as Fateh put a fistful in a tiny plastic bag and shoved it in my bag. All I could hear were her loud supplications for Naseeb's return, while she chided the children to keep the certificate back safely and run to distribute the yellow rice to people outside.

Naseeb's death certificate is returned to the same file with the documents pertaining to Naseeb's disappearance. In the end, it seems the "*kagzaat*" amount to nothing. They are almost a protracted engagement, a kind of "gap-filling". The disappeared – how to mourn them, remember them: there is no precedence having a "disappearance" and to deal with such an event becomes a complex series of engagements and it seems these processes become a part of alternate forms of mourning.

Conclusion

In this chapter I traced how memory manifests in Kashmir. I trace the processes of archive and repertoire in how they become resistance in invisible forms, enmeshed in life's daily rituals. The acts of remembering become spectacles, contrary to what the state wants people to behold. The archive becomes a site of preservation of a traumatic history which becomes an important part of the gendered politics. The archival-repertoire here does not include classic activities like theatre or dance but a performance of everyday, a way of living; where the disappeared has been assimilated into life; embodied as a hauntology, a knock about to come, or a reverse pregnancy or what is at the heart of this chapter, an archival impulse. The archival impulse becomes a part of discursive performance, which becomes a rupture pointing to what India wants to make invisible and what Kashmiris specifically women want to make visible. The performance here is animated through archives, specifically the archival impulse. The archive defines the contours of gendered agency and power. The great length to which the women go to procure the documents in order to archive the disappearance remains at the core of this struggle. It enables conjuring the ghosts of the disappeared, a ghosting, a hauntology through discursive visualization of the disappeared, which is the beginnings of acting politically and it exceeds the live. The archives become a prop in this performance of ghosting, which is aimed to alter future phantoms.

Chapter 7

Obliterations & Transmutation – Between Public and Private

Repertoire

The question that this chapter tries to answer is not only how does memory “become” in times of oppression and war but also what becomes of memory? Not only how is it produced in face of state’s repressive policies but also how does it stay and inform, more importantly in what forms? In a time of unspeakable violence, it seems like there is no space for memory, which does not mean forgetting or that no one remembers. The state is in the process of thwarting memory; it is bent on repressive erasure (Connerton 2011) but it also creates a space for counter-memory (Foucault 1977). What does counter memory do? How does it come about; is it a way of remembering or selective forgetting? Does it remember, retell or commemorate? Does the subjugated knowledge that counter-memory produces make visible the “disappeared” or makes invisible “that what must not be seen/what the state does not want seen”?

Most of the time scholarship views archive and repertoire as separate (Taylor 2003). In this chapter I trace the contours of how archive and repertoire work together to constitute and transmit social knowledge (Taylor 2003) and become a mode of counter-memory. The archive and the repertoire are enmeshed, with the archive subsumed within the repertoire which is grounded in the social drama of the disappearance (Turner 1980) that animates the lives of these women (and also men). The epistemological categories of the archive and the repertoire, though separate, one dealing with the majesty of the written word, and the other with the ephemera of words and gestures, collapse into each other or commingle in an invisible way in the agentic performance of everyday (Das 2007). In the ethnographic illustrations that follow I hope to understand what is at risk politically and what ways of becoming emerge through this embodied

knowledge and performance (which itself disappears)? If this pursuance and preservation of documents, this archival impulse attempts to make visible the disappeared in a repertoire of an embodied knowledge, what are the limits of such an affective journey? How does repertoire store and transmit social memory? Whose memories and traumas disappear if we privilege the archive over the repertoire of embodied experience or knowledge?

This chapter illustrates the motif of repertoire and reveals how it is used to create a discourse that ensures a sustained memory and memorialization in the absence of formal memory making structures and existence of hegemonic state apparatus bent on erasure. At the scene of protest which the APDP stage every month and any other places they congregate, become events to mark the “disappearance.” Sometimes it is a funeral, replete with laments and mourning. At other times it might even be a wedding, a joyous celebration and which morphs into remembering those who are absent; young sons, or husbands who have been disappeared. Memory and its making becomes the turf of inversions and transmutations; both facets of transgressions, something that the counter-memory is composed of. In this chapter I juxtapose two scenarios, one of a wedding and the other of the public protest. I illustrate how these two events manifest the obliteration in the social fabric. I explore how routines and given social facts transmute and morph; and how the “archival-repertoire” emerges in this subalterity and what it does to recuperate in times of loss and disappearance and repression. However, these were not the questions that came to my mind when Saja invited me to the wedding of her two granddaughters. She extended the invitation to me during an APDP protest; sitting huddled, knees close to her chest, her rheumy green eyes staring at nothing as she held my hand tight.

Saja is an 80 year old woman, her face crisscrossed with lines; it always reminds me of an old sepia toned map of some forgotten country. A member activist of APDP Saja had lost 4

sons. Sameer, the youngest one was forcibly “disappeared” by the army. Two sons were militants and allegedly killed in encounters while one was killed in custody after being picked up by the army. A week after she extended the invitation, I found myself in a vehicle speeding towards Saja’s home in one of the remote villages in Kashmir, which takes about half a day to reach from the capital Srinagar. I accompanied Parveena and a few other APDP staffers who were also invited. I thought of Saja, and how the trip must be uncomfortable for her not only because of the distance but the sheer inconvenience of having to change several connections in order to reach the city where she came in connection with APDP engagements every month.

We sped by the countryside; its sheer beauty gurgling like a child’s hearty giggle during a somber event. The pines leaves swayed in the rain, the soldiers stood underneath taking shelter, and the mountains were dotted with bunkers surveilling barren stretches of land, deserted roadsides, and terrace filled with paddy, flocks of lazy herds, sleepy hamlets, forgotten trails and highways. The scenery was lush with daffodils, wild mint, mustard, and an occasional patch of wild marijuana. Tall colonnades of poplars on the highway were interwoven with concertina wires, which also ran across and through to create interruptions for pedestrians, livestock and traffic. The craggy wire barricades stood between what people saw as obstruction and soldiers deployed for their own safety. These metal interventions were reminders of invisible war that loomed like a shadow behind every beautiful scene. The poplar trees and the streetlights were marked by three strokes of orange, green and white: the tricolors of the Indian flag.¹ Huge cloth banners sponsored by the army directed to “*Slow Down Convoy Approaching with regards from 77 RR.*” Billboards donning the serene country roads declared “*Awam and Jawan, Aman Ke Naam / The soldier and the civilian: dedicated to peace.*” These banners alluded to the variety of programs that the army was conducting with the youth groups through Operation Goodwill. The

entire group in the car scoffed at the banners, dismissing them as “*makarel*.”² Parveena grimaced; the young staffer said aloud “*wetchew, mera qatil hi mera munsif hay/see, my murderer is my defender.*” The mountainsides were etched with the name “India” and the army battalions manning the area. The young APDP staffer said, “*they are putting their marks on everything, as if we need reminding they are here; they want to erase everything Kashmiri, but we know India is a ‘makar’, we will not fall for it.*”

The politics of erasure, starkly seen in enforced disappearances of men seemed underway in other aspects. There seemed a constant move towards limiting Kashmiri imagination to accept the ideal of India and to push it to encompass the idea of full intergration. We passed by a notorious army camp where Parveena said she would always be stopped in the past. The camp was situated on a steep hill side. The only structure visible was the high wall; a tall brick lookout and a stodgy bunker covered with a wire-mesh, layered with a huge a welcome banner.

“*See a Welcome; big deal welcome, comes with either a bullet or beating and free side of humiliation*”, said the young APDP staffer in anger.³ The entire length of the camp was covered with multiple layers of concertina wire and empty bottles of liquor hung from the high wire-fences like necklaces, probably used as makeshift alarms in case someone tried to intrude. On the fortified wall which faced the road hung pictures of Kashmir’s well known lakes, mountains, glaciers and gardens. The contrasting motifs of welcome and hostility, pretence and piety, visibility and invisibility seemed telling of the politics of visibility of the Indian nation in Kashmir. It seemed there could not be any other odd sight than a notorious army camp decked with “touristy” pictures. The group in the car categorized the entire mis-en-scene as “*makarel*.”

Parveena reminisced, “*They have stopped me many times; at the height of militancy when I went to Saja’s house with a documentary filmmaker. I hid the camera in a vegetable basket, they took us for questioning, it was harder then, they did not let a fly get through easily, I*

*exchanged heated words with them, they were so rude, we did not say the lady with me was a filmmaker”.*⁴

A few paces ahead the soldiers stopped us. They began checking the vehicle, rummaging through our bags and gifts of fruits we were taking for Saja. They poked every surface with batons and the barrels of their guns. Upon questioning, Parveena did not divulge our real identities and introduced me as a tourist. When I was directly questioned, I said I had come from America. “Amrika”, the soldier repeated in Hindi, “accha/ok.” He seemed unimpressed, as he cursorily glanced over the identity cards that our driver and the other male companions were asked to produce. Of course it is mandatory for Kashmiri men to carry identity cards. Parveena did not have to show her identity card; indeed she did not even carry one. As aforementioned women are not held to the standard of having an ID card very strictly; they may or may not have one. I for one, seemed beyond any stricture – since I was from “Amrika” and a woman, I was dismissively ordered to “get in the car.” Incidentally, all visitors from outside and tourists are not asked for identity cards. A non-kashmiri visage and dress, different language seemed to help transcend the constraints of surveillance enforced on Kashmiris.

We reached Saja’s one storey home after a few hours. She and her huge extended family all swarmed out to welcome us. I wondered how four families live in such a small tight space, where Saja lived separately in one of the 5 rooms. Her three surviving sons occupied the rest along with their families. Saja was raising Heena,⁵ Sameer’s 13 year old daughter. Heena’s mother (Saja’s daughter-in-law) was raising her three other children at her parent’s house.

It was the wedding of Saja’s granddaughters (her eldest son’s daughters). The brides were dressed in inexpensive pink and red dresses and fake costume jewelry; a radiant contradiction to the spartan surroundings. They sat in the corner traditionally in a dressed up corner. In their case instead of an expensive carpet they are sitting on a padded mattress covered with a fitted sheet.

The guests are sitting on a rough mat wet with the slush everyone has dragged in while coming in from the rain. Saja sat huddled in the middle, her hands hugging her knees; her pose very reminiscent of the way she sat in the protest.

There were no men in the room, which was bursting at the seams with women of all ages, excited little boys, and flustered toddlers suckling at their mother's breast. Interestingly a tiniest old man, his face deeply wrinkled who could be considered beyond any gender stands outside peering in with his face pressed hard against the window screen; you could almost feel his legs tottering. This I recall not for anything else, but the sheer innocence of his curious face peeking inside. Behind him in the courtyard a hazy crowd of men were fussing around the makeshift hearth on which the wedding feast was being cooked. They were panicking to cover the hearth with tarpaulin against the rain. Smoke rose into the wet air as the men ran helter-skelter, trying to save the fire.

Inside the room, the women were sitting packed together on damp floor. We sat near the brides, in the prized area - half on the damp rug and half on the raised mattress. The women were throatily singing "wanwun" - traditional wedding songs. Wanwun has a set repertoire of songs. There might be mild changes in lyrics from region to region owing to dialect, and other regional peculiarities. The songs are based on simple themes. The ones sung initially are invocations to Allah, or Prophet Mohammad peace be upon him, some honor local saints. There are comical ones which poke fun at the bride, groom, or their families and others pivot around wedding festivities and long tested themes of love and romance. The songs in wanwun cannot be traced to any particular poet; though popular poetry albeit with simple rhythmic variations is often sung. Songs of Habba Khatoon⁶ are especially sung with popular variations. Women improvise old classics, or more notably they come up with impromptu whimsical renditions, making them more

relevant to the occasion. The songs of “wanwun” are dialogic and constantly improvised. Once a version becomes popular, professional wedding singers will improvise them further. After the new versions segue into the mainstream repertoire, a new version might evolve, and as such no one is credited for the lyrics.

The women in the room were singing and laughing raucously. A tiny woman named Jamila, wearing a sweaty blue Shalwar-Kameez got up. The ladies who were sitting down moved away, forming a small circle in the middle, just enough for Jamila to plant her feet. Jamila arranged her gauzy scarf over her hair, and it fell down over her back and bosom. Satisfied that she was well covered, she started to twirl on her toes. Parveena accepted a Tumbhaknaari⁷ which she tightly held in the crook of her left arm; just like a baby. She began to beat it gently with the tips of her fingers, picking up the rhythm. An old lady held the “Nout” which is a simple earthen pot that she beat with her ringed finger and a copper spoon. Heena⁸ who was sitting close to Saja played the Chumta.⁹

Jamila began to whirl. She raised her right hand over her head and began circling with some intricate footwork. Jamila quickened her steps with the rising music. She reminded me of a whirling Dervish; the movement manifesting a sheer joy, bordering on abandon. This dance will not be easily visible in Kashmir. It is not danced much except in private often gender segregated marriage parties. Even then women may be in the background for much of the dances are done by cross-dressing professional wedding dancers. On the other hand, the wanwun is recognized as the women’s forte “zanan gawun/women’s songs”. It has a set method of singing. There are usually two groups of women engaged in a lyrical repartee or it can also be just a lead singer and chorus. One group or the singer will take the lead, and sing a line which will be repeated by the other group. In between this sending and receiving of lyrics, the groups will pause and make a

peculiar “Ahn” sound which can be understood as the cue to improvise if need be, after which the other group does the “ratun” or receiving, followed by their response. In this soiree, Jamila was the lead singer and they had been singing since morning.

In a very raspy but steady and a strangely attractive voice Jamila sang (here I present the translation):

*“We used to go to college,
We used to look good together, the two of us
We were separated, me and my beloved
We began fighting, me and my beloved”*

The women had exhausted most of the songs and they did not have an agreement on which song to sing next. I saw Heena nudging Saja. I thought she was tired from playing the Chumta and wanted someone else to take over. Saja leaned towards me saying Heena¹⁰ wanted “papa-en baeth” roughly meaning that she wanted to sing “her Papa’s songs.”

Saja addressed Jamila. Unfortunately I could not catch what Saja said to her. Jamila looked intently at Heena and began a long lyrical wail “Waaaaay, wayyyyhh.” The other ladies including Parveena joined her, “Waaaaay, wayyyyhh”. This wail is customary lyrical expression of pain often used in eulogies or songs of melancholic nature. The haunting sound threw me off balance. I was not ready for listening to anything that sounded less than joyous and rapturous. Jamila went on for a minute or more, wailing and whirling faster as the beats quickened. Heena clanged the Chumta faster against the copper pot; her face shining. She moved closer to her grandmother, who winced as if hurt. An old woman in the corner who had been pouring pink salt tea from a copper samovar¹¹ joined the orchestra by beating the hot samovar with a copper ladle. Jamila’s scarf fell under her feet, but she continued to dance. She seemed to have forgotten the strict decorum of covering her bosom and hair.¹²

Jamila began singing,

“My beloved, my beloved, my ruthless beloved

“Come to me in the flower garden, my love”. The chorus repeated the lines.

Jamila: *The Indian armed forces have come to raid*

“The Indian armed forces have raided Andra-gam (name of a village). The chorus repeated twice. After which Jamila stopped for a brief moment; her eyes rested on Saja and Heena; she sang at the top of her voice, raspy and steady – *Gaahb, korkhay Rafiq-jan bechaara ho (poor Rafiq-jan¹³ has been disappeared).*

Saja sat quiet; her tiny frame huddled even tighter. Heena joined the chorus with gusto, her sallow face glistening with sweat. The chorus continued to sing, *“My beloved, my beloved, my ruthless beloved/Come to me in the flower garden, my love.”* Jamila paused, and wails - *There has been a raid (by the Indian armed forces/The Indian armed forces have raided Bon-pora (name of a village).* The chorus repeated twice. Jamila paused, continuing to twirl and sang in a high pitch, *“poor Uncle-‘lal’¹⁴ has been disappeared”*. When the chorus repeated, as if on cue Jamila whirled faster, becoming a blur. The chorus continued to sing, *My beloved, my beloved, my ruthless beloved, Come to me in the flower garden, my love.”*

The song stretched to more than half-an hour, as new names, of those who had disappeared or had been killed by the Indian army were commemorated. Although the space in the room did not allow more than one person to stand, two young girls got up and joined Jamila in dancing. One had lost her voice, probably from the preceding wanwun soirees, but she lead in calling out names of several men together. Saja turned to me, whispering amidst the music, *“these women will go crazy, they have been singing mujahid-baet¹⁵ all night, her brother and maternal Uncle were both killed, she seems to have lava inside.”* The mujahid-baet loosely

translates into songs of “warriors.” These are songs commemorating the lives, deeds and martyrdom of militants “mujahids” fighting the Indian army. Even though not all men who were commemorated were mujahids, they were all perceived as martyr who had sacrificed their lives in Kashmir struggle.

A woman entered asking “hey salamun wanwuy” (did you mention Salam?). Salam is her cousin who had been killed, and she was making sure he was mentioned. The women also added expository lyrics, which could have been directly relevant to the person being remembered or just an interesting add on. They imagined scenarios of death, of waiting, or “of still being somewhere”; there were also subtle jabs at the Indian state, army, police and state administration and those who were perceived as responsible for the atrocities on these men.

Jamila added a line which took a jab at the bureaucracy, “tcha chukh afsar tche be karthass mara-ho” (you are an officer, you made me miserable (the word she uses for “making miserable” actually is the word for being/getting killed in Kashmiri). Another verse extols the man who was martyred ; mentioning him as a helpless and noble father to “many daughters” waiting with “hennaed” palms. This was symbolic of saying he had daughters of marriageable age. Jamila took another jab at army men who look like “shister” (iron). Another song was sung from the perspective of a wife of a killed man, who has been left alone in a hostile world while the man (soul) has proceeded to a better state in “jannat” (heaven), by dying a martyr’s death. In this song, there is a strong current of “giving” up one’s life voluntarily to death as an offering rather than being killed, even though many men had been killed randomly.

During the pause Parveena added a few names and sang throatily, wiping her eyes. Sajas came closer to her and they hugged. In one of the pauses she leaned towards me and said “*I mentioned my nika (term of endearment for a little boy) and Mughli’s Nazir. I have promised her*

to always mention his name.” The women chorused after her: *I will keep calling you, I will keep calling you.*

The memory in the room was thick. Most eyes in the room were dry; the voices steady. The song stretched long, as the women called many more names¹⁶ culled from pasts made hazy. They seemed intent to pry every name; they pointed to each others temples, nudging to recall names that could have been forgotten. It seemed like they were lifting moss and dirt from old on imaginary tombstones. The gaiety which surrounds a wedding gave way to something laden, and heavy. Young children looked expectantly at the faces of their elders, and accompanied them in calling out names. While the songs were being sung and the names were being recalled the hennaed hands of the brides were being admired simultaneously. The brides were part of the chorus as well, singing at high pitch, *“I will keep calling you, I will keep calling you.”*

The work of memory inside the room was in stark contrast to the state of siege outside the room. The repression by the Indian state is evident in the censorship on all expression: it manifests in news reports, columns and books that are published in Kashmir and which pussy-foot around how to retell the stories of human rights violations, of killings and disappearances, of the political will of people. The repression is evident right there in the wedding; in the post and pre-wanwun time; these heartbreaking human rights tragedies became vague postscripts¹⁷ in the conversations. No one referred to those killed and disappeared in Saja’s family as the brides were leaving their parental home. There was little acknowledgement of the tears that the brides shed for their dead and disappeared uncles, who they were missing on their most important day.

The mechanics of state administration and the prevalent counterinsurgency laws focus on erasing the haunting memories of Kashmiris. There is a tacit policy which ensures that punitive measures are taken against those who resist or memorialize. The state enforces a silence¹⁸, which

can manifest as a blatant censorship or penalization of any pro-resistance narrative, symbol or event. The hyper-visibility of nationalistic symbols of India and the surreptitious appropriation of Kashmiri ethos and intergrating it with Indian ideals has also become a part of silencing Kashmiris. The normal routines of how people commemorate and rememeber their dead – those killed in the violence have become impossible. In the case of disappearances, the entire idea about a good disappearance for the state is to disappear “without a trace”; and yet memory gushes out from the unlikeliest of places. Amids the wedding at Saja’s house it seemed that the cultural memory won over the official history.

The APDP often has to counter the state’s official numbers which in the last 22 years have waxed and waned as far as the disappeared are concerned. It seems that the state interchangeably brushes the disappearances under the carpet, or creates confusions around numbers and nature of disappearances. The state statistics of the disappearances have changed from year to year; from party to party and from politician to politician – in numbers ranging from a ridiculous 60 to around 4000. The State officials also use the word “missing” instead of “disappeared.” They claim that most of the disappeared have been militants and might be in custody or stranded across the border in Pakistan or been killed at the border.

In the wedding, a strange juxtaposition of grief and joy appeared. It is often that the appearance of grief makes joy invisible, and vice versa, but at that moment I saw them forced together, transmuted into each other: a bride singing a funerary song, a wedding becoming a space of mourning, remembrance, telling, retelling and commemoration. Grief and joy conjoined. The retelling became a subtle subversion in the innards of deep sociality where the state cannot tread easily. Even if surveillance and self-surveillance is rampant outside; in these moments under the mask of a wedding, memory not only becomes visible but is also transmitted

to the younger generations who listen and absorb wide-eyed. The men disappeared and killed become invincible mythical figures who had once been part of the village firmament.

As the wedding *wanwun* progressed an invocation to Allah was interspersed with prayers for Kashmir's freedom from India. The women sang many songs extolling early freedom fighters (most of the deceased/killed), calling them by name and narrating the scenarios of their valiant fight with the army. This became a telling gesture in consolidating the contextual history of those dead and disappeared. The wedding soiree became a private history lesson away from the formal spaces of schools. In contemporary Kashmir children learn more about the Indian Independence struggle and Indian history whereas lessons about history of Kashmir and politics are non-existent. There is a huge chasm between what is formally taught to children, published in the media as well as formally "said" by people themselves in the public and in privacy of their homes.

In the small overheated room, resistance boiled down to memory versus forgetting. The state of India has used every tactic to enforce "forgetting". From a policy of brazen and lethal coercion, the administration and its apologists are trying to promote a theory that peace has returned to Kashmir. Many are using the word "post-conflict" liberally and there are proposals for forming truth and reconciliation commissions. There has always been a push to reconstruct the Kashmir imbroglio as something that happened due to Indian mismanagement and leftover dissatisfactions of 1947 partition. Issues like unemployment, under-development, economic disenchantment and weak infrastructure are portrayed as main factors and made to appear as if they have been addressed and the "disenchanted" Kashmiris will come around. While these issues may have become additive factors, they were not the original triggers. The Kashmir dispute preceded any developmental or economic issues as propagated by the administration.

The Indian administration in Kashmir seems to be in the process of superfluously imposing the myth of normalcy and peace while trying to shove its extra judicial transgressions under the carpet. The Indian national media reports are rife with how the Indian government is investing in Kashmir, encouraging peace processes, generating employment and developing infrastructure. A well-known poet, Zareef Ahmed Zareef expressed this as *“Kashmir has a tumor in its head, and Indian is putting henna on its feet.”*¹⁹ Zareef alludes to the Indian policy in Kashmir which does not address the original aspiration or demand for self-determination and subsequently Independence which many Kashmiris strive for but tries every Michiavellian tactic in the book to forcibly intergrate them. Zareef calls it a politics of whitewashing, and as far as media is concerned he states, *“The Indian media and those in Kashmir who have rented out their pens to India, write there is peace or people are coming round, that whatever has happened should be forgotten, that we should move on for tke sake of development, but Kashmiris will not forget, we remember”*. Zareef juxtaposed two very interesting processes - the “written” word of the state and its collaborators with the “memory” of people. In Kashmiri the word “yaad” (the word Zareef used) stands for memory²⁰ as well as memorizing/memorialization. The state censors every written word, and people/writers take extreme care in what they express in print. However, the traditions which are not practiced in formal “state-public” space seemingly allow commemoration. The songs of wanwun during weddings; the words of dirges amidst funerals – spaces which largely belong to women are lent to memory-making, where the state does not seem to pay heed. It becomes women’s monumental time (Kristeva 1989), which is also the time of other oppressed or marginalized groups and the essence of counter-memory (Sorkin 1989: 175). The import of women’s memorialization is a challenge to the established practices of

remembering and forgetting. The women²¹ excavate subjugated bodies and remember those who have been made to disappear by politically hegemonic practices (Kristeva 1989).

Transmutations: Funereal Celebrations, Outside and Inside

Mughli, Nazir's mother whose deathbed incident I mention in chapter 1 was active worker of the APDP. She was also the central character²² in a documentary titled "Chandav" (The Search), which is much acclaimed for bringing awareness to the issue of enforced disappearances. I had known her very well during my career as a journalist and I began working with her formally as an anthropologist in 2008. Mughli enjoyed my visits to her home²³ and I refrained from forcing interviews for she often complained she was tired of being questioned.

Her house was in the midst of tight alleys in the humbler parts of the old city. At any given time the ramparts were filled with the aroma of cooking, mostly collards and onions, snatches of movie songs, and gurgling gutters, which although putrid strangely seem in place with the centuries old ambience. Once when I went to pick her up for for the monthly protest, she had just finished praying and welcomed me into a room which was her kitchen, bedroom and parlor. It was the smallest room in the house which can only be described as decaying. Mughli had been sick, but she was insistent on coming for the protest. She talked about Nazir, her only son who had been a school teacher and was disappeared in 1990. Mughli's husband had died when she was pregnant with Nazir. She had raised him as a single mother on her earnings from *Pashmina*²⁴ yarn spinning. Mughli was proud of educating and raising Nazir as an upright young man and had been keen to find a bride for him when he disappeared.

"I thought I would be busy chasing grandchildren, and here I am chasing army, courts, police with no success, I am on the road at this age, my home seems like a strangers now", said Mughli. *"Ghar-e-chum na wan Ghar-e basaan"* (home does not seem like a home), she adds. As

we prepare to leave Mughli pulled her large plastic bag from behind the bolster. *“beyti Dapaan ye Kagaz- Lifafa kot gow, ye ghache saethey rozun”*, (I was wondering where I kept the document-bag, it is always close by, I should take it with me”.

The document bag was the same as everyone's – a generic symbol that marked the kin of the disappeared. Mughli gingerly cradled the bag in the nook of her arm and bent uncomfortably to lock the door. I tried offering to hold the bag. She shook her head, tightening her arm just a bit, “ye chu menish theek (it is ok with me). She was reluctant to give the bag to me. The contents of the bag which she interchangeably called a file appeared in my imagination. Documents connected to Nazir's disappearance: court documents, police clearances, and letters from bureaucrats, army, politicians; xerox copies of news reports, dog eared newspapers, old calendars, his scores from schools, diplomas and photographs.

Outside the weathered wooden door to the home which let out an ancient yelp, Mughli cinched the large iron bar into place. We traveled to the protest venue in a noisy but very popular vehicular contraption called auto – a three wheeler automobile with little space for passengers to sit behind the driver. We sat close together with the bag in the middle. Mughli patted the bag as she pulled it to her side, *“ye chu zarori, ye gache asun, kahn chu prechaan, kam cha yewaan, kagaz chu karan katha”* (This should be with me, it is important, someone asks/questions (about Nazir/his disappearance), a lot of people visit, document/paper speaks).

We reached the park, where most of the APDP members had gathered. Located in one of the busiest intersections in the Srinagar city, outside the press enclave, where most of the media outlets are housed. The fountains in the park were dry, and the grass withered at places. A few people were sitting around the park, and the APDP women sat away lined up near a Chinar tree under the glaring August sun. The women had water, children and their kagaz-lifaf (document

bag) at their side or in their laps. The metal fence of the park was emblazoned with a giant plastic poster. It displayed an outline of a male face with side-parted hair. It was a featureless visage; in place of a nose or a mouth it had the names of men who were missing in the custody of Indian army – or who had been ‘disappeared.’ A giant rectangular poster made out of newspapers stood besides the women. A silhouette of man had been cut in the middle. The emptiness it seemed marked the “disappeared man”. A physical manifestation of the disappeared, the empty human-like form appeared as a sign of the bodiless presence of the men who have been subjected to enforced disappearance in the custody of the state. The potent physical absence of the men visible through the bodily presence of the women: mothers, wives and other kin.

The women welcomed Mughli with smiles and yelps of joy. They adore Mughli as a maternal figure and lovingly called her “*Mass-e*”, meaning maternal aunt. Mughli turning to me said, “*Assi chu konuy karbala, be zana yehinz dagh, te yem zanan myean*” (*our Karbala²⁵ is the same, they know my pain and I know theirs*).

The women fanned out as more members poured into the park. They held photographs of their sons and husbands and bag sitting in a planned order. Many children and grandchildren were also present. The younger ones sat on laps while the older ones sat formally with the adults. There were journalists interviewing some members. A girl, whose father disappeared when she was 13, and who was now twenty something and was recently married was being interviewed. Parveena was talking to the journalists while videographers were following the activities closely. There were researchers with notepads and cameras waiting to make contacts with the women. Jana, one of my informants called out to me to translate for her. A foreign journalist from an Italian media outlet, who spoke little English, was interviewing her.

A group of lawyers, human rights activists as well as curious passersby stood close. The men from Jammu and Kashmir policemen, mostly local Kashmiri and could even be friends and neighbors of the women, stood alert in duty. They kept their gazes averted and moped around the group with their guns and batons. Mughli calls out to one police man who was hovering quite close, *“Wala gobre, wal, che tresh (Come son, come, drink some water. “Yeti kanse maji hund” (he too is some mother’s son). “Batta tawan, yeti majboor, bati majboor” (woes of food/belly, he too is compelled/forced, and I am desperate as well), she said to me in a low voice and pulling a wry face.*

The women had to rearrange their sitting position as the photographers wanted them in a better light. This happened often in other protests as well. One lady yelled to another, *“this punishment was pending.”* In this particular protest it was the third time the photographers had asked them to move to a better lighted position. Parveena began to talking to the group. She wanted to use the bullhorn, but said *“Yemin khasi wan shararat / they (police) will get angry). “Yem kam che,yem kya karan pata, kar tche” (who are they, what can they do, use it), yelled a woman and Parveena was encouraged. Soon the air was echoing with lamentations -*

Mayne achen hind nooro,karyo goru, gooro” (the light of my eyes, I will rock you)
Mayne fakiro, karyo goru, gooro” (my hermit-sage, I will rock you).
“Ha gobra-tchooro, tce goyew yo sooro” (Son-stealer, may you turn to ash)
“Mayane Dastgeero²⁶, tche karyo goru guroo” (O Saint Dastgeer, I will rock you)
“Gobru-tchooran kar sooru, Myane Dastgeero” (O Dastgeer turn son-stealers to ash)

The women including Saja, Husna, Mughli and other all joined the chorus. Azi another mother-activist took the lead; improvising -

Mayne sona kani-duro, karyo goru, gooro” (my golden earring, I will rock you)
“Mayne Manzooro²⁷, karyo goru, gooro” (my Manzoor, I will rock you)
“Ha gobra-tchooro, tce goyew yo sooro” (Son-stealer, may you turn to ash)

Saja who was there with Heena, pushed her in front. She was only 2 years when her father disappeared “Who will care for her?” she asked sobbing uncontrollably, gasping for breath. Another mother, Rahati fainted and several women rushed to revive her. Photographers swooped down on the group, jostling for coveted angles: close-ups, long shots. The wailing continued. Parveena who was sobbing uncontrollably was being hugged by another member.

A policeman hovering close by told the APDP staffer in a firm tone: “*Make sure you wrap up soon.*” In the past when the commotion heightened and attracted bigger crowds, and the women did not leave within the time stipulated, the women activists have been beaten and arrested. Since a few years an uncomfortable routine has been established where the women are allowed to protest without making too much noise and dispersed soon after.

The afternoon sun was ceaselessly beating down, as the women continued to sing. A new song was started, which was an improvisation on a popular wedding song. Buried in the lyrics was a direct barb against the enemy (state) of the disappeared who is lovingly referred to as “my beloved bridegroom.” A traditional way to reinforce the magnitude of the tragedy is to refer to the disappeared person as a “bridegroom.” It is a paradoxical way of mourning the joyous possibilities of a life that has been snuffed out.

“Lagya balaya, myane mahrazu, (I will give you my life, my bridegroom)

“Weachen chane tchaye, lagya balaye mahrazo (I look for your shadow (literal), I will give you my life, my bridegroom)

Zool²⁸ zalay tchaney mayi, lagya balaye mahrazo”. (I will light up, for the love I have for you)

Gachan chem chane rayi, lagya balaye mahrazo (I feel you coming often, I will give you my life my bridegroom)

“Dushmanan chanen gowa waye waye, lagya balaye myane mahrazo (may your enemies do waay²⁹, waay, I will give you my life my bridegroom)

“Roni damaan maran grayee, lagya balaye mahrazo (the bells on my hemline are tinkling, I will give you my life my bridegroom).

The women sing about an imaginary scenario of marriage celebration of the disappeared who were unmarried. A stray lyric is inserted to curse the “dushman/enemy” who “disappeared” them, “praying that may woes befall the enemy.” The women insert names of men who have disappeared as they progress with the song. The funereal atmosphere had a patina of forced levity, as the women repeated the lyrics in a lighter tune. This scene was in juxtaposition to the wedding at Saja’s house where the celebrations had turned funereal, and in the protest an imaginary wedding of the disappeared was being celebrated.

A few women left the group to move closer to the fence which was covered by a large poster with pictures of the disappeared. An old woman touched her son’s visage “*az wochum warye kaal amsend shakal, be chass ne hekaan wechthey*” (*today I saw his face; I can’t bear to look at his picture*). Soon the women disperse, and sit in smaller groups, as if in the courtyard of their homes, drinking water and eating fruit handed out by the APDP staffers. Most women in the group would never have thought of sitting like that in public, especially to mourn. The emotions around bereavement in Kashmiri society was especially kept discrete. Families liberally shared their pain with each other and friends, but the mourning was limited to the four walls of the home. This is what was socially expected. The public space was a space of maintaining an appearance of fortitude and patience. It was not a place to mourn.

Parveena once said to me as I asked her about protesting in public “*Pata kya ruud, be drayes saree bazaar, mya oss burkha, pata trow me burka wirke / what remained after, what was there to lose,, I just came into public/bazaar, I used to wear burkha.*” Parveena uses the motif of Burkha paradoxically. Burkha symbolizes piety and segregation from the opposite sex. For Parveena her son’s disappearance forced her to step out of the home, and come into contact with all that was previously an anathema, namely the man’s world of courts and police. Now she sees

the Burkha as redundant. After she has to deliberately initiate contacts with “na-mahram”³⁰ men from all walks of life the motif of piety becomes useless for her.

Parveena said, *“Be asis gare tchoore behan, magar nyechew kadnas randi”* (I would be sheltered in my home, but my son’s pain has dragged me out). Mughli’s narrative resonated similarly, as she said in response to her activism in public, *“be assasya ne na zuni wachmech na aftaban, magar Naziran thawnum ne keheen para, sadake bannownam gara hu, gareh banyoum footpath, yeti chum yewaan karar, dapaan chess kuni kin ma yeyi, yeti gow na gaebh”* (The sun or the moon did not see me, but Nazir’s loss made sure I was seen by everyone, he made this road like a home for me, and my home became like a pavement, I am restless at home, I keep hoping he will appear at the alley corner, just as suddenly as he disappeared/ lost).

For women like Mughli the social constraints on the “outside” have been erased. The road harbors an endless possibility of return of the disappeared, *“Nazir gow na watpethay gayb / Nazir disappeared on the way/on the road”*. The motif of “Gareh/ home” also is undergoing a change. Home was traditionally a secret space: private and secure. Under the situation of violence and militarization homes have lost that sanctity. Many times the cherished homes have become makeshift interrogation centers, where men and women have been tortured, killed and raped. An easy example to understand this would be the cordon and search operations called crackdowns, during which soldiers have been known to barge into homes and check each and every last item. They sift through stockings item, clothes, and trivial household goods; opening up ceilings and floorboards in their search for arms and militants. Many times the search is needless and more as a show of power. It’s the women usually who have to clean up after the mess that soldiers leave behind. Mughli³¹ said, *“home is not a home anymore, what secret or security does*

it have now, they came in with boots, they looted, they molested, there is not much difference with outside now.”

While the home loses its “private/sacred-ness”, Mughli also evoked another scenario where the “public-ness” of outside gets altered: *“we sit on the roads, we were made to do what we did inside the homes, outside, we sat on the roads, we were beaten on the road, what difference does outside and inside have now”*. Mughli alluded to the instances of crackdowns during which most males excluding pre-teens and toddlers are rounded up in an area and taken for identification parades. In the initial years the crackdowns would last for long periods (some for 2/3 days or more), and sometimes women were allowed to bring tea or other eatables to men. The men would partake of the meals wherever they would be sitting, which would mostly be large stretches of land, commonly schoolyards and when those were not available it would be the filthiest stretches of the neighborhood.

During the crackdown the women would be at home, accompanying the soldiers in searching their homes; worried about the menfolk and apprehensive of soldiers raping or molesting them. The soldiers would often be accompanied by a civilian mostly an elder from the area but one who could hardly be seen as a protection, being himself fearful, outnumbered and unarmed. There have been many incidents of rape during the crackdowns when the soldiers took advantage of the siege like conditions (Human Rights Watch 1993). Many women consider the absence of men as being an opportunity for the soldiers to harass them.

A man by the name Hamid³² (whose brother had disappeared) once reminisced about a crackdown saying *“we had to sit for hours, you not only had to sit, but sit in a certain way, on your haunches and not move, if you did, you got beaten, it was like an open prison, we would sit on dirt and feces, even eat there, that is if you got lucky, but what can you do, it is humiliating to*

look back and think how we were made to sit and behave like dogs on the streets and fields, which otherwise were places where we played cricket, imagine these places becoming interrogation centers, and killing fields, a friend of my mine was killed right there, we just turned our backs and boom”.

When the soldiers arrested young boys and men the women would rush out into the streets and sit in “Dharna” (protests/sit-ins) outside the bunkers or army camps pleading for the arrestees. The dharna would take place multiple times if the men were not released and it had to, and it did not guarantee any release. Women would often move the “dharna” from location to location, for example from the bunker to the army camp, or to a politician’s house in hopes of seeking intervention. Sitting in the streets, and being out for long durations, moving between places which were previously avoided by women like police stations and army camps to search for the boys and men became a norm, unlike any in the past culture of Kashmir.

Mughli’s narrative not only outlines but prods at the very heart of the inversions and transmutations that take place in the struggle for memory and resistance. Even her death offers a motif of an inversion which I discuss in earlier chapters. This memory in Kashmir dwells between the state repression and private reiterations. Memory remains hidden in markers. While women utilize the archive and the repertoire to memorialize, men also have a unique way to capture memory. The masculine attempts at memorialization are found on the roadsides, in the tightest of alleys, in the strangest of places.³³ You will not find it unless you look deliberately. It takes effort to crane your neck to find that small signboard that comes up one day, naming a previously unnamed and unremarkable “chowk/crossing” or a bus stop after the name of a disappeared person or a martyr. The object made the focus for naming can be a public faucet, where the plaque is written in the smallest possible font, built hurriedly by the community.³⁴

These markers are put up by the group of men from a locality but not highlighted; no one may notice except those who seek deliberately. One has to look too high on the street light to see the signboard pegged onto it, or read the fine print etched behind the faucet. These markers are remembrances/memories hidden in plain sight; made invisible, because memory in Kashmir also means putting away or hiding. It is interesting to note how the non-hegemonic Kashmiri masculinity has emerged in face of Indian militarization, an illustration of which emerges in the lives of Shabir, Aziz, Assadullah, Basit and others who permeate the pages of this dissertation.

The counter-memory looks to the past for the hidden histories excluded from dominant narratives. It produces subjugated knowledges which become defining narratives of the oppressed and marginalized groups. Everything is either hidden or in the process of being erased or erased for all practical purposes. Enforced disappearance becomes the epitome of the kind of erasure that happens under colonial oppression³⁵. However, following a disappearance there occurs a personal as well a communal mourning of the disappeared. This mourning is a spectacle for all to see. The disappeared persons are without the benefit of being documented, they may appear in a news report or two, but for all practical purposes they are corporeally and documentarily expunged; they are in danger of being forgotten, for the state thwarts any attempt of memorialization and redress.

Conclusion

In this chapter I traced the process of counter memory, how it is a way of remembering and also of selective forgetting and how it commemorates. This process also reveals how the disappeared are made visible or even invisible - that what must not be seen or what the state does not want seen. In the event of the wedding, the archive and repertoire enmeshes and transmits social knowledge. While subjugated knowledges which Foucault says are forms of experiencing

and remembering, make visible “some knowledge”, they also become a condition of possibility for making “something invisible.” The partial erasure which Kashmiri men and women are undergoing under the state of coercion becomes a paradox – people remember to forget lest they are penalized. In events which are hidden from the eyes of the state the memory oozes out becoming testament to the partial erasure, because the state cannot achieve complete erasure of memory and annihilating resistance completely is thus, impossible.

This chapter also shows how counter-memory is produced in a situation of “partial erasures”. The idea of partial erasure, I argue is a state of erasure within the state of exception (Agamben 2005) where not only the disappearances occur but the community and sociality itself are in partial erasure (disappeared), and even the state is in partial erasure. In this partial erasure, routines transmute; meanings are inverted and subverted. A wedding is tempered with funerary songs and a funereal venue becomes a site of wedding imaginaries. A process of incessant subversion of meaning is underway which not only signifies challenges but also leads from and to the spaces of alternate resistance created by people while suffering under surveillance.

Memory becomes an agency, but it also makes invisible that which the hegemonic discourses not want visible. So while the songs “*remember*” each and every man disappeared or killed, *commemoration* is restrained – which is not to say that memorizing has no merit. This is palpable more in the case of men who were militants and therefore whose mention is risky within public discourse. While subjugated knowledge reclaims memory it can also create a second layer of invisibility which might benefit the state’s hegemonic narrative. I think by reclaiming memories under partial erasures, women are also “confining” memory. There is a difference between remembering and commemoration. By confining memory I mean they are not heightened in public memory the same way as a memory of a national hero would be. The reason

being that these disappeared men, whether non-combatants or those who were combatants cannot be valorized the same way as Indian's recall their hero's from the struggle against British India. There is fear of retribution from the state. This, confining memory is an idea to sustain the "memory" in any way up to the point that the state will not find it too subversive beyond which it might crack down on the people/women. This is essentially confining memory because it stays within the ramparts of homes, and often does not travel out for the fear of reprisal. However, it is recalled every now and then, at every instance, through reiteration it is being passed down. Also memory-making occurs in viable spaces, and in this meanings of occasions can be inverted in order to accommodate the confining of memory, which becomes agency.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION - SUBALTERITY WITHIN SUBALTERITY

Anthropology's core enterprise is making sense of the social and cultural order. In the case of the Kashmir valley social order is enmeshed in a war system. The agency that fuels daily lives of ordinary women and men, and which in turn fills the larger ocean of human survival often gets overlooked in the political histories of nations. It is here that I hope my ethnography steps in to reveal the narrative beauty of everyday pursuits of life and justice. I have sought to offer an expansive, sensitive and nuanced disciplinary canvas to illustrate the often ignored courage and agency of average people. While history speaks of nations, anthropology speaks of people who make those nations; and more importantly who endure the making and unmaking of those nations. This dissertation tells the story of Kashmir and its people from the vantage point of women from whom basic security of home and hearth has been snatched by the desire of Indian nation-state. From this perspective state power, militarization, and resistance are revealed in new ways.

As of this writing, one of my key informants Parveena Ahangar is at the University of Westminster in London, chairing a conference on commemoration of the 25 years after the Tianeman Square tragedy. In London Parveena will also address the British Parliament about the current state of affairs in Kashmir. This is another instance illustrating how the politics of mourning which Parveena symbolizes and the genesis of which I have traced to Husna's door, manifests itself in diverse, contemporary political and intellectual scenarios. This instance resonates with my concept "affective law"; the motif of the activist mother (and by implication the half-widow as well) and all those who have sometimes been technically termed (or many times dismissed as) the accidental activist becomes pivotal through its inclusion into

contemporary narratives and understandings of politics, justice, law, and gender. The gendered politics of mourning which many times has been relegated to just being the women's thing has become one of the important testaments central to the project of exposing the "terminal occupation" (Lamb 1991) of Kashmir within India.

This study primarily reveals how and why women become activists and how they embody activism against the Indian policy of enforced disappearances. While this speaks of women's experiences it also traces the protracted tragedy of Kashmiri people who have languished between machinations of Indian and Pakistani nationalistic politics since 1947. In addressing the concerns of feminist studies about gendered agency and dynamics as they exist in non-Western (but increasingly Westernizing) settings this dissertation offers several insights. The domination of women over the APDP movement reflects the changing dynamics of gender in response to extreme militarization. Part of my project thus became an attempt to trace and recover women's agency and voice.¹ I have shown how the life of APDP activists has become crucial to social relations and practices of politics in Kashmir, a significance which cannot be ignored anymore. When Mughli (about whom I talk in previous chapters) died, many newspapers reported her passing. The stories were written with a sincere human interest angle – largely aimed at tugging the hear-strings. Mughli was stereotypically framed as a grieving "mother." A naïve overview of her work was projected ignoring how she had become a leader, transcending her personal grief and speaking for all the disappeared men and their families. The headlines recorded: "the lonely mother dies," and "mother pining for her son dies heartbroken."² Thus, Mughli's long history of protest was reduced to a story of her grieving. Her decades' long activism was subsumed under the casual phrase that "she had been a member of the APDP." In short her in the official news reports of her death, Mughli's agency was eroded, if not erased

entirely.³ In a similar vein, non-activist Kashmiri women whose sons or husbands have disappeared are presented in news reports simply as victims, passive and without agency. Such representations, clearly, are not unique to Kashmiri women who combat the ravages of war and still manage to sustain the social and political pressures in the absence of men. Similar resonances abound in the images of the Burkha-clad women in war-razed Afghanistan and the Mater Dolorosa in the Global South.⁴ The narratives of “victimology” used to portray women in such war situations often obscures women’s experience, survival skills, and everyday acts of resistance to construct only a passive image of women in need of help.⁵

This study contributes to the scholarly efforts aimed at recovering the agency of women which has been a major engagement of other scholars in the South Asian context as well. There have been efforts across disciplines to bring to light the “consistent gendered resistance” (Ghosh 2008:4). In doing so, this study presents the complexities inherent in analyzing the various forms of resistance strategies adopted by women in their everyday lives. The intricacies of women’s lives such as in the setting of Kashmir are often misconstrued by Western scholarship where women have been by and large studied as mere ‘representations’ or ‘sites’ for the play of dominant discourses. Their active roles and agency are almost erased from history. This is particularly the case for Muslim women. It is certainly ironic that an approach that has done so much to criticize Orientalist essentialism has also reinforced the stereotype of the passive woman. Not only is the colonial domination deprived of all complexities and variations, more crucially women are stripped of agency.⁶

What the work of APDP reveals, and by implication what each woman activist represents is a triumph of “*subalterity within subalterity.*” The overarching Kashmiri patriarchy is the “subaltern” within Indian masculine militaristic apparatus. Kashmiri woman within that

subalterity of “Kashmiri men” form another layer of “feminine” subalterns. Historically Kashmiri patriarchy has been benevolent for it did not create hurdles in women’s intellectual or economic growth in the last 70 years or so. Kashmir’s patriarchal structures were flexible enough to allow women’s education and their entry into mainstream professions.⁷ However in the environment of increasing militarization, Kashmiri masculinity remains extremely coerced and repressed. Women in public protests or acting as chaperones of men are telling of the onslaught that Kashmiri patriarchy has faced under the militaristic governance of the Indian state. As I have shown this mode of gender dynamics reveals social invisibility of women and the overarching helplessness of their male counterparts.

In the larger Western feminist paradigm APDP activism which is focused on retrieving men can also be criticized for its attempt to restore the traditional family. The traditional family structure is seen as a power construct which imposes oppressive rules on women. In that context, conveying women as passive recipients has been predetermined by the approaches that scholars have adopted. Very little room remains for women to be perceived as conscious agents when they are projected as a monolithic and oppressed entity (Anagol 2008). A significant question to engage with here is to understand why women participate in patriarchal systems?⁸ Towards understanding these complex relationships current models of both power and resistance are both inadequate to understand what Veena Das has called the delicate work of self-creation (by women). The relation between violence and subjectivity is through the construction of subjectivity which women make by occupying the very signs of injury and giving them meaning not only through narration but by the work of repairing relations (Das 2007:78) and through forging continuity and forms of community in the devastation (2007:74). This dissertation is a story of those continuities which women create through their politics of mourning and also how

they depart in myriads ways from their pre-enforced disappearance existence. The activism of women and the associated social and political awareness in light of the universal human rights paradigm has forever changed them. Their experiences have morphed into tools which they utilize not only for alleviating their own suffering, but that of their comrades in APDP and they apply this wisdom to life and people outside their activism. The extent of their social and political growth can be measured fully if the men were to return. But to date, the disappearance of men, as a punitive measure continues to remain an open wound. An unprecedented form of punishment implemented by India, enforced disappearances continue to baffle the society and the close kin of the disappeared men. Everything around the disappearances is in flux and nothing is for sure. In the case of a person killed (combatants or non-combatants) the family gains closure by accepting the martyrdom. In the case of disappearance, it seems the state foreclose even that possibility. This dissertation has grappled with how the women make sense of the disappearance, and how their activism emerges as a politics of daily life through which they confront, resist and subvert what is strongly perceived as an occupation by India.

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NOTES ON CHAPTERS

DEDICATION

"... Mujahid is the warrior who undertakes Jihad." See Robinson 2013.

¹ This was said by Azi Begum, mother of Manzoor Ahmed who disappeared in custody of the Indian army in 1996. Interview with Ather Zia, dated July 11th 2009

² Fishlock Trevor 2002 A Tragic Feud Baltimore Sun, Accessed at http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2002-01-13/topic/0201120221_1_india-and-pakistan-kashmir-hari/2

INTRODUCTION

¹ The word disappearance, in the context of Kashmir, operates as a verb (i.e. as "made to disappear" rather than disappear). The word "disappeared" here indicates a disappearance caused by the state, which is what the general use of the word is in Kashmir. My informants did make use of the term "gaeb kermit," which means, roughly, "those who have been disappeared." In Latin America when enforced disappearance became a tool of repression first used by Haiti, Brazil and Guatemala in the 1960s (followed by Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile and Argentina) to accurately describe what was happening, people had conceived of an active interpretation of the verb to disappear in the Spanish language. "Disappeared" has become an euphemism for 'arrest, deport, torture in clandestine detention centres and dump in a location where tortured remains are unlikely to ever be found. See Vranckx Ann 2007, A long road towards universal protection against enforced disappearances, Aser Insitute, Accessed http://www.asser.nl/default.aspx?site_id=9&level1=13337&level2=13350#_Toc158263795

² Indian-administered Kashmir henceforth referred to Kashmir Valley

³ A report titled *Alleged Perpetrators: Stories of Impunity in Kashmir* alleged Perpetrators a report by IPTK/APDP examines 214 cases of human rights violations and for the first time, the role of 500 alleged perpetrators in these crimes. It states that, "out of 214 cases a list emerges of 500 individual perpetrators, which include 235 army personnel, 123 paramilitary personnel, 111 Jammu and Kashmir Police personnel and 31 Government backed militants/associates. Among the alleged perpetrators are two Major Generals and three Brigadiers of the Indian Army, besides nine Colonels, three Lieutenant Colonels, 78 Majors and 25 Captains. Add to this, 37 senior officials of the federal Paramilitary forces, a recently retired Director General of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, as well as a serving Inspector General. The report is not a definitive or exhaustive list of alleged perpetrators but merely a beginning of the process of accountability. The cases chosen are those where the IPTK has received information. In

a State where institutions – such as the police – have proven ineffective, a majority of the violations have in fact not been investigated. Therefore, the names of alleged perpetrators in a majority of cases are officially unknown, though certainly part of living public memory. See *Alleged Perpetrators - Stories of Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir* by Parvez Imroz, Kartik Murukutla, Khurram Parvez & Parvaiz Mata by International Peoples' Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir, Accessed at http://kashmirprocess.org/reports/alleged_Perpetrators.pdf

⁴ A Report, *Human Rights Crisis in Kashmir*, Human Rights Watch Accessed online at <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/INDIA937.PDF>

⁵ The word 'hauntology' is a clever spin on the word ontology. Both these words sound similar in French which is the language Derrida writes in. He describes hauntology as a haunting of a historicised present by spectres; "to haunt does not mean to be present, and it is necessary to introduce haunting into the very construction of a concept; of every concept, beginning with the concepts of being and time. That is what we would be calling here a hauntology. Ontology opposes it only in a movement of exorcism. Ontology is a conjuration (Derrida 1994:161).

⁶ The word spectacle encompasses display and performance, or more negatively, images of violence and atrocity. The etymology of the word spectacle derives from the Latin root *spectare*, "to view, watch," and *specere*, "to look at." Foucault borrows the term *spectacle* from Guy Debord in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) to exemplify the gruesome display of the criminal Damien's execution. For Foucault the spectacle consists of an explicit, graphic, and spectacular punishment for attacking the sovereign's body. Foucault asserts that the society of the spectacle exerted its power and control over the bodies through gruesome displays, thus expecting to restrain criminality, mutiny, or dissidence. The public execution was a political ritual that conveyed the law as the will of the sovereign. Any transgression of the law was deemed an attack on the sovereign. The spectacles of punishment reactivated power creating awareness about the ever-present sovereign wherein torture had both judicial and political purpose. The operation of power reproduced the crime on the body of the criminal publicly. The terrifying punishment turned the criminal into an inverted figure of the king. The rituals of the scaffold suffused with torture implicated the executioner, judge, and other involved parties into the shame and guilt associated with brutality. This made the criminal a sympathetic figure, even when "the punishment was thought to equal, if not to exceed, in savagery the crime itself" (Foucault 1977: 9). In order to counter being seen as brutal the powers-that-be sought new modes of punishment pivotal to which became prisons. Thus, towards the start of modern age Foucault insists that society of surveillance emerged as a model of disciplinary power, and eclipsed the spectacle of the scaffold. The society of surveillance was based on the model of Bentham's Panopticon which is a regulatory mode of power the body becomes the site of docility. The soul becomes the target of reform. Incarceration inverted mass spectatorship and punishment was relegated into abstract consciousness. Foucault called it the "age of sobriety" or "the new legal ethic of death" which made "punitive justice, desist from biting into the bodiless reality" (Foucault 1977: 14-17) and marked the decline of the society of spectacle. He reiterates that modern social relations are "the exact reverse of the spectacle" (1977: 86) and, thus, the modern Western society has become one of surveillance.

⁷ Civilians are victimized for trying to retrieve the disappeared or any information about them and, at the same time, groups like the Argentinean Madres de Plaza Mayo emerge. The efforts of networks such as the Madres have prompted the United Nations to develop a Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. This raises the question of resistance fueled by the body (invisible/visible), which is discussed ahead in the paper.

⁸ The Panopticon was originally an architectural design put forth by Jeremy Bentham in the mid-19th Century for prisons, insane asylums, schools, hospitals, and factories. The design was never actualized.

⁹ In trying to see how spectacle and surveillance converge, I am by no means trying to find lacunae in Foucault's analysis. I utilize Foucault's idea about spectacle and surveillance as a basis for thinking about the body and the meanings it holds for justice and resistance. Foucault has described theory as a "toolkit," since it is "not a system but an instrument," and thus we have to utilize such elements in careful consideration to our own motivations and those of Foucault's. In that sense Foucault's analysis enables further understanding of the body and discipline as manifested in life situations elsewhere. For further reference see Michel Foucault, "Questions on Geography," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York, 1980), p. 145 and Daniel Punday, *Foucault's Body Tropes*, 2005 *New Literary History*, Vol. 31, No. 3, *Philosophical and Rhetorical Inquiries*.

¹⁰ A human rights watch report recommends that "[t]he Human Rights Council should appoint a special rapporteur with an ongoing mandate to publish regular and public reports on the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir and Azad Kashmir. The governments of India and Pakistan should publicly commit to full cooperation with the

special rapporteur, including with any necessary visits. To the international community, in particular those states with significant... Human Rights watch have urged the government of India, the government of Pakistan, and all militant and Kashmiri groups to place human rights protection mechanisms at the center of any attempt to resolve the conflict. Press these parties to ensure responsibility for abuses, thereby bringing impunity to an end, without which no sustainable settlement will be possible” (Human Rights Watch Report 2006). Amnesty International has called for a 14-Point Program to be implemented for the Prevention of "Disappearances." There are appeals for an “end and prevent further “disappearances” in the state; establish the whereabouts of those currently “disappeared”; bring the perpetrators to justice; and compensate the victims or their families; end and prevent disappearances”(Amnesty, 1999)

¹¹ A species of Maple; heralded as the national tree of Kashmir

¹² Most informant names in this dissertation have been changed to protect privacy except those activists who are public figures. Husna, Parveena Ahangar, and Mughli are amongst the activists whose names have been retained.

¹³ Mourning as originally defined by Freud (1917) is creating a relation with an object. It can occur by integrating the memory of the lost one into a self-memory or a selfhood, which is introjection, or by refusing to accept the loss of the other, which is incorporation. Derrida (1994) puts mourning between introjection and incorporation. He takes this distinction and uses mourning as an attitude to access justice; of a refusal to let the past cease being a part of the present, and a recognition of haunting

¹⁴ Those which “draw from the overarching system and at the same time allows people to speak from their particular histories and voices.” See Aronowitz & Giroux 124: 1991.

¹⁵ Interview conducted and translated by author with Azi, a mother whose son disappeared thirteen years ago while in the custody of the Indian army. Kupwara, Summer 2009

¹⁶ The people who become resistant and protest the disappearance; their bodies have taken on a type of “political economy” and are intimately involved in a “political field” as much as the body of a disappeared ever was. In this sense, the single spectacle of disappearance gets implicated into the bigger spectacle that is in the making, that of the living congregating around it. See Hassenstab Christine 2007 *The Inspection House: panopticism, gynopticism and prenatal genetic screening, Theory and Science.*

¹⁷ Another aspect is that India deploys above ground policies In Kashmir, like making investments for developing infrastructure, nurturing a large and dependent bureaucracy, conducting elections, fielding pro-India politicians and crushing any form of dissent. See Bhan 2013; Aggarwal 2004; and Mehmood 2001

¹⁸ Also see Chatterji Angana 2010

¹⁹ I heard this phrase repeatedly in Shabir’s narrative of his torturous ordeal in detention, and that of his wife’s, in the numerous interviews and participant observations conducted with them. This particular interview with Shabir and his wife Taja took place on 2nd July 2010 and was held in Palhalan, a village in Indian-administered Kashmir. This phrase is not, however, unique to Shabir’s experience, but is commonly heard in most Kashmiri accounts of interaction with the Indian army, both inside and outside detention centers.

²⁰ The word Jihad in English is used to refer to religious warfare and, as an Islamicate word, it has variegated meanings which can refer to struggle in spiritual or material realms. Mujahid is the warrior who undertakes Jihad. See Robinson 2013; Asad 2001

²¹ The victims of "disappearance" include businessmen, lawyers, laborers, government workers, students, farmers – many who “appear to be ordinary civilians having no connections with armed opposition groups operative in Jammu and Kashmir” (Amnesty International Report 1999. Persons who have vanished without a trace are presumed to have been taken by armed forces as they often pick people from roads, highways or from sudden crackdowns/cordons. The Indian government attributes many disappearances to the disappeared persons crossing the border into Pakistan for training in guerilla warfare or other subversions. My informants included women whose men had simply vanished after leaving the home in the morning for work or other such purposes. They accused the army, which would often pick people randomly for questioning and detain them without Since formal channels of investigation were not available to them in investigating such disappearances, many families embarked on private and informal investigations to search for the disappeared. Many times they got leads that they would follow for years and some would fall try to make meanings out of rumors, sightings and hearsay. Take, for example Haleema from Bandipore, whose husband, a carpet maker, left home to deliver a newly finished carpet, “which he was excited about, as it was worth a lot of money” to his dealer. He never came back. People had seen him at the bus stop where there was army activity that involved a cordon for the purpose of conducting searches. Haleema’s husband remains untraced. The family’s informal investigations revealed that the army had arrested many men,

some of whom later disappeared. “8 persons were killed that day in our area, their bodies thrown around, so who knows,” says Haleema who denies the involvement of her husband in militancy, saying he was a simple family man who had left home to earn a livelihood to support his three children. Haleema’s husband’s sister also lost her husband in similar fashion. He had, some years back, been arrested by counter insurgents who accused him of being a militant, but was later released. “Why would he run away to Pakistan, I knew everything about him. He was educated. He worked from home; he had no links with militancy. It was just an excuse army and the government give us so that we to shut us up...if he went to get training in arms, why is he not coming back now? It’s been nine years,” says Haleema when asked about the army’s accusation that her husband must have gone to Pakistan to get trained. Interview with haleema by the author 2009

²² Interview with Shabir by the author at Palhalan; August 2011.

²³ In the Wikileaks cables, it was revealed that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had reported to American diplomats in Delhi about the grave human rights situation in Kashmir, which included the use of electrocution, beatings and sexual humiliation against hundreds of detainees, all under the cover of AFSPA. See WikiLeaks: India 'systematically torturing civilians in Kashmir' at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/wikileaks/8208084/WikiLeaks-India-systematically-torturing-civilians-in-Kashmir.html>

²⁴ It is interesting to note that “[t]he AFSPA has its roots in British colonial legislation dating back to the 19th century and is based on a 1942 colonial ordinance intended to suppress the Indian independence movement” (Human Rights Watch, 2006)

²⁵ Amnesty International has, time and again, called on the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to take seriously its obligations under international human rights law to stop the unlawful killings and end the impunity with which they are committed. Impunity, the freedom from punishment, is crucially responsible for further unlawful killings as past and potential perpetrators assume that they will get away with murder as did others before them. In the cases that Amnesty has listed in past, none of the perpetrators have been arrested and criminally charged, nor have the police or members of the security forces been suspended from their posts, and continue to enjoy impunity for their actions. See India: Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir, Amnesty International 2001 Amnesty International Accessed at <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3c29def33.pdf>. Also see Alleged Perpetrators - Stories of Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir 2012 by Parvez Imroz, Kartik Murukutla, Khurram Parvez and Parvaiz Mata by International Peoples’ Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir, Accessed at http://kashmirprocess.org/reports/alleged_Perpetrators.pdf

²⁶ See Althusser, L. 1989. 'Ideology and ideological state apparatuses' in Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays. London: New Left Books.

²⁷ Kumar Manasi 2010 Politics of Exclusion and Social Marginalization of Muslims in India: Case Study of Gujarat, International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies, 7(3) Accessed at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/aps.256/pdf>

²⁸ Agamben defines homo sacer (sacred man) as an obscure figure of archaic Roman law who may be killed and yet not sacrificed – thus “killable.” The life of homo sacer is included in the juridical order solely in the form of its exclusion or through its capacity to be killed (Agamben 1998) or killability. Although the “killable” Kashmiri body overlaps and resonates with the figure of homo sacer, I argue that there are differences which do not allow the motif of homo sacer to fully superimpose on the killable. This aspect is not of immediate relevance to this dissertation.

²⁹ I see this as “too much law” and “little” justice; an aspect which is not discussed here since it is not within the purview of this dissertation.

³⁰ In an autoethnographic moment I may reveal that I have also heard this phrase hurled at me and my family in different forms and manner by the Indian troops.

³¹ The word separatist as an identifier is problematic for most Kashmiris. Most do not recognize the accession to India as legal; thus, there is no real “separation” to be sought. The pro-freedom leaders or even common masses do not like to be called secessionists, as they did not “willingly” accede to India” says Junaid a 28 year old doctoral student in Political Science in Delhi. Interview with the author conducted in 2010. Most of my informants preferred to be called pro-freedom. I use the term “separatist” here to juxtapose the sentiment of foundational violence on India’s part to “integrate” Kashmir.

³² This is aggravated by the separatist clamor in North-east India and insurgencies in central India

³³ A scarf, which is a middle-eastern import used by ultra-religious men, worn to demonstrate solidarity with Pan-Islamism or even the Palestinian cause

³⁴ I use this word loosely to convey someone who is seen as subscribing to militant ideology

³⁵ As of writing this the killing of 24 year old Muslim engineer by a hate mob in Pune is in the news. One headline states “After techie’s killing, fear drives many in Pune to shun skull caps, Pathani suits.” Accessed online at <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/After-techie-killing-fear-drives-many-in-Pune-to-shun-skull-caps-Pathani-suits/articleshow/36225007.cms>

³⁶ See Weiss 2003

³⁷ I have discussed this elsewhere in context of the hanging of Afzal Guru, a former Kashmiri militant convicted of masterminding the attack on the Indian Parliament and the marking of him as the “Other”

³⁸ Kumar Manasi 2010 Politics of Exclusion and Social Marginalization of Muslims in India: Case Study of Gujarat, *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 7(3) Accessed at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/aps.256/pdf> [The quote that this footnote refers to has an italicized word. You need to indicate if this emphasis is yours or that of the original.]

³⁹ See Nussbaum, M. C. (2007). *The clash within: Democracy, religious violence, and India's future*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Nussbaum says that the “Muslims in Gujarat today are in a position very similar to that of African Americans in the 1950s South.”

⁴⁰ In the discussions on the communal tensions in Indian, most minorities, and specifically Muslims, are perceived as the “Other” in the Hindu nationalist imaginary. In 2011, Subramanian Swamy, the chief of the Janata party, a national political outfit, called for a suspension of the voting rights of Muslims until they accepted and took pride in their alleged “Hindu past,” which many analysts interpreted as an exhortation for Muslims to cease being the “Other.” The cultural nationalism subscribed to by political parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party also underlines the stereotype of Muslim Otherness. In an evocative paper titled “Can a Muslim be an Indian?” Pandey talks of the Hindu cultural imagination and its construction of Muslim as the other. Hindus have, increasingly, from the 1940s through 1980s, been more clear about demarcations between the “Hindu nationalists” and secular (or Indian) nationalists. However, in the case of Muslims, the label of “nationalist Muslims” does not imply the same nationalistic fervor in terms of political affiliation or identity, as the label of “Hindu nationalists” does in India. “Minority” and “majority” have, therefore, become terms of contention, where “Hindu” or “Indian” is used interchangeably and the distinction has become irrelevant or, at the least, blurred. “Minorities,” here, connotes a problematic status as they are viewed mainly as second-rate citizens. See Pandey, G. (1992). In defence of the fragment: writing about Hindu–Muslim riots in India today. *Representations*, 37, 27–55. Also see Pandey, G. (1994). *The prose of otherness*. *Subaltern Studies Vol. 8*. (Eds. D. Arnold & D. Hardiman). Oxford University Press. & (1999). *Can a Muslim be an Indian? Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41

⁴¹ Pakistan was created out of the western parts of the British dominion of India

⁴² In parts of Kashmir, like Ladakh, which has a Buddhist majority as well, the question of Muslim otherness becomes glaring in how communities are fragmenting due to the Indian state’s distrust of Muslims. It is well known in the region that the military favored Buddhist over Muslims who are seen as incipient terrorists. For more on the subject of Indian Muslims, see Bhan 2013; Aggarwal 2004 and Ahmed Irfan 2009 in *Islamism and Democracy in India: The Transformation of Jamaat-e-Islami*, Princeton University Press. As a cultural and racial minority, the Brogpa are also often posed as a threat to the nation-state’s hegemonic religious and territorial order. Nonetheless, Brogpas are depicted by the Indian state as a more controllable “other” than the Muslims who are cast as a bigger threat.

⁴³ See Martha Nussbaum 2007; 2010

⁴⁴ Guha Ramachandra There is no Third Option *Hindustan Times* Accessed <http://www.hindustantimes.com/comment/editorials/there-s-no-third-option/article1-367089.aspx>

⁴⁵ The concept of the society of surveillance has been criticized in reference to European and American colonies where the “spectacle” continued to be inflicted on indigenous people in Africa and the Americas. It is argued that Foucault weaves a historical perspective that eventually presents the contemporary Western state as a non-practitioner of torture. This also illustrates how easy it is to erase the specificity of the body and violence while centering the discourse on them. It is said that Foucault universalizes the body of a white, propertied male. Much of *Discipline and Punish* depicts a body with no specificity tied to racial or sexualized punishment (James 1996). This also brings into view the inattention to Non-western states and bodies. See James, J. (1996). *Resisting state violence: Radicalism, gender, and race in U.S. culture*. Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota

⁴⁶ See *The Economist*, A vote in an angry valley, at <http://www.economist.com/node/12868164>

⁴⁷ In the case of India, the government finds it necessary to have counterinsurgency measures to prevent secession. The Supreme Court has upheld the validity of various acts which have given the Indian armed forces immense powers to operate with. However checks were placed to reduce the scope for abuse by the army. This had included a strict reading of the provision vesting the armed forces with a duty to produce the arrested person at the nearest police station with “the least possible delay,” which the court has decreed cannot exceed 2-3 hours. This has been diluted to some extent in a subsequent judgment of the Supreme Court. See Further Saumya Uma, 2009, Repressive Laws in India Unpacking Human Rights: Concepts, Campaigns and Concerns.

⁴⁸ Parvez Imroz. Human Rights Lawyer. Interview with Ather Zia. 26th May 2009.

⁴⁹ See Foucault 1977. Foucault calls it sovereign “truths” – which I replace with the word might.

⁵⁰ The Indian trope of heart-warfare draws from the US counterinsurgency programs based on liberal foundations of the military’s new humanitarianism. See Bhan 2013 and Fassin, Didier and Pandolfi Mariella 2010 Contemporary States of Emergency; The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions MIT Press

⁵¹ Rumor plays an important part in invoking the body that has been subjected to disappearance. Veena Das (2007), Homi Bhabha (1990) and Ranajit Guha (1983) have written about the life of rumor and its role in creating memory and resistance. Gyanendra Pandey (2002) states that rumor becomes crucial in a state of unpredictability and violence: “something has happened there”; “Don’t go further, it is not safe just now”; “A disturbance has broken out”; “People are fleeing”; “The shutters are down”; “Curfew has been imposed”; “Two [or ten, or a hundred or more] people have been killed” (or, in the case of this paper, “someone has been disappeared by the military”). The state usually makes its appearance only in the wake of these rumors and other fleeting reports. The state’s initial reports, in themselves, are marked by the signature of rumor, jostling now with a vocabulary of “civilization” and “counterinsurgency.” Rumor is marked characteristically not only by indeterminacy, anonymity and contagion, but also by a tendency to excess and “certainty.” See Gyanendra Pandey The long Life of Rumor, 2002, Alternatives: Global, Local, Politica Vol 27 Nbr 2. Also see Bhabha, Homi. 1990. “DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation.” In Nation and Narration. Edited by Homi Bhabha. London: Routledge. 291-322.

⁵² The theatricality becomes significant of the Indian state resonates in Clifford Geertz’s “Negara” (1973) or the theater state, although not directly. Contemporary types of statehood, including India, are found to display theatre state characteristics but, of course, none show strict parallels to serve for a profound, reliable comparison within the original thesis by Geertz. The Negara generally refers to a dictatorship and does not describe a substantive democracy – or any type of statehood in between. I am not attempting to denounce India as a Weberian state, but my invocation of Negara here is to focus on “the ceremonial and symbolic activity” which forms the spectacle of the state backed by rhetoric-based theory of power⁵² (Kwon & Chung 2012: 45). Negara, in India’s case, evokes a mode of technicality, or just as an alternate analysis of the contemporary militarized democracy prevailing in Kashmir.

⁵³ The significance of media which heightens and reproduces the spectacle overlapping with surveillance has been utilized by Leo Chavez in understanding the construction of the immigration debate and the figure of the immigrant in the backdrop of the minuteman project. See Chavez, Leo 2008 The Latino threat: Constructing immigrants, citizens, and the nation. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press

⁵⁴ In his book Pilkington regards Ireland as “innately performative” in the backdrop of the “drama” of rebellion and anti-colonial insurgency. Although he focuses on Irish “blarney” (theater and the long list of dramatists etc) as a response to colonial repression, this text becomes significant to understand the centrality of performance in social and political life.

⁵⁵ The term Megaspectacle was coined by Best and Kellner, 2001 in Postmodern Adventure. While Debord presents a rather generalized and abstract notion of spectacle, Best and Kellner engage in specific examples of media spectacle and how they are produced and constructed. I utilize the term in the context of what the state conjures up through “enforced disappearances” and the counter response from people

⁵⁶ The trope of the relationship between law and theatre is age-old. For example, for the 17th century Cardinal and lawyer Giovanni Battista de Luca, law was a “*Theatrum veritatis et iustitiae*” (“Theatre of Justice and Truth”); Jeremy Bentham called the courtroom “judicial theatre” or “theatre of justice.” Judicial punishment was regarded as theater. In this dissertation, it is not the judicial punishment but the “extra-judicial” punishment which along with the non-existence of justice appears as theatrical. See Luca, *Theatrum veritatis et iustitiae*, 19 vols. (Rome, 1669-77). Bentham, “Rationale of Judicial Evidence,” in *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. John Bowring (London, Simpkin Marshall, 1843), vol. VI, p. 354.

⁵⁷ In its gendered aspect it is interesting to note that this condition of invisibility/disappearance of men leads to hyper-visibility of women (who have been traditionally an invisible population, specifically in the public realm).

⁵⁸ Also see Taylor Diana 2002 *Translating Performances, Profession*, (2002), pp. 44-50 Accessed online <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25595729>

⁵⁹ Specifically see the chapter on gendered resistance and the massacre at Acteal in Chiapas, by Shannon Speed in *Engaged Observer*

⁶⁰ This, as I now look back was a typical middle class phenomenon. Had we been from from a financially disadvantaged class with no means and clout to intervene and mostly banking on public protests our folks would have languished for years or could have faced worse predicament.

⁶¹ Marcus George 2005 *The Anthropologist as a witness in Contemporar regimes of intervention, Cultural Politics Vol1, Issue 1* <http://culturalpolitics.dukejournals.org/content/1/1/31.full.pdf>

⁶² Nancy Scheper-Hughes 1995 *The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology Current Anthropology, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Jun., 1995), 409-440* <http://www.unl.edu/rhames/courses/current/hughes.pdf>

⁶³ Kaplan Elizabeth, "Many Paths to Partial Truths": *Archives, Anthropology, and the Power of Representation, Archival Science 2: 209-220, 2002. 209_9 2002,* http://download.springer.com/static/pdf/404/art%253A10.1007%252FBF02435622.pdf?auth66=1398626011_e0e77df3cac6c9043754cdea16a522bc&ext=.pdf

⁶⁴ They were most wary of media persons, and other researchers who were not Kashmiri were also suspect for them.

⁶⁵ According to Euro-American norms, unlike the Latin American literary form of *testimonio*

SECTION 1 – TRACING SPECTERS, HAUNTING & PERFORMANCE

Chapter 1: The Territory of Desire and State of Seige

¹ Editorial, *Kashmir Times* 12th November 2013, India - Kashmir: 'Siege' of a totalitarian state

² Being outside the purview of this review, the dispute about the validity and authenticity of the accession document, and the details about the will of Kashmiri masses for independence which they heavily supported, or joining either nation are not explained here. For more see Lamb 1991, Bose 1997;2004

³ See Schofield Victoria 1996; Snedden 2013

⁴ See Report by Human Rights Watch 1991, *Kashmir Under Seige* Accessed Online <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1991/05/01/kashmir-under-siege>

⁵ In the chapters ahead, I discuss the project Goodwill (Sadbhavana), which is the Indian army's humanitarian endeavor to implement welfare programs on behalf of the nation-state. Mona Bhan's recent study of this project argues that the military's humanitarian program is not altruistic, but a tool to attach and transform people into loyal Indian citizens. Bhan demonstrates how Sadhbhavana complicates the lives of frontier communities by collapsing traditional community, overriding the civil administration and ensuring people's distance from democratic processes. See Bhan 2013

⁶ Many Kashmiris have faced such situations where the army has barged into their homes to make arrests, conduct searches or to create a general atmosphere of fear. Parveena, one of my key informants says, "there is hardly any Kashmiris who has not experienced the tip of a soldier's boot." Interview with Parveena's home, 27th June 2009

⁷ The word spectacle encompasses display and performance or, more negatively, images of violence and atrocity. The etymology of the word spectacle derives from the Latin root *spectare* "to view, watch" and *specere* "to look at." Further ahead, it is discussed in detail in relation to Debord and Foucault

⁸ State of Human Rights in J&K, 1990-2005, A Report by Public Commission on Human Rights, Kashmir

⁹ See Agarwaal Ravina (2004) *Beyond lines of control: Performance and politics on the disputed borders of Ladakh, India*. Durham: Duke University Press

¹⁰ The Line of Control (LOC) between the two torn parts of Kashmir is also known as Asia's Berlin Wall. Earlier known as the "Cease-fire Line," it was renamed the "Line of Control" after the Simla Agreement in 1972. Another cease-fire line, one that separates the Indian-controlled state of Jammu and Kashmir from the Chinese-controlled area of Aksia Chin, is known as the Line of Actual Control (LAC). In the next chapter I discuss the history of the bifurcation of Kashmir in detail.

¹¹ They explicitly say that the LOC is not "between" Kashmir, but exists as a "temporary agreement between the countries" and some opine - "the UN did not tell Kashmiris it is your LOC" (Robinson 2013:58)

¹² See Foucault 1998 and Veena Das 2005

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- ¹³ Bhurgri Abdul Gafoor, *The Falcon of Pakistan & Kashmir in Pakistani Politics* Zaigham Khan 1999 Accessed online at <http://www.himalmag.com/component/content/article/2234-Kashmir-in-Pakistani-politics.html>
- ¹⁴ Fishlock Trevor 2002 *A Tragic Feud* Baltimore Sun, Accessed at http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2002-01-13/topic/0201120221_1_india-and-pakistan-kashmir-hari/2
- ¹⁵ See Snedden 2013 (Poonch Uprising) & Lamb 1991
- ¹⁶ China also lays claim to the 90,000 sq km inside Arunachal Pradesh North Western part of India
- ¹⁷ Chang La, Jara La, and Charding La etc
- ¹⁸ Rao Farman Ali *Kashmir Under the Shadow of Gun*
- ¹⁹ It carried out the first of a series of armed operations — the killing of Border Security Force constable Charan Das on the Nawakadal Bridge in Srinagar.
- ²⁰ Nicknamed as the Master Cell by the police
- ²¹ amongst which Kashmir's former Deputy Chief Minister and People's Democratic Party Muzaffar Beigh, former Inspector-General of Police Javed Mukhdoomi and the National Conference's Bashir Kitchloo are well known
- ²² Pir Ghulam Hassan Shah a police officer was charged with rehabilitating its members
- ²³ People's League of which he was a member
- ²⁴ Querishi currently runs a pro-freedom outfit
- ²⁵ Kampani Gaurav, *Placing the India Pakistan Standoff in perspective* Accessed at <http://cns.miis.edu/reports/pdfs/indopak.pdf>
- ²⁶ The founder of Hizbul Mujahidin one of the big players in the armed movement says, "it is absolutely wrong that I picked up arms because the elections were rigged. Muftis are giving the election results a wrong twist. I was a freedom fighter long before I fought elections. I have inherited this from my forebears. My brother, Sayed Ghulam Muhammad, was the district president of Plebiscite Front in Budgam. My grandfather, Haji Ghulam Mohiuddin, was tortured by a very infamous police officer; his mouth stuffed with hot potatoes, kicked and beaten, because he used to observe Indian Independence Day as a 'black day.' We fought elections so that we could pass resolution in the assembly for freedom of Kashmir. India knew that. That is why they rigged the elections. People remember that when I was campaigning for the elections, I used to begin my speech with ay mard-e-mujahid jaag zara. Fighting elections were a means to educate masses about the freedom struggle. We wanted endorsement of public sentiment in the assembly. Otherwise who would have voted for my person, I was nobody. But people voted for the sentiment. Even the relatives of my opponent Ghulam Mohiuddin Shah voted for me. And those who were campaigning for elections became top resistance leaders. We were ideologically driven by the struggle for freedom. There was a case against me in which the then SSP had said that I was not campaigning for elections but for freedom. If the Muslim United Front (MUF) had won the elections, we would have tabled a resolution for right of self-determination. India would have dissolved the assembly and that would have triggered the freedom struggle. Majority of the MUF members were in favour of such a resolution. The MUF was anti-India by its very nature and essence. We were going to use elections to get to the goal, but that didn't mature. See Interview in Greater Kashmir <http://greaterkashmir.com/news/2008/Apr/14/i-am-not-product-of-1987-elections-salahuddin-46.asp>
- ²⁷ "No, it was not just in 1989 that guns came here. They have come here since 1947. Youth did not go to Pakistan in 1989. Prior to that, outfits were working underground. There were Al-Fata and Student Federation operating. In 1965 and 1975, guns and grenades were recovered here. So those routes have never stopped and shall never close. Also see Jammatt does not distinguish between religion and politics, An interview with General Musa in Rising Kashmir, Accessed online <http://www.risingkashmir.com/jamaat-doesnt-distinguish-between-religion-and-politics/>.
- ²⁸ See Snedden 2013
- ²⁹ See Robinson 2013 & Snedden 2013
- ³⁰ War has been defined as using "organized force between two politically independent units, in pursuit of [each unit's] policy (Malinowski 1994 [1937])."³⁰ Another definition calls it a socially organized armed combat between members of different territorial units" (Snyder 1994). Others understand war simply as lethal intergroup violence (Goldstein 2001). Although studies of understanding war do not offer a quantitative cutoff point comparable to the Correlates of War project's benchmark of 1,000 battle deaths for distinguishing warfare from lesser forms of violence, they do normally distinguish qualitatively between warfare organized by recognized group leaders and unsanctioned violence by certain in-group members against certain out-group members (Snyder 2002)
- ³¹ These laws are described ahead. Cockburn Cynthia 2005, *War against Women: A Feminist Response to Genocide in Gujarat*, Accessed on 09/10/09 at <http://www.cynthiacockburn.org/Gujaratblog.pdf>
- ³² Chatterji Angana, 2010

³³ In the Wikileaks cables it was revealed that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had reported to the United States diplomats in Delhi about the grave human rights situation in Kashmir which included the use of electrocution, beatings and sexual humiliation against hundreds of detainees all under the cover of AFSPA

³⁴ Amnesty International has time and again called on the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to take seriously its obligations under international human rights law to stop the unlawful killings and end the impunity with which they are committed. Impunity, the freedom from punishment, is crucially responsible for further unlawful killings as past and potential perpetrators assume that they will get away with murder as did others before them. In the cases that Amnesty list in this report, none of the perpetrators have been arrested and criminally charged, not have the police or members of the security forces, been suspended from their posts, and continue to enjoy impunity for their actions. See India: Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir, Amnesty International 2001 AI Accessed at <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/3c29def33.pdf> . Also see See Alleged Perpetrators - Stories of Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir 2012 by Parvez Imroz, Kartik Murukutla, Khurram Parvez & Parvaiz Mata by International Peoples' Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir, Accessed at http://kashmirprocess.org/reports/alleged_Perpetrators.pdf

³⁵ These include the Indian Army, Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Rashtriya Rifles, the Indian Reserves Police Force (IRPF), the Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP)

³⁶ Civilian groups armed by the state

³⁷ Police Bill 2013

³⁸ Duschinski 2010; Boga 2010; Zia 2010

³⁹ I talk about this in detail in chapters ahead

⁴⁰ Kanal is a unit of measurement used in India and Pakistan. 1 Kanal = 460 m² 1 hectare = 10,000 m² so there are 22 canals / hectare

⁴¹ Snyder, Jack L., 2002, Anarchy and Culture: Insights from the Anthropology of War, International Organization, Volume 56, Number 1

⁴² Obama said that working with Pakistan and India to try to resolve their Kashmir conflict would be a critical task for his administration's efforts to try to counter growing instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

⁴³ "The Indians freaked out at talk of Bill Clinton being an envoy to Kashmir," said Daniel Markey, a South Asia expert at the Council on Foreign Relations. "The reason they were so worried is they don't want their activities in Kashmir to be equated with what Pakistan is doing in Afghanistan." See Mishra Pankak Afghanistan: The Forgotten Conflict in Kashmir New York Review of Books See

<http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2009/dec/08/afghanistan-the-forgotten-conflict-in-kashmir/>

⁴⁴ See India: 'An unnatural fate' - "Disappearances" and impunity in the Indian States of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, Amnesty International (AI) Index: ASA 20/042/1993; India: "If they are dead, tell us": "Disappearances" in Jammu and Kashmir, AI Index: ASA 20/002/1998; Open Letter to Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, AI Index: ASA 20/020/2002 and India: Armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir targeting civilians, AI Index: ASA 20/016/2005.

SECTION 1 – TRACING SPECTERS, HAUNTING & PERFORMANCE

Chapter 2: Work of Mourning: Hauntology, Affective Law and Spectral Justice

¹ The word 'hauntology' is a clever spin on the word ontology. Both these words sound similar in French which is the language Derrida writes in. He describes hauntology as a haunting of a historicised present by spectres; "to haunt does not mean to be present, and it is necessary to introduce haunting into the very construction of a concept. Of every concept, beginning with the concepts of being and time. That is what we would be calling here a hauntology. Ontology opposes it only in a movement of exorcism. Ontology is a conjuration (Derrida 1994:161).

² I understand counter-memory as a way of remembering and forgetting that starts with the local, the immediate, and the personal. Unlike historical narratives that begin with the totality of human existence and then locate specific actions and events within that totality, counter-memory starts with the particular and the specific and then builds outward toward a total story. Counter-memory looks to the past for the hidden histories excluded from dominant narratives.....counter-memory focuses on localized experiences with oppression, using them to reframe and refocus dominant narratives purporting to represent universal experience. (Lipsitz 1990: 213) Foucault (1977) has discussed counter-memory as a way of creating subjugated knowledges. Lipsitz (1990) differs from Foucault who insists that "counter-memory must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality" while Lipsitz admitting his difference from

Foucault (213) says that counter memory acknowledges the collective legacy of human actions, ideas, and experiences. Lipsitz thinks that a monotonous finality can do violence to the singularity of events and at the same time “refusal of all totality can obscure real connections, relationships, causes and atomize experiences into accidents and endlessly repeated play” (214)

³ Malathi De Alwis (2004) also discusses the “temporalities of lived experience, in the wake of disappearance” in Sri Lanka. She quotes Van Voorhis (2004) in conveying the “families’ emotional retelling of the disappearance of a spouse or child gave the impression that their loved one had disappeared 15 days earlier rather than 15 years earlier. Their pain had not subsided and will probably never do so. This impression of a tragedy that has freshly taken place is reinforced by the families’ recollections of dates, times, places, suspected perpetrators and other details of their loved one’s disappearance” (128)

⁴ Spectacular in Das’ work can be seen as a defiant creation of a subject (Das 2007:62). Nevertheless it is grounded in the routines of everyday (163).

⁵ See Schofield, Victoria (2003) *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan, and the Unending War*. London: I.B. Tauris.

⁶ The regiment is known as Rashtriya Rifles and was raised as a counter-insurgency force. It is notoriously brutal force and responsible for many extra-judicial killings and arrests. For further information see Mathur Shubh 2013 *Impunity in India Guernica*. Also Agarwaal Ashok (2008), *In Search of Vanished Blood: The Writ of Habeas Corpus in Jammu and Kashmir: 1990-2004*. Kathmandu, Nepal: South Asia Forum for Human Rights. Also see Amnesty International (2011) A ‘Lawless Law’: Detentions Under the Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act. Index ASA 20/001/2011. New York.

⁷ See India: ‘An unnatural fate’- “Disappearances” and impunity in the Indian States of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, Amnesty International (AI) Index: ASA 20/042/1993; India: “If they are dead, tell us”: “Disappearances” in Jammu and Kashmir, AI Index: ASA 20/002/1998; Open Letter to Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, AI Index: ASA 20/020/2002 and India: Armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir targeting civilians, AI Index: ASA 20/016/2005.

⁸ According to the United Nations International Convention for Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, enforced disappearances occur when, with the involvement of State authorities, a person is forcibly removed from public view and his or her whereabouts is intentionally undisclosed. As a consequence, victims are placed outside the protection of the law. In most cases, the only verifiable information provided will relate to the circumstances in which the victim was last seen alive and free. Disappearance is often used euphemistically since many are believed to be murdered.

⁹ Also see Half-widow, Half-life: Responding to Gender Violence in Kashmir 2011, Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) Accessed at http://www.hks.harvard.edu/cchrp/sbhrap/projects/kashmir/Half_Widow_Half_Wife.pdf

¹⁰ Indian government finds it necessary to have counterinsurgency measures to prevent secession. The Supreme Court has upheld the validity of various acts which have given the Indian armed forces immense powers to act with impunity. It has tried to place checks to reduce the scope for abuse. This includes a strict reading of the provision vesting the armed forces with a duty to produce the arrested person at the nearest police station with “the least possible delay,” which the court said could not exceed 2-3 hours. However, this has been diluted to some extent in a subsequent judgment of the Supreme Court. See further reading Saumya Uma, 2009, *Repressive Laws in India Unpackaging Human Rights: Concepts, Campaigns and Concerns*

¹¹ There are cases where armed fighters have forcibly disappeared people, which are being documented by a local human rights group named Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society.

¹² This has been a common problem even in case of arrests, custodial killings and other forms of violence as well.

¹³ See Amnesty International (2011) A ‘Lawless Law’: Detentions Under the Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act. Index ASA 20/001/2011. New York. Also see Duschinski Haley 2010

¹⁴ See Duschinski & Hoffman *Militarized Governance, Popular Protest, And Jurisdictions of Justice In Kashmir*, article under review *Law and Society Review* 2013

¹⁵ I also track the process as “active forgetting” elsewhere which occurs in the environment of coercion and occupation, a topic which is outside the purview of this paper.

¹⁶ Kashmiri women have always been an active component of the society. Much of their social, educational and professional growth has seen a steady increase over the years; most of it can also be attributed to, for lack of a better word, to the “benign” patriarchal norms of the Kashmiri society. Barring the elite and orthodox clergy classes where the womenfolk lived an orthodox an uncommonly sheltered life, often because they could afford such “non-visible”

lifestyles (although there are exceptions); common Kashmiri women from middleclass and the lower financial realms have always been a part of a bustling social and economic scenario. Most of the women from the working classes across the valley have always been engaged with the historic cottage industry of spinning (Pashmina and other famous yarns). This vocation was pursued within the confines of their homes, in tandem with tending to house and children, never leaving the premises except to procure raw material. Within the trader and artisan class existed a unique form of working equity which was born of a complementary relation between the men and women while pursuing their family trade. For example the fisherwomen took care of selling the catch after men procured it or while the male bakers did the actual baking, women were responsible for selling the items. It is not unusual to find numerous eulogies to the unique contributions of the tradeswomen; tributes to their beauty, industriousness, and wit in Kashmiri literature and folklore are replete. In rural areas, women have always been counted as dependable workers even if not at par with men, tending farms, cultivating rice, and raising cattle. Other professions that women have been historically involved in are embroidering, carpet weaving, and vegetable vending besides being the traditional birth attendants as well (Zia 2007) ?

In the years following partition and burgeoning political strife in Kashmir, there were quite a few women visible on the political firmament, mostly by the token of their family affiliations.

¹⁷ It must be noted that most of the APDP members belong to financially backward, less formally educated class. The disappeared men appear to have been the main breadwinner as well. For further reading see Choudhury, Amreen & Moser-Puangsuwan, Yeshua (2007). "Justice Disappeared: Exploring the Links of Arms Trade, Impunity and Political Disappearances", Nonviolence International Southeast Asia, www.nonviolenceinternational.net/seasia

¹⁸ Descendant of the Propher Muhammad peace be upon him. The Syed's are a clerical class and are renowned for their knowledge of religion and mysticism.

¹⁹ In the chapters ahead I discuss how women use two registers to sustain their activism. In countering the state they use the idiom and ideology of the universal Human Rights and International law and for the social context they foreground their maternity and piety as a spouse.

²⁰ The public mourning by Kashmiri women is reminiscent of the role of the female lamenter in both modern and ancient Greek traditions, as mediator or a bridge between the worlds of the living and the dead; the aesthetics and function of *ponos* ("pain") and a vehicle protest (Fishman 2008). See Andrea Fishman, 2008, *Thrênoi to Moirólógia: Female Voices of Solitude, Resistance, and Solidarity*, *Oral Tradition*, 23/2

²¹ The *taweez* usually are inscribed with verses from the Holy Quran and other allied Islamic prayers

²² A number of reasons are offered for animal attacks. Some say man-animal conflict is on rise in most parts of Kashmir Valley because of the conversion of paddy lands near forests into orchards. is the main reason for wild animals venturing into populated areas. See <http://www.kashmirlife.net/minor-girl-mauled-to-death-by-leopard/>

²³ An independent tribunal released a report which claimed that 2,700 'unknown, unmarked, and mass graves,' containing at least 2,900 bodies, in 55 villages of North Kashmir have been probed. The tribunal also claimed the presence of more than 6000 unmarked and mass graves. The Indian authorities through the offices of State Human Rights Commission have confirmed the existence of mass graves. See *Buried Evidence: Unknown, Unmarked, and Mass Graves in Indian-Administered Kashmir 2009, A Report by International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Kashmir (IPTK)*

²⁴ 27th October is a momentous date in Kashmir's history when the Indian troops were flown into Kashmir in 1947.

²⁵ The account of her death was given by Parveena, a family friend and a journalist. It has been widely written about as well.

²⁶ Participant observation & Interview with Haseena July 2011. Srinagar Kashmir

²⁷ Interview with Haseena August 2011. Srinagar Kashmir

²⁸ Interview with Haseena October 2011. Historic downtown, Shrine of Amir Kabir, Srinagar Kashmir

²⁹ Diana Taylor (1997) borrows this term from Elaine Scarry 1985, *The body in pain: The making and unmaking of the world*. New York: Oxford University Press.

³⁰ Laura Ahearn in her review on agency says that agency can be defined in any number of ways; for some it is not transdiscursive, while some perceive it as a useless concept if not universally transportable. See Ahearn, Laura M. 2001. *Language and Agency*. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30:109-37.

SECTION 1 – TRACING SPECTERS, HAUNTING & PERFORMANCE

Chapter 3 – Haunting Performance & The Politics of Visibility

¹ According to the United Nations International Convention for Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, enforced disappearances occur when, with the involvement of State authorities, a person is forcibly removed from public view and his or her whereabouts is intentionally undisclosed. As a consequence, victims are placed outside the protection of the law. In most cases, the only verifiable information provided will relate to the circumstances in which the victim was last seen alive and free. Disappearance is often used euphemistically since many are believed to be murdered. Amnesty International describes enforced disappearance as a particularly cruel human rights violation: a violation of the person who has ‘disappeared’ and a violation of those who love them. The ‘disappeared’ person is often tortured and in constant fear for his or her life, removed from the protection of the law, deprived of all their rights, and at the mercy of their captors. It is a continuing violation which persists often for many years after the initial abduction.

² I use these which I will use interchangeably and do not engage with the nuanced differences between them like Butler does

³ The words theater, theatricality, theatrics as the terms performance, performativity, performative are understood differently

⁴ The word spectacle encompasses display and performance, or more negatively, images of violence and atrocity. The etymology of the word spectacle derives from the Latin root spectare, "to view, watch," and specere, "to look at." Further ahead, it is discussed in detail in relation to Debord and Foucault

⁵ Although Foucault is talking about Western society and especially the example of France, I use it to understand the world created by Western Imperialism which in its wake has given rise to similar politics and state apparatuses.

⁶ In trying to see how spectacle and surveillance converge, I am by no means trying to find lacunae's in Foucault's analysis. I utilize Foucault's idea about spectacle and surveillance as a basis for thinking about the body and the meanings it holds for justice and resistance. Foucault has described theory as a "toolkit," since it is "not a system but an instrument," and thus we have to utilize such elements in careful consideration to our own motivations and those of Foucault's. In that sense Foucault's analysis enables further understanding of the body and discipline as manifested in life situations elsewhere. For further reference see Michel Foucault, "Questions on Geography," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York, 1980), p. 145 and Daniel Punday, *Foucault's Body Tropes*, 2005 *New Literary History*, Vol. 31, No. 3, *Philosophical and Rhetorical Inquiries*.

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⁸ The notion of “innocence” as well as “proof of papers” that Parveena invokes is interesting in understanding how exonerative and punishable categories are made and reinforced. Parveena insists her son was innocent; not a combatant or “mujahid (warrior), thus, he should not have been disappeared. While she does not mean that combatants deserve to be disappeared, the way state makes the defense of “disappeared” possible inversely casts the combatants as fit to be disappeared (even though Parveena or other activists who might insist on innocence of their kin do not mean this)

⁹ Ho ho karyo gulyow

¹⁰ A documentary of the same title was made on Habba's struggle and search for her son by Nazir by a documentary filmmaker Iffat Fatima (2012)

¹¹ She does not permit her daughter-in-law to involve herself with APDP activities. She says it's a tough role for a young woman whose husband has disappeared. She says as an older woman she has “hath hisaab” (100 remedies/ways of escape) than a younger woman who will be misused not only by the state apparatuses but also looked down upon by relations to take up such a public role. I discuss this matter further ahead in the chapter

¹² Interview & Participant Observation August 10th 2010

¹³ Nick name of Javid Ahmed Ahangar, Parveena's young son who was forcibly disappeared by the Indian army

¹⁴ This underlines that the gentleness, compassion and obedience in the boy is connoted as being “girl-like”

¹⁵ Term of endearment; Phamba called Parveena Jiji instead of Mother. A common practice in Kashmir

¹⁶ I discuss how the file becomes motif in chapters ahead

¹⁷ Such a statement against India in front of the state policemen by an ordinary citizen is also very telling about the politics that is prevalent in Kashmir.

¹⁸ A metaphor used to convey something that is very well recalled and predictable

¹⁹ I talk extensively about this as affective archive in Section 3

²⁰ See Aretxaga 1997; Das 2005

²¹ Explain why somewhere; the way parveena uses burkha here is meaningful define but stopped wearing it”

²² Parveena is referred to by many as Iron lady of Kashmir and a facebook page is dedicated to her by the same name

²³ Derrida invokes the idea of trace in context of writing (Derrida 1974: Part I, Chapter 2)

²⁴ A palimpsest is a manuscript from a scroll or a book from which text has been scraped or washed off and which can be used again.

²⁵ Being called “pagal mouj/crazy mothers” is reminiscent of the Madres of Argentina who were also called “locas/crazy” when they were searching for the children.

²⁶ I talk about this category in chapters ahead in connection with the social invisibility of women

²⁷ Such men are referred to as Motth

²⁸ I discuss Lal Ded one such female mystic at length ahead in the chapters

²⁹ Metch women are thought to of the mystic order of Fana fi Allah, people who have annihilated their self into Allah. Islam has a long tradition of such people who may or may not walk naked. There are some notable women Fana fi Allah, like Rabia Basri. In Kashmir Lala Arifa who was hindu by birth is also traditionally considered as Fana fi Allah. I talk about Lala Arifa in chapter ahead.

³⁰ See Butler, Judith. 1990 "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Ed. Sue-Ellen Case. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP

³¹ Butler, Judith. 1993 *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York: Routledge.

³² Ahead in the paper I discuss the other complications that Burkha brought to fore for women’s mobility in public

³³ Interview with Sadaf July 2010 Srinagar, Kashmir

³⁴ A group of religious scholars in 2013 again debated this and reached a consensus, saying half-widows can re-marry after a waiting period of four years. The decision was taken at the conclusion of third round of consultation over the issue organized by Ehsaas, a civil society initiative. The ulemas (scholars) from different schools of thought, representing various institutions and organizations, issued a joint statement saying that any half widow who intends to re-marry can do so after four years (as per conditions laid down by Hazrat Imam Malik RA). They also resolved that the issue of property in respect of the half widows should be resolved in the light of teachings of Holy Quran and Hadith. However, the a detailed edict (Fatwa) is awaited

³⁵ The phenomenon of renegade militant/soldiers has been well documented by many scholars as as well as organizations such as the Human Rights Watch. See Human Rights Watch , 1996, See *India's Secret Army in Kashmir: New Patterns of Abuse Emerge in the Conflict*, Accessed on 1/14/2012
http://www.kashmirlibrary.org/kashmir_timeline/kashmir_files/renegade_hrw.htm

³⁶ Michel Foucault in his book *The Will to Knowledge* and his lectures in the Collège de France defines biopolitics as the technologies of political power that allow for the control of the human population as a biological species. He illustrates how the population is controlled biologically as well as by disciplinary means, resulting in “a bestialization of man achieved through the most sophisticated political techniques.” Also see Foucault M, *The Birth of Biopolitics*

³⁷ It is important to note that while Sadaf faces this unfavorable attitude on being in the beauty trade, some very popular beauty salons are owned by women from elite and moneyed families who enter this trade with pride. These women however are seen as proprietors and often do not actually work as beauticians.

³⁸ I also mean to indicate younger girls like sisters or other relatives who might be a member for a brother or a cousin some cases

³⁹ See Kress & van Leeuwen 1996, 122

⁴⁰ The editorial gaze - 'the whole institutional process by which some portion of the photographer's gaze is chosen for use and emphasis' See Lutz & Collins 1994: 368.

⁴¹ Freud, Sigmund. (1964a) 1984. “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes.” In *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, translated by James Strachey; edited by Angela Richards, 000–00. Vol. 11 of the Pelican Freud Library. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

⁴² Jackson M, 2003

SECTION 2: INVISIBLE SPECTACLES/OTHER INVISIBILITIES

Chapter 4: Enforced Disappearance of the Other Kind

-
- ¹ This adage has many versions
- ² This maxim has many versions
- ³ I must mention that my immediate family did none of this but the members of the larger social order wanted to impose these restrictions.
- ⁴ The idea of a woman not being seen, as I am forced to think and I see the strains of this ideology even in choices I have made for myself. I always gave preference opportunities which had less visibility like Radio rather than television
- ⁵ Bhargava Kavita, 2000, A Grave Mistake The Tribune, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2000/20000603/windows/main3.htm>
- ⁶ Dhar K.N, Glimpses of Kashmir, N N raina Baharistan I Shahi, See <http://ikashmir.net/baharistan/doc/baharistan.pdf>, and <http://www.koausa.org/Poets/HabbaKhatoon/article2.html>
- ⁷ Lal Ded and her being a historical stalwart. {say about lal, why she is so vivid- mysticism, and religion, as well as mother, while habba Mughals came after they had to erase some trail)
- ⁸ It can even be that each ID card shows a different aspect of the person, as a student, part-time employee, even an expired card which had been issued for a certain duration.
- ⁹ The Politics of ID cards: Shabir's technique: This makes me think, how important are the ID cards. Do the soldiers know really something useful from them. If yes, what? If not, considering how easily they can be acquired or faked, what does this do?
- ¹⁰ Chatterji Angana "Who are the Indian forces? Disenfranchised caste and other groups, Assamese, Nagas, Sikhs, Dalits (erstwhile "untouchable" peoples), and Muslims from Kashmir, are being used to combat Kashmiris." Asks Angana Chatterji, an anthropologist behind discovery of the graves in Kashmir: A Time for Solidarity Accessed online at <http://www.solidarity-us.org/site/node/3095>
- ¹¹ This was not the case in early 1990's when the anxiety about ID cards was more intense.
- ¹² This is telling of how "Sadaf" perceives her own subjectivity.
- ¹³ A founder member of APDP Dilshada was assassinated along with her son
- ¹⁴ This is illustrated in how HR activists treat the documents they need for identification and travel like passports; how they use them, and how they manage to keep them valid fearing state's suspension of documents that would ensure them mobility to create awareness. It is a given that HR activists are not allowed to conduct surveys and they can get blacklisted and their passports and other documents could get impounded. Parvez Imroz the co-founder of the APDP has his passport impounded which restricts his movement outside Kashmir. Many human rights workers are unable to get their passports and visas to other countries renewed. This is in addition to security risks the activists face
- ¹⁵ Interview with Sadaf. November 2011. Baramulla Kashmir
- ¹⁶ Interview with Sadaf. November 2011. Baramulla Kashmir
- ¹⁷ In case of a killing the response is more visceral; with people flocking to attend the funeral, which could be more aptly termed as funeral-protests
- ¹⁸ I say militarization increased; not violence grew or militancy because the troops have been always disproportionate either to the number of violent incidents or number of armed militants
- ¹⁹ Interview by the author with Rehti at Tangpur dated 7th August 2009.
- ²⁰ Interview by the author with Husna in downtown Srinagar October 7th 2011
- ²¹ See Human Rights Watch report 2006
- ²² Interview with Husna by the author 7th October 2011
- ²³ Interview by the author with Rehti at Tangpur dated 7th August 2009
- ²⁴ In the aftermath of a killing response is different with both men and women flocking to attend funeral-protest
- ²⁵ There is a participation of old men, usually fathers. In the recent years youth ranging from the field of art, and activism have started to join solidarity protests along with young women
- ²⁶ Many rapes have been reported where other people have been present. See Alleged Perpetrators - Stories of Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir by Parvez Imroz, Kartik Murukutla, Khurram Parvez & Parvaiz Mata by International Peoples' Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir, Accessed at http://kashmirprocess.org/reports/alleged_Perpetrators.pdf
- ²⁷ This form of violence/erasure is accepted and tells of agency and subjugation at the same time
- ²⁸ The motifs of power and hegemony that operate male female differences are inherently structural that permeate the gender difference

²⁹ In 1970 to protest the curfew imposed by the British army, Irish nationalist women took to streets because of their inability to attain a basic provision for their children, “milk,” which spurred the women to action (Aretxaga, 2007). The adherence of women to moral law rather than political law also contributes to perceiving women as largely non-political.

³⁰ Peterson and Runyan 1993

³¹ McWilliams 1995

³² Accidental activism can also result in women supporting conflict or becoming combatants. This concept does not presuppose that women’s activism will always be working for peace. See McWilliams 1995; Sharoni 2001.

³³ This is reminiscent of Petet’s differentiation between “female and feminist consciousness” (Petet 1991:94). These movements (such as the Mothers movement) are treated as manifestation of female consciousness defending their community, whereas feminist consciousness strives for gender liberation and advocating change in gender relations (97).

³⁴ This debate is important to my fieldwork since most of the activist women are mothers.

³⁵ Toshkhani S S 2000, Lal ded: The great Kashmiri saint Poetess

SECTION 2: INVISIBLE SPECTACLES/OTHER INVISIBILITIES

Chapter 5: Disappearing Sociality, Humanizing Military

¹ The phenomenon of partial erasure can be compared to producing consequences like that of a palimpsest.

A palimpsest is a manuscript from a scroll or a book from which text has been scraped or washed off and which can be used again. Faint legible traces of earlier texts remain on the palimpsest.

² Fighting sub-conventional war in Kashmir: Lt Gen Hasnain, Greater Kashmir, 2012, Accessed online <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Apr/7/fighting-sub-conventional-war-in-kashmir-lt-gen-hasnain-48.asp>

³ State of Human Rights in J&K, 1990-2005, A Report by Public Commission on Human Rights, Kashmir

⁴ Interviews for this chapter were conducted between June 2010 and September 2010; August 2011 till July 2012.

⁵ Commonly known as the CO (pronounced CEEYO); prefixed with Sir or Saeb (respected in Kashmiri) in the officers presence

⁶ Interviews for this chapter were conducted between June 2010 and September 2010; August 2011 till July 2012.

⁷ Another policy called “Jee Janab” (Operation Yes Sir) has been added to make soldiers behave in a friendly and better way to the people. The army which is seen as a brutal and uncouth force by the people and who have continuously suppressed them are directed to talk politely. It is interesting to note that the use of “Sir” in Kashmir has become exclusive for referring to soldiers, and has passed into the folklore. With Operation Jee Jenab the soldiers are taught to engage with people differently and employ better mannerisms. However since 2008 more than 500 hundred people have been killed in protests and incidents of stone pelting as a result of direct violence by the India army and more than 4000 injured. The skirmishes and encounters around the villages and remote border regions continue to create casualties, so in this scenario it remains to be seen how this process pans out for the Indian army

⁸ See Feldman, A. 1997, ‘Violence and Vision: The Prosthetics and Aesthetics of Terror’, *Public Culture* 10(1), pp. 24-60

⁹ Cocks Joan, *Foundational Violence*, *Radical Philosophy Review* Volume 15 number 1 (2012): 103–126

¹⁰ In one example of “Gudill” a high ranking judicial officer told me had seen people being given gift packages only to be taken away at the next check-post

¹¹ Indian Army In The Development Of Jammu & Kashmir: Operation Sadbhavna Accessed at <http://frontierindia.net/indian-army-in-the-development-of-jammu-kashmir-operation-sadbhavna>

¹² Feldman Allen 2004 Securocratic wars of public safety *Interventions, International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, Accessed online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1369801042000280005f>

¹³ The glasses for tea are not the one with handle but are more like the ones used for water in Kashmir, which are associated with tea-drinking for non-kashmiris

¹⁴ From the conduct and bearing of Prophet Mohammad peace be upon him

¹⁵ The Machil fake encounter is hailed as a landmark case in extra judicial killings which fueled grassroots uprising. Initial Report about this fake encounter as a “foiling of infiltration” See Outlook report from 2010 at <http://news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=680686>. 2014: Army Colonel , 2 Majors chargesheeted in Machil fake encounter case, see report <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/81704/army-colonel-2-majors-chargesheeted.html>

¹⁶ The erased individuals called Slovenia’s “bureaucratic ethnic cleansing” occurred not only without large-scale physical violence (although with police brutality in individual cases) but also in the name of the repudiation of violence.

¹⁷ Later as Ruhi, Shabir and I walk around Palhalan after Shabir draws me a small map filled with details. The way he draws the map with happiness and caution goes a long way to tell me how much he loves his village. The torture is not all the Shabir encountered. See Palhalan Symbolizes Revolution in Kashmir Watch, <http://kashmirwatch.com/features.php/2011/12/21/palhalan-symbolises-revolution.html>. Also see Kandahar of Kashmir Tehelka, <http://tehelka.com/they-call-palhalan-the-kandahar-of-kashmir-here-is-why-it-might-yield-new-recruits-for-militancy>

SECTION 3: MEMORY, SUBJUGATED KNOWLEDGES, AFFECTIVE ARCHIVE MODES OF COUNTER-MEMORY

Chapter 6: Retelling and Remembering - Memory in times of an Invisible War

¹ Interview with Saja December 2012. Singpora Kashmir

² Parveena says “we have no grave, we could go to this memorial to cry. It would be a grave, our memory.” Interview conducted in April 2012. She called the monument Yaadgar (memorial)

³ Human Rights Watch, “Behind the Kashmir Conflict, Accessed online at http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/india0906/5.htm#_ftn189

⁴ This is a process of “active forgetting” borrowed from Nietzsche who sees this as a call for an abandonment of the past because, as he says, it “returns as a ghost and disturbs the peace of a later moment” (UD 61).”Active” forgetting is selective remembering, the recognition that not all past forms of knowledge and not all experiences are beneficial for present and future life. I do not explore this in detail in this dissertation but is very productive in thinking about how memory is shaped in rationalizing the relation to the past and to overcome events that become relevant and have the potential to disturb future. See Nietzsche, Friederich. “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.” *Untimely Meditations*. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1983. 57-124. Also see Blanchot, Maurice. *The Writing of the Disaster*. Trans. Ann Smock. Lincoln: Nebraska UP, 1986.

⁵ Active forgetting also comes across as affirmation and a device of agency and survival.

⁶ But unlike myths that seek to detach events and actions from the fabric of any larger history, counter-memory forces revision of existing histories by supplying new perspectives about the past.

⁷ For example The Armed Forces Special Powers Act and the Jammu and Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act. see Amnesty International Report, 1999 and Human Rights Watch Report 2006

⁸ Interview conducted by the author September 2010

⁹ For many it refers to the contents of museums, libraries, and archives and thus the entire extant historical record. Some writers distinguish between archives as repositories of documents, manuscripts, and images; libraries as repositories of published books, journals, and other media; and museums as repositories of yet logic of the archive” (268) see Mbembe A *The Power of Archive and its Limits* (2002) in *Refiguring the archive*. Hamilton, C. Cape Town, South Africa

¹⁰ November 2012. Interview Eid gah Safa Kadal. Srinagar Kashmir

¹¹ Alluding to state, army and other infrastructure

¹² Here I must note that my interlocutors use the words documents and file interchangeably to indicate a written form and I will also follow the same pattern.

¹³ Maharaj Gunj, a central location in Srinagar has been an important trade center in the past and continues to be so. It houses wholesale businesses, therein by emphasizing her husband being a watchman of this area Hameeda is emphasizing the importance of his work and juxtaposing the “disappearance” of his son with it.

¹⁴ For a detailed discussion about documents in the South Asian bureaucracy see Mathew Hull (2012)

¹⁵ See Akhil Gupta *Red Tape* (2012). Also Matthew Hull (2012)

¹⁶ See discussion of Parveen’s case in Agarwal (2007). Also see Duschinski, Haley & Bruce Hoffman (2011)

¹⁷ Repertoire in this case does not include classic activities like theatre or dance but a performance of everyday, a way of living; where the disappeared has been assimilated into life; embodied as a hauntology, a knock about to come, or a reverse pregnancy or the archival impulse.

¹⁸ Hull (2012) writes that the “perdurance of files beyond the circumstances of their creation situates them within a horizon of uncertainty..files are like time bombs” (129).

¹⁹ In this dissertation I do not extend into the discussion about non-hegemonic maleness under militarization which I consider as “imploding patriarchy.”

²⁰ See Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez Living Archive: The Performative Potential of a Document (on the contextual part of the exhibition *The Promises of the Past*)

By Accessed online at http://aprior.schoolofarts.be/pdfs/ap17_NatasaPetresin-LesPromessesDuPass%C3%A9.pdf

²¹ Archival artist Schmidt recuperated an “incident” which was repressed by the Australian government and the media. It involved the disappearance of an event of a sunken boat off the coast of Australia which had people onboard. Schmidt the boat, gathered narratives of repressed survivor statements and traced of images and names of the drowned refugees”. The women in Kashmir similarly like Schmidt submit to an archival impulse “as a proffering of counter-memory.. for what is counter-memory if not the act of making the diminished, forgotten, and repressed, visible?” See Tello Veronica *Between Paranoia and Counter Memory* 2011. 16 *Kunstlicht* · jrg. 32 · 2011 nr. 4 · *Vormen van het archief / Shaping the Archive*

²² See discussion of Masuda’s case in Agarwal (2007). Also see Duschinski, Haley and Bruce Hoffman (2011)

²³ Old school Kashmiri pronunciation for the English word “copy”

²⁴ She was awarded a membership as a Human Rights defender in Dublin 2011. Interview conducted at Parveena’s home. January 2012

²⁵ Imroz stacked his office with copies of habeus corpus petitions which he would ask the petitioners to keep for record as well.

²⁶ Also see Gounaridou, K. (2005). *Staging nationalism: Essays on theatre and national identity*. Jefferson, N.C: McFarland & Co.

²⁷ Also see Brush, Pippa. 1998 "Metaphors of Inscription: Discipline, Plasticity and the Rhetoric of Choice."

Feminist Review 58: 22-43. Accessed online <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/1395678.pdf>

²⁸ Interview conducted January 2012

²⁹ Long robe worn mostly in winter; old women may wear it from light or heavy fabric all year through.

³⁰ Islamic declaration of faith, often recited by the dying or those around the deathbed

³¹ The site where all the important administrative offices called the “Secretariat” is located. All top bureaucrats, the Chief Minister and other ministers have their offices in this highly securitized zone.

³² Document as proof of sanity; mental health

³³ See *Alleged Perpetrators* 2006. The official truth is regarded as documents produced by the state own functionaries and institutions. The Official Truth comprises of the documents of different types: first information reports (FIRs), statements before police and/or magistrates, police final reports (closure reports or charge sheets), High Court petitions, objections, other documents forming a part of the court record such as compliance reports, status reports, judicial enquiries, State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) documents from complaints to objections, police submissions and final orders.

³⁴ Osbourne Thomas 1998 *The ordinariness of the archive*. *History of the human sciences*, 12(2) Accessed online at <http://hhs.sagepub.com/content/12/2/51.full.pdf>

³⁵ There is a clear dichotomy between state and administration. This line of thought is outside the purview of this dissertation but worth pursuing

³⁶ Husna also consults mystics as does Fateh Jaan

³⁷ Saffron is an expensive condiment grown in the region Pampore in Southern Kashmir where Mohidin and Masuda lived in an upper middle class household

³⁸ Interview held in Pampore February 2012

³⁹ There have been many reported cases of arbitration by militants especially at the height of militancy in the 90’s when legal and administrative system barely functioned

⁴⁰ Masuda alleges that Mohidin’s partners had complained to the Indian army to create further harassment. Apparently the reason for his arrest was that he was a militant (or had ties with them), but Masuda says that the army knew the truth (about his being a lawyer and the dispute with his business partners), “they were not naïve, they knew, they just used him to create “khauf” (terror), my husband was an unlucky scapegoat”, she says.

⁴¹ Missing in Action - A Report on the Judiciary, Justice and Army Impunity in Kashmir by Public Commission on Human Rights (J&K) and People's Union for Democratic Rights 2007 Accessed online at <http://www.pudr.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/masooda-1.pdf>

⁴² Rashid Afsana 2007 A Determined Search Accessed online <http://charkha.org/newsletter/determind.htm>

⁴³ As far as the record with families goes, HR organizations and activists often consult the files of the families for records that might have been hidden or inaccessible from the state

⁴⁴ See Yusuf Raz 2011

⁴⁵ Tahri is an offering of yellow rice shared with family and friends often as a supplication

⁴⁶ The name of two hills in Saudi Arabia between which Muslim pilgrims run between during Hajj to symbolize Prophet Ibrahim's wife Hajjar's search for water for her young infant Ismael

⁴⁷ A rough translation means a death proven on paper (literal paper-death)

⁴⁸ The term security forces which is widely used for Indian forces in Kashmir. In context of human rights abuses and impunity how do the Indian troops emerge in context of "security" for Kashmiris?

SECTION 3: MEMORY, SUBJUGATED KNOWLEDGES, AFFECTIVE ARCHIVE MODES OF COUNTER-MEMORY

CHAPTER 7: Commemoration, Silences, Obliterations and Mutations

¹ Rashtriya Rifles is a special regiment raised to counter insurgency in Kashmir. It is notorious for its brutality. The motif of the army convoy is very telling in terms of how it pervades over the road, timing and creating obstacles in mobility.

² The word "*makar*" in Kashmiri is used for a person who is a hypocrite; someone specifically with a covert agenda and is not upfront about it and uses sly tactics. Such a person is considered to engage in "*makarel*," sort of repertoire or playacting without appearing confrontational or adversarial to peddle a selfish agenda. Shabir also uses this word in describing the behavior of army especially in the context of Operation Goodwill. See page 131

³ In Kashmiri she said "Weththow welcome, sakh welcome, ath chu seeth ya goel ya maar ya muft khaar."

⁴ Interview with Parveena 18th October 2012

⁵ Heena's mother maybe one of the few cases of half-widows who have remarried. Last heard about her was that she was getting divorced from the second husband or was already living apart.

⁶ Habba Khatoon is a 15th century poetess-queen. I talk in detail about Habba as a historical figure to engage with the motif of women's invisibility.

⁷ A Kashmiri musical instrument; made from terracotta, it is a long necked drum of small size, beaten with hands

⁸ Transgenerational mourning: Heena also accompanies Saja to the APDP events, but is too young to be a member.

⁹ Chumta is similar to large tongs, made of iron. Tiny little rings attached to the length.

¹⁰ Heena's father Rafiq was not a militant but disappeared in custody on suspicion of being one. In the next version for this chapter or at some relevant point further ahead, this point might allow me to talk about what Papen Baeth actually suggests. These are actually songs sung for Mujahids who are considered to be Shaheed or martyrs. How the category of Mujahids comes to include people who are not militants and how they are considered to be shaheeds/martyrs is interesting and also helps thinking about how the search for a militant and non-militant who has disappeared is perceived/conducted and what it says about how the Kashmiri freedom struggle is understood. The difference between "mood" (died), "morukh" (killed), shaheed (martyred) is important and indicates how people think about these deaths. Same is the case with "Row" (missing), "Gayb gow" (disappeared), "Gayb Korukh" (was disappeared).

¹¹ A copper kettle with is designed to have hot coals inside to brew and serve the traditional green tea

¹² Her gender a minuscule consideration in that moment: this moment of doing away with propriety/decorum is very telling. I connect this moment as a "departure"; this is the moment of remolding. How it connect to the bigger search where women transcend/remold their gender/sexuality in order to get something done is important; in line with this incident is when men actually request/force women to protest or do a "dharna" to get men released or find out about them

¹³ Term of endearment often suffixed to names. It could be equivalent to saying love, honey, or sweetheart in English

¹⁴ Suffix that indicates respect

¹⁵ Mujahid-baet are songs commemorating the lives and deeds of militants fighting Indian army. In this case men being remembered were both combatants and non-combatants. Every man killed was seen as a martyr and thus posthumously treated as a mujahid.

¹⁶ The singing party breaks towards the evening, as the family readies for arrival of the bridegrooms One of the bridegrooms is a survivor of torture

¹⁷ There are silences and invisible and memories that are repressed

¹⁸ The armed struggle is not over. The dispute is continuing between India and Pakistan, and there is presence of armed militancy. Since 2008 a peaceful grassroots pro-resistance movement is underway as well as a markedly “gunless” stone pelting movement has arisen which is styled after the Palestinian Intifada. In 2012 there is much talk about peace and the disappearances are down, as are the killing but the situation is far from improved. [If anything, the state is still heavily militarized, but tactics and techniques used by the government of India to quell the resistance movement through military are being revamped. There is an emphasis on changing militarization as people know it. It seems that here is an emphasis on normalizing militarization and military presence in Kashmir. I can only discern it as militarization 2.0 which is a technique of making militarization invisible and weaving it into the society in numerous ways that it becomes different to tell it apart. Every draconian law is still in place, not a single soldier has been deployed back, but militarization is disappearing in ways that we know it; it is changing face – Operation Sathbhavana, schools, jobs, community service, sports, health etc. – This will have a separate section on Disappearing Militarization or Militarization 2.0

¹⁹ Interview with the author, November 7 2011.

²⁰ “me chu yaad” /“yaad karun”

²¹ Kristeva’s women’s time argues that women must both understand men and the time of women, a parallel effort. This ties in with the man’s remark. See Sorkin, A. J. (1989). *Politics and the muse: Studies in the politics of recent American literature*. 175 Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press

²² I wrote a docu-drama based on “enforced disappearances” which was broadcast on KPKE in 2004. This was the first time it has been

²³ She had admitted to being tired of responding to same questions; but she did think it odd when I just followed her around, chatting and not having her sit and shoot questions at her. “You are not even filming, what are you doing?” I explained my process to her, of talking and taking notes right after our meeting was done and even took some notes while she was busy around her home, to assuage her of my authenticity as a researcher. Here I must leave this dilemma for thinking about anthropological methodology, and turn back to Mughli.

²⁴ Spinning Pashmina and other coveted yarn has been a traditional economic engagement of Kashmiri women for centuries. The earnings from spinning yarn used to be modest enough for a woman to pull the weight of her entire family.

²⁵ Karbala is a reference to the battle in which Prophet Mohammad’s (peace be upon him) grandson and his family was martyred

²⁶ “One who holds hand/helps” - epithet for a revered Saint Syed Abdul Qadir Jeelani (may Allah be pleased with him), who is revered in the valley and all over central Asia.

²⁷ Name of someone else’s son who she names for commemoration .

²⁸ Zool means to “light up.” There is a tradition of putting lighting up houses during wedding celebrations.

²⁹ Expression of pain and regret

³⁰ A na-mahram is a category of people in Islamic shariah with whom sexual relation is not a taboo. Intermingling with na-mahram is not allowed.

³¹ Men in crackdowns would sit on the roads for hours and sometimes days unable to enter back into their homes. Interview with Mughli August 2011

³² This man, a teenager in the early 90’s reminisced about a crackdown in Dalgate town, during which 4 boys, all non-combatants were killed. Interview conducted by the author 12th June 2010

³³ The graves that have come to be known as “unmarked” are actually marked and numbered by local communities who have also preserved clothes and sovenirs from the corpse to account for in future

³⁴ There is a dichotomy in how women commemorate and how men do. While women remember orally these constructions like a faucet or renaming public crossings are done by men

³⁵ Indian state continues to operate as a democracy even when acting authoritarian. How does deploying repressive mechanism not seen as “colonizing” if Kashmir is considered to be in a terminal colonial situation (Lamb 1991).

Chapter 8: CONCLUSION – SUBALTERITY WITHIN SUBALTERITY

¹ Chandrakanta Mohanty (1988, 2003) has also approached this issue but mainly in response to western feminist interventions and interpretations of Third world women.

² Reports from Kashmir Images and Greater Kashmir 23rd October 2009

³ A routine example of perceptions about the activist women can be surmised from casual phrases such as “what can they do?”, “they do nothing,” and “they are just a bunch of women” which the policemen and passersby often say when the women are sitting in protests. I encountered such narratives while doing preliminary fieldwork in 2009 and 2010.

⁴ The Global South refers to the countries which are located in the Southern Hemisphere. It includes 133 countries out of a total of 197. Most of the Global South is located in South and Central America, Africa, and Asia. See United Nations Development report 2007 at http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/pdf/HDR05_HDI.pdf

⁵ See Cynthia Enloe (1990, 1992), Cynthia Cockburn (1998), Sara Ruddick (1998), Sally Merry Engle (2007; 2009) Das (2007; 2008), Aretxaga (1997), Khan (2001), and Shirazi (2010).

⁶ In understanding and analyzing the ways in which female agency is systematically distorted, corrupted, or misled, Sandra Bartky’s argument is relevant where she says that the flat out denial of agency comes across as politically reactionary as well as philosophically indefensible. Also see Padma Anagol, ‘Agency, Periodisation and Change in the Gender and Women’s History of Colonial India’ *Gender & History*, Vol.20 No.3 November 2008, pp. 603–627.

⁷ See footnote 16 in Section 1, Chapter 2

⁸ Geraldine Forbes (ed.), Shudha Mazumdar: *Memoirs of an Indian Woman* (New York: Sharpe, 1989), p. xvii.