

Resistance Literature: History and Concept

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ABSTRACT

The history of resistance is as old as the world itself. Man over the eons has stood against all adverse forces of nature. It is an indisputable fact that his thoughts and ideas have never remained frozen and he has always been in the quest to raise the standard of his life. In this journey he was encountered umpteenth time by the forces of adversaries but he never surrendered against them. Rather he drove pride by laying his life in his battle against evil and malevolent forces. The men of yonder times proudly narrated the tales of bravery and courage of their ancestors from one generation to the next. In true sense, these tales, anecdotes and ballads are what the concept of resistance in world literature evolved from. The current study has been done by using the secondary data i.e., retrieved from archives like books, research journals, web sources and interviews of various scholars.

Keywords: Resistance, Literature, Human, Sumerian, Greece, Heroic Age.

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Introduction

The idea of resistance literature comes to the fore when the first word in the world was created, the writer brings to the fore this resistance process when he tries to express the evils around him, the abuse of human beings, and the old or wrong attitudes of society and civilization. According to Ahmed Abrar (1995) "Creating literature in itself is a process of resistance because the writer cannot conform to his surroundings and based on this conflict, he creates literature. In a way, all literature is resistance and every writer is rebellious." (p.p:48)

When the man took refuge in forests, mountains, and caves, he endured all kinds of sorrows and troubles for his protection and sustenance and faced and resisted all kinds of difficulties. That is why the man was pleased to hear stories of his experience, bravery, courage, and bravery from others. What he used to do, he would then tell others the deeds, stories, and tales of bravery. Because they did not want to forget their hard work and resistance. He used to convey the story of all his bravery and servitude to other people like a story and from here the resistance and bravery begin.

"This was the time when someone considered a hero if he had done a great action, had done great deeds in hunting, or had shown the courage to face the dangerous forces of nature and people looked at him with respect. His action was considered a special kindness and consent of the gods. Then later on he used to create poems, stories, and tales on these factors. And then the people of that time must have listened and recited these creations with great interest. Later, the same creations have been passed on orally from one to another. The foundation of resistance and war civilization has been laid in this period. In history, this period has been named as Heroic Age." (Shad, 2014: 85-86)

Literature Review

The present research paper covers the history and tradition of literary resistance. Various articles and books on this subject have been written which have given rise to the scope of research on this subject. Dr. Ghafoor Shad's book *Balochi Classical Poetry*. (2014), Abrar Ahmed's book *Resistance of Urdu Literature*. (1995), Artza Karim's book *Protest and Resistance in Urdu Literature*. (2004), Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq Ahmed's book *Jihad, Resistance and Rebellion*. (2008) and other several other unpublished dissertations and research papers have also been consulted.

Various articles have been studied as a secondary source in this research work, including Naeem Baig's article *Resistance literature and its interpretations* (2016), Ali Rifad Fatihi's article *Resistance behavior of world literature, and Urdu literature*. (2020) Adil Faraz's article *Modern Elegies and Resistance Behavior* (2019), Tahir Hakeem Balochi's *Article Balochi Resistance Literature*. (2015), Nayyar Hayat Qassimi's *Article Literature and Resistance*. (2018) And Qasim Yaqub's article *Literature and Resistance Behavior* (2019) has been used as a background study. Attempts have been made to bring all these issues to light in an investigative manner.

The Method Used for Data Collection

This research work has been completed through secondary sources, i.e., the materials that have been printed in books or published on various internet sites. It has also been benefited from research journals published by various universities and institutes which are the fundamental sources of the data collection.

History of Resistance Literature

When words like bravery, courage, servitude, conflict, hardship, war, joy and sorrow, friendship, and resentment were born in human life, literature opened its eyes in these circumstances, that is, the oral tradition of poems and stories came to the fore. In the same way, this trend goes on to take the form of writing, that is to say, man, who used to practice collective creations, comes out of there and goes into an individual life, and all the creations that he creates here become his heritage. He has now given written form to his oral creations.

"The creators of such literature were Sumerians. They were not only its creator but also developed it and gave it a written form. All the heroism, adventures, and great deeds have been found in the form of narrative poems in pottery and inscriptions. And this literature has spread to other areas besides Sumer (Iraq). Like the Toyotas of ancient Greece, India, and northern Europe, the Sumerians traced their history back to the Heroic Age. This heroic age of the Sumerians is three thousand years ago, that is, it happened five thousand years ago today." (Shad, 2014: 87)

Research studies show that the nine tales of resistance and war in *Sumerian literature* are considered to be very popular. But *Gilgamesh* is considered the best of them all. These are the stories that have been discovered and read. Ghafoor Shad (2014) says:

"It is the first period in human history that the Sumerian Heroic Age is two thousand years older than the Greek and Indian heroic age and three thousand years older than the Heroic Age of the Toyotas. After the Sumerian war poetry, the story of the Greek war poems Iliad and Odyssey has gained a lot of fame in the world. In terms of popularity, Greek war poetry is better than any other war poem in the world. The author of "Iliad" and "Odyssey" is named Omar who was blind. Omar's birth is said to have taken place in the twelfth century AD. The Odyssey is considered to be one of the oldest literary treasures in ancient Greece, and the Iliad is considered one of the best war poems in the world that poetry is beautifully described both, internally and externally." (p.p:88)

There are two very famous creations in the ancient resistance literature of India which are known as *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. According to the researchers, the poem *Mahabharata* consists of two

hundred and twenty thousand verses while *Ramayana* consists of fifty thousand hemistiches which are the basic poems of Indian war and resistance literature.

“It has taken thousands of years to create these two stories of India. Different poets have been the creators of these stories and poets have added to these stories at different times. That is why these stories became so long that the masterpiece of Mahabharata is a poem of at least 220,000 hemistiches consisting of 18 volumes of war poems.” (Shad, 2014:88-89)

The basis of literature is the reversal of existing wrongdoings and attitudes. That is why resistance colors and elements can be found and seen everywhere in world literature. Literature also does the work of resisting every thought, emotion, and feeling that cannot be expressed in simple words or face to face, so literature brings the responsibility of expressing such works into the category of resistance literature by putting them in artistic embellishments and symbolic figures. According to Tahir Hakeem Baloch (2015):

“Life reflects literature and society. Poets and writers cannot distance themselves from life and social issues, so they give creative form to the expression of emotions. These creations are known as resistance literature.” (Pp: 67)

Before discussing a literary topic, it is very important to consider the literary mood and environment of that time. What were the conditions and difficulties of the writer of that time and how he was living, what was the mood and attitude of that society, and what kind of literature has been created?

“If life is colorless, suffering from problems is a target of wars, then literature cannot be alien to them, the writer reflects on society and life through his social and political consciousness and combines his commitment to society and life with artistic virtues, creating new literature. This creation and literature become a great example of commitment to life and a new way of human consciousness.” (Baloch, 2015: 62-63)

The term *resistance* in literature comes to the fore when *Palestinian* writer, intellectual, and critic Ghassan Kanaḡani uses the word “resistance” in his book *Resistance Literature in Occupied Palestine*.

“He wrote this article in 1966 before the 1967 war, in which the Palestinian Mujahideen and the Israeli conflict not only became part of the prominent world literature but also of contemporary movements that were then fighting for independence in Latin America, the Far East, and Africa. Brought together this article discusses the role of resistance literature, its basic elements, and broader post-colonial trends, as well as the history of Western colonialism.” (Baig, 2016)

Ghassan not only separates resistance from symbolic communication but also strives to make it a reality by taking it out of the experimental world. When this creation came to light in 1961, Israel had raised the banner of its oppression in the occupied territories.

“Therefore, for a time, the world including the Arab world was unfamiliar with the literature written in occupied Palestine. During this period, Ghassan spent most of his time preserving and uniting literary archives.” (Baig, 2016)

Some critics disagree that Ghassan was the first to use the term resistance. Ali Rifad Fatehi (2020) in his article *Resistant behavior of world literature and Urdu literature* writes that “the term “Resistance literature” was first introduced by Barbara Harlow and discussed the role of literature in the armed struggle. His speech included writings from resistance literature in Africa, Latin America, and Asia that were engaged in the armed struggle for independence. He explains how the struggle for national liberation developed a collection of poetry and prose and resistance literature for ideological analysis.”

But going forward, he does not stick to his word and, realizing the above two views and opinions, says that the term resistance literature was first coined by the *Palestinian* writer Ghassan Kanaḡani or Barbara

Harlow, but the term resistance literature certainly came into being during the dictatorship. Thus, on the one hand, the literature written for the liberation of Vietnam, Palestine, and Algeria was called resistance literature, on the other hand, the literature written to encourage the marginalized population was also considered resistance literature. The writers have always lit the lamp of truth against the darkness of oppression and tyranny (Fatehi, 2020).

Literature directly affects human life and creates awareness in society. If the history of world literature is studied, there are rarely a few writers whose creations do not have resistance elements and drops of blood dripping from the tip of his pen. It shows that literature and resistance literature are related to each other tightly.

“Some experts think that the classification and distribution of resistance and non-resistance literature are wrong because literature itself is a resistance process. When a writer is not in complete harmony with his surroundings, he expresses it through literary creations. From this point of view and ideology, all literature is resistance literature and every writer is a rebel.” (Fatehi, 2020)

Greece is the land where the journey of literature, along with another knowledge, has begun. Resistance literature is also seen in this literary journey. By the way, the land of Greece is considered the land of resistance literature.

“The effects of Greek civilization have had a direct impact on human life. The first poems to appear in the form of resistance in Greek literature are Omar's poems Iliad and Odyssey which form the basis of resistance literature. Iliad is a poem that tells the story of the horrors of war and the destruction of the conquered state of Troy. This story was considered the soul of tragedy in poetry and drama later. Three of the world's four greatest tragedians are from Greece, including Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Shakespeare. Since democracy was established in Greece, the avenues of resistance and resistance remained open and the fine arts also flourished.” (Faraz, 2019)

There are many early Greek poets who have a tradition of speaking out against oppression practically and creatively. Resistance, courage, and bravery have been part of their nature. They have reshaped their ancient rituals and kept alive the tradition of resistance literature.

“Due to resistance and protest, about two thousand five hundred years ago, the Greeks excelled in tragedy and the main reason was the Omari literature. In Omar's poems, Troy's war and horror are described in the way that resistance literature was born. By the way, the influence of Greek civilization has wrapped up human development well, but the role of Greece in moving resistance literature in the right direction is commendable.” (Punjnud.com, 2021)

Euripides, an ancient Greek dramatist, has brought emotional awareness, consciousness, and new questions to his dramas. When he sees human dignity being violated, he creates resistance literature against those attitudes. When he writes an article entitled *“The effects of the ravages of war on women”* the government gets unhappy and bans it.

“Due to this restriction, he travels out of Athens and stays outside to perform his art. Despite being Greek in Women of Troy, all his sorrows were with the people of Troy who were destroyed at war.” (Punjnud.com, 2021)

Literature has benefited every country and nation that was in the custody of other powerful nations, that is, their freedom was violated. The creator has always tried to come up with new ideas from his creation. So that society moves towards new ideas and ideologies. But society does not embrace the ideas and thoughts of every creator unless they are mature and strong technically, practically, and intellectually.

When a writer's work is not popular with the public, the writer is compelled to give a resistance color to his writings.

"Sometimes the creator presents an ideal in his creations but the society refuses to accept his ideal, thus resisting attitudes that arise in his writings. Resistance is also against established attitudes, customs, and values. The Creator reshapes society. Rebels against outdated traditions and barren intellectual movements break taboos." (Yaqoob, 2019)

Resistance and literary creation are considered to be a masterpiece that is universal, similar to the conditions of every society, where the feelings, emotions are all the same. For example, if any feelings and emotions are expressed, then everyone can find their sorrows and troubles in that creation. If such resistance and literary creation are brought to the fore, the emotional aspects of this creation become stronger. That is, it will be able to accompany the journey of international resistance literature. Adil Faraz (2019) thinks that the best literature is born from the cradle of resistance and protest:

"Even today, these creations of art are of universal importance in world literature which is the gift of resistance, rebellion, and protests attitudes. Literature that does not have the power to resist becomes very short-lived and its scope can be very small because the writer is naturally tolerant of resistance and rebellious temperament in his creative universe." (Faraz, 2019)

Resistance is not something that comes from outside, resistance is born from the birth of man. That is, all the difficulties and circumstances that surrounded human life, as a result of these factors, resistance literature has come into existence. Whether those factors are born out of friendship and resentment, or stories of war and misery, misbehavior and old-fashioned social customs, or the hardships of trampling and enslavement, all of these actions and reactions have made resistance literature has been alive and well. Man has been associated with resistance from birth to the present day and has kept on creating resistance literature.

"But it has been observed that despite all these, only resistance literature written with the passage of time has gained popularity. However, it has rarely happened in the past that such resistance literature has been created that would be useful in the future. That is, old resistance literature may be used as a reference, but for the reader of popular literature it has no particular practical interest. It seems that the most important thing in determining the age of resistance literature is the calculation of the period." (Qassimi, 2018)

Conclusion

Resistance literature began when the man from the practical world, stepped into the creative arena. He was looking for a way to express his feelings. Whether those feelings were in response to the breakdown of a society or are creative voices of resistance against powerful and ruthless kings. Man has resorted to all these factors with the help of literature because literature has been the means of expressing human feelings and emotions whereas man has expressed all his sorrows and pains under artistic means. Remember that only those creations will adorn resistance literature that meets the technical requirements of resistance literature.

From this research paper, it is concluded that man has expressed his friendship, resentment, abuse, hunger, deprivation of rights, protection of civilization, shame and disgrace, expressions of revenge in resistance poems and creations. It is through this intellectual and emotional expression that resistance literature has been born, and similarly the writings of bravery, courage, and boldness have been given the name of resistance literature. By the way, the term resistance literature appears when Ghassan Kanafani uses this term in his book. But some writers believe that Barbara Harlow was the first to use the term. Since then, the term has become popular and is still used today. On the other hand, the source of

resistance literature is considered to be Sumerian, Greek, and Teutonic literature whose great works of art are still treasures of resistance literature.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors have no conflict of interest.

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