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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

ENGLISH

***Hamlet in Pakistan***

by

**Mohammad Muazzam Sharif**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**



# ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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***HAMLET IN PAKISTAN***

Mohammad Muazzam Sharif

This thesis tests and questions the concept of revenge in *Hamlet* against the context of Pukhtun culture in the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan. As this study seeks to understand the emotive meaning of revenge in a range of cultural contexts, I explore the way in which *Hamlet* is read and interpreted in a culture where revenge, as in the debased form of *badal*, is both current and pervasive. The *KP* universities' students who belong to the culture, where revenge is considered obligatory, tend to identify themselves with various characters of the play, particularly Hamlet. This study seeks to ascertain the experience of the play as a dramaturgical construct which questions the revenge ethos capable of modifying entrenched beliefs among young Pakistanis engaged in reading the play at *KP* universities. As a result, I explore the role and use of *Hamlet* as an educational tool to combat revenge practices in Pakistan. This research contributes to the growing work on Shakespeare criticism and performance in different cultures around the world by presenting the relevant appropriations of the play in Pakistan and worldwide.



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## Definitions and Abbreviations

<b><i>Badal</i></b>	The literal meaning of <i>badal</i> is to exchange or reciprocate. Nowadays, it is used more in a sense of revenge.
<b>Khyber Pukhtunkhwa</b>	Khyber Pukhtunkhwa was formerly known as North-West Frontier Province and is one of the four provinces of Pakistan, located in the north-western region of the country. Its provincial capital and the largest city is Peshawar. It borders Afghanistan through Khyber Pass. It is officially abbreviated as <i>KP</i> .
<b>Pukhto</b>	<p>Pukhto, also known as <i>Pashto</i>, is the name of the language spoken in parts of Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Iran. It is the official language of Afghanistan and is predominantly spoken in <i>KP</i> and the tribal areas of Pakistan. It is the second largest regional language of Pakistan.</p> <p>Pukhto is also a series of tenets on how a Pukhtun must live. These tenets define how the people interact and provide guideline for normative behaviours in living in Pukhtun lifestyle. It is considered as the constitution of the life of the Pukhtuns.</p>
<b>HEC</b>	Higher Education Commission
<b><i>KP</i></b>	Khyber Pukhtunkhwa

<b>KK</b>	<i>Khudai Khidmatgar</i> . It is commonly translated as Servants of God
<b>OED</b>	Oxford English Dictionary online ( <a href="http://www.oed.com/">http://www.oed.com/</a> )
<b>QEC</b>	Quality Enhancement Cell
<b>Q2</b>	Hamlet: The Quarto of 1604-05
<b>Q1</b>	Hamlet: The Quarto of 1603
<b>F</b>	First Folio of 1623

## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Mohammad Muazzam Sharif, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

### *Hamlet in Pakistan*

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signed: .....

Date:.....





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## Note on Style

All quotations from *Hamlet* are taken from 'The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare: *Hamlet*' edited by Harold Jenkins unless otherwise stated. Similarly, these quotations follow the spelling and punctuation of this edition unless otherwise stated.

All quotations from *Haider* are taken from the English subtitles provided in the film.

All Pukhto and non-English words are spelt in Roman English, and are also italicised where necessary.

**Comment:** All references are sorted through Endnote software.



## Introduction

My interest in drama started in childhood when I grew up watching Pakistani drama serials through the state-owned channel Pakistan Television (PTV). PTV constituted of five local TV stations situated in Peshawar, Quetta, Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. These dramas were weekly telecasted from each centre. Loaded with local social and cultural values, these dramas from each centre focused on and depicted the respective life styles, societal issues and problems, religious controversies of the country. Hardly were they of political nature but they certainly brought out the corruption of the societies in which they were set.

Pakistan is constituted of four provinces Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (*KP*), Baluchistan, Sindh and Punjab, and the Federally Administered Tribal and Northern Areas. While there are common elements between various societies of Pakistan, all the four provinces have different and diverse cultures and social values from each other. Even the languages are different in each province. Conflicts surface every now and then due to these differences, particularly because of the differences related to languages. Examples of such conflicts can be seen in the clashes between Pukhtuns and *Mohajir*<sup>1</sup> in Karachi and/ or Pukhtuns and *Hindko*<sup>2</sup> speakers in *KP*. Therefore, the nature of the problems in these different societies is equally diverse. As a result efforts were made to make Urdu the national as well as official language of

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<sup>1</sup> *Mohajirs* in Karachi refer to those people who migrated from India and settled in Pakistan in 1947. The literal meaning of the term Mohajir is immigrant.

<sup>2</sup> *Hindko* is an Indo-Iranian language and is spoken in some parts of *KP* and Western Punjab.

Pakistan, mainly for the unification of the people of Pakistan. PTV dramas that were televised were in Urdu language regardless of the society in which they were set.

The content of these dramas varied. Dramas telecasted from Karachi and Lahore TV centres, for instance, were mostly about the inequities caused by the prevalent feudalism in the respective societies of Sindh and Punjab. Dramas televised from Quetta and Peshawar TV centres mostly consisted of violent contents, which shed light on the tribal codes responsible for violence and aggression in the societies of Baluchistan and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa. Within the boundaries of poetic justice these dramas portrayed realistic pictures of the societies and their respective negative elements. They, however, were also loaded with embedded messages for social reformation. Like any other Pakistani, my love for drama increased with the passage of time due to their realistic depiction of the society.

To consider an example of these dramas, any Pakistani who grew up in 1970s-1990s would remember the famous drama *Dhuwan* (Smoke) which was televised from the Quetta TV centre. It was based on the story of five friends who decided to collectively fight against terrorists and drug dealers. Though partly successful, all five were shot dead in the end by the terrorists. The fiancé of one of the friends took revenge and killed the offenders. The audience loved the play so much that PTV had to re-telecast it on demand, which rarely happened with head cast TV dramas. We all loved it because justice was served by taking revenge. PTV telecasted numerous dramas in which revenge as a theme was frequently found. Little did we know that violence and terrorism would escalate in the coming years where revenge

would play a vital role in its growth. This is not to suggest that there is a casual relationship between TV revenge dramas and acts of violence. But it is to say that they reflect and address issues related to violence and revenge.

As well as representing the evils of the societies, these dramas adapted real life incidents and occurrences for the purpose of social awareness and reformation. One such instance is the production of the drama serial *Aahan*, written by the Pakistani poet and dramatist Syed Wasi Shah. It dramatized various terror related incidents that occurred in Pakistan and the subsequent successful military operations against them. One such scene in the drama depicts the real-life hijacking of a school bus in Peshawar in 1994. Three armed militants from Afghanistan hijacked the school bus of Peshawar Model School, which was on its way to the school, carrying around 70 students and 7 teachers. All the hostages were successfully rescued in the military operation.

Similarly, another example of a dramatic narrative, which is based on real-life events, is *Faseel-e-Jaan Se Aagey –Matti ka Qaraz (Loyalty to Motherland)*. Written by Sajjad Saji, this drama retells the real-life story of a Deputy Superintendent of Police Javaid Iqbal. Javaid Iqbal was martyred in the line of duty by militants in Lakki Marwat, KP in Feb 2008. In his funeral later the same day a suicide blast killed around 40 people.<sup>3</sup> Such dramas are used as a public medium through which to foster awareness and social reform, and establish the writ of the government.

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<sup>3</sup> The Municipal records show that around 70 people were buried.

My first reading of *Hamlet* made me think of the drama *Dhuwan* and other similar Pakistani dramas that were based on the theme of revenge. Brought up in a Pukhtun traditional family, my initial reactions to revenge plays including *Hamlet* were no different from those of my other classmates. Revenge was an obligatory part of the society as well as of the dramas that we grew up with. It is unjust to say that these dramas supported or accepted the call for revenge. It was mostly because these dramas depicted the society as it was in real life; the reflections of which can also be seen in Pukhto literature.

Even Pukhto folk tales which have been passed on from generation to generation resonate with stories of revenge mostly inspired from real life. Like blood feud, the revenge stories were passed on from generation to generation but with a sense of pride in them. *Yousaf Khan ao Sherbano*, for instance, is a famous and the most often quoted story of romance and eternal love. However, it is imbued with the code of honour and revenge. It is revenge which ultimately consumes the life of Yousaf Khan the protagonist. People love it because it gives them a typical Pukhto romance story where the protagonist maintains his honour and revenge.

Violence and aggression may easily become part of the behaviour of the young children in a society where they are taught 'g for gun' and 't for tank' in schools and pictures are taken of them with real guns. What's more, the use of toy guns particularly during the Eid Festivals in Pakistan may contribute to the normalisation of gun culture. The government has made several attempts to ban and control the sale and use of the toy guns in Pakistan mainly because of the increase in the number of injuries,



particularly eye injuries, caused by the rubber or plastic pellets used in these guns. It does not seem far-fetched that the same young boys may start using the real guns which are as easily available as the toy guns particularly in *KP*. With the recent increase in the rate of street crime and subsequent violence, police have time and again taken actions against the sale and use of toy guns. They have repeatedly requested the government to put a complete ban on the production of toy guns for health and safety reasons. Incidents have happened where Police had mistaken young boys with toy guns for armed robbers. In one such incident in 2015, the police officer shot the two school boys in Faisalabad who were playing with their toy guns on the street. Fahad aged 14 survived whereas Farhan aged 15 died in the hospital later.<sup>4</sup>

Whether parents as well as teachers are conscious of it or not, this is an unconscious first step in the acceptance of the tradition of revenge as a means of delivering justice in the society. *Son of a Lion* is an Australian-Pakistani film set in the tribal area of Darra Adam Khel, *KP*, which reflects a typical life story of a son growing up in a traditionalist society. However, the young son successfully shuns the life of a firearms manufacturer and goes to school; where he defies the demand to study 'g for gun' and 't for tank'.

When I was growing up *Hamlet's* revenge appeared to us as a typical Pukhtun story of revenge where Hamlet was justified in killing his uncle according to the Pukhtun code of *badal*. Thinking otherwise was hard, particularly in a traditional society like Pukhtun. However, *Hamlet* had a

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<sup>4</sup> Kashif Hussain. 'Selfie with Toy Gun: Schoolboy Shot by Police in Faisalabad Dies', *DAWN*, 2015 < <https://www.dawn.com/news/1189965> > [accessed 26 March 2017]

different appeal to those of us who were exposed to revenge. This different appeal of the play to the students is what this thesis explores for the reason that it may act as a tool to change the attitude and thinking of students towards the matter of revenge.

For this reason, I always wanted to carry out research on *Hamlet*. The present study was initially planned to be a stylistic analysis of *Hamlet*, where I intended to probe the structure of the play to critically evaluate the literary criticism regarding Hamlet's indecisiveness and procrastination in relation to the ways in which it is read and taught as a revenge play in Pakistani universities, particularly in the universities of KP.<sup>5</sup> In this linguistic study, my initial interest was also in the structure of the play, particularly focusing on the use of the verbs of perception, to determine Hamlet's indecisiveness and procrastination over the revenge matter. Coming from the background where *Hamlet* is taught and read in the universities at Bachelor and/or Master levels in Pakistan, we have academic approaches to the play that are mostly rooted in rather old-fashioned literary criticism, which adhere to the Aristotelian view point of tragedy, tragic-hero, *hamartia* and *catharsis*, resulting in classroom-discussions of Hamlet's indecision to avenge his father's murder.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the Higher Education Commission Pakistan, there are twenty-three public sector universities stationed throughout KP province for feasible access for students. Out of those, seven universities: Kohat, Karak, Bannu, DI Khan and Swat are located in those areas of the province which are more volatile and unstable due to the current insurgency of the militants.

Higher Education Commission Pakistan, 'HEC Recognised Universities', 2014 < <http://www.hec.gov.pk/Ourinstitutes/pages/Default.aspx> > [accessed 26 March 2014]

Such criticism of the play dominates classroom-discussions as are evident from the following few questions and topics:

- A different Hamlet might have killed his uncle on the strength of the Ghost's accusation, ascended the throne, married Ophelia, and lived happily ever after. But such a primitive hero was not likely to be of interest to Shakespeare.
- How does Shakespeare mould Hamlet as a tragic hero?
- What, in your opinion, are the reasons for Hamlet's procrastination in avenging the murder of his father?
- Do you think Hamlet delays his revenge at all?<sup>6</sup>

I argue that one of the reasons why *Hamlet* is read and understood as a revenge play and why it attracts Pakistani readers in general and *KP* readers in particular is because of the strong presence of real life revenge culture in the region. Thus, Hamlet's tragic flaw of inability to take action showcases *Hamlet* as an experience to produce moral catharsis for Pakistani readers.

## The Syllabus for English Literature

The syllabus of English Literature and the way it is taught has not much changed since its introduction by the British after the occupation of the subcontinent. Gauri Viswanathan traces the history of English literature in *Masks of Conquest* and finds it to have been introduced as early as the

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<sup>6</sup> These topics and questions are taken from the resources and notes available to students and from past exam papers.

1820s in British India. 'English Literature made its appearance in India, albeit indirectly, with a crucial act in [British] Indian Educational history: the passing of the Charter Act in 1823.'<sup>7</sup> While her study provides a list of English Literature books included in the curriculum across the government schools in the British India during the mid-nineteenth century, we see three Shakespeare's plays: *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. In contrast, the list of recommended books prescribed by the Duff's Free Church Institution in 1852 excluded these plays and introduced religious (Christianity) books.<sup>8</sup>

While Viswanathan claims that the British Indian people were familiar with English Literature much before 1820s, Poonam Trivedi in her book *India's Shakespeare: Translation, Interpretation and Performance* traces the presence of *Hamlet* as early as 1775.<sup>9</sup> 1775 is also the year when Calcutta Theatre or the New Playhouse was opened in Calcutta under the patronage of the then Governor General, Warren Hastings. English Theatres in Calcutta entertained a largely British audience constituted of the officers, merchants, scholars, and clerics of the East India Company.<sup>10</sup>

When the English came to Calcutta they brought with them the plays of Shakespeare. Early in the nineteenth century Shakespeare was a subject of study in the Hindu College. Much before that Shakespeare's plays had begun to be staged in the theatres that the local Englishmen had setup in the city for their entertainment and

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<sup>7</sup> Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Viswanathan, p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> Poonam Trivedi and Dennis Bartholomeusz, *India's Shakespeare: Translation, Interpretation, and Performance* (University of Delaware Press, 2005), p. 261.

<sup>10</sup> Jyotsna Singh, 'Different Shakespeares: The Bard in Colonial/Postcolonial India', *Theatre Journal*, 41 (1989), 445-58 (p. 445).

relaxation. The names of David Garrick, the great eighteenth-century Shakespearean actor, and Garrick Drury Lane Theatre ... were familiar in Calcutta among the readers of Shakespeare and the lovers of theatre.<sup>11</sup>

Trivedi also claims that the introduction of *Hamlet* in British India was predominantly for the purpose of entertainment rather than education. *Hamlet*, along with other plays of Shakespeare, was performed particularly for the European traders in Calcutta and Bombay. This correlates to the notes found in the journal of the Captain of East India Company's ship *The Dragon*. In 1607, he noted in his journal that the performance of *Hamlet* kept his people from idleness and unlawful games, or sleep.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, the establishment of the rule of the East India Company in India, which effectively began in 1757, affirms that Shakespeare plays, including *Hamlet*, not only came to India with the Company but they were also used by theatre companies in India to entertain the European traders. On August 17, 1848, an Indian actor called Baishnav Charan Adhya performed the role of Othello in a production at the Sans Sonci Theatre in Calcutta which set 'the whole world of Calcutta agog'.<sup>13</sup> The 1850s saw translations of Shakespeare's plays into local languages and that is when the story of post-colonial Shakespeare began.

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<sup>11</sup> Sushil Kumar Mukherjee and Suśīla Mukhopādhyāya, *The Story of the Calcutta Theatres, 1753-1980* (KP Bagchi, 1982), p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Royal Shakespeare Company, 'Stage history | Hamlet | Royal Shakespeare Company' < <https://www.rsc.org.uk/hamlet/about-the-play/stage-history> > [accessed 9 March 2017]

<sup>13</sup> Singh, p. 445.

Viswanathan's *Masks of Conquest* is predominantly concerned with the institutionalization of English Language and Literature; and their use as a tool by the British for the social and political control of British India. The present study is based on the premise of Viswanathan's account of the use of English Literature; yet, differently from Viswanathan, my thesis considers the uses of *Hamlet* and its subsequent influence in Pakistan rather than colonial India. Where Viswanathan's study focused on the historic development of the use of English language and literature as a means of power for the British, my study focuses on the present-day use of the English literature (*Hamlet*) as well as Pukhto literature as a means of empowerment for all.

Texts introduced during the era of colonial rule have mostly remained in Pakistani education even after 1947 when Pakistan came into being. However, the approaches to studying and understanding them have started to change. The intervention of local cultural values and the sense of pride in the traditional literature, and the emergence of Pakistani English have certainly instigated this change. For this reason, I also base my argument in this thesis on Linda Hutcheon's theory of adaptation<sup>14</sup> where she describes adaptation as: an acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work, a creative and an interpretive act of appropriation and an extended inter-textual engagement with the adapted work.<sup>15</sup>

It is a matter of observation that the curriculum for teaching English Literature in Pakistani universities since independence has long been

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<sup>14</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (Routledge, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Hutcheon.

traditionally associating itself with a strong syllabus devoted to Eurocentric content.<sup>16</sup>

It so much so remained the same that the

English curriculum in literature at masters level from year 1981-1991 did not have the aims and objectives mentioned in the official document distributed by University Grants Commission [Now Higher Education Commission].<sup>17</sup>

‘The British colonists in 1835 introduced their “standard” English language and its literature in British India to control it intellectually and culturally.’<sup>18</sup>

The teaching of English language and literature remained the same even after the creation of Pakistan in 1947 because ‘policy changes are slow in Pakistani education context’. This demonstrates that the teaching of English language and literature continued in the same traditional way as it was officially recognised by the 1835 English Education Act of Governor-General William Bentinck and presentation of Thomas Babington Macaulay’s minutes.<sup>19</sup> The teaching of English literature was also confined to those institutions in which studies were conducted entirely and strictly in English.<sup>20</sup> There is a strong negative reception associated with Macaulay’s policy of education and much has been written about it, however, the focus here is neither on the content of the English Literature introduced in 1835 nor on

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<sup>16</sup> Monazza Makhdoom and S. M. Awan, 'Education and Neo-Colonization: A Critique of English Literature Curriculum in Pakistan', *South Asian Studies (1026-678X)*, 29 (2014), 411-21 (p.417).

<sup>17</sup> Makhdoom and Awan, p. 417.

<sup>18</sup> Makhdoom and Awan, p. 415

<sup>19</sup> Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), p. 41.

<sup>20</sup> Viswanathan, p.41.

Macaulay's policies of education in Pakistan but on the continuation of teaching of English Literature in traditional ways as mentioned below:

One has also observed that the prescribed curricular course of all the four compulsory genres (drama, poetry, novel and criticism) in the study of English Literature are primarily traditional English Literature courses. The consumption of these courses perpetuate the colonial legacy of a single culture which is heavily loaded with western history, philosophy and ideological referencing to a larger extent.<sup>21</sup>

While teaching English Literature, 'the traditional approach to teaching has been that of analyses of texts in terms of plot construction, character, theme, and genre analysis.'<sup>22</sup> In the predominant Pakistani idea of *Hamlet* the plot and theme is mostly revenge and Hamlet is an indecisive character whose tragic flaw is procrastination.

In order to clarify how *Hamlet* is read and taught in Pakistan universities, the following section surveys some of the questions that regularly appear in the graduate exam papers in the last four years. The following questions not only show how *Hamlet* is read and taught in terms of plot construction, character, theme and genre analysis but also refer to the presence of dominant revenge-theme classroom discussions.

How does Shakespeare improve upon the conventional revenge plays in *Hamlet*?

The problem of "delay" in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has led to many suggestions some plausible other highly unacceptable. What in your opinion is the cause of delay in Hamlet's action to take revenge?

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<sup>21</sup> Makhdoom and Awan, p. 416.

<sup>22</sup> Shirin Zubair, 'Women's Critical Literacies in a Pakistani Classroom', *Changing English*, 10.2 (2003), 163-73 (p. 163).



“Shakespeare sought to depict a great deed laid upon a soul unequal to the performance of it...” (Goethe). Comment on Goethe’s judgment of Hamlet as noble but weak-willed hero.

Keeping in mind this old-fashioned criticism, it is no surprise that *Hamlet* is still read and taught in old literary ways, where it is critically analysed as a revenge play. Where *Hamlet* (and English Literature) is confined to old-fashioned criticism, it denies readers the freedom to use their own socio-cultural and political knowledge in the understanding and interpretation of the play.

### *Hamlet and Badal*

There is a striking element of revenge in the Pakistani society which bears resemblance with the story of *Hamlet*’s revenge. Focusing on the revenge culture of Pukhto, which is commonly known as *badal*, the revenge plot in *Hamlet* provides striking similarities with real-life revenge incidents in Pukhtun culture. *Badal* and its similarities to *Hamlet* are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis. However, here it is better to replace the word *badal* with *revenge* for clarity.

Where young students of *KP* universities come across revenge incidents/stories in real life, they are attracted to the play as it tells them a familiar story of revenge. They are intrigued by the story of *Hamlet*, which provides them revenge stories from three different perspectives: Hamlet, Laertes and Fortinbras. The revenge theme in *Hamlet* dominates the classroom-discussion. One outcome of this predominant pedagogical

framing of revenge is seen in the afore-mentioned exam questions, which are set in accordance with the syllabus and the way it is taught in class.

This dominance of revenge-related discussion in the classroom is also evident and discussed in detail in chapter 5. As a teacher of Shakespearean drama in that area, I have noticed that it is mostly discussed in terms of revenge and that Hamlet is generally considered a weak-willed hero, even a coward to take revenge for his father's murder. It is so because the concept of revenge as it is understood in the codes of *badal* is deep rooted in Pukhtun society and culture, where it is incumbent upon the victim or family of the victim to take revenge. However, this does not mean that the understanding and interpretation of Hamlet is limited to revenge.

Revenge in the form of *badal* is incumbent and acceptable in Pukhtun culture which as a result presents the revenge of Hamlet, Laertes and Fortinbras as justified and acceptable to Pukhtun readers. However, this does not mean that the teachers teach *Hamlet* with the intention to justify the revenge culture in the society as well as in the play. The fact is that *badal* is so deep rooted in the culture that it is very difficult for teachers as well as students to begin to question it and/or reject it.

Thus, teachers may end up providing mere examples from Pukhtun society instead of challenging this revenge practice. Drawing mere parallel may prove destructive rather than constructive particularly under the new semester system for Bachelors and Masters in Pakistan introduced by the Higher Education Commission, where teachers are required to relate any literary work to the current issues and day to day life, as part of the syllabus.

The teachers are required to provide examples, if any, from the present Pakistani (or any other country) context to the students while teaching Shakespeare's plays, including *Hamlet*.

One such example is the use of Shakespeare's plays in the classroom to address the issues of female sexuality, feminism and gender.<sup>23</sup> In order to do so, Shirin Zubair uses examples from *Hamlet*. 'While teaching *Hamlet* I asked questions about the character of Ophelia. Is she a good and obedient daughter? The girls in the class room were readily able to identify themselves with Ophelia, because in Pakistani society, daughters are supposed to be obedient to their fathers.'<sup>24</sup> This approach of providing parallels, for instance, between the play and Pakistan women's status in the society is essential and relevant particularly when we keep hearing about real life incidents of honour killings and forced marriages in the country. Mere parallels like these may not do justice to the character of Ophelia as well as the young students. There is every possibility that this approach may act as another way of normalising repression. In this case the parallels drawn by the teacher tend to validate the old fashioned criticism but through referring to current social pressures.

Thus, it appears that it is because of such parallels that the students of *KP* universities initially consider Hamlet a weak-willed hero or a coward to avenge his father's murder as opposed to Laertes who plans to avenge instantly and recklessly. Will a change in the teaching of *Hamlet* to address

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<sup>23</sup> Zubair, p. 167.

<sup>24</sup> Zubair, p. 167.

the revenge issue in *KP* change the understanding and opinions of the students not to take revenge? Are there any changes in the perceptions about Hamlet's revenge of the students who have similar real-life incidents to Hamlet? Are there any changes in students' perspectives about revenge? These are the questions that this study explores and discusses in detail in Chapter 5 of the thesis.

Thus the comparison of revenge in *Hamlet* and *badal* in Pukhto address the grave issue of the latter in Pukhtun society. *Hamlet* presents a revenge story which attracts readers and students from cultures where revenge is practiced for instance, *KP* universities' students. Coming from a culture where revenge is both current and pervasive, it is not surprising to have students justify Hamlet's revenge and/or consider Hamlet as a coward for not taking revenge for his father's murder instantly. As a student, my first initial reaction to Hamlet's revenge within the context of the play was probably no different from that of other students of that time and/or even present students. It was not until I thought out of the box of classroom criticism of *Hamlet* and saw real-life incidents similar to Hamlet's revenge in the society that I began to reflect on other possible readings.

Similarly, as a teacher of Shakespearean drama, I have been struck by a tendency among students to identify with the various characters in the play, particularly with Hamlet. This identification is mostly in terms of revenge. Such identifications suggest the students' experiences of and/or exposure to revenge in the society. This empathetic identification of readers and students with Hamlet is not a new phenomenon but 'many generations have

seen their own reflection in this [*Hamlet*] play.<sup>25</sup> Taking into consideration this empathetic identification, what is important here is to investigate the influence of the play on the students (of *KP* universities) to determine any changes in the thinking about the revenge ethos.

Though having this comparison in mind, it was not until the start of this project at the University of Southampton and the guidance provided here at the Department of English that I realised how ambivalence and uncertainty in *Hamlet* might help to address the problem of revenge associated with *badal*, that is, to question and reject it through *Hamlet*. Also, *KP* universities students' identification and empathetic connection with Hamlet, and that too in terms of revenge, strongly encouraged me to change the course of this study for the practical significance of addressing the socio-cultural issue of revenge/ *badal* in Pakistan. Could such ambivalence and uncertainty be a means to address the problem of revenge/ *badal* and thereby help to minimize violence in the region? This central question is what motivated this study and this is what this study seeks to understand and demonstrate at the same time. This is what gives novelty to this thesis and establishes the practical significance of it.

Where academic approaches to the play are rooted in a rather old-fashioned literary criticism approach, there are no academic studies which link *Hamlet* to Pukhtun culture. In Pukhto language, apart from a translation of Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*, by Murad Shinwari in 1960s, limited research has been conducted on the plays of Shakespeare/*Hamlet* in

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<sup>25</sup> Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (London: WW Norton & Company, 1974), p. 47.

*KP*, Pakistan. In terms of the comparison and appropriation of *Hamlet* to the Pukhtun culture no significant research is conducted in Pakistan.

### The play as question

Therefore, this study unfolds new perspectives to interpret and understand *Hamlet*. Pertaining to the extraordinary number of questions (interrogative structures) while the play deals with the theme of revenge, I present a critique of the dramaturgical construction of *Hamlet*, which in turn allow us to reject revenge within the play. As a result, the construction of more than three hundred questions in *Hamlet* not only reject revenge in the play, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, but also empower its readers to relate to similar incidents/situations outside the play, which, in turn, enable them to question and reject revenge in real life. Exposure to revenge action is very common in the region. Therefore, I argue that *Hamlet* has the potential to initiate the thinking process of the readers and audience and in turn enable them to relate and empathize with the characters' situations. Therefore, in chapter 5 of this thesis, I investigate the potential of *Hamlet* to modify the entrenched beliefs regarding revenge amongst young Pakistani students engaged in reading the play.

My investigation also includes teachers' perspective on the inclusion of the play in the syllabus of the *KP* universities and their opinions of the relevance (or not) of its content to Pukhtun culture. The purpose here is to add to the syllabus such relevance particularly about revenge, in order to help the future students of *KP* universities to avoid Hamlet's situation. This inclusion in return may help the teachers to teach *Hamlet* by not merely equating it

with revenge (*badal*) which as a result may promote the acceptance of this revenge culture. Instead, this appropriation may question and reject the idea of revenge as it does in *Hamlet*. As a result it may help the *KP* students to understand *Hamlet* thus making them realise, question and challenge the prevalent culture of revenge and its subsequent consequences.

Therefore, in this study, I argue that through *Hamlet's* rhetorical construction as a series of questions, Shakespeare establishes the fact that revenge cultures do entertain questions at various stages, even though on the surface such cultures may seem not to do so and revenge may appear to be the normal accepted behaviour of people. People or societies which perceive revenge as a naturally accepted norm are referred to as 'ego-syntonic' or 'ego-near', 'meaning something that the individual or the group sees as being so near the inherent way of thinking and behaving that it is not questioned. In such a manner, violent revenge in a crime of passion can be considered "legitimate" and a "matter of course"'.<sup>26</sup> While addressing the nature and practice of revenge, Irwin Rosen argues that 'vengeance is the central motive of no fewer than twenty of Shakespeare's plays, which gives us some of the world's best remembered avengers: Hamlet, Lear, Iago, Richard III'.<sup>27</sup> However, referring to the same point of Rosen, Tomas Bohm and Suzanne Kaplan add the reconciliation aspect to Shakespeare plays'

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<sup>26</sup> Tomas Bohm and Suzanne Kaplan, *Revenge: On the Dynamics of a Frightening Urge and Its Taming* (Karnac Books, 2011), p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Irwin C Rosen, 'Revenge—the Hate That Dare Not Speak Its Name: A Psychoanalytic Perspective', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 55 (2007), 595-620 (p. 599).

revenge concept. *Hamlet*, for instance, 'contains speeches about reconciliation and the meaningless destructivity of violence'.<sup>28</sup>

Let us consider an example of how a certain revenge culture, like Pukhtun culture, apparently, may not entertain questions about the rejection of revenge, unless and until they are challenged properly. Let us consider a survey-documentary conducted by *Khyber News*, a popular Pukhto news channel in KP. *Khyber Watch* is a program, run by the same channel. It is dedicated to addressing the socio-cultural issues of KP, Pakistan and Pakistani communities outside the country. It also addresses issues particularly related to Pukhtuns. In this episode of *Khyber Watch*, the issue of gun culture, revenge, and growing violence was addressed.

The anchor and actor, Yousaf Jan Utmanzai, dressed up in typical Pukhtun dress with a gun, and documented the views of the people, including police guards, traffic police, government officers, taxi drivers and pedestrians, on the role of gun culture in the context of increasing of violence and revenge stories. Initially, almost all the people praised and applauded him for his aggression and the gun. When asked about the gun culture in the region, the participants not only approved of it but they also considered it an essential part of the Pukhtun culture. When Utmanzi referred to the growing violence and increase in revenge-based incidents in the region, the same people criticised and disapproved of the gun culture and the subsequent violence.

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<sup>28</sup> Bohm and Kaplan, p. 4.



Thus, in short, it is inferred and argued that despite what may normally appear to be the accepted behaviour of the people about revenge (gun culture in this case) it is not necessary that they may never entertain questions about it. The fact is that because it is an accepted behaviour of the overall society in general that is why it seems hard to challenge and question it. However, it does require stimulation, means and a medium to change. Once challenged and questioned, it has the potential to change this accepted behaviour. This, then, is what this project seeks to investigate: can *Hamlet* provide a means to address the cultural issue of revenge in *KP* and thereby enable students to challenge this accepted norm of *bada*?

Shakespeare presents *Hamlet* in a way that tells the story of bloody revenge but at the same time constructs the plot and language of the play in such a way that enables the readers and audience to question revenge. Thus, in this study I argue that Shakespeare presents the phenomenon of blood revenge as apparently justified, but at the same time challenges and rejects it through his dramaturgy, that is, the construction of the language and the juxtaposition of characters and scenes. What it also does is that it neither explicitly rejects nor accepts revenge but leaves it to the audience and readers to draw their own interpretations based on an individual's experience. This is one of the reasons *Hamlet* (and other Shakespeare plays) attracts audiences across time and cultures because it appeals to individuals' experiences and knowledge. Thus, it also attracts adapters to appropriate the play to address another country's specific problems.



## Chapter 1: Shakespeare in Pakistan

Although Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and is recommended as the official language in the 1973 constitution of Pakistan, English is still effectively the official language. English is taught as a language and subject in almost all the schools and colleges of Pakistan including a few religious schools too, and English is the Medium of Instruction (EMI) in higher education. There are those that disagree with this practice but the majority of linguists and subject specialists consider EMI compulsory at university; this is supported and advised to all the universities in Pakistan by HEC.<sup>29</sup> While English is a compulsory subject from Year 1,<sup>30</sup> the Ministry of Education announced that all science subjects including mathematics must be taught in English from 2014.<sup>31</sup>

Almost all of the courses and subjects taught in school, colleges and universities are in English with the exception of Urdu and Islamic Studies. Resources and materials for them are also in English. To take a few examples: studies in medicine, health sciences and engineering are all in the English language. English is also taught as a compulsory subject from primary to bachelor levels where the courses (at different levels) include language learning, comprehension, essay writing, writing letters and

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<sup>29</sup> Humaira Irfan Khan, 'An Investigation of Two Universities' Postgraduate Students and Their Teachers' Perceptions of Policy and Practice of English Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Pakistani Universities' (Dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2013), p. 19.

<sup>30</sup> Hywel Coleman, 'Teaching and Learning in Pakistan: The Role of Language in Education', *Islamabad: The British Council*, (2010), p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> Coleman, p. 15.

applications, poetry, prose, drama, and the novel. At Bachelor and Master levels, the English Literature curriculum covers the works from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century starting with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century including George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*. It mostly includes the following Shakespeare plays: *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Tempest*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Twelfth Night*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant of Venice*.

In addition to the use of English in the education sector, there are other mediums in Pakistan where English is predominantly seen and/or used. These include news channels, newspapers, films (English) in Pakistani cinemas, banners, signboards, posters, national identity cards. Even the driving license, license plates and registrations of vehicles are in English. In short, English is ubiquitous, although comprehension, fluency and expression vary widely in the population.

Because of this, a Pakistani variety of English has emerged. Pakistan, with over 85 million speakers of English as a second language, belongs in the concentric circles of world Englishes described by Braj Kachru.<sup>32</sup> Kachru presents three circles of world Englishes: the Inner circle, which includes countries like the UK and US where English is the primary language; the Outer circle, which includes countries like Pakistan and India which were colonies of the inner circle countries; and the Expanding circle, which includes countries like Japan that were not colonies but which have adopted

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<sup>32</sup> Braj B Kachru, 'The English Language in the Outer Circle', *World Englishes*, 3 (2006), 241-55 (p. 242).

English as an International language.<sup>33</sup> Pakistan continued the use of English language even after gaining independence in 1947 and has since developed a Pakistani variety of English.

People were learning English through formal schooling but there were not enough native-English speaking teachers to meet the demand; most teachers were Pakistani-Indian. Thus 'the input that English language learners received in South Asia was non-native and local.'<sup>34</sup> This helped in the emergence of a Pakistani variety of English and as result the number of Pakistani teachers increased to teach English. Participants in a survey of Pakistani teachers conducted by Humaira Khan, stated: 'we use our own English that is Pakistani.'<sup>35</sup> This variety of English is now part of the curriculum and is taught as a module/subject 'Pakistani English'.<sup>36</sup>

With the emergence of Pakistani English and its use to enable readers to read and interpret *Hamlet* in Pakistani context, there is a need for a change in the teaching of the play. Mere comparison of similarities between *Hamlet* and Pukhtun culture does not satisfy the needs of Pakistani readers. It also does not do justice to the text itself which has so much more to offer than a

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<sup>33</sup> Kachru, p. 242.

<sup>34</sup> Ahmar Mahboob and Nadra Huma Ahmar, 'Pakistani English: Phonology', in *A Handbook of Varieties of English: A Multimedia Reference Tool*, (2004), 1003-16 (p. 1003).

<sup>35</sup> Humaira Irfan Khan, 'An Investigation of Two Universities' Postgraduate Students and Their Teachers' Perceptions of Policy and Practice of English Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Pakistani Universities' (Dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2013), p. 294.

<sup>36</sup> Higher Education Commision, 'Curriculum of English BS & MS/Mphil', *Report* (Islamabad, 2012), (p. 75).

mere revenge story or story about procrastination over revenge. More importantly, it offers the opportunity for using *Hamlet* and its adaptations to address contemporary Pakistani problems. Therefore, a version of *Hamlet* taught in accordance within the new parameters of Pakistani English may prove beneficial and constructive for students, enabling them to draw parallels between revenge in *Hamlet* and in Pukhtun culture.

### Shakespeare across borders

Dennis Kennedy makes the point that ‘he [Shakespeare] regularly crosses national and linguistic boundaries with apparent ease’,<sup>37</sup> but at the same time, he raises the following important question about how Shakespeare travels: ‘does he cross into Poland or China as the same dramatist who is played in Stratford?’<sup>38</sup> Just as the English language crosses geographical boundaries and emerges as a peculiar variety, so literature, in this case Shakespeare’s plays in general and *Hamlet* in particular, also crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries. When Shakespeare’s plays are adapted and appropriated to represent those countries and cultures where they are read and interpreted in local varieties of English, they are not limited to western understandings or interpretations. The meaning and/or understanding of the plays may change when they cross geographical and/or linguistic boundaries. However, it does not necessarily mean that the

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<sup>37</sup> Dennis Kennedy, *Foreign Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Kennedy, p. 2.

play loses its originality. When the play crosses geographical boundaries, the perspective to understand and interpret the play changes.

This change in the understanding of the play is mainly due to the change in the context in which it is read, understood, and staged. When *Hamlet* is staged in Krakow, Hamlet is no more the Prince of Denmark and/or England, and it is not Denmark or England, but Poland which is the prison. In fact, the story of *Hamlet* has been crossing boundaries since its inception as Amleth,<sup>39</sup> where Shakespeare first adapted it into the form *Hamlet*. The story of Hamlet (Amleth) moved from Denmark to France and then to England.<sup>40</sup> However, to put it in the words of Jon Kott, 'what matters is that through Shakespeare's text we ought to get at our modern experience, anxiety and sensibility.'<sup>41</sup> *Hamlet* crosses national, geographical, and linguistic boundaries and is translated into new contexts where it becomes the voice of the adapters and becomes a means of communication with the audience.

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<sup>39</sup> A version of which was recorded in the thirteenth-century, in Books III and IV of Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum* ('The Deeds of the Danes').

Cited in Megan Arnott, 'Hamlet and Amleth, Princes of Denmark: Shakespeare and Saxo Grammaticus as historians and kingly actions in the Hamlet/Amleth narrative', *The Hilltop Review*, 8.1 (2015), p. 35.

<sup>40</sup> Louise D Cary, 'Hamlet Recycled, or the Tragical History of the Prince's Prints', *ELH*, 61 (1994), 783-805 (p. 784).

<sup>41</sup> Kott, p. 48.

Similarly, when *Hamlet* crosses to China, it appeals differently to the Chinese audience. The Chinese *Hamlet* of 1990s on stage, according to Lin Zhaohua, is 'neither a prince who seeks revenge for the sake of justice nor a hero of humanism. What we are facing is ourselves. To face oneself is the most active and bravest attitude modern people can possibly assume.'<sup>42</sup> After the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4, 1989, where hundreds of students were killed by the then government of Deng Xiaoping, Lin Zhaohua adapted and staged *Hamlet*<sup>43</sup> to highlight the anxieties of the people about the country's future. By referring to the Tiananmen Square massacre through this adaptation, Zhaohua addresses and appeals to the audience that 'the thoughts that tortured him [Hamlet] also torture us every day. The choice he needs to make is also the one we face every day.'<sup>44</sup> In this performance, the role of Hamlet was taken simultaneously by three different actors in order to present the idea that 'Everyone is Hamlet', in the context of Chinese political problems.<sup>45</sup> Thus, *Hamlet* was seen to speak for the common people and represented them and their concerns. It spoke to Chinese audiences in their language and provided them with a familiar context.

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<sup>42</sup> Lin Zhaohua, Program notes from *Hamlet*. Cited in Li Ruru, 'Shakespeare on the Chinese Stage in the 1990s', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 50 (1999), 355-67 (p. 357).

<sup>43</sup> This production of *Hamlet* proposes the idea that anyone can play the iconic character of Hamlet. This production was staged in 1990 in China by Beijing Film Academy.

Globalshakespeares.mit.edu, *Hamulaite* « *MIT Global Shakespeares*. [online] 2010 < <http://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/hamulaite-lin-zhaohua-1995/> > [accessed 24 January 2015]

<sup>44</sup> Ruru, p. 357.

<sup>45</sup> Ruru. P.357.



It may be a mark of *Hamlet*'s distinction as a great work of world literature that speaks to people from diverse nations, countries, and cultures who have appropriated it and used it to their own ends and benefit, even while the play maintains its originality as a play. It can be argued that it is Shakespeare's *Hamlet* which is important because it attracts people from all around the world rather than Zhaohua's *Hamlet*; yet, at the same time, the purpose the latter serves is equally remarkable as a play in itself, at least for a Chinese audience.

'The genius of *Hamlet* consists, perhaps, in the fact that the play can serve as a mirror [in which] many generations have seen their own reflection in this play'.<sup>46</sup> To put it in the words of Zhaohua, 'Hamlet is one of us. In the street, we may pass him without knowing who he is'.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, different people or generations, belonging to different cultures, read and interpret the play in their own country-specific context. They do so by appropriating the play to their own socio-cultural context. While referring to the idea of Shakespeare being not of an age but for all time, John Drakakis argues that Shakespeare can only be our contemporary through the strategy of appropriation.<sup>48</sup>

The interpretation of any art work rests with readers and audience and it can be different from that of the writer and/or other local readers and audience, who share the same language and culture as that of the writer. The

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<sup>46</sup> Kott, pp. 48-49.

<sup>47</sup> Ruru, p. 356.

<sup>48</sup> John Drakakis, *Alternative Shakespeares* (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 45.

following lines from Laura Bohannan's *Shakespeare in the Bush* elaborate this point further:

Sometime ... you must tell us some more stories of your country. We, who are elders, will instruct you in their true meaning, so that when you return to your own land your elders will see that you have not been sitting in the bush, but among those who know things and who have taught you wisdom. <sup>49</sup>

These are the words of an African tribe's chief after hearing the story of *Hamlet* from an anthropologist. The tribesmen, who listened to the story, interpreted and analysed *Hamlet* in their own socio-cultural context and provided an entirely different perspective on the understanding of the play. They asserted, for instance, that the ghost in *Hamlet* is the witch's omen according to their African-tribal culture and that Hamlet followed the omen to avenge his father. The tribesmen interpreted the play in their own cultural context, which was quite different from the English interpretation of the anthropologist. The tribesmen's understanding of *Hamlet* came from the retelling of the story rather than the original text or any stage production. They might have a different understanding or interpretation if they had read or watched the play. A change in the perspective through which Shakespeare's plays are understood and interpreted become inevitable when they are read in cultures other than those of Britain or Western Europe. When Shakespeare crosses linguistic boundaries, it is no more read and interpreted in the English context but is understood in the local variety of language and the local context.

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<sup>49</sup> Laura Bohannan, 'Shakespeare in the Bush', *Language: Readings in Language and Culture*, ed. by Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa (New York, NY: St. Martin's, 1998), pp. 27-36.

*Hamlet* can also be approached differently within a single country. If different cultures exist within a country, each may explore the play in a different way from others as it may appeal to them differently. *Hamlet* may offer a different perspective to an audience belonging to different cultures, and as a result the audience may draw different parallels between the play and their culture. In the context of Pakistan, for instance, Pukhtun readers and audiences may draw parallels in terms of revenge in *Hamlet* and in Pukhtun culture. Nevertheless, because Pakistan was part of the British colony, and the colonial legacy is so strong, there is a certain uniformity in English literature courses and the way they are taught throughout the country.

The focus of this study is on the revenge factor of the play and in Pukhtun culture. One of the reasons for selecting the revenge issue in this thesis is that revenge culture is both current and pervasive in *KP* and has been repeatedly associated with and identified as a reason for the increase in violence and terrorism in the region. Because of this increase and the subsequent unrest in Pakistani people about the causes of such increasing violence, *Hamlet* has the potential to directly appeal to the emotions of Pakistani especially Pukhtun people due to the fact that it is taught as a revenge play in the country.

Similarly, in order to understand the importance and significance of Shakespeare's plays to address contemporary Pakistani problems and the impact they have on the audience, I present two examples of Pakistani appropriations and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays: *Taming of the Shrew* as *Ilaj-i-zid Dastyab Hay* and *The Winter's Tale* as *Fasana-i-Ajaaib*. In order

to have a glimpse into the power of these adaptations to address various problems in Pakistan, I briefly discuss the adaptations of the *Taming of the Shrew* and *The Winter's Tale*.

#### Pakistani *Taming of the Shrew*

*The Taming of the Shrew* was performed in Urdu at the Globe in 2012.<sup>50</sup> The play is set within a Pakistani context to highlight patriarchal society, where sisters are married according to the birth order and where the permission and approval of the parents are compulsory.<sup>51</sup> The director, Haissam Hussain, explained that '*Taming of the Shrew* goes with our culture and it has all the elements that are in our society'.<sup>52</sup>

Hussain's objectives behind this adaptation were to 'raise awareness about the role of educated and strong women in a patriarchal society [...] to use the opportunity to address stereotypical views of Pakistan (as dysfunctional and consisting mainly of terrorist and other extremists)'.<sup>53</sup> While doing so, they managed to use *The Shrew* as a medium to address certain prevailing issues of Pakistan and Pakistani communities outside the country, for instance, the issue of forced-arranged marriages. Apparently, the issues

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<sup>50</sup> 'Global Shakespeare Festival Opens', *BBC News*, 23 April 2012 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-17811639> > [accessed 6 March 2015]

<sup>51</sup> Irna Qureshi, 'The Taming of the Shrew in Urdu | The Culture Vulture', 2012. <<http://theculturevulture.co.uk/blog/all/the-taming-of-the-shrew-in-urdu/> > [accessed 6 March 2015]

<sup>52</sup> In an interview after the show.

<sup>53</sup> Elizabeth Schafer, 'A Shrew Full of Laughter', in *Shakespeare Beyond English: A Global Experiment*, ed. by Susan Bennett and Christie Carson (Cambridge : CUP, 2013), 251-60 (p. 257).

related to patriarchal society, for instance, arranged marriages or marrying daughters in the order they are born as depicted in the play might appear to be a typical problem for many societies which are male dominated and where women are treated unjustly. Yet, there is more to it when looked at from a Pakistani perspective.

It is essential not to confuse forced marriages with arranged marriages, where in the latter case girls have every right, in theory and practice, to refuse proposals. There is a popular and misinformed understanding, particularly in the west, that all arranged marriages are forced marriages and/or that girls do not have a say in arranged marriages. However, they have to give oral as well as written consent of their acceptance of the marriage. This Pakistani adaptation highlights the problems of forced-arranged marriages where parents do not allow girls to exercise the right to choose and/or refuse, which is an un-Islamic practice in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

In some way Theatre Wallay's appearance at the Globe seemed very timely, as one of the main news stories in the British press at the time was feeding the worst British stereotypes about Pakistani culture: the trial of the parents of Shafilea Ahmad (1986-2003), accused of murdering their daughter because she refused an arranged marriage, can read as a brutal taming narrative.<sup>54</sup>

Cases like Shafilea Ahmad are common in Pakistan where girls who refuse to marry against their parents' and family's wishes gets murdered by them. In such cases the offenders' actions are justified under the socially and culturally protective cover of 'honour killing'.<sup>55</sup> The issue of forced marriage

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<sup>54</sup> Schafer, p. 258.

<sup>55</sup> Honour killing is associated with and is part of the revenge culture.

and/or forced arranged marriage could also potentially lead to honour killing if a woman refuses or raises her voice against it. But in the case of Shafiea it was the refusal of the forced-arranged marriage that resulted in her murder. Also, premarital or extramarital sex by women calls for honour killing. Honour is challenged if she marries at her own will without the consent of her family and/or refuses to marry as arranged by her family. Thus, forced marriages may lead to honour killings. However, the Pakistani *Shrew* essentially highlights the issues related to forced marriages rather than honour killing. Performed in the same year (2012) when Ahmad's parents were imprisoned because of killing their daughter, the Pakistani *Shrew* has more to offer to its audience than mere entertainment.

This problem of forced-arranged marriages extends to Pakistani communities outside Pakistan as well as other South Asian communities, particularly in the United Kingdom. The BBC 3 drama *Murdered by my Father* written by Vijay Patel highlights a typical forced-arranged marriage resulting in the murder of a young girl by her father under social pressure from his relatives. Jasvinder Sanghera, one of the advisors for the drama, experienced a similar real-life situation when at the age of fifteen she had to flee from home to escape a forced-arranged marriage. Before this, her elder sister also fell victim to forced-arranged marriage but she later committed suicide after the marriage. In reference to such cases Azir Afzal from the Crown Prosecution Service stated, 'we have no idea how many unmarked

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graves there are in Britain, let alone the girls who are taken abroad, because their parents obviously don't report them missing.'<sup>56</sup>

Similarly, the Pakistani *Shrew* addresses issues of patriarchal society in Pakistan but in a witty and humorous way in order to produce awareness and laughter at the same time. For instance, the snobbery of class difference and the clash between elite and middle-class people is highlighted through the dialogues of Meer (the Tranio figure) and Ghazi (the Gremio figure) when both brag about their wealth while seeking the hand of Bina (Bianca) in marriage. When both exhaust all options of showing their wealth, Meer suddenly announces in English 'I have a British passport'. His British passport outbids Ghazi's temporary visit visa. Witty as it sounds, it made the audience burst out laughing during the live performance in London. The refusal of a visa to enter the UK to four performers of this show added flavour to the wit in the dialogue. The scene was applauded by the audience too. The laughter of the audience suggests that they could well relate to the scene and understand the meaning behind it, that is, the problem of class difference in Pakistan and that speaking English is considered as a status symbol. That is why we see a frequent use of English in this adaptation.

The frequent switch-over from Urdu to English or the use of English words may also be for the English-speaking audience to understand the play.

However, the usage of English in scenes like these reflects its use as a status symbol. It highlights the debate about superiority of English over Urdu and

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<sup>56</sup> Kasia Delago, "'Honour-Based Abuse' Survivor Jasvinder Sanghera on the Reality of Murdered by My Father", *Radio Times*, 05 April 2016 <  
<http://www.radiotimes.com/news/2016-04-05/honour-based-abuse-survivor-jasvinder-sanghera-on-the-reality-of-murdered-by-my-father/>> [accessed 26 December 2016]

vice versa in Pakistan. Much has been written by critics, linguists, and scholars about the subject, but the general consensus in Pakistan is that 'English is the key to power and employment in the state and private sectors'<sup>57</sup> and is 'associated with upper and upper middle classes.'<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, the accent with which Rustam (the Petruchio figure) and his servant speak Urdu is very peculiar to Pukhtuns. It immediately draws the attention of the audience because of its peculiarity. Because of different sentence structures in the two languages there is a common mistake that Pukhtun speakers make while speaking Urdu. They tend to make a mistake in identifying the gendered element in a sentence which gives a funny meaning to the sentence that may make a listener laugh. This production certainly makes use of this aspect of language and makes the audience laugh.

Rustam and his servant, Sifarish, enact the roles of Pukhtuns in the play where they are dressed in typical *shalwar kameez* (long knee length shirt with baggy trousers) and wool hat called a *Pakool*. In a comic way both the characters make a comment on and highlight some of the problems associated with Pukhtuns. For instance, when Rustam asks Sifarish to knock on the door he uses the Urdu word *katkatana*, which literally means to knock on the door, but metaphorically speaking, it means to kill or knock someone unconscious. Upon hearing this word, Sifarish immediately takes a knife out of his pocket and asks Rustam whom to kill. Thus the use of this

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<sup>57</sup> Tariq Rahman, 'Language, Power and Ideology', *Economic and Political Weekly*, (2002), 4556-60 (p. 4556).

<sup>58</sup> Rahman, p. 4556.



word suggests and comments on the aggressive nature of Pukhtuns and their readiness to fight or kill. The clever use of the word *katkatana* may amuse the audience but the generalization about Pukhtuns may affect the sentiments of people too.

The actor Omair Rana who enacted the role of Rustam explained in an interview that one of the purposes of introducing diverse characters from all provinces in Pakistan was to promote Pakistani culture. It certainly brings the cultures together, however, it is equally essential to understanding the delicacies of interpreting, appropriating, and adapting Shakespeare's plays, particularly in non-English cultures. Such an adaptation may be an innocent and honest attempt to produce laughter and highlight contemporary Pakistani issues of patriarchal society but it may also negatively affect the sentiments of people too. Therefore, it is essential to understand the delicacies attached to the appropriation and adaptation of Shakespeare's plays for constructive and positive influence.

In addition to the accent of Rustam and Sifarish, the manner in which they act and/or move around may also make the audience laugh but at the same time it hints at a prevailing issue among the Pukhtuns of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Throughout, Rustam and Sifarish perform gestures and actions that implicitly, and at times explicitly suggest homosexuality. While homosexuality is forbidden in Islam, there is a significant problem of homosexual exploitation in Pakistan. In the phenomenon known as *Bacha Bazi* (boy play), mostly associated with Pukhtuns of Pakistan and Afghanistan, boys are enticed or forced into sexual relationships. There have been many documentaries on the subject, but Khalid Hussaini's *The*

*Kite Runner* presents a detailed depiction of this problem. It is so deeply embedded in the society that even in the time of the Taliban and war in Afghanistan, even 'British soldiers found that young Afghan men were actually trying to "touch and fondle them [...] the soldiers didn't understand.'<sup>59</sup>

During the production, Rustum and his servant perform several gestures and make physical contact with other male characters; in so doing, they invite these male characters to participate in a sexual relationship. This certainly makes the audience laugh out loud and applaud, but at the same time it addresses the issue which needs attention for remedy. A more careful design is needed while appropriating and adapting Shakespeare's plays. The power and influence of the adaptive versions of Shakespeare's plays could equally be constructive as well as destructive. However, it is this constructive power of Shakespeare's plays which has attracted the attention of Pakistani adapters to appropriate and adapt the plays in a Pakistani context. Where the Pakistani *Taming of the Shrew* teaches contemporary Pakistani issues such as forced and arranged marriages in a much lighter way, the *Winter's Tale* adaptation in Urdu addresses issues, such as honour killing, in a more serious way.

The actress performing the role of Bianca, expressed after the performance in London that this adaptation shows that Pakistani women are now powerful and that they have a say/right in accepting or rejecting a marriage

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<sup>59</sup> Joel Brinkley, 'Afghanistan's Dirty Little Secret', (Online: San Francisco Chronicle, 2010), < <http://www.sfgate.com/opinion/brinkley/article/Afghanistan-s-dirty-little-secret-3176762.php> > [accessed 5 May 2015 ]

proposal. However, real life murders of those girls who refuse forced or arranged marriages and/or who try to marry against the will of their parents and family demonstrate the contrary. Actors in the Pakistani *Shrew* may claim that the production is about women empowerment and that Pakistani women are free to make choices especially about marriages; however, the real-life statistics of honour killing cases in Pakistan speak the opposite.

According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), there were 1005 reported cases of honour killings in 2015, involving 923 women and 82 underage girls. This represents a rise of 15 per cent that year. The previous year, the murder of a young woman, Farzana Parveen, on May 28, 2014, moved director Gregory Thompson to launch his project to adapt *The Winter's Tale* in Urdu to highlight the issue of honour killing in Pakistan.

#### Pakistani *Winter's Tale*

The title of *The Winter's Tale* is translated as *Fasana-i-Ajaib* and is adapted by Gregory Thompson with the collaboration of National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) in Pakistan. The story of the play is set in the Moghul era of 1614, at a time when Shakespeare wrote it. Just as Shakespeare shifts the time frame 16 years from Sicily to Bohemia in Act 3 of the play, so time in this production shifts from the Moghul era to the modern-day Pakistan of 2014.<sup>60</sup> Not only does this adaptation address the contemporary issue of honour killing and adultery but it also supports the

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<sup>60</sup> Gregory Thompson, 'The World Wants Shakespeare', *Theatre and Dance*, 2014. <<http://theatreanddance.britishcouncil.org/blog/2014/the-world-wants-shakespeare/>> [accessed 28 May 2015]

idea of theatre and performing arts in Pakistan by diminishing the taboos attached to them.

The production was scheduled for staging in London in May 2016, but the performers of this production were denied entry visas. Instead, it was screened. Before the screening, director Gregory Thompson discussed the appropriation of the play to the Pakistani context, and drew parallels between current day Pakistan and the Elizabethan age. He referred to the change of government, military rule, guns on the street, armed guards and even a lack of street lights in Karachi, and compared them with the Elizabethan times. This production draws the attention of a Pakistani audience by providing familiar content particularly about the grave issue of honour killing. Suspicious of the love affair between his wife and his childhood friend Polixenes, Leontes orders Camillo to kill Polixenes. Leontes also accuses his wife of infidelity and throws her in prison.

The honour killing case of Farzana Parveen is the driving force behind this production. Parveen aged 30 was blamed by her family for marrying without her family's consent, and was murdered by her father, brother, cousin, former fiancé, and other relatives. She was beaten to death with bricks and sticks a few yards from the Lahore High Court when she came to defend her husband in a case brought against him by her relatives.

While the honour killing case of Parveen triggered this adaptation as expressed by Thompson in his closing remarks on the London screening of the play, *The Winter's Tale* continues to appeal to the audience due to the increase in honour killing cases. Previously unreported or suppressed, the

honour killings are now more frequently reported in Pakistani media which has enabled people, particularly surviving family members of the victim, to speak about it openly in public. Previously, shame and societal pressure had prevented surviving family members of the victim from speaking about it, let alone pursuing the case for justice in courts.

Honour calls for revenge. Honour killing across Pakistan, for instance, is a serious problem where killing of the so-called offender is considered obligatory and honourable mainly as a way to avoid social shame. Any sort of sexual relationship outside marriage, particularly for women, is considered as dishonour for the family, where the latter has 'self-authorized justification to kill her.'<sup>61</sup> Practiced in almost all the provinces of Pakistan, honour killing is known as *Kala-Kali* in Punjab, *Tor-Tora* in KP and FATA, *Siyahkari* in Baluchistan and *Karo-Kari* in Sindh. In all these different forms the ultimate motive for honour killing is the same, that is, honour: to drive away the social shame and to bring back the so-called balance for the harm done.

Honour killing cases occur frequently throughout Pakistan from the rural areas to big developed cities like Lahore and Karachi. Honour killing persists because it has public support and the judicial system seems to have little control over it; many times these honour killings have taken place in public places and near police stations and judicial courts. The case of Farzana is an example of it.

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<sup>61</sup> Sujay Patel and Amin Muhammad Gadit, 'Karo-Kari: A Form of Honour Killing in Pakistan', *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 45 (2008), 683-694 (p. 684)

Most of the offenders involved in the crime of honour killing can easily get away with legal proceedings if the victim or victim's family forgive them. In most cases because their own family members carry out the murder, therefore, it is easy for them to obtain forgiveness. Once the family have forgiven the perpetrator, the court cannot intervene in the matter because it is protected by the current faulty law. In order to put an end to this unjust settlement of the issue outside the court, a new law has been passed by the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, which allows the court/state to impose punishment on the offenders regardless of the settlement with the victim's family. The initiative to change the existing faulty law was taken after the Prime Minister watched an Oscar winning documentary on the subject of honour killing in 2016. Referring to this announcement of the Prime Minister, the director Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy remarked that this 'is the power of film'.<sup>62</sup>

*A Girl in the River* is a recent documentary by Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, which highlights the factors behind honour killings while telling the story of a victim, Saba Qaiser. It is a true story of Saba Qaiser who, after running away from home to marry a person of her choice, was chased, shot in the head, and her body thrown in a river by her father and uncle. Miraculously, she survived to retell the story through *A Girl in the River*. In telling her story, Saba also tells a story about other girls who are victims of domestic violence and honour killing.

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<sup>62</sup> In her speech at the Oscar Award Ceremony of 2016.

Where the judicial system delays or fails to provide justice, revenge is sought by the victims not only for personal satisfaction but to balance the harm done, earn back the honour and avoid social shame. For any girl or woman, for instance, to elope from home with a lover or for any other reason, may it be the search for new prosperous life, is considered as a source of shame for the family and demands subsequent punishment.

Elopement is treated with such severity that at times the friends or relatives who help in the action of elopement are punished too. Even death punishments are given. Ambreen (the full name of the girl not disclosed by the Police) from Abbottabad, Pakistan, had helped her school friend to flee the village to marry a person of her own choice. Thirteen relatives and village elders 'seated the girl in a van in which the couple had escaped. They tied her hands to the seats and then poured petrol on her and the vehicle.'<sup>63</sup> In the similar line of argument, in the year 2000 only, 'nearly 1000 women were killed in Pakistan [mostly in Sindh and Punjab] out of a total of world figure of 5000 honour killings.'<sup>64</sup>

'The Interior Ministry disclosed in the National Assembly [of Pakistan] on Thursday that during the last three years of Musharraf regime, over 4,000 women were murdered all over Pakistan, including 1,019 in the name of

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<sup>63</sup> Katie Forster, 'Pakistani Girl Burned Alive in Honour Killing for Helping Friend Elope. *The Independent*, 06 May 2016  
<<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/pakistan-honour-killing-girl-set-alight-helped-friend-ambreen-abbottabad-a7016451.html>> [accessed 20 October 2016]

<sup>64</sup> Rabia Ali, 'The Dark Side of "Honour", Shirkat Gah', *Report* 2001  
[http://www.pk.boell.org/downloads/the\\_dark\\_side\\_of\\_honour.pdf](http://www.pk.boell.org/downloads/the_dark_side_of_honour.pdf) [access 20 October 2016]

honour [...] The Interior Ministry also confirmed that 1,000 women were killed in the name of honour during 2005-07, which gives an insight into the alarming rise in the trend of killing women under that archaic tradition'.<sup>65</sup> It is considered a shame not to fulfil the obligation of honour killing. There is a strong element of social pressure involved in it too. In Pukhtun culture, it is present in a more severe form where the eloped girl and her lover (anyone assisting in her elopement) both are killed. Their bodies are normally dumped in rivers.

The issue of honour killing is not limited to Pakistan but extends to Pakistani communities outside the country especially in the UK. For instance, Samia Shahid, aged 28 from Bradford is an example of someone who fell victim to honour killing while on a visit to *Punjab*, Pakistan in 2016. She was initially reported by her relatives to be dead because of a heart attack. However, police investigations later confirmed she was murdered by her ex-husband with the help of her own uncle.<sup>66</sup>

Similarly, crimes carried out in the name of honour extend to other communities in the UK. The data obtained by the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organizations from the UK police records between 2010 and 2014 reveals that there were 11,744 recorded incidences of so called honour crimes including forced marriages and female genital mutilation in

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<sup>65</sup> 'Shocking Statistics of Murder from Pakistan', *Violence is not our culture*, 2016. <<http://www.violenceisnotourculture.org/content/shocking-statistics-murder-pakistan>> [accessed 12 October 2016]

<sup>66</sup> 'Samia Shahid Honour Killing: Raped before Death', *BBC News*, 2016 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-37258853>> [accessed 19 October 2016]



the country.<sup>67</sup> While honour killing is mostly associated with Pakistani Muslims (as depicted in *Murdered by my father*) it extends to other non-Muslim communities such as Hindu and Sikh communities.<sup>68</sup> The murder of the Indian-British woman Seeta Kaur<sup>69</sup> in India is an example of honour killing. Commentators and experts on the subject normally associate honour killing with religion especially Islam. However, it is transcultural crime in which trappings of a culture are used to justify the violence against women.<sup>70</sup> Honour killing has nothing to do with Islam.<sup>71</sup>

Therefore, the representation of such issues through film, drama or any other medium is of paramount importance. Productions like *A Girl in the River* and the Pakistani *Winter's Tale* are also important because they present practices like honour killing as a crime, not as a matter of pride and honour and thus they allow people to openly discourage and reject it.

Apart from addressing the problem of honour killing, the Pakistani *Winter's Tale* highlights other social, cultural and political issues of Pakistan. One

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<sup>67</sup> Divya Talwar and Athar Ahmad, "'Honour crime': 11,000 UK Cases Recorded in Five Years', *BBC News*, 2015 < <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-33424644> > [accessed 24 March 2016]

<sup>68</sup> Poonam Taneja, 'Honour Killing victims: First National Memorial Day', *BBC News* 2015 < <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-33516885> > [accessed 19 October 2016]

<sup>69</sup> Seeta Kaur was murdered by her husband and his relatives in March 2015 while she was on a holiday trip to India.

<sup>70</sup> Aisha Gill, "'Crimes of Honour"and Violence against Women in the UK', *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 32 (2008), 243-263 (p. 249).

<sup>71</sup> Islamic Group Representatives like Council of American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and Canadian Islamic Congress insist that honour killings have nothing to do with Islam; that they [honour killings] are cultural, tribal, pre-Islamic customs. Cited in Phyllis Chesler, 'Worldwide Trends in Honor Killings', *Middle East Quarterly*, (2010).

such example is assignment given to Camillo to kill Polixenes, which refers to another grave issue in Pakistan, particularly in Karachi, that is, target killing. Camillo reveals the plan of Leontes and tells him that *mujey aap ke qatal per mamor kia gia hay* meaning 'I have been assigned the task to kill you.'<sup>72</sup> Whether it is political or non-political affiliated killings, target killing is a pressing problem in Karachi. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), in 2014, there were 568 and 107 non-political and political affiliated target killings respectively in Karachi only. The 2015 HRCP report shows a decrease in target killing in Karachi by 63 percent. However, the sectarian violence and the subsequent target killings has not much improved in the city. According to the HRCP report, in May 2015 alone, 45 members of the Ismaili community were killed. Considering such real-life incidents, such adaptations become a strong medium to highlight the issues of a country. They also become a means of communication with the audience for raising awareness in them.

To a Pakistani audience, such adaptations do not have to explicitly draw parallels to real life problems in the country. Mere fictional resemblances enable the audience to draw similar parallels between the content of the play and real-life incidents. The trickster, for instance, while performing on the stage within the play, refers to two things. First, he uses the word Tsunami for the procession gathered for political reasons. Second, he uses the catch phrase, *Tabdeeli agai hay* (Change has come/things have changed). A Pakistani audience or anyone who follows Pakistani politics would readily identify these few words as they are associated with Imran

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<sup>72</sup> Translated from Urdu.

Khan, the chairman of current provincial ruling party Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) in KP. This catch phrase is widely used either to refer to actual constructive change in the administration of the government and state of affairs and/or uses as an ironic term to refer to the corruption of the same political government. This phrase is now commonly used on the street and carries diverse meanings.

The recent film *Rahm* adds to the tally of Shakespeare's adaptations in Pakistan. It was announced to be screened in August 2016 but it has not been released for reasons not yet known. *Rahm* is directed by Ahmad Jamal and produced by the poet and translator Mahmood Jamal, who has also translated *Measure for Measure* into Urdu. *Rahm* is an Urdu word which means *kindness*. All we know from the press release is that the film explores the themes of honesty, love, unity and justice in Pakistani context/society.<sup>73</sup> The official trailer of the film has already attracted the attention of the audience and critics alike.

Thus in terms of appropriations and adaptation, Shakespeare plays are becoming popular in Pakistan and are widely appropriated and presented in a Pakistani context to address or highlight the country's present-day problems. It is this appropriation of the plays of Shakespeare to the Pakistani context, which is the reason for their rise in popularity and increase in the widespread use of them in Pakistan. These plays are appropriated and used to address issues that are embedded in the Pakistani

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<sup>73</sup> 'This Sanam Saeed-starrer is inspired by Shakespeare and set in Pakistan', DAWN. Desk Report 2015 < <https://images.dawn.com/news/1174412> > [accessed 8 March 2017]

society. Addressing issues through these plays is a safe form of criticism, which is mainly targeted to and understood by the educated class. Through such adaptations, contemporary problems are also addressed, which are otherwise hard to challenge. Also, these adaptations reach a wide audience and make them aware of these problems. These adaptations not only address these issues but also present embedded messages for reformation or change. In this way these appropriations and adaptations also have a long-lasting effect on audience, mainly due to the empathetic connection and/or identification with the content and characters of the play at hand.

The use of Shakespeare's plays to address contemporary Pakistani issues is not limited to these productions only but is also found in the media reports of the country. *Hamlet* in particular appears in media reports more frequently than other plays of Shakespeare in order to address and highlight contemporary problems in Pakistan.

### *Hamlet* in the media reports of Pakistan

While we see an increase in the appearance of references from *Hamlet* in the media reports of Pakistan, articles on Shakespeare and his works are published regularly in the nation-wide newspapers. For instance, the daily newspaper DAWN, one of the best-selling English newspapers in Pakistan, also available online, has a page dedicated to literary articles, which frequently includes articles on Shakespeare and his works and the related contemporary criticism. A cursory look at few of the titles of articles that appeared in the recent newspapers are: *Shakespeare creates a parallel universe*; *Spotlight: The Shakespeare Wali*; *Bard-ji on the beach: Post-colonial*

*artists write back to Shakespeare; How Shakespeare influenced the American ad industry; 'Cult of celebrity' exhibition explores similarities between Shakespeare and Austen; and 400 years of Shakespeare: GCU stages Urdu adaptation of Macbeth.*

These and similar articles attract and appeal to Pakistani readers because they are either adapted to fit a Pakistani context or refer to Shakespeare in Pakistan most of the time. References to and from *Hamlet* appear frequently in the media reports of Pakistan. These references are made to point out and highlight various problems in Pakistan. Below are just a few of the instances of such references in the media reports of Pakistan. Iftikhar Murshad notes,

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif lives in an etherised world where time is of little consequence. Like Hamlet he is given to indecision. The prince of Denmark prevaricated because of self-doubt on life and death issues – whether or not to kill his father’s murderer, Claudius – but the prime minister of Pakistan is indecisive even on routine matters such as the appointment of ambassadors.<sup>74</sup>

Referring to the reluctance of General Musharaff, former President of Pakistan, to curb violence and fight against terrorism, Ralph Peter described him as a Hamlet in khaki who is torn between action and inaction.<sup>75</sup>

Yasmina Aftab Ali also notes:

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<sup>74</sup> Iftikhar Murshed, 'The Hamlet in Nawaz Sharif', *The News*, 22 October 2013 <<https://www.thenews.com.pk/archive/print/461798-the-hamlet-in-nawaz-sharif>> [accessed 23 March 2015]

<sup>75</sup> Ralph Peters, 'Pakistan: Important Role of Bedfellow-Bogeyman', *The Wall Street Journal*, 2003 <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1043721128373256704>> [accessed 23 March 2015]

just as Hamlet had to put aside everything else in his life in order to deal with Claudius, our government too must prioritize to make terrorism its main challenge to be tackled.<sup>76</sup>

The references to and from *Hamlet* are not only used to highlight Pakistani internal political issues but are also used in the matters outside Pakistan too. While referring to the conflict of Pakistan and India over Kashmir, for instance, in a meeting with Kashmir delegation in September 2004, the then Information Minister Mushahid Hussain mentioned, 'You cannot have *Hamlet* without the Prince of Demark [...] Similarly, India and Pakistan cannot have peace and normalization without resolving Kashmir'.<sup>77</sup>

The dispute of Pakistan and India over Kashmir dates back to the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. During the partition of the subcontinent, the prince of Kashmir (then a state) first decided to stay independent but later decided to join India against the wishes of his people who were majority Muslims. As a result, Pakistan and India fought their first war over Kashmir in 1947-48. Since then it has been a disputed territory resulting in periodic conflict between the two countries. It is not the first time in the media that a reference to *Hamlet* has been made while addressing the Kashmir conflict.

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<sup>76</sup> Yasmina Aftab Ali, 'Recalling Hamlet's Indecisiveness', *Pakistan Today*, 2014 < <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2014/03/03/recalling-hamlets-indecisiveness/> > [accessed 23 March 2015]

<sup>77</sup> Faisul Yaseen, 'You can't have a *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark', 2004 < [http://cpdr.org.pk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=593:you-can-t-have-a-hamlet-without-the-prince-of-denmark&catid=51:news-blog&Itemid=445](http://cpdr.org.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=593:you-can-t-have-a-hamlet-without-the-prince-of-denmark&catid=51:news-blog&Itemid=445) > [accessed 24 March 2015]

'It would be like staging Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. It is Kashmir that has been the cause of war.'<sup>78</sup>

The allusive phrase 'staging Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark' refers to the importance of the role Kashmir has to play in order to bring peace and stability to the region. Peace talks between Pakistan and India are hard to carry-out without resolving the conflict of Kashmir. The frequent use of the phrase by Pakistani and Indian writers in reference to Kashmir suggests that both countries understand and realise the importance of resolving the conflict of Kashmir. This importance of the role of Kashmir in bringing peace and stability to the region and why it is important to resolve the issue of Kashmir is further discussed in detail in chapter 4 of this thesis.

It is evident from these examples that the Pakistani media relates such references to and from *Hamlet* which show the relevance of it to the indecisiveness and ineptitude of the Pakistani government. Yasmina Aftab Ali, a political analyst, further suggests the following dialogue between Hamlet and Horatio as good advice for the Pakistani government and military strategists to think out of the box while dealing with the current war against the militancy, and not to just waste their time and energy on routine/ less important matters of state.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. 1.5.174-175

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<sup>78</sup> John Kifner, 'Nuclear Anxiety: In Pakistan; Complex Pressures, Dominated by Islam, Let to Testing', *The New York Times*, 1998  
<<http://www.nytimes.com/1998/06/01/world/nuclear-anxiety-in-pakistan-complex-pressures-dominated-by-islam-led-to-testing.html> > [accessed 24 March 2016]

These lines have a different contextual meaning in *Hamlet* but they certainly reflect the inaction and lack of decision-making policies of the Pakistani government in dealing with terrorism. References like these are used out of context of the play, where it may have a different historically and culturally bound understanding, but they certainly fit in and encompass the new meaning in which they are used. To take an example, Dick the Butcher's dialogue 'the first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers' in *Henry VI, Part II*, may produce laughter and become lawyer's joke but if it is used in the context of Pakistan, it takes a completely new meaning.

The recent attack on the lawyers in Quetta, the provincial capital of Baluchistan, on 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2016, left seventy people dead and over one hundred injured. The majority of the dead and injured people were lawyers. The lawyers gathered at Quetta hospital to protest against the murder of a prominent lawyer (target killing) who was shot dead earlier the same day and whose body was being brought to the hospital. There is a recent increase in target killing of the lawyers in Baluchistan province in general and Quetta in particular. Thus, in this case 'let's kill all the lawyers' takes a new meaning, a literal meaning to be exact, which describes the situation of Quetta, Baluchistan and as a result produces tears rather than laughter.

References like these are adding to the rapid increase in the use of quotes from *Hamlet* in Pakistani media reports. As a result, these references on the one hand not only establish the ubiquity of the idea of *Hamlet* in Pakistan but also determine the relevance of the play to the Pakistani political situation. On the other hand, the use of these references, for instance, to highlight the indecisiveness of the Pakistani rulers to tackle terrorism also



gives us an idea about how *Hamlet* is interpreted and understood in Pakistan, that is, a play about delay and procrastination.

While referring to the negative image of Pakistan in the world news, Abdul Majeed directly quotes from *Hamlet* and modifies it to 'something is rotten in the state of Pakistan'.<sup>79</sup> Though Majeed's reference is to the political situation of Pakistan and the subsequent negative image of the country in the world news, however, due to the on-going war on terrorism, the same applies to the rotten status of revenge practice in Pakistan, particularly *KP* where it is so deep rooted that it is socially accepted in the form of *badal*.

Before drawing comparisons between revenge in *Hamlet* and in Pukhtun culture, it is essential to understand the emotive meaning and process of revenge in *Hamlet* first. Therefore, in the next Chapter, I present a critique on the way Shakespeare has dealt with the matter of revenge in *Hamlet*. I present the critique on the dramaturgical construction of *Hamlet* and the way it rejects revenge within and outside the play.

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<sup>79</sup> Abdul Majeed, 'Pakistan's Image Problem', *ARY News*, 2013  
<<https://blogs.arynews.tv/pakistans-image-problem/>> [accessed 25 March 2014]



## Chapter 2: Why *Hamlet*

“Ay there’s the question”<sup>80</sup>

Why is *Hamlet*, a play about revenge, so full of questions? The play, while dealing with the theme of revenge, contains three hundred and above questions. In this chapter, I explore *Hamlet* as a revenge play that contains an extraordinary number of interrogatives. The purpose is to highlight the significance as well as the role these questions play in the understanding of *Hamlet*. What do these questions propose about the understanding of *Hamlet* as a revenge play? Do these interrogative structures question the revenge ethos in the play and, as a result, enable readers to reject revenge action outside the play? What is it about *Hamlet* the play and its construction that invite so many adaptive foreign performances? Is there something about the presence and construction of these questions that enables people to relate the play to the socio-political-cultural situations of other countries? These are the questions that I will discuss in this chapter to argue that the power of the play resides in the fact that it is structured as series of questions rather than instructions or plain statements to influence its readers, audience, and adapters. I argue that the dramaturgical construction and the presence of extraordinary number of interrogatives as well as this inquisitive nature of *Hamlet* serve two purposes. First it questions the revenge ethos within and outside the play. Second it enables people to

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<sup>80</sup> Henry VI Part II, 4.4.134.

appropriate and adapt the play to voice countries' specific contemporary problems around the world, hence, question them.

Each of the plays (of Shakespeare), has a distinctive quality, something peculiar to that play alone, a quality that is not altogether attributive to difference in plot, theme, character and setting, but something that feels different, or that sounds different to ears, something as peculiar to the play as the music of any of Beethoven's mature symphonies or quartets is to that peculiar composition. Such quality would seem to be in the style.<sup>81</sup>

Madeleine Doran further adds that Shakespeare used language 'to enhance the spirit of the story, that is, to bring out and emphasize something essential in it.'<sup>82</sup> *Hamlet*, a play about revenge, is full of questions in both literal and metaphorical senses. Having more than three hundred interrogative structures, *Hamlet* stocks multiple questions ranging from the madness of Hamlet to the psychoanalysis of the play. As Jon Kott argues, 'there are many subjects in *Hamlet*. There is politics [...] there is tragedy of love, as well as family drama [...] there is everything you want, including deep psychological analysis, a bloody story, a duel, and a general slaughter. One can select at will. But one must know what one selects, and why.'<sup>83</sup> Thus, this chapter explores the construction of the language of *Hamlet* in terms of the interrogative structures to 'emphasize something essential',<sup>84</sup> that is, to question the revenge ethos within and outside the play.

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<sup>81</sup> Madeleine Doran, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Language: Essays*, (Madison : University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), p. 4.

<sup>82</sup> Doran, p. 4.

<sup>83</sup> Kott, p. 49.

<sup>84</sup> Doran, p. 4.

## The term revenge and its use in *Hamlet*

A glance at a Shakespeare concordance, a book that lists all the words he used alphabetically, showing the occurrence of each word in every play, shows that a word might occur many times in one play and scarcely or not at all in another [...] Using the same word in multiple senses, and particularly using it early on in the play because of the significance it will acquire later, enables him to create a soundscape and world picture for each play.<sup>85</sup>

Shakespeare had an extensive vocabulary. But he did not use every word of it in every play, nor did he use it indiscriminately; like any artist, he gives himself a restricted palette, since that will lend the work a sense of place, mood and coherence.<sup>86</sup>

According to the concordance<sup>87</sup> of Shakespeare's plays, the term *revenge*, in all its forms, appears two hundred and thirty two times across all of the plays with an average of 6.27 per play. The exact word form *revenge* occurs one hundred and sixty times in one hundred and fifty different speeches in the plays. This exact word form occurs twelve times in *Hamlet*. It is used in four other forms, like *vengeful*<sup>88</sup> and *reveng'd*,<sup>89</sup> hence making the total of sixteen. The occurrences of the word *revenge* in all its forms in *Hamlet* are third most in number in all the plays of Shakespeare. The play in which this word has occurred the most, that is, thirty one times, is *Titus Andronicus*, which also revolves around the theme of revenge, followed by *Henry VI Part III*.

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<sup>85</sup> Ros King, *Shakespeare: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2011), p. 130.

<sup>86</sup> King, p. 130.

<sup>87</sup> Open Source Shakespeare, 'Concordance of Shakespeare's Complete Works', 2014 < <http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/concordance/> > [accessed 28 June 2014]

<sup>88</sup> 3.1.125.

<sup>89</sup> 3.3.84.

Considering the frequency of these occurrences in *Hamlet*, the word *revenge* appears to be a deliberate choice by Shakespeare in order to let the readers and audience know about the linchpin of the play, that is, revenge. The word *revenge* is an essential term in *Hamlet* as it captures the main action of the play, that is, revenge-action. It also encompasses the emotions of the characters revolving around revenge matter and sheds lights on their behaviours.

This word *revenge* is used by the ghost, Hamlet, Claudius and Laertes, all of whom are directly related to the action of revenge. The uses of the word revenge by these characters, which reveals their thinking related emotions and feelings about it, are shown in table 1 below:

**Table 1: Occurrences of *revenge* in *Hamlet***

S.No.	Character	Occurrence/ Frequency	Use/Utterance	Act/Scene / Line
1.	Hamlet  Father's Ghost	2	1. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.	1.5.7
			2. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.	1.5.25

2.	Hamlet	8	3. Haste me...to my revenge.	
			4. That I, the son of a dear father murder'd / Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell.	2.2.579- 580
			5. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious.	3.1.125
			6. Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge	3.2.248
			7. Now a is a-praying. And now I'll do't... And so am I reveng'd.	3.3.72-75
			8. Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge.	3.3.79
			9. And am I then reveng'd.	3.3.84
			10. How all occasions do inform against me, And spur my dull revenge.	4.4.32-33

3.	Claudius	2	11.If you desire to know... is't writ in your revenge? 12.No place indeed should murder sanctuarize; Revenge should have no bounds.	4.5.115??  4.7.127
4.	Laertes	4	13.Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd	4.5.135
			14.Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge It could not move thus.	4.5.166
			15.But my revenge will come.	4.7.29
			16.I am satisfied in nature, Whose motive in this case should stir me most To my revenge.	5.2.240- 242

The process of revenge starts with the appearance and revelation of the ghost about the murder of Hamlet's father and that is where the word *revenge* appears for the first time too, as shown in utterance 1 of the table 1.



The word revenge occurs before the word murder, which puts emphasis on the former. The second time it appears again before the word murder, 'Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder' (1.5.25). This selection of the word choice puts emphasis on revenge matter. The use of the word revenge early on in the play sets the stall for the revenge-action.

The ghost imposes revenge on Hamlet as we can see in the utterance 1 of the table 1. This compulsion comes with the use of the word *shall* (*shalt*) by the ghost. The use of the word *shall*<sup>90</sup> (*shalt*) makes it incumbent upon Hamlet that he must take the revenge. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*,<sup>91</sup> in old and Middle English, the word *shall* is defined as 'in stating a necessary condition: will have to, must (if something else is to happen)'. It is also defined in terms of *must* and *have to* and is used in commands and instructions.<sup>92</sup> Jonathan Hope also refers to the use of *shall* in a sentence as something which adds the meaning of futurity 'with a sense of obligation'.<sup>93</sup> Thus the ghost conditions the revelation of the truth about the murder of Hamlet's father to the taking of revenge by *Hamlet* through the formation of this sentence structure. Initially, accepting the word of the ghost, Hamlet instantly decides to take revenge for his father's murder.

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<sup>90</sup> 1.5.8.

<sup>91</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, 'Shall', *Oxford University Press*. 2015.  
<[http://www.oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=shall&\\_searchBtn=Search](http://www.oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=shall&_searchBtn=Search)>  
[accessed 25 June 2015]

<sup>92</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, 'Shall', *Oxford University Press*. 2015.  
<[http://www.oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=shall&\\_searchBtn=Search](http://www.oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=shall&_searchBtn=Search)>  
[accessed 25 June 2015]

<sup>93</sup> Jonathan Hope, *Shakespeare's Grammar* (London: Thomson, 2003), p. 145.

Soon after, he uses the words *my revenge*.<sup>94</sup> The use of the word *my* also suggests Hamlet's instant acceptance of revenge and eagerness to take revenge. It also emphasises the importance of the word revenge as Hamlet now considers this his revenge.

Haste me to know't that I with wings as swift  
As meditation or the thoughts of love  
May sweep to my revenge.            1.5.29-31

Previously, critics have argued that *may* originally meant have permission to, or be allowed to.<sup>95</sup> 'In the present-day English, the permission sense would have to be represented by the use of "must" (I must not come), but *may* occurs in this sense in Shakespeare'<sup>96</sup>. John Kerrigan has argued that 'Hamlet takes his task [revenge] to heart with all the passion which he can muster'.<sup>97</sup> However, he also argues that:

When the ghost exhorts Hamlet to 'Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder', the prince's response is only superficially 'apt'. 'Haste me to know't,' he says: 'that I with wings as swift | As meditation, or thoughts of love, | May sweep to my revenge' (l.v. 25, 29-31). 'May' is not 'will', [...] Hamlet never promises to revenge, only to remember.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> 1.5.31.

<sup>95</sup> N. F. Blake, *A Grammar of Shakespeare's Language* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002), p. 128.

<sup>96</sup> Blake, p. 128.

<sup>97</sup> John Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 181.

<sup>98</sup> Kerrigan, p. 181.

Frank Kermode points out that in the argument of Kerrigan 'Hamlet is concerned more with memory than with revenge'.<sup>99</sup> Kerrigan opines that 'Hamlet's compulsion to remember must of necessity cause him anguish.'<sup>100</sup> Remembrance of the ghost's commandment to avenge his father's murder has put Hamlet in this anguished-state and there is no turning back. *Hamlet* cannot ignore what he has seen or heard from the ghost that is why he makes a prompt choice of taking the revenge. In order to get rid and/or come out of this anguished-state, Hamlet inclines to take revenge for his father's murder immediately. Hence, we see an immediate development of empathetic connection between Hamlet and the ghost. As a result of this connection (feeling), Hamlet makes it incumbent upon himself to take revenge for his father's murder, which in turn would enable him to get rid of this anguish. However, as the play progresses, what adds to Hamlet's anguish more is not knowing for certain about the murder of his father as revealed to him by the ghost.

Knowing for certain is what Hamlet strives for throughout the play which is why he stages *The Murder of Gonzago*. However, this does not give him the absolute answer to what he wants to know and find out about his father's murder because it is subject to interpretation too. Although Claudius reacts to the play, it is Hamlet who anticipates and assumes the meaning that the former gathers from it. The reaction of Claudius could likely be due to the resemblance of Lucianus in *The Murder of Gonzago* with Hamlet. Lucianus, the revenger, is the nephew to the King and so is Hamlet to Claudius. Hence,

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<sup>99</sup> Frank Kermode, *Shakespeare's Language* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 181.

<sup>100</sup> Kerrigan, p. 181.

Claudius rightly sees it as a threat. It certainly may be this threat and the subsequent anger about it which makes Claudius react to the play. This prompts Hamlet to interpret Claudius' reaction as a sign of his guilt.

Claudius gathers from the play that Hamlet may kill him and that is why he plans to take action before Hamlet does. Although designed by Hamlet to find out the intentions of the King, *The Murder of Gonzago* also reveals the intentions of Hamlet to Claudius, who as a result decides to take action. This whole situation is in a way similar to the ghost's revelation to Hamlet where the later decides to take action. Hamlet takes the verdict of the ghost and comes into action, whereas Claudius takes the verdict from *The Murder of Gonzago* and gets into action. Open to interpretation, both are not absolutely certain of the credibility of the two verdicts but the likelihood of the suspicions gets them to action. Thus, the dramatic appearance of the ghost and *The Murder of Gonzago* initiate Hamlet and Claudius respectively to get into action.

The use of the word *may* in Hamlet's dialogue 'may sweep to my revenge' is certainly not *will*, as mentioned by Kermode, but at the same time is conditional on the 'know't in the dialogue 'Haste me to know't' (1.5.29). It is in a way similar to the condition laid on Hamlet by the ghost in the dialogue 'so art though to revenge, when thou shalt hear' (1.5.7). It is not the first time that we see the *hear* word. Before this, the ghost demands 'lend me thy serious hearing' (1.5.5) to which Hamlet replies, 'I am bound to hear' (1.5.6). The word *hear* potentially may refer to hearsay which in fact is not evidence. The information of the murder of Hamlet's father comes from the words of the ghost and that is perhaps why the ghost demands 'serious hearing'.

Thus the use of the word 'hear' suggests that, though apparently Hamlet believes the ghost's verdict, he is not absolutely certain of it. Hamlet does mention 'thy [ghost's] commandment all alone shall live' (1.5.102). However, the emphasis here is not on the fulfilment of the revenge-action but on the remembrance ('Remember me'). We see Hamlet's uncertainty about the words of the ghost as the play progresses. This is one of the reasons why Hamlet arranges *The Murder of Gonzago* to know for certain about the murder of his father and the subsequent revenge. Otherwise, if Hamlet had taken the verdict of the ghost, he need not to have arranged *The Murder of Gonzago*. On the other hand, it is possible that he might have wanted to prove the guilt of Claudius to others, for instance, to Horatio in particular. It could have well served as a justified reason to kill Claudius and complete his revenge. Where the latter seems more plausible, *The Murder of Gonzago* is also open to various interpretations, and that is most probably the reason for Hamlet's reluctance to kill Claudius in the closet scene.

In the closet scene, Act 3 Scene 3, Hamlet delays his actions and starts questioning the possible outcomes of his revenge. 'Am I then revenged?' (3.3.84). This question sheds light on Hamlet's inner conflict about the revenge ethos, which leads to a series of other related questions like: will the murder of Claudius in the closet while he is praying suffice the feelings of anger and hate that developed in his mind after the ghost's revelation? Or/and Will this killing make him get rid of his anguish? Can he actually kill Claudius, where he is not absolutely sure or certain of his crime? Will his revenge feelings subside after killing Claudius? Although not voiced by Hamlet in so many words, these and similar are the questions that the play raises in the minds of the critics too. While Hamlet provides his own

rationale for not killing Claudius during the worship, the doubts and uncertainty linger on in his mind even after *The Murder of Gonzago* scene.

Even this play, which Hamlet calls the 'Mouse Trap', cannot give surety and certainty to him about the murder of his father. Claudius does react to the play and sees it as a threat due to the similarities of the situations related to the old King's murder. However, it is Hamlet who assumes the meaning that Claudius takes from it; for this reason he opines 'I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound' (3.2.280). The confirmation of this assumption comes from Horatio, when Hamlet asks him for his opinion: 'Didst perceive?' (3.2.281). 'Upon the talk of poisoning?' (3.2.283) to which the former replies, 'Very well, my lord' (3.2.282), 'I did very well note him' (3.2.284).

Horatio is very careful in his replies. He never explicitly expresses that he agrees with Hamlet that Claudius killed the old King. He only admits that he observed (noted) Claudius during the play. He did so because Hamlet asked him to 'Observe my uncle' 3.2.80 and 'Give him heedful note' (3.2.84) Before the performance of the play *The Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet tells Horatio that 'after [the play] we will both our judgments join' (3.2.86) No reaction from Claudius would mean that — as Hamlet puts it — 'it is a damned ghost that we have seen, and my imaginations are as foul | As Vulcan's stithy' (3.2.82-84). It is, however, Hamlet who gathers from Horatio's replies that Claudius did react to the play because of the guilt of killing the old King.

Therefore, I argue that Hamlet strives throughout the play for certainty about the murder of his father's death and the subsequent justification of

revenge action. Along with other characters of the play, Hamlet asks questions throughout the play which depict his uncertainty about the subject matter and the subsequent quest for knowing for certain. As a result, we see a vast number of questions in the form of interrogative structures in the play. Besides revenge, Hamlet's quest for certainty is about self-realization too. He needs more than the ghost's words to consider revenge. Thus, the dramaturgical construction of *Hamlet* in general and these interrogative structures play a pivotal role in the understanding of the play, Hamlet and the revenge ethos. These vast numbers of interrogative structures also account for the reluctance of Hamlet to take revenge. What and how these questions account for it is what this next section discusses.

#### The term Question and its use in *Hamlet*

*Hamlet* is a play of questions: it contains all forms and meanings of the word; thus it expresses a potency of understanding concerning the subject even while expressing a multiplicity of doubts. The play deals with the reality of the ghost and its revelation of unnatural death of the King and identity of Prince Hamlet's restless-self due to it. It also questions the loyalty of Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, because of her hasty marriage with Claudius and truthfulness of Ophelia's love for Hamlet.

A word that is used in *Hamlet* even more frequently than the word *revenge* is *question*. The concordance of Shakespeare's works suggests that the word 'question', in all forms, is used one hundred and eighty times in all his works and one hundred and forty five times in all his plays. *Hamlet* contains 11.72% of the use of the word 'question' including the word form

'questionable', which is the highest incidence in any play by Shakespeare. The word, question, is used six times by Hamlet himself with different contextual meanings.

The first time Hamlet uses this word is in the form 'questionable' — the only instance of this form of the word in the entire Shakespearean canon. It reveals his uncertain state of mind; ranging from the questionable reality of the ghost to the killings of other characters and himself. The dialogue in Act 1 Scene 4 of the play in which the word occurs, contains six different questions that are stimulated in the mind of Hamlet about the shape and identity of the ghost. Thus, it can be inferred that the use of this word form is no mere coincidence but a careful and deliberate choice by Shakespeare to show the inquisitive nature (mind) of Hamlet.

Shakespeare's choice of words is very apt and peculiar to the situations he portrays in his plays. Wherever necessary, he has coined new words to best suit his purpose of revealing his characters and situations to his audience and readers. These words play a pivotal role in establishing a link of understanding among the characters, readers and audience alike. Referring to the use of vocabulary in Shakespeare's works, Inga-Stina Ewbank states, 'words govern the action of the play' and 'control the fates and the development of the characters.'<sup>101</sup> This particular choice of words also enables the readers to think along the same lines as the character and help

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<sup>101</sup> Inga-Stina Ewbank, 'Hamlet and the Power of Words', in *Shakespeare and Language*, ed. by Catherine M. S. Alexander and Jonathan Hope (Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2004), pp. 151-78 (p. 151).



create an empathetic relationship between the two. This relationship allows people to identify with Hamlet.

Hence, the distinct use of the word *questionable* once in this form not only highlights the troubled-state of mind of Hamlet about the appearance, shape and identity of the ghost but it also enables readers to ask similar questions about its identity and significance too. Shakespeare does not introduce the ghost as a mortal character and let the readers and audience assume its credibility. Through Hamlet mainly, but also, importantly through Horatio, who is presented as the most trustworthy of all the characters in the play, Shakespeare makes the readers and audience question the shape and identity of the ghost. In Act 1 Scene 4, for instance, the queries of Hamlet about the shape and identity of the ghost are the types of questions which the readers and audience have in mind too. Like Hamlet, the readers and audience alike are troubled by the appearance of the ghost. 'Thou com'st in such a questionable shape' (1.4.43). The 'questionable shape' of the ghost gives rise to a number of questions in Hamlet's mind. Hamlet admits: 'I will speak to thee [ghost]' (1.4.5), because of the ghost's questionable shape. Hamlet does speak to the ghost but has too many questions to ask. This is where there is a rise in the number of questions in the dialogues of Hamlet particularly in his conversations with Horatio and the ghost.

The purposeful use of the word *questionable* by Shakespeare mirrors the mind of Hamlet where he has so many queries: about the ghost, its reality, his father's death, and his mother's hasty marriage. The interrogative structures, in the same dialogue where the word *questionable* occurs, 'Say why is this? 'Wherefore? What should we do?' (1.4.57) are the typical

reflections of Hamlet's beginning of uncertainty and doubtful state of mind about the identity and appearance of the ghost and the task assigned to him by the latter. The word *questionable* here is used in the sense of doubtful and or a state of uncertainty. Semantically, the word *questionable* functions to open or create doubt. According to the *OED* the word *questionable* is defined as: 'of a thing, fact etc.: open to question or dispute; doubtful, uncertain' and 'of a quality, property, etc.: about the existence or presence of which there may be a question'. The appearance and identity of the ghost is certainly making doubts in the mind of Hamlet. These doubts and uncertainties open a Pandora's Box of questions not only in the mind of Hamlet but of other characters, audience, and readers alike. These doubts can be seen more vividly in the language of Hamlet and other characters particularly in the overuse of the interrogatives throughout the play. The uses of these interrogative structures are diverse and serve different purposes in various contexts rather than merely seeking information. For clarity, therefore, it is essential to look into a few of the different interrogative structures in more detail.

### Interrogative structures and questions in *Hamlet*

Jonathan Hope and Laura Wright define the interrogative as 'a question which seeks a response'.<sup>102</sup> The response may be in a form providing information or just a nod of head to show yes or no, depending on the question asked. The interrogatives which demand or expect specific

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<sup>102</sup> Laura Wright and Jonathan Hope, *Stylistics: A Practical Coursebook* (London : Routledge, 1996), p. 204.

information in response are content questions, whereas interrogatives which requires a yes/no answer are polar questions. There are several ways to ask a question, 'either by using a so-called *wh*- word such as *what*, *who*, *when*, *why*, *which*, *where* or *how*; or by inverting subject and verb; or by use of a statement structure with rising intonation at the end of an utterance; or by using a tag, such as *isn't it*, *didn't I*, *wouldn't you?*'.<sup>103</sup> 'Most interrogative words in English begin with *wh*-, content questions in English are called *wh*-questions'.<sup>104</sup> The OED defines *interrogative* as 'of, pertaining to, or of the nature of questioning; having the form or force of a question'. There are four types of interrogative sentences: Yes/No; Alternative; *wh*-interrogatives; and tag questions. In the opening scene of *Hamlet*, as discussed above, we see the *wh*-interrogatives. They include all *wh* words: *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *which*, *whose*, *whom* and *how*. Normally they have an interrogative pronoun to form a question.

The play opens with the interrogative pronoun *who*, which is used to form questions regularly throughout the play. The interrogative phrase 'Who is there?' (1.1.1) opens the play *Hamlet*, and drives everyone in to questioning-mode to find answers to this and other related questions that arise in the minds of the readers and audiences. Apparently, *who is there* is a simple question which is normally answered when the concerned character

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<sup>103</sup> Wright and Hope, p. 206.

<sup>104</sup> Matthew S. Dryer, Position of Interrogative Phrases in Content Questions. In: Dryer, Matthew S. & Martin Haspelmath, *The World Atlas of Language Structures*, Online, 2013 < <http://wals.info/chapter/93>> [accessed 26 March 2016]. P. 378.

responds or appears on stage (in the scene) as a response. This simple query occurs very often in almost all the plays of Shakespeare. In Act 3 scene 1, Macbeth inquires, 'who's there!' and the attendant and the two murderers enter in response to the query. Similarly, Angelo asks 'who's there!' in Act 2 Scene 4 of *Measure for Measure* and in response a servant enters. 'Who's there' and 'who is here' is often repeated in *Cymbeline*, where different characters either respond or enters the scene to answer the question. Generally, in most cases in these plays, human characters appear in response to these questions.

The use of the question *who is there* could potentially be used as a dramatic device to let the audience know who is on stage, for instance, 'who's there? my good lord Cardinal? O my Wolsey' in Act 2 Scene 2 of *Henry VIII*. However, in the case of *Hamlet* 'who's there' presents more than a mere dramatic device for knowing who is on stage.

'Francisco's opening query "who is there?" has posed a disturbing question which demands revelation, requires unfolding'.<sup>105</sup> Terence Hawkes is obviously referring to the First Quarto of *Hamlet* in 1603 as it is Francisco who opens the play with the question. In *Hamlet: Second Quarto*, 1604-5 and *The First Folio*, 1623 it is Barnardo who opens the play with the questions. From now on, these different editions of the play are referred to as Q1, Q2 and F in this study.

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<sup>105</sup> Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare's Talking Animals: Language and Drama in Society* (London : Edward Arnold, 1973), p. 49.

It is common that sentries usually ask this question to find out who is there, but in *Hamlet* it is important to know who asks the question because it has special dramaturgical importance attached to it. Whether it is Francesco or Barnardo who asks the question makes a huge dramaturgical difference to the meaning of the play. Barnardo's query creates a sense of mystery that he is expecting someone else apart from Francesco, whom he may have seen during his previous duties.

This question, as in Q2 and F, enables the readers to think why Barnardo asked the question from Francisco who is already on duty, where the former knowingly has to replace him. It is obvious that he is replacing Francisco so the question seems out of joint and it should be the other way round. This inquiry by Barnardo drives the idea of some previous happening into the minds of audience and readers that he is expecting someone else too: just who he is expecting is another query, which needs an answer.

This unexpected reversal of dialogues in *Hamlet* suggests that Barnardo is jumpy, perhaps expecting something untoward. Being the guard on duty on a previous occasion, Barnardo has seen the ghost and since then has grown suspicious about its identity and appearance. He questions the appearance of the ghost and its resemblance to the dead King. However, it is safe to say that Barnardo's questions are more concerned with gathering information about the ghost. His style of questioning aptly fits his job, that is, to guard—inquire about the appearance of the ghost and get to the bottom of the matter.

Marcellus' question to Barnardo; 'What, has this thing appeared again tonight?' (1.1.24) suggests that the ghost has appeared previously. Though not sure of the identity of the ghost at this point, Marcellus uses the term *thing* because of his uncertainty about it. Such a choice of words strengthens the idea of the deliberate selection of words and sentence structures by Shakespeare to create the natural desired dramatic effect. Horatio, however, considers it to be the fantasy of Barnardo and Marcellus. The two guards, who claim to have seen it twice, revert to calling it *apparition* rather than *thing* to assure the appearance of it to Horatio. Horatio after seeing it himself calls it a *guilty thing* when the ghost disappears after *the crowing of the cock*. Wondering about the identity of the ghost (calling it guilty thing), Horatio thinks to reveal the matter to Hamlet. This very thought changes his opinion about the ghost. Immediately, he uses the words *this spirit* instead of *guilty thing* due to the fact of this ghost's resemblance with Hamlet's father, the King. Thus, the language and choice of words adhere to the situation and simulate the thoughts of the characters. Given the situation, and given even a marginal belief in the existence of ghosts, this might well be read as a real-life response.

The appearance of the ghost in the form of the late King puzzles Barnardo, Marcellus and Horatio and compels them to question its shape and form for their own, as well as the audience's, and the readers' understanding and clarity of the situation. Just before the appearance of the ghost, the characters, readers, and audience alike are free to imagine the shape and form of the ghost, but once they see it, it limits them to the figure that has appeared, that is 'In the same figure like the King that's dead' (1.1.44). This appearance in the form of the dead king takes everyone into a series of

questions, and that is where we see an immediate increase in the occurrence of the interrogative structures.

Taking into account the mid night with less visibility, and the doubt and suspicion in the minds of Barnardo, Marcellus, and Horatio, the former two doubt the form of the ghost: 'Looks a not like the King that's dead'; and 'Is it not like the King' (1.1.46 and 61) respectively. These two questions require yes/no answers to justify the doubts in the minds of the inquirers, the readers and audience alike. But the repetition of these questions creates even more doubts in the minds of the audience and readers about the resemblance of the ghost with the dead king. It also gives rise to questions like, if so, why has it appeared in the form of the dead King? What does it want?

The structure of these interrogatives categorizes them as negative questions. The former question by Barnardo has an element of surprise in it and that he would be more surprised to hear a yes answer from others that the ghost really looks like the King, who is dead. In every language some questions are asked in order to have affirmative or negative answers; or even an expected/allowed yes/no answer embedded in the question as Wright and Hope illustrates in the examples 1 and 2. Examples 4 and 5 are taken from Q2. Examples 3 and 6 are restructured for the purpose of understanding the yes/no responses.

Where's your ticket?

Example 1

You have a ticket?

Example 2

Have you not got a ticket?

Example 3

Have you had a quiet guard?

Example 4 1.1.9 Q2

Is it not like the King?

Example 5 1.1.58 Q2

Isn't it like the King?

Example 6

In example 1, simple information is required about the ticket whereas in example 2, which is an interrogative structure due to intonation, requires a yes/no answer. In example 2 the inquirer expects a yes answer and would be surprised to hear a no instead. While example 3 has an allowed *yes* answer, there is a stronger implication of a *yes* answer in Example 6, that is, it is like the king. However, the situation is slightly different in Example 5. It expresses doubt but at the same time it has a slight hint of a *yes* answer rather than a *no*. It therefore suggests that while there is doubt in the minds of the guards, the ghost does look like the late King. Similarly, Barnardo's question 'Looks a not like the king' (1.1.46) also suggests the same response, which is why Barnardo warns the other guards of the appearance of the ghost 'in the same figure like the King that's dead' (1.1.44) earlier in the same scene.

The opening question of the play *Hamlet* requires an answer and so does example 4 where the possible answer can be both *yes* or *no*. However, if we take the appearance of the ghost and Barnardo's unexpected *who is there* question into consideration, he would not be surprised to hear a *no* answer from Francisco in Example 4. Example 6, where a slight change is made to the position of the negative element *not*, and example 5 are negative



interrogatives. The negative element *not* is placed before and after the subject 'it' in Example 6 and 5 respectively. This slight change makes a notable difference in the understanding of the questions and the subsequent responses. Negative interrogative questions can be mostly designed to favour *yes* answers. Such questions are designed to seek information as well as, more importantly, to take a position or stance for agreeing with the questions' content. The added negation (not) in negative interrogative structures can also create and express ambiguity, as it is doing in the case of *Hamlet's* ghost scene in general and in these examples in particular.

Doubtful about its resemblance to the dead King, the appearance of the ghost forces Barnardo and Marcellus to ask questions with the allowed *yes/no* answers in the responses. However, in the same ghost's scene, Barnardo asks Horatio, 'How now Horatio, you tremble and look pale, Is not this something more than phantasy?' (1.1.56-57) as Horatio has said earlier that it is their fantasy to have seen the ghost. Now the question asked here 'Is not this something more than fantasy?' (1.1.57) has a similar structure to Example 6, where the negative particle 'not' is used before the subject. It thus carries an expectation of a *yes* answer in the response. Hence negation in the question may vary the expectation of its response.

Negation 'can be realized by a number of elements, and can appear in a number of different positions in the verb phrase'.<sup>106</sup> It can be adverbial, morphological and/or grammatical depending on the structure of the

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<sup>106</sup> Hope, p 169.

sentence and its meaning. Here we are concerned with grammatical negation where a negative particle is added to the verb phrase to negate the verb. Examples 5 and 6 have a negative particle *not* added to the sentence to make it a negative in structure. If we change these two negative interrogatives in Examples 5 and 6 into simple declarative negative sentences: *It is not like the King* and *A (it) (does) not look like the King* respectively, it then clearly proposes the negation of the idea of seeing the ghost of the King or its resemblance with the late King.

There is a third infrequent possibility of negation where the negative particle *not* reverses or changes position with the verb as is obvious in the later structure 'Looks a not like the King?' (1.1.46). Here the tone and context makes an interrogative structure and the negative particle *not* makes a negation pattern which can be answered either by denying or affirming the ghost's resemblance to the late King. This pattern also creates mystery and doubt about the ghost and its resemblance with the old King.

Barnardo and Marcellus see the figure as that of the late King but they are in doubt as to whether to believe in it in the first place because of its unnatural appearance. This is why they ask each other and Horatio for confirmation. It is the use of the negative interrogatives which show this ambiguity and confusion among the guards. Therefore, I argue that Shakespeare deliberately used this style of structuring his interrogatives to show the real responses of the characters upon seeing a ghost; that is of not believing it. However, the three of them seeing the ghost supplements the presence of it with having all sorts of questions in their minds as Horatio asks 'who is it

that can inform me?’ 1.1.81 about the reality of the ghost and the reasons for its appearance.

Though these interrogatives create ambiguity as well as mystery around the appearance of the ghost, their construction reveals and supports the point that the *thing* and *figure* does look like the ghost despite doubts in the minds of the guards. It also intensifies the situation regarding its identity; as Alison Thorne puts it, ‘the ghost’s likeness to the dead monarch only intensifies the mystery surrounding its identity’.<sup>107</sup> Though Thorne attributes the intensification of the mystery to the fact of the likeness of the ghost to the dead King, it is actually the linguistic form in which the interrogatives are couched that raises the doubts, and hence creates mystery. In addition, what further works to intensify these doubts are the doubling practices of the many modern productions of *Hamlet* particularly where the same actor plays the role of the ghost and Claudius, for instance, Gregory Doran’s *Hamlet* (2009) where Patrick Stewart plays the role of the ghost and Claudius.

Similarly, Shakespeare’s prudent use of the word ‘like’ four times in the opening scenes emphasises the similarity of the ghost with the late King. Barnardo explains the appearance of the ghost as ‘in the same figure like the King that’s dead’ (1.1.41). Marcellus and Barnardo also make use of the word ‘like’ in their questions: ‘Is it not like the King?’ and ‘Looks a not like the King?’ (1.1.61 and 46) respectively, to refer to the resemblance of the ghost with the late King. Barnardo’s speech seems contradictory as he states

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<sup>107</sup> Alison Thorne, ‘Hamlet and the Art of Looking Diversely on the Self’, in *Vision and Rhetoric in Shakespeare*, (Springer, 2000), pp 104-133 (p. 105).

'In the same figure like the King that's dead' on seeing the ghost, but then asks 'Looks a not like the King?' (1.1.41 and 61). The figure may or may not look like the King but the presence of it is certain, which the guard cannot deny. Hamlet, before the ghost's appearance is revealed to him, shows his sorrow and his certainty that his father will not return, 'I shall not look upon his like again' (1.2.186). The use of the word *like* with a negation in three of these sentences actually reinforces the logic of not believing in the ghost in the first place.

The appearance of the ghost as this strange figure in the form of the late King allows the disbelief to linger in the minds of these guards as Horatio tells about this incident to Hamlet, "*I think I saw him [Late King] yesternight*" (1.2.188) which perplexes Hamlet too. The mind of Horatio is still in doubt about the ghost and its appearance. The reasons for these doubts are further supplemented by his utterance, 'I saw him once' (1.2.186). The word *once* puts him in a situation where he could identify the ghost of the King (as the King) as it appeared. The revelation of this notion of ghost to Hamlet by Horatio puts the former in a perplexed world of doubts and questions. At this point it is Hamlet who starts questioning Horatio. This is where we see an increase in the number of the interrogatives which reveal the inquisitive mind of Hamlet.

Even though Hamlet eventually accepts the appearance and identity of the ghost, these interrogative structures create an atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty about it. These interrogative structures are spread throughout the play. They play a vital role in the understanding of the drama in general and revenge ethos in particular. Though Hamlet eventually does take

revenge in the end, he is neither certain nor in favour of it throughout the play. The effect of doubt and uncertainty is created by Shakespeare through these interrogative structures. I argue that the delay and questioning of this revenge by Hamlet is a deliberate choice and a conscious ploy by Shakespeare to express something greater than mere dramatic convention. Apparently, Hamlet seems keen to take revenge and does not question this revenge-action in itself. However, his dialogues as well as the dialogues of other characters are full of questions (in the form of interrogative structures) which manifest the questioning of this revenge.

Therefore, I argue that through the dramaturgical composition of the play and these questions, Shakespeare implicitly challenges and rejects revenge. The following section discusses the use and effect of these interrogative structures on the revenge ethos within and outside the play.

### The Question of Revenge

Apart from a better understanding of Hamlet's dilemma, the opening scene sets the stall for the appearance of the ghost and marks the beginning of revenge action. 'Shall I strike at it with my partisan?' (1.1.143), is the other interrogative which shows the natural response of the guards to perform their duty. This same question, for instance, befits the situation of Hamlet's revenge on his uncle: whether he should or should not strike while Claudius is praying or whether he should look for some other more fitting moment to kill him. As a result of this uncertainty, he also questions himself 'And am I then reveng'd?' (3.3.84).

Let us consider an example from Act 3 Scene 1 when Hamlet is having a conversation with Ophelia. He asks her, 'Why, wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?' (3.1.121) and further states 'I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious' (3.1.125). He ends his dialogue with a question: 'Where's your father?' (3.1.130). It seems from this question that Hamlet is occupied by thoughts of his father and revenge. It links the ghost's statement, 'I am thy father's spirit, | Doomed for a certain term to walk the night, | And for the day confin'd to fast in fires' (1.4.9-11). It suggests that Hamlet's mind is occupied with the thoughts of his father when he converses with Ophelia, but it also anticipates the revenge that he will take unwittingly on her father.

Therefore, it appears from his words that although Hamlet is revengeful the questions that are revolving around revenge action make his mind appear uncertain about it. In this example, Hamlet's first question — 'why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners' (3.1.121) — is a reference to his own birth ('O cursed spite | That ever I was born to set it right' (1.5. 196-197), where he is conditioned by the ghost to kill, and thus commit a sin. Although Hamlet asserts his right and duty to be *revengeful*, these questions reveal that Hamlet is aware of the fact that killing someone is a sin, especially if one is not certain about the crime the other has committed. Thus, it establishes and supports the fact that Hamlet is uncertain about the verdict of the ghost and the subsequent guilt of Claudius. Hence, the need to know for certain is Hamlet's dilemma, rather than the indecision and procrastination that so many critics have proposed.

This discussion demonstrates that Shakespeare's language is apt to the task of revealing the minds of the characters particularly regarding revenge-

action. His language choices are designed to show doubts in Hamlet's mind about the rationality of the revenge. In the true spirit of Elizabethan revenge tragedy, Hamlet may remind himself of the revenge he has to take but the presence of these questions suggests instead that he should be challenging rather than accepting the injunction to take revenge. Shakespeare has used a peculiar linguistic style that both shows Hamlet's eagerness for revenge, 'I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious' (3.1.125) while at the same time surrounding this revengeful readiness with questions showing his inquisitive mind and his moral dilemma. It is this dramaturgical composition of the play which makes it unique and effective to address and challenge the revenge ethos within the play. Likewise, it enables the readers and audience to form an opinion or perspective about revenge, and hence influence them.

Therefore, I argue that these interrogatives serve the purpose of creating doubts in the mind of Hamlet, as well as those of readers and audiences which eventually leads to a questioning of the revenge ethos. The same revenge, which appeared judicious and justified by the dialogues of the ghost and Hamlet in the beginning of the play, no longer appears judicious or justified. In fact, the premise of revenge is questioned by Hamlet, and by Horatio. As a result, it allows *Hamlet* to enable its readers and audience to question and reject revenge within the play as well as outside the play.

Public attitudes toward revenge are mixed. Some consider revenge to be irrational act that has no place in civilized society. Others portray revenge as both rational and morally justifiable in the face of injustice.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Karina Schumann and Michael Ross, 'The Benefits, Costs, and Paradox of Revenge', *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 4 (2010), 1193-1205 (p. 1195).

Shakespeare presents both perspectives about revenge through *Hamlet* and leaves it to the judgment of readers and audience to decide. The lines 'Revenge should have no bounds' (4.7.127) and 'to cut his throat i' th' church' (4.7.125) spoken by Claudius and Laertes respectively represent the category of people who consider revenge as a rational and morally justified action in face of justice. Both figures are prepared to act in a very underhand manner with poison. The ghost's urging Hamlet to take revenge: 'So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear' (1.5.7) and 'Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder' (1.5.25) further supports this idea of revenge as a rational act.

The indecision of Hamlet about the revenge matter is also the manifestation of these two perspectives. On the one hand, Hamlet explicitly admits in Act 4 Scene 4 (7<sup>th</sup> Soliloquy) that revenge is a rational act and he berates himself about not taking revenge in a sufficiently timely fashion. On the other hand, the delay and the subsequent questions in the mind of Hamlet about the rationality of revenge speak the contrary. It is striking that this speech of Hamlet is cut from F. It appears that it is too late in the action for Hamlet (and Shakespeare) to admit the rationality of revenge. Perhaps that is why it is cut from F. While the linguistic structure of the interrogatives questions the necessity and rationality of revenge in *Hamlet*, it might well be Shakespeare who made this cut.

'Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means, | To do it' (4.4.50). Despite the fact that Hamlet has the cause, will, ability and means to avenge, he still has to push himself to do the task imposed upon him. At the same time, at the end of his soliloquy in Act 4 Scene 4, he reminds himself about



the revenge and expresses, 'My thoughts be bloody' (4.5.66). Hamlet admits that his thoughts be bloody, not actions. However, he does get into action in the end but it is mostly because of the circumstances that developed rather than his planned action of revenge. The murder of Polonius, the death of Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and the letter written by Claudius summoning Hamlet's death in England, work together to compel him to take action for his survival.

Convinced and motivated by the commitment and passion of the soldiers, immediately, Hamlet decides to take revenge of his father's murder but the choice of word *thoughts* does not reflect that he would actually act upon it. 'But we know already how impossible it is for him to make bloody action out of bloody thoughts'.<sup>109</sup> Peter Mercer argues that it is impossible for Hamlet to change the thoughts into action. However, I argue that these lines do not suggest the possibility or impossibility of Hamlet's ability to take revenge. If that was the case, he could not have killed Polonius in the first place, as he was not aware whether he has killed the King or Polonius, 'Is it the King?' (3.4.26).

Similarly, upon changing the letter summoning Rosencrantz and Guildenstern deaths instead, Hamlet's remarks 'They are not near my conscience, their defeat | Does by their own insinuation grow' (5.2.62) speak for him as man capable of taking decisions and actions. In the case of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, he is certain of their treachery; therefore, he

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<sup>109</sup> Peter Mercer, *Hamlet and the Acting of Revenge* (University of Iowa Press, 1987), p. 231.

does not hold their deaths near his conscience. There is no doubting in Hamlet's capability to take revenge or kill. It implies his non-acceptance of revenge as a rational act. On the occasion of the Mouse Trap scene, Hamlet proclaims 'if a do blench/I know my course' (2.2.593-594). Even then he does not explicitly admit that he is resolved to take revenge. It is the readers and audience who anticipate the meaning of revenge from the statement.

On the contrary, Laertes' feelings and emotions about the revenge of his father are opposite to those of Hamlet's. Hamlet is cautious and delays revenge whereas Laertes is reckless and intends to take it at his earliest opportunity. Unlike Hamlet who decides not to kill Claudius during worship, Laertes recklessly declares his desire 'to cut his [father's murderer's] throat i' th' church' (4.7.125). Thus, Laertes and Hamlet personify two sides or extremes of revenge. The following dialogues show Laertes' commitment and eagerness to take revenge.

To this point I stand,  
That both the worlds I give to negligence,  
Let come what comes, only I'll be reveng'd  
Most thoroughly for my father. (4.5.133-135)

And so have I a noble father lost  
A sister driven into desp'rate terms [...]  
But my revenge will come.' (4.7.25-29)

Though both act catastrophically and Laertes dishonestly, Hamlet falls into that category of people for whom revenge is one of the options rather than the absolute choice and that is one of the possible reasons for his delay in the revenge. By contrast, Laertes represents the category of people who considers revenge as a rational and morally justified act. Through Hamlet and Laertes, Shakespeare presents two different attitudes to revenge.

However, after the revenge experience (duel with Hamlet), Laertes also accepts his own death after the duel with Hamlet; 'I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery' (5.2.312). Laertes did choose to take revenge but the end result of this action makes him realise his choice was based on flawed reasoning, hence he accepts his death.

I argue that, not knowing for certain and considering revenge as an irrational act, the hesitation and delay in Hamlet's revenge becomes more evident from the interrogative structures in the play. The interrogative structures are crafted around the revenge word and theme. These interrogatives appear in the text more frequently whenever Hamlet recalls or mentions his vengeance. These interrogatives occur even more frequently in his soliloquies where his mind is full of the thoughts of revenge. Am I a coward? (2.2.565) is the question Hamlet asks himself when he recalls his revenge: 'Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell' (2.3.580).

This question also shows Hamlet's reason to struggle against the temptation to take revenge. This fight/struggle continues in the third soliloquy too. 'Am I then reveng'd' (3.3.84). The struggle is evident from the use of this question. This rationality in the play is maintained in the play through these questions which challenge the concept and practice of revenge.

In the oft-discussed soliloquy in Act 3 Scene 1, 'to be or not to be' the indecisiveness of Hamlet to take or not to take revenge is also foregrounded. Hamlet may curse the time and his birth, 'The time is out of joint. O cursed spite, | That ever I was born to set it right' (1.5.196-197) but the fact is that he has to choose to act or not act on the question of revenge. Time and

again we see in the play that Hamlet is torn between the side he has to choose, that is, to kill or not to kill. Towards the end of the play, however, Hamlet is pushed to a corner where he has to choose and act accordingly to take his revenge. The murder of Polonius, whether incidental or intentional, drives Hamlet into action. The act of killing which withheld him from taking revenge, starts to emerge with the death of Polonius. His banishment, however, drives him to forced inaction. But the letter which summoned his death again forces him to change it and have Rosencrantz and Guildenstern killed instead.

The deaths of Polonius, Ophelia, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are the potential factors which drive Hamlet into action. The duel with Laertes, poison on the sword, poison in the wine, Gertrude's death due to the poisoned wine, Laertes' death due to the poisoned sword are the factors which force Hamlet to wound Claudius with the same sword and make him drink the poisoned wine. The fulfilment of this revenge is not entirely because of his father's unnatural murder or the acceptance of the word of the ghost. The circumstances mentioned above are equally valid reasons, which cannot be put aside. Hamlet may have reacted differently had these circumstances not developed.

In a similar line of argument, the experience (and reading) of the play allows readers and audiences to side with one of the perspectives: revenge as a rational or irrational act. Based on real life experiences of revenge, responses and perspectives of the readers and audience may vary. Similar life experiences like that of Hamlet may attract the readers' and audiences' attention about the revenge question. Thus, the interrogative rhetorical

structure of the play enables the readers and audience to develop an empathetic connection with the play. Hence, it has the potential to influence them. Second, it establishes (and supports) the unique dramaturgical composition of *Hamlet* to address and challenge the revenge ethos within the play. It is this unique dramaturgical composition which establishes this empathetic connection between the play and readers and audience.

Because *Hamlet* is constructed as a series of questions, Shakespeare suggests that revenge cultures can entertain questions about revenge even though on the surface they may seem not to do so. These questions in *Hamlet* initiate the thinking process of readers and audience and enable them to relate and empathise with the character's situations and relate to the same questions.

Stevie Simkins argues that in Western culture, 'the revenge plot has been one of the linchpins of narrative structure.'<sup>110</sup> I argue that these interrogative structures in *Hamlet* are certainly the linchpins crafted and used by Shakespeare to question this concept of the 'revenge plot'. The construction of these questions which surround Hamlet and his revenge are used as a tool by Shakespeare to challenge the presence, acceptance and practice of revenge in general and Elizabethan revenge in particular. It is the presence of these questions that enable Hamlet as well as the readers and audience alike to question the revenge ethos.

Apparently, the play ends with the revenge action completed but it incites the readers and audience to question revenge and its justification. The way

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<sup>110</sup> Stevie Simkins, *Revenge Tragedy* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p. 56.

Shakespeare has dealt with the revenge theme is remarkable. Shakespeare does not set out to teach the morality of revenge in the play. He presents extremes of revenge and lets the readers and audience decide for themselves. While doing so he weaves a net of questions around the revenge issue which allows the readers and audience to relate to similar questions about the necessity of revenge and, as a result, enables them to question and reject it.

Similarly, these interrogatives also enable the readers and audience to raise similar questions about issues other than revenge. The flexibility of *Hamlet* because of its dramaturgical construction plays an equally vital role to address other contemporary issues around the world. Examples of which we see in the media reports in Pakistan as discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. Mostly, this happens when *Hamlet* is appropriated and or adapted.

It is the ambiguity created by the dramaturgical construction of *Hamlet* which attracts the adapters and enables them to appropriate the play to question their respective countries' specific contemporary problems. The construction of these interrogative structures contribute to the play's translatability, and potential to address any questionable paradigms in different times, places and nationalities, which also helps to establish Shakespeare's universality as a dramatist.

My next chapter explores the problem of revenge in Pukhtun society in the light of the treatment of revenge in *Hamlet*. It will set out an empirical investigation as to whether or not *Hamlet* has the potential to enable young students of *KP* to question the necessity of revenge in real life.

## Chapter 3: Revenge Culture in Khyber

### Pukhtunkhwa

When it comes to countering extremism, Pakistan's approach is primarily reactive, with diagnostic efforts largely absent.<sup>111</sup>

Although frequently characterized as a warlike people, a large number of these people took radical nonviolent action against both local authoritarianism and British imperialism in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, courageously standing up to brutality without flinching and without inflicting counter violence despite enormous provocation. Their behaviour was so remarkable as to be truly breathtaking, yet sufficiently understandable to be instructive in analysis of contemporary conflicts.<sup>112</sup>

While policies to counter terrorism are particularly urgent in a country like Pakistan where we see an increase in violence in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP), strategies around the world are designed to tackle terrorism and the corruption of a government through non-military approaches, such as non-violent campaigns and pro-conflict education and training. The recent terrorist attack on the Bacha Khan University Charsadda, KP, Pakistan on January 20, 2016 left twenty two students and staff dead including an Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Syed Hamid Hussain. It was claimed to be a revenge-attack by the militants for the military operation against

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<sup>111</sup> Mohammad Ali Babakhel, 'Extremism in books'. *DAWN*, 2016  
<<https://www.dawn.com/news/1261474>> [accessed 2 January 2017]

<sup>112</sup> Robert C Johansen, 'Radical Islam and Nonviolence: A Case Study of Religious Empowerment and Constraint among Pashtuns', *Journal of Peace Research*, 34 (1997), 53-71 (p. 56).

extremism in the country.<sup>113</sup> Before Hussain was shot dead, he shot at the attackers with a pistol. His action provided time for some students to escape the classroom. Hailed as a hero undoubtedly for sacrificing his life to save the lives of the students, his action of carrying a gun has been criticised by foreign media. Possession of a gun is indeed a debatable question in this case, however, since one worrying result of this incident is the rationalization and promotion of gun culture in the region, particularly in the academic institutions of *KP*. A rise in the incidence of gun use by teachers and students is seen in the academic institutions of (*KP*).

As a result of this incident, the *KP* government arranged training for teachers in the use of guns for the defence of academic institutions. Pictures of teachers (both male and female) armed with guns during the training produced a hype in the media (and social media). *KP*'s information minister stated that where teachers can engage the attackers for five to ten minutes, they could provide time for the security forces to respond.<sup>114</sup> Putting aside all the complicated politics behind the security measures and Pakistani policies to counter terrorism, training in self-defence and the presence of armed teachers in academic institutions leave the institutions more vulnerable.

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<sup>113</sup> David L. Gosling, 'Bacha Khan University Attack: Pakistan's Education Institutions Targets for Terror', *Time Higher Education*, 2016 < <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/bacha-khan-university-attack-pakistans-education-institutions-targets-terror> > [accessed 30 January 2017]

<sup>114</sup> Ilyas M. Khan, 'Peshawar School Massacre: Row over Pakistan Armed Teacher Plan', *BBC News* 21 January 2015 < <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-30917350> > [accessed 20 September 2016]



Firstly, the act of armed training may bring the teachers (and the schools) in direct confrontation with militants, where the latter already do not approve of western-style education. Fundamentalist militants in Pakistan consider western style education in schools and colleges to be un-Islamic, and for this reason, they have attacked and destroyed hundreds of schools and colleges. The Human Rights Commission in Pakistan reported 500 schools to have been destroyed and/or damaged in 2009 alone.<sup>115</sup> According to the report released by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), 838 schools were attacked between 2009 and 2012.<sup>116</sup> Not to forget that from 2002 to 2015, approximately 21,000 civilians and an additional 6015 security personnel have been killed in incidents of terrorism and militancy. The security personnel have died at the hands of militants.<sup>117</sup>

Second, in *KP*, 'schools are already looking more and more like military barracks than places of learning and inquiry, and in such a scenario, the increased presence of weapons is bound to leave a lasting impression on the psyche of young minds.'<sup>118</sup> There are mixed opinions among people on such security measures. This in itself is an alarming situation because it reflects the acceptance of gun culture by the people who are in its favour. Such

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<sup>115</sup> Jon Henley 'The Taliban's 'Alarming' War on Education', *The Guardian*. 2014 < <https://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2014/dec/21/taliban-alarming-war-education-peshawar-attack> > [accessed 5 April 2017]

<sup>116</sup> Henley.

<sup>117</sup> Marvin G Weinbaum, 'Insurgency and Violent Extremism in Pakistan', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 28 (2017), 34-56 (p. 36).

<sup>118</sup> Syed Rashid Munir, 'Bullets and Backpacks: Arming School Teachers is a Stopgap measure', *DAWN* 30 January 2015 < <https://www.dawn.com/news/1160456> > [accessed 5 April 2017]

efforts may prove more lethal in regions like *KP* where violence in the form of revenge is part of everyday life.

Such measures could well add to the already worsening situations of sectarian violence, honour killings and the prevalent culture of revenge in Pakistan in general and *KP* in particular. Such actions not only potentially affect the decades of hard work carried out to curb gun culture in the Pukhtun history but also adversely affect the policies of Pakistan and foreign powers to curb violence and terrorism. Where Pakistan has banned 212 militant organizations in the country, which includes the leading foreign terrorist groups, there are still currently at least 60 militant groups active in the Punjab province alone. In addition, 'foreign combatants also finding safe haven in Pakistan's border areas with Afghanistan soon made common cause with Pakistan's TTP and other anti-state groups'.<sup>119</sup> 'United States and Western policies toward Pakistan have devoted billions of dollars to encouraging economic and social development as an explicit means of diminishing the militant threat.'<sup>120</sup> Therefore, curbing violence and/or discouraging any means that instigate violence in *KP* is both nationally and internationally important.

'Codes of honour and revenge will lead to escalating global violence' writes Akbar Ahmed.<sup>121</sup> In the course of time, the pervasive and current practice of

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<sup>119</sup> Weinbaum, p. 36.

<sup>120</sup> Will Bullock, Kosuke Imai, and Jacob N Shapiro, 'Statistical Analysis of Endorsement Experiments: Measuring Support for Militant Groups in Pakistan', *Political Analysis*, 19 (2011), 363-84 (p. 365).

<sup>121</sup> Akbar Ahmed, *The Thistle and the Drone: How America's War on Terror Became a Global War on Tribal Islam*, (HarperCollins Publishers India, 2014), p. 4.

revenge in *KP* has been used and exploited by people outside the Pukhtun community. One such example of such exploitation is the abuse of this revenge practice by the militants in the region. They have exploited this practice of revenge in the region over the years. Most terrorist attacks are followed by messages from spokespersons (of the attackers) about the attackers' motives. The message almost every time describes the motive as revenge. News headings such as 'Pakistan Taliban warns of revenge',<sup>122</sup> 'Taliban says Peshawar school attack is a revenge of Army Operation',<sup>123</sup> 'Osama bin Laden dead: Taliban suicide bombers kill 80 in Pakistan revenge attack'<sup>124</sup> sum up the point. Militants have made a careful and deliberate choice to foster the concept of revenge on the grounds that it is a current cultural practice amongst the Pukhtuns.

To add to the irony of situation a news headline like, 'Osama bin Laden's son vows revenge against US for killing his father in online video message'<sup>125</sup> is played/punned upon as "Hamlet" bin Laden zweert wraak voor moord op

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<sup>122</sup> Saima Mohsin, 'Pakistan Taliban Warns Government of Revenge Attacks After Leader's Killing', *CNN*, 2013 <<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/08/world/asia/pakistan-taliban/index.html> > [accessed 15 February 2015]

<sup>123</sup> Abcnewspoint, 'Taliban says Peshawar School Attack Is a Revenge of Army Operation', 2014 < <http://www.abcnewspoint.com/taliban-says-peshawar-school-attack-is-a-revenge-of-army-operation/> > [accessed 20 December 2016]

<sup>124</sup> Telegraph, 'Osama bin Laden death: Taliban suicide bombers kill 80 in Pakistan revenge attack', 2011. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picturegalleries/worldnews/8511766/Osama-bin-Laden-death-Taliban-suicide-bombers-kill-80-in-Pakistan-revenge-attack.html>> [accessed 20 December 2016]

<sup>125</sup> Asma Alabed, 'Son of Osama bin Laden Issues Threat of Revenge against the US', *The Independent*, 2016 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/osama-bin-laden-son-hamza-vows-revenge-us-for-killing-his-father-in-video-posted-online-a7129281.html>> [accessed 21 September 2016]

Osama'<sup>126</sup> (Hamlet Bin Laden vows revenge for Osama Killing). As a result, 'Osama's ghost comes back to haunt US'.<sup>127</sup>

This is not the first time that we see references to *Hamlet* and the Arab world. Numerous comparisons and parallels are drawn between *Hamlet* and the Arab world: the reflections of which we see in the adaptations of the play. 'War, migration and revenge: Shakespeare is the bard of today's world.'<sup>128</sup> Shakespeare's plays prove more contemporary than ever before due to the recent increase in violence and uprisings around the world, which bears some resemblance with various events in the plays. The recent war against terrorism across the world has caused record mass migrations in human history. The Syrian crisis, for instance, has caused more than a million people to migrate to Europe in 2015 only.<sup>129</sup> Due to an increase in similar real-life events, adaptations of *Hamlet* have proved suitable to address respective issues and conflicts around the world. 'From Hamlet in Syrian refugee camp to Macbeth in Kolkata, the plays have a resonance far

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<sup>126</sup> De Standaard. 'Hamlet bin Laden zweert wraak voor moord op Osama', < [http://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20160710\\_02379034](http://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20160710_02379034)>2016. [accessed 21 September 2016]

<sup>127</sup> Hari Narayan, 'Osama Bin Laden's Ghost Come Back to Haunt Barack Obama', *The Hindu*, 2015 < <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/osama-bin-ladens-ghost-come-back-to-haunt-barack-obama/article7252268.ece?w=alauto> > [accessed 21 September 2016]

<sup>128</sup> Andrew Dickson, 'War, Migration and Revenge: Shakespeare is the Bard of Today's World', *The Guardian*, 2015 <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/30/war-migration-revenge-shakespeare-world-syrian-refugee-camps>> [accessed 24 September 2016]

<sup>129</sup> BBC News 'Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe Explained in Seven Charts', 2016. < <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34131911> > [accessed 18 December 2016]

beyond middle England.<sup>130</sup> An adaptive combination of *Hamlet* and *King Lear* by Nawar Bulbul was performed by the Syrian children in Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan in April 2014 and Roman Theatre in Amman in May 2014. It presents yet another strong example of the reinvention and reinterpretation of *Hamlet* (and *King Lear*). This earlier Syrian Children's performance has its own interpretation of the play which is contrary to Shakespeare's Globe performance of *Hamlet* in October 2015 in the same refugee camp a year later. The Syrian adaptation of *Hamlet* (and *King Lear*) gives a new understanding to *Hamlet* as well as *King Lear* and further highlights the problems of the Syrian refugees and the war. The reaction of a Syrian-audience, Rabie Imadi, 'the play shows how much Syrians have suffered and how much they are oppressed'<sup>131</sup> sums up the understanding of the Syrians of the play.

Not only do such adaptations establish *Hamlet* as a global play, they also provide a safe platform for the adapters to address contemporary problems. Adaptations provide a symbolic forum through which any social and/or cultural issues can be addressed which otherwise may prove hard to address due to social, political or religious constraints.

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<sup>130</sup> Andrew Dickson, 'War, Migration and Revenge: Shakespeare is the Bard of Today's World', *The Guardian*, 2015  
<<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/30/war-migration-revenge-shakespeare-world-syrian-refugee-camps>> [accessed 24 September 2016]

<sup>131</sup> Muath Freij, 'To be or not to be – Zaatari Children Bring their Interpretation of Shakespeare to Amman', *Jordan Times*, 2014  
<<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/be-or-not-be%E2%80%99-%E2%80%94-zaatari-children-bring-their-interpretation-shakespeare-amman>> [accessed 25 September 2016]

In an interview with *the New York Times*, for instance, Bulbul explicitly described how his previous play was banned by the Syrian government and how the latter wanted him to denounce it. Instead, Bulbul chose to leave the country. Stationed in Zaatari camp, he planned to adapt *Hamlet* and *King Lear* to address the Syrian refugees' issues in order to lift the moral of the young children in the camp. When asked about the objective behind the production of this adaptation, Bulbul replies that this 'performance is a way for Syrian refugees to send a message of peace to the world.'<sup>132</sup> While talking about the suitability of the *Hamlet* to depict Syrian crisis, Bulbul mentions:

*Hamlet* inevitably comments on the conflict in Syria. "To be or not to be is one of the most important sentences in the world for me. Who am I? Shall I take action or not? This applies to our revolution."<sup>133</sup>

In *King Lear* there are many paths you can take. I focused on the main story-an aging king giving away his kingdom to his daughters. I want to say the struggle is between hypocrisy and honesty, and honesty is better."<sup>134</sup>

It is not the first time that *Hamlet* has been adapted to address Syrian (or Arab-world) issues. Mohammad Subhi's adaption of *Hamlet* in 1977 presents the political conflicts of the time. In this production Hamlet is depicted as a glorified avenger as well as a revolutionist who fights against 'the corruption and tyranny and dies in pursuit of justice'.<sup>135</sup> It is striking to compare the

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<sup>132</sup> Muath Freij.

<sup>133</sup> The Economist, 'Shakespeare Syrian Style: A Special Performance', 2014. <<http://www.economist.com/blogs/pomegranate/2014/02/shakespeare-syrian-style>> [accessed 26 September 2016]

<sup>134</sup> The Economist.

<sup>135</sup> Mahmoud F Al Shetawi, 'Hamlet in Arabic', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 20 (1999), 43-63 (p. 47).

earlier adaptations of Arab *Hamlets* with the recent versions, as there is a transition in the way the play is approached, particularly in terms of revenge. There is a change in the portrayal of Hamlet as an avenger to Hamlet as not an avenger in these Arab adaptations. Revenge is an integral part of the Arab world, and *Hamlet* appeals to the Arab world because revenge is an integral part of their society too.

The first ever recorded translation and adaptation of *Hamlet* in Arabic by Tanius 'Abdoh was performed in 1893 in Egypt. It was used in theatre for decades, which speaks for its popularity especially in the Arab world. While dealing with the theme of revenge, this adaptive-translated version of *Hamlet* dealt with the theme of revenge. Rather than an adaptation, it appears to be a mere retelling of the story with an unusual ending which loses its connection with Shakespeare's tragedy. Most probably, one of the reasons then for its popularity was this unusual ending where Hamlet successfully completes his revenge, which was very much in accordance with the then Arab revenge culture. 'Hamlet does not die, he ascends the throne of his deceased father, while the ghost blesses him in these words "Hamlet, may you live a joyful life on earth, pardoned in Heaven. Ascend the throne formerly occupied by your uncle. This throne was most appropriately made for you, accept it."<sup>136</sup> Thus, it provided revenge as an acceptable means for justice, hence, adhered to the tradition of revenge in the region.

In contrast to this adaptation, in 1994 Jawad al-Asadi's *Shibbak Ufiliya* (Ophelia's Window) or *Hamlit 'Ala al-Tariqah al-Asriyah'* (Hamlet a la Mode),

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<sup>136</sup> Al Shetawi, p. 45.

'experimented with the text of *Hamlet* in order to put across his message: we will become victims of crime unless we stand up to stop them.'<sup>137</sup> In this adaptation, while it addresses political conflicts of the time, Hamlet is depicted as a hero 'who sets out to fight corruption, and dies for the cause of justice'.<sup>138</sup> This production rejects the tradition of revenge culture in the Arab world.

Apparently, the mere storyline of *Hamlet* may not explicitly reject revenge and/or promote the message of peace, however, it certainly does so through the construction of the play and the use of questions as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. It certainly is the similarity of the representation of violence and revenge in the play with Arab crisis that allow adapters as well as readers and audience to relate to the characters and incidents of the play. To make use of the inquisitive nature of the play and to question the tragic ending of *Hamlet* as inevitable is to allow readers and adapters to reject revenge (in any culture) and spread the message of peace. While there are similar numerous comparisons and parallels drawn between *Hamlet* and the Arab world, for instance, 'the modern Arabs are truly the Hamlet of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century',<sup>139</sup> I will suggest that modern Pukhtuns are perhaps the Hamlet of the twenty-first century.

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<sup>137</sup> Al Shetawi, p. 48.

<sup>138</sup> Al Shetawi, p. 49.

<sup>139</sup> Sadik Jalal Al-Azm, 'Owning the Future: Modern Arabs and Hamlet', *ISIM Newsletter*, 5 (2000), p. 11.



Revenge storylines do share basic characteristics wherever they occur in the world, however, the tradition of Anglophone teaching in *KP* offers the opportunity for English specialists to intervene in this problem through teaching that reflects a more nuanced approach to the play as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Therefore, in this chapter, I briefly discuss the particular revenge tradition of *Badal* in *KP* and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). I also explore various forms of non-violent protest, specifically the *Khudai Khidmatgar* resistance against the British Raj in 1920-40s and its use of drama as an education tool to combat traditional, non-progressive ideas. I conclude the chapter by demonstrating that a fully dramaturgical reading of *Hamlet*, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, could likewise prove a useful tool for combatting violence in *KP* among college and university-educated students.

## Pukhto and Pukhtuns

‘Every known culture features retribution in some form, as well as norms and beliefs that govern and justify retributive behaviour.’<sup>140</sup>

Pukhtuns inhabit the North West Frontier Province [Khyber Pukhtunkhwa] of Pakistan as a major ethnic group of the populace. Most parts of the land they occupy remained independent, and without a centralized government of its own for most of his known history...Despite the fact that the society remained tribal and individualistic to some extent, the lives and actions of the people had been regulated and ruled by unwritten but well-defined and well-known customs, norms, codes and rules called Pukhto also written as Pashto and Pakhtu, which also is the name of the language of the people.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Tamler Sommers, 'The Two Faces of Revenge: Moral Responsibility and the Culture of Honor', *Biology & Philosophy*, 24 (2009), 35-50 (p. 37).

<sup>141</sup> Sultan-I-Rome, 'Pukhtu: The Pukhtun Code of Life', *Pakistan Vision*, 7 (2006), p. 1.

Referring to the renowned Pukhto scholar and poet Salma Shaheen, Sultan-i-Rome states that Pukhto is not just a language; it is the constitution of the life of the Pukhtuns. The lives and actions of the Pukhtuns are mostly determined by the well-defined unwritten law of customs, norms and codes (of behaviour) called Pukhto. Jonathan Hawkins describes Pukhto as 'a series of tenets on how a *Pukhtun* must live. These tenets define how the tribe interacts and provide guidelines for normative behaviours in living a Pashtun [variant spelling of Pukhtun] lifestyle.'<sup>142</sup>

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, commonly known as FATA, also constitutes Pukhtuns where people predominantly speak Pukhto. They also live their lives according to the well-defined unwritten concept of Pukhto but they call it *Pukhtunwali* instead. Critics differ on the concepts of Pukhto and *Pukhtunwali* but Rome considers them the same. He further expresses that the difference between the two is that it is followed in more strict sense in FATA where it is known as *Pukhtunwali* as the region lacks a proper judicial system as opposed to the settled area of *KP*. However, the basic tenets of it remain the same for all Pukhtuns; whether they be in FATA, *KP*, Pakistan, Afghanistan and/or elsewhere. As the focus is not on the differences between Pukhto and *Pukhtunwali*, I will use the term Pukhto for these well-defined codes of life of Pukhtuns, unless otherwise stated.

Pukhto mainly consists of *Melmastya* (Hospitality), *Nang* (Honour), *Badal* (Exchange/Revenge), *Ghyrat* (Chivalry) and *Namoos* (Protection of Women and Land). These basic codes define the living principles of the people.

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<sup>142</sup> Jonathan Hawkins, 'The Pashtun Cultural Code: Pashtunwali', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, 180 (2009), 16-27 (p. 17).

Mostly, these tenets are religiously followed even if they prove fatal or destructive. At times, it is even prioritised over the religion. Perhaps that is where societal and cultural shortcomings are either covered and/or wrongly justified under the name of Islam and/or exploited by fundamentalists. Examples of which we can see in the form the exploitation of the revenge element by the militants. Therefore, my focus is on the tenet of *badal* which is often translated as *revenge*.

### *Badal*

'It [badal] has two sides, badal for good and badal for bad. Doing good and doing bad, neither is ever forgotten.'<sup>143</sup> Besides meaning revenge, *badal* is used for 'assisting others for their assistance in any work or any way; to return someone else work(s), deed(s), and favour(s)'.<sup>144</sup>

The term *badal* has other meanings apart from revenge, that is, retribution where it is used in a sense of repayment or recompense for a good service 'Badal is an obligation to seek proportional retribution'.<sup>145</sup> 'Pashtun [Pukhtun] authors unmistakably point out that both good deeds and bad deeds require corresponding actions in return. Hence *badal* is not merely the call for revenge, but also the obligation to thank for the provision of help and to

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<sup>143</sup> Raga G. Hussain, 'Badal: A Culture of Revenge, the Impact of Collateral Damage on Taliban Insurgency', (doctoral thesis, Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate 2008) p. 57.

<sup>144</sup> Sultan-I-Rome, p. 4.

<sup>145</sup> Bruce L Benson and Zafar R Siddiqui, 'Pashtunwali -Law for the Lawless, Defense for the Stateless', *International Review of Law and Economics*, 37 (2014) 108-220 (p. 108).

provide compensation as soon as possible.<sup>146</sup> The meaning of the word *badal* as mere revenge does not cover the holistic sense, though it covers the term revenge as one part. It follows the principle of give and take. This principle of reciprocity can be found in many societies and cultures, but are still predominantly followed as the code of life by the Pukhtuns where *badal* as revenge is incumbent alongside *badal* for good.

### Reasons for *Badal* in Pukhto

The concept of *badal* in Pukhtun culture is primitive and unique. It is unique in a sense that the harshness and steadfastness to it has enabled the Pukhtuns to maintain peace in the region throughout history, except in times of foreign invasions and/or occupations. Revenge practice strengthens justice in a culture where the state fails to provide the same.

*'Badal* helps in maintaining and ensuring peace, order and respect of human life and honour [...] because it compels a person to think, time and again, over the would-be consequences, not only for himself but also for his other family members, his tribe or even his offsprings after him, before committing a murder, fighting or quarrelling with someone, insulting someone and so forth.<sup>147</sup>

This obligation of *badal* stops the offenders from inflicting harm. This obligation to take revenge is so deep-rooted in the society that 'a person who does not care for it [*badal*] or ignores it, is not considered a true

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<sup>146</sup> Lutz Rzehak, 'Doing Pashto', *Pashtunwali as the Ideal of Honourable Behaviour and tribal Life Among the Pashtuns*, March (2011), p. 14.

<sup>147</sup> Sultan-I-Rome, p. 3.

*Pukhtun*.<sup>148</sup> This adds the element of honour and shame to it. To take *badal* is an honour, not to take it is a sign of shame. In the Pukhtun community, incidents related to blood feuds occur regularly, where one of the worst causes is the murder of someone's father. It is unthinkable for the son not to take revenge. In cases where the victim has no male heir, it becomes the responsibility of extended family members to take revenge. If the aggressor escapes to another place or dies of a natural cause, the revenge is still taken on his family. Though un-Islamic, such matters are rarely forgiven. Most of the time tradition and custom overpowers religion in Pukhtun culture.

Normally, revenge is taken in order to vent one's feelings of anger and inflict similar pain on the opponent. The supposed purpose behind this is to attain some sort of satisfaction, and balance the harm that has been inflicted on the victim and his/her family. 'In order to avoid public reprimands and thus social ostracism a Pakhtun [variant spelling of Pukhtun] will not hesitate to even exceed the honour code and religious tenets to gain respect and approbation in the community.'<sup>149</sup> The compulsion to take revenge in Pukhto is for various reasons. The primary reason for the completion of revenge is honour, that is, to restore one's family's honour. 'They [Pukhtuns] love life, but only a life with honour. Life is, in fact, subordinated to honour because mere living is considered useless and uselessness is despised [...] whenever some aspect of honour is damaged, it

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<sup>148</sup> Sultan-I-Rome, p. 4.

<sup>149</sup> Niloufer Qasim Mahdi, 'Pukhtunwali: Ostracism and Honor among the Pathan Hill Tribes', *Ethology and Sociobiology*, 7 (1986), 295-304 (p. 117).

is restored through taking revenge'.<sup>150</sup> It is considered shameful not to avenge any transgression against one's family. Secondly, 'in taking badal a Pakhtun restores his status in public,'<sup>151</sup> because Pukhtuns 'cannot bear insult and humiliation and take revenge at all cost.'<sup>152</sup>

This establishes revenge as a deterrent force for others. 'As a tool of social control, badal is an adaptive punishment and an effective deterrent'<sup>153</sup> where 'badal acts as a powerful curb on wanton killing.'<sup>154</sup> The establishment of revenge as a deterrent force is normally considered as a binding force to keep peace in cultures where revenge is practiced. 'In honour cultures, the retributive dispositions serve primarily as a deterrent to theft or offenses directed at the individual and his family.'<sup>155</sup> Tamler Sommers, however, is right in his argument about the retribution or revenge that it is used as a deterrent force but in the case of Pukhtuns, the balance inclines more towards honour and satisfaction rather than deterrent force, particularly in the present times due to the current insurgency in *KP* and increase in violence. Most importantly, it also speaks about the frustration of the people towards the failure of the state to provide justice.

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<sup>150</sup> Raj Wali Shah Khattak, Fida Mohammad, and Richard Lee, 'The Pashtun Code of Honour', *Research Journal of Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar-Pakistan*, 2009 < <http://pages.citebite.com/o4f0b0d2k0ohh> > [accessed 14 June 2015]

<sup>151</sup> Khattak, Mohammad, and Lee.

<sup>152</sup> Muhammad Saeed, *Pakhtun Men's Perceptions of the Conditions Promoting Domestic Violence in Their Culture* (University of York, 2012), p. 151.

<sup>153</sup> Mahdi, p. 151.

<sup>154</sup> Mahdi, pp. 151-52.

<sup>155</sup> Sommers, p. 37.

The book *And then the Pathan Murders* by Mohamamd Ali, Advocate and Public Prosecutor, who became the Vice Chancellor of the University of Peshawar, KP (the then N-W.F.P), contains similar real life cases which are mainly based on revenge. This book contains a compilation of actual murder cases based on revenge tried in courts of law in Pakistan. 'I have had a unique opportunity, perhaps unparalleled in the history of Bar, in handling about three thousand (3000) murder cases'.

These real-life incidents have many aspects in common with the various incidents and situations in *Hamlet*. One of the cases in Ali's book, *An Angry Brother*, resembles the situation of Laertes' anger due to his sister's death. It is the story of Ghulam Nabi and his sister Khudaija who lived in a remote area of KP, Pakistan. In order for her to get an education, Nabi sent Khudaija to Peshawar city in KP where she was seduced by another character named Muhammad Salim, who exploited her situation and married her without the knowledge and consent of her family. Upon hearing the news, the whole family felt humiliated and decided to take revenge on Muhammad Salim. Ghulam Nabi eventually gets an opportunity to kill Salim and avenge the disgrace brought to them.

Hundreds and thousands of Pukhtuns have lost lives due to revenge in real life incidents and the news of revenge-based violence appear regularly in the media reports of Pakistan. The three main factors which trigger *badal* are the three 'Zs': *Zan*, *Zar* and *Zameen*. *Zan* in Pukhto language means *women*; wife, mother, daughter and sister, *zar* literally meaning gold but is also used for *money* and *wealth* and the word *zameen* means *land*. The word *zameen* is borrowed from the *Urdu* language, where the original word for it is

*zmaka* in *Puktho*. Any attack or disrespect related to these three Zs is considered as an attack and insult on the honour of a person. Its protection has shaped the behaviours of the Pukhtuns. These three are the basic factors which the Pukhtuns value the most in their code of Pukhto and have been the cause of massacre in the Pukhtun world.

### Pride in *Badal*

'Is not the Pathan [Pukhtun] amenable to love and reason? He will go with you to hell if you can win his heart, but you cannot force him even to go to heaven. Such is the power of love over the Pathan [Pukhtun]'<sup>156</sup> There are numerous quotes and statements like this, which are mostly taken from Pukhto poems and dramas. These works and such quotes reflect the presence of a strong sense of pride about the various tenets of Pukhto. While Pukhtuns take pride in the positive constructive side of their ways of life, they religiously entertain the negative elements of the tenets of Pukhto too. The presence of this pride has the potential to affect minds of the younger generation.

The positive aspects and contribution of *badal* in Pukhtun lives dominate the negative effects. However, instead of the positive, the negative association of the word *badal*, that is, revenge, is prioritised by those who have written upon the topic,<sup>157</sup> The compensation aspect of *badal* can involve payment in gifts or money, but it can also take the form of *Swara*, a

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<sup>156</sup> Eknath Easwaran, *Nonviolent Soldier of Islam: Badshah Khan, a Man to Match His Mountains*, (Nilgiri Press, 1999), p. 95.

<sup>157</sup> Sultan-I-Rome, p. 4.



custom where a girl from the offender's family is handed over in marriage to the victim's family to resolve blood-feuds. The offender thus pays in the form of something which is particularly honourable to him. Besides *Swara*, sometimes, in order to end generations-long disputes of land and property, exchange marriages, commonly known as *adal badal*, are arranged between the two families. In most cases, women married in exchange live a miserable life. The problems related to such marriage are a topic of a grave issue in itself, which has been discussed by critics and researchers alike.<sup>158</sup> However, the focus here is on the issue of *badal* as in revenge related to blood feuds.

*Badal* acquired the meaning of retaliation mostly after the British occupation of the subcontinent, which now mostly constitute Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. In western publications (as well as *non-Pukhtun* Asian), the term is now often understood exclusively as revenge and blood feud. One of the reasons behind this is that most of this western understanding of *badal* comes either from British writers immediately before the 1947 partition of Pakistan and India, or from American writers after 9/11. Mostly, it has been written about in the times of conflict because that is where *badal* articles and stories have surfaced a lot in the west.

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<sup>158</sup> Following are few notable studies conducted on the topic of *Swara* and *Adal Badal* (exchange) marriages):

Arshad Munir and Naseem Akhtar, 'A Social Custom "Vani": Introduction And Critical Analysis', *VFAST Transactions on Education and Social Sciences*, 3.2 (2014).

Rakhshinda Perveen, 'Violence against women in Pakistan: A qualitative review of statistics for 2009', *Islamabad: Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation* (2010).

Naila Aman Khan, 'Socio-Economic and Political Status of Women in FATA-The Process of Development and Phenomenon of Militancy', *TIGAH: A Journal of Peace and Development*, 2 (2013), 1-21.

Local writers, who have written on the subject, have mostly presented the same negative attributes of Pukhto but as matter of pride. To sum up, mostly all writers have either looked at *badal* (as well as the other tenets of Pukhto) as something amusing and fascinating or something very negative and non-civilised. Whether it is the brutal negative side or the fascinating perspective, youngsters have mostly taken pride in it. The reflections of which are vividly present in modern day Pukhto dramas, poems and films. As a result, it rarely receives that impartial and balanced treatment or criticism which might have encouraged the adoption of the constructive role.

### Drama and Non-violent Protest

A recent course introduced in the Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania, US, focuses on how to defend against terrorism non-violently. Subsequent research related to the course suggests eight alternative non-military strategies to counter terrorism non-violently. These are:

- Ally-building and the infrastructure of economic development,
- Reducing cultural marginalization,
- Nonviolent protest/campaigns among the defenders, plus unarmed civilian peacekeeping,
- Pro-conflict education and training,
- Post-terror recovery programs,
- Police as peace officers: the infrastructure of norms and laws,
- Negotiation,

- Realistic application of non-military defence against terror.<sup>159</sup>

According to George Lakey,

The Philippine dictator Marcos had been overthrown by what was called “people power” in 1986; Communist dictatorships had been overthrown by people power in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland in 1989; commanders in the KGB, army, and Communist Party were prevented by people power from establishing a coup in Russia in 1991; a mass nonviolent uprising in Thailand prevented a top military general from consolidating his power in 1993; the South African whites’ monopoly political rule was broken in 1994 after a decade of largely nonviolent struggle.<sup>160</sup>

And

In all these places the power-holders found their power slipping away because those they depended on refused any longer to follow the script.<sup>161</sup>

Lakey bases these strategies on the nonviolent resistance movement of Otpur in Serbia during 1998 to 2004 against the Milosevic regime. He argues that Otpur’s nonviolent resistance movement was successful due to well-planned advance strategies and comprehensive follow-up afterwards.

In contrast, Lakey presents an example of a nonviolent campaign by Burmese students against the Burmese prime minister and military commander Ne Win, in 1988; “If you are going to shoot, shoot me first” was the slogan of every student in the protest. However, when the Burmese army

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<sup>160</sup> George Lakey, ‘Strategizing for a Living Revolution’, 2012  
<<https://www.trainingforchange.org/publications/strategizing-living-revolution>>  
[accessed 17 July 2016]

<sup>161</sup> Lakey.

retreated and Ni Win's party stepped down, the students and the people were jubilant but confused at the same time. They did not have any parallel or follow-up strategic plan. This resulted in the reappearance of the same government but this time with a different name, which implemented a new strict administration with much more repressive policies.

Drawing a comparison between the Otpur and Burmese students' movements, Lakey explains the importance of his five stages strategic framework for a successful nonviolent resistance, which are essential for understanding contemporary revolutions and movements around the world.

The five stages of this strategic framework are:

- Cultural preparation,
- Organization-Building,
- Confrontation,
- Mass political and economic non-cooperation,
- Parallel institutions.

The *Khudai Khidmatgar* (hereafter referred to as *KK* resistance movement of 1910s-1950s against the British occupation of the subcontinent likewise shows the effectiveness of the strategies outlined by Lakey. The members of *Khudai Khidmatgar* not only put up strong unarmed non-violent resistance against the British but also succeeded in bringing social reforms. According to Mukulika Banerjee, 'the *Khudai Khidmatgar* movement was a largely Pashtun movement which was arguably the longest lasting civil disobedience

movement anywhere in the world.<sup>162</sup> It was largely a Pukhtun movement because, firstly, it initially demanded free land for Pukhtuns. Because of the Durand Line, which was drawn in 1893 by the British Raj, divided the Pukhtuns of British India (North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan) and Afghanistan. Secondly, it also dealt with all their social, political and religious problems. However, non-Pukhtun people (particularly Hindko speakers) of the region also supported this movement.

#### Khudai Khidmatgar Movement

I am going to give you such a weapon that the police and army will not be able to stand against it. It is the weapon of the Prophet, but you are not aware of it. That weapon is patience and righteousness. No power on earth can stand against it [...] When you go back to your villages, tell your brethren that there is an army of God, and its weapon is patience. Ask your brethren to join the army of God. Endure all hardships. If you exercise patience, victory will be yours.<sup>163</sup>

*Khudai Khidmatgar movement* was led by one of the renowned Pukhtun leaders, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, commonly known as Bacha Khan. He was a social reformer, who served to raise the standard of living of his people between 1910 and 1950. Born in 1890, Bacha Khan grew up in times where people particularly Muslim mullahs of the region were preoccupied with *jihad*<sup>164</sup> to get rid of the British rulers in that part of South Asia.<sup>165</sup> With

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<sup>162</sup> Mukulika Banerjee, 'Unarmed Pathans', *India International Centre Quarterly*, 35.2 (2008), 94-101 (p. 94).

<sup>163</sup> Dinanath Gopal Tendulkar, *Abdul Ghaffar Khan: Faith Is a Battle*, (Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1967), p. 129.

<sup>164</sup> Commonly used as Muslim religious war. It is an Arabic word meaning to strive and/or struggle against one's self or others.

<sup>165</sup> Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, 'Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Khudai Khidmatgars, Congress and the Partition of India', *Pakistan Vision*, 8.2 (2007), p. 88.

revenge as an integral part of the culture, Pukhtuns actively fought against the British for the cause.

Before Bacha Khan, Pukhtuns 'adopted a policy of armed resistance particularly in the tribal areas and in some cases succeeded in inflicting heavy losses on the British in the region. That was why the British rule did not extend into this region as smoothly as compared to other parts of India'.<sup>166</sup> For instance, a British military retreat from Kabul in 1842 led by Major General William Elphinstone resulted in the death of about sixteen thousand British-aligned soldiers and civilians except the surgeon, Dr William Brydon.<sup>167</sup> According to Vincent Eyre, there were 4500 fighting soldiers and 12000 camp followers, which exclude women and children. Those few who escaped and survived were left to beg in the streets for a living.<sup>168</sup>

'In studying the life and legacy of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, we begin to understand that his story is not just about himself, but about how he was determined to take "bad" past of destructive violence used by his people, the Pashtun, and reform it into a "good" future of constructive nonviolence.'<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Abdul Rauf, 'Socio-Educational Reform Movements in N.W.F.P. A Case Study of Anjuman -I- Islahul Afaghina', *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, XXVII 2 (2006), (p. 31).

<sup>167</sup> Chris McNab, *World's Worst Military Disasters*, (The Rosen Publishing Group, 2008), p. 50.

<sup>168</sup> Vincent Eyre, 'The Military Operations at Cabul Which Ended in the Retreat and Destruction of the British Army, January 1842: With a Journal of Imprisonment in Afghanistan', (John Murray, 1843), (p. 195).

<sup>169</sup> Joyce Slaughter, 'Non-Violence and Islam: The Life and Forgotten Legacy of Abdul Ghaffar Khan', *Peace Studies Journal*, 2012, (p. 107).

Bacha Khan and other contemporary Pukhtun leaders established various platforms for Pukhtuns to unite and fight non-violently against British Imperialism. *Khudai Khidmatgar*, commonly translated and known as the 'Servants of God' and the *Anjuman -i- Islah -ul- Afaghina* as the 'Society for the Reformation of Afghans', are two examples of such platforms. 'Despite imprisonment, inhumane treatment, and frequent British efforts to intimidate, in 1929 Bacha Khan organized a non-violent action group known as the *Khudai Khidmatgar*, or literally the 'Servants of God'.<sup>170</sup> In practice, the objectives and mission of the two organizations were the same, that is, to bring social reform and spread of education. Mostly, the members of both were the same too. The reformative Pukhto literature produced during this time were used by both organizations, however, *KK* additionally focused on the unarmed nonviolent civilian resistance. Later *Anjuman -i- Islah -ul- Afaghina* merged into *Khudai Khidmatgar*.

### **Servants of God**

*Khudai Khidmatgar* is commonly referred to as Servants of God, Red Shirts and/or Surkh Posh (Dressed in Red). They are called Red Shirts because they were dressed in red coloured clothes with a red cap. Indo-Pak historians like Dinanath Tendulkar suggest that the members wore red colour for convenience as white colour clothes got dirty easily.<sup>171</sup> However, Pukhtun men rarely wear red colour clothes because it is against the tradition to wear red clothes. Red is predominantly associated with women. Rather than mere

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<sup>170</sup> Johansen, p. 58.

<sup>171</sup> Tendulkar, p. 39.

cleanliness, wearing red clothes by men was a starting point for the rejection of conventional norms and values. It was the first step to challenge the more significant yet dangerous tradition of the Pukhtun culture, such as *badal*.

The red colour symbolises resistance and readiness to sacrifice their lives by offering their lives. *KK* is commonly translated as Servants of God; however, it does not encompass the complete true meaning of the term. In Pukhto language, *Khudai* literally means for the sake of God but the way it is used as an expression in Pukhto is to do something for the people without expecting any reward or benefit in return, whereas the word servant carries a connotation of being paid for the services. Obviously, here the ultimate reward for *Khudai Khidmatgars* was freedom from the British and a free separate land, but it did not have any monetary benefits attached to it. *Khidmatgar*, taken from the word *Khidmat*, is closest in meaning to the word social worker but again it has a connotation of volunteer service rather than paid services. Hence, we can say that *Khudai Khidmatgar* is a person who does volunteer work for the social welfare without any expectation of reward or benefit.

*KK* was an action group which was unique because it was an army of people who had no guns. Their aim was to fight without weapons. They were determined and trained not to show any kind of violence. Not only did they refrain from taking revenge themselves in circumstances which demanded it, but they also religiously preached others to refrain from it. This was contrary to the code of *badal* and the way Pukhtuns had reacted to any



previous foreign occupation of the land. Talking about this uniqueness of *KK*, Easwaran mentions how,

‘In a creative fusion of religiously rooted mandates for nonviolence and selfless service and the powerful Pashtun cultural code of honour and courage, the *Khudai Khidmatgar* was a drilled and disciplined army of volunteer nonviolent soldiers – with officers, platoons, red-shirted uniforms, flag, and bagpipe corps – that pledged to fight with their lives rather than with guns.’<sup>172</sup>

The objective of *KK* was to ‘establish a visible and easily identifiable presence of unarmed civilian guards, who could prevent clashes between rival factions and confront the opponents by refusing to obey their orders and refusing to go away.’<sup>173</sup>

In order to suppress the movement, the British troops launched a crackdown against the members which resulted in a massacre of around three hundred people on two different occasions in Peshawar in April and May, 1930, and 70 people in Bannu on August 24 in the same year. ‘On May 16, 1930, Utmanzai [Bacha Khan’s home town] was besieged by eight hundred British soldiers, who set on fire the office of *Khudai Khidmatgar* and ravaged the whole village’.<sup>174</sup> Frequent firing and torture became common against the nonviolent *KK* which showed the agitation and frustration of the British leaders to curb the movement. *Khudai Khidmatgar* members were ‘stripped,

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<sup>172</sup> Eknath Easwaran, *A Man to Match His Mountains: Badshah Khan, Nonviolent Soldier of Islam*, (Plough Publishing House, 1984).

<sup>173</sup> Sruti Bala, 'Waging Nonviolence: Reflections on the History Writing of the Pashtun Nonviolent Movement *Khudai Khidmatgar*', *Peace & Change*, 38.2 (2013), 131-154 (p. 144).

<sup>174</sup> Cited in Bukhari, Farigh, ‘Tehrik-i-Azadi Awe Bacha Khan’, *Lahore: Fiction House*. (1991), (p. 55). Translated by Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat, 'Origins, Growth and Consolidation of *Khudai Khidmatgar* Movement', *Pakistan Perspectives*, 17.1 (2012), p. 145.

flogged, and forced to walk naked through the cordons of soldiers who prodded them with rifles and bayonets as they passed.<sup>175</sup>

There were repeated instances of mass firings on unarmed groups, with scores, and in some cases, hundreds of casualties. The British frequently arrested and flogged members of the Servants of God (more than 10,000 were locked in Haripur prison alone in 1932), herded them into icy streams in winter, forced them at gunpoint to remove their clothes in public, confiscated property, burned fields before time of harvest, poured oil on wheat in storage for the residents' winter food supply, and sacked whole villages.<sup>176</sup>

The members were treated in most humiliating ways in order to provoke their Pukhto which would have provided justification for their inhuman treatment and also given an excuse to use force against them. However, the *KK* members followed Bacha Khan and stuck to their path of nonviolence and refrained from revenge and offered no resistance. 'They were told not to retaliate, even if humiliated.'<sup>177</sup>

Bacha Khan, along with other companions, 'felt the Pashtuns needed more soldiers but not more bloodshed. He was convinced that the pervasive violence of his society was responsible for its inability to uplift itself.'<sup>178</sup> He repeatedly emphasised the rejection of revenge throughout his life. He instructed his followers to particularly refrain from revenge practices against the British. Bacha Khan later wrote that for the British 'a nonviolent Pashtun

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<sup>175</sup> Wiqar A Shah and Sayed Wiqar, 'Abdul Ghaffar Khan' *Bacha Khan Trust* 2010 <<http://www.baachakhantrust.org/about%20baacha%20khan.html>> [accessed 25 November 2016]

<sup>176</sup> Abdul Ghaffar Khan and KB Narang, *My Life and Struggle: Autobiography of Badshah Khan*, (Hind Pocket Books, 1969), p. 143-44.

<sup>177</sup> Shah and Wiqar.

<sup>178</sup> Johansen, pp. 62-63.

was more dangerous than a violent Pashtun. As a result, the British wanted to provoke them to commit violent acts.<sup>179</sup> 'Because a nonviolent Pashtun in British minds seem a fraud.'<sup>180</sup> For this reason 'in 1931, London ordered its police and military to crush the Servants of God.'<sup>181</sup> Due to the repeated failure of armed revolts by Pukhtuns against the British, the latter seemed more convinced of their power to subdue such revolts and they were quite successful in it. Because of the unarmed and non-violent nature of the group, the British could not use too much force against them as it created further hatred of the people towards the British and also encouraged other people, factions and organizations to join *KK*. However, the nonviolent unarmed resistance by the people, the widespread popularity of *KK*, the social reform and aspiration and ambition of Pukhtuns to attain freedom became hard for the British to subdue.

Khudai Khidmatgar members succeeded in establishing a parallel government against the opposition of the civil police, the British-led frontier constabulary, an entire division of troops, a detachment of the Air Force and Risalpur, and the imposition of martial law [...] the Servants of God succeeded in establishing their own revenue offices.<sup>182</sup>

All this increased the popularity of the *KK* so much that the number of members increased to one million over the passage of time. Most of this huge number of *KK* members had been trained like soldiers, although they had no guns. Given the gun culture in the region, armed resistance could

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<sup>179</sup> Johansen, p. 63.

<sup>180</sup> Johansen, p. 63.

<sup>181</sup> Johansen, p. 63.

<sup>182</sup> Johansen, p. 63.

only have resulted in huge loss of life. Instead, Bacha Khan and KK continued nonviolent resistance for the better and with long-term success.

The British tried all means to curb this resistance as they felt threatened by its existence. In order to de-popularise them the British administration made an extensive propaganda by equating KK with the Bolsheviks and labelled the leaders and members to be Russian agents.<sup>183</sup> The terms 'red shirts' coined and used by the British administration for the KK members was part of this propaganda. In a letter<sup>184</sup> to the then Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy admitted,

The 'red shirts' label and its associations with fascism and Bolshevism had 'supported its practical purpose pretty successfully' by helping discredit the ethical basis of the movement and forcing its leaders on the defensive.<sup>185</sup>

However, in the response of the Secretary of State in a letter significantly titled 'Courtesy and civil disobedience', he objected to the term and confirmed that 'the organization of the red shirts has little or nothing to do with the Bolsheviks and we should have saved ourselves some trouble if we

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<sup>183</sup> WA Shah and Sayed Wiqar, 'Abdul Ghaffar Khan', (Retrieved from Bacha Khan Trust: <http://www.baachakhantrust.org/about%20baacha%20khan.html>) [accessed 25 November 2016].

<sup>184</sup> Extract from a private letter 16 August 1930, from H.E. the Viceroy to the Secretary of State of India. Halifax Collection, Mss.EUR.,C.152,IOLR. Cited in Mukulika Banerjee, 'The Pathan Unarmed', *Opposition and Memory in the North West Frontier. Krachi/New Dehli*, (2000), 107-08.

<sup>185</sup> Banerjee, p. 107.

had never employed the word'.<sup>186</sup> *KK* also strongly objected to the British 'insinuations about the movement's (*KK*'s) so called Bolshevik aims'.<sup>187</sup>

By the propaganda of comparing *KK* with the Bolsheviks (as well as Nazis<sup>188</sup>) and considering its members friends of Hindus, the British administration also tried to denounce its members as enemies of Islam.<sup>189</sup> For this reason, the British paid local Mullahs to oppose Bacha Khan and *KK* movement. The pro-government mullahs who 'received monetary compensation from the government preached obedience to the British government and discouraged people from antagonizing the government'.<sup>190</sup>

Besides blaming *KK* for its so called non-Islamic affiliations, these mullahs and the British administration even condemned the chain of Azad (Free) schools set by the members of *KK* (and Society for the Reformations of Afghan), which taught English, Mathematics and other subjects alongside religious education.

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<sup>186</sup> Banerjee, p. 108.

<sup>187</sup> Banerjee, p. 107.

<sup>188</sup> After the failure of the *KK*-Bolsheviks propaganda, the British administration compared *KK* with fascism (Nazis). The government succeeded in switching over the propaganda from the Bolsheviks to the Germans and the 'Mullahs seems to look quite naturally to the Nazis as being the principal enemy of Islam and Britain alike'. Cited in Sayyid Vaqar Ali Shah, 'Ethnicity, Islam, and Nationalism: Muslim Politics in the North-West Frontier Province, 1937-1947', (Oxford University Press, 1999), p.136.

<sup>189</sup> Kanak Mani Dixit, *The Southasian Sensibility: A Himal Reader*, (SAGE Publications India, 2012).

<sup>190</sup> Maria Stephan, *Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East*, (Springer, 2009), p. 113.

Perhaps this adds to the tally of reasons why the British considered educated Pukhtun dangerous. Both the English medium schools which produced pro-British people, and the Islamic schools which forbade the teaching of science (and other modern subjects) that could have led to scientific developments and progress, were favourable for the British to continue the rule. The Azad schools were established with the objective to equip students with both which led to the awareness of the people.

'The British and Mullah connivance against Azad Schools ensued negative propaganda against Azad Schools.'<sup>191</sup> Playing on the superstitious nature of the people, these mullahs even spread rumours about 'the presence of demons in the big *Sheesham* [Mulberry] tree in the premises of one of the schools at Utmanzai, KP. As a result of the rumour, students started to believe that there were some supernatural happenings in the tree; this made the students fearful.'<sup>192</sup> Ultimately, the school administration had to cut down the tree upon which the students re-joined the school. However bizarre it may sound, the British administration's idea behind this was to use any means to discourage these schools set by the social wing of KK.

However, while spreading the message of the non-violent movement; Bacha Khan blended together the teachings of Islam with the traditions of Pakhtunwali [Pukhto]<sup>193</sup> and this blending of 'religion with Pukhtunwali

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<sup>191</sup> Mohammad Sohail, Syed Munir Ahmad, and Hafiz Muhammad Inamullah, 'The Educational Services and Philosophy of Bacha Khan', *J. Appl. Environ. Biol. Sci*, 4.7S (2014), 157-65 (p. 161).

<sup>192</sup> Sohail, Ahmad, and Inamullah, p. 161.

<sup>193</sup> Syed Minhaj Ul Hassan, 'Non-Violence, Islam and Pakhtunwali', *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 52.2 (2015), (p. 215).

[Pukhto] paid off quite well and [Bacha Khan] was able to unite a large number of Pukhtuns'.<sup>194</sup>

In order to be more effective and organised, Bacha Khan and his companions devised an oath designed to unite and bring all Pukhtuns as well as other people of the region under one banner. This also served as the first step of commitment for social reformation by the people for the people. The elements mentioned in the oath were drawn from the most important aspects of the Pukhtun society.

In order to become a member, recruits had to swear an oath on the Holy Quran to abide by the *KK*'s rules and regulations. One version of these is as follows:<sup>195</sup>

1. I am a servant of God, and as God needs no service, but serving his creation is serving him, I promise to serve humanity in the name of God.
2. I promise to refrain from violence and from taking revenge.
3. I promise to forgive those who oppress me or treat me with cruelty.
4. I promise to refrain from taking part in feuds and quarrels and from creating enmity.
5. I promise to treat every Pathan<sup>196</sup> as my brother and friend.

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<sup>194</sup> Ul Hassan, p. 215.

<sup>195</sup> Johansen, p. 59.

<sup>196</sup> In the contemporary era, the term Pathan is used to refer to Pukhtun people. It is mostly used by non-natives in Pakistan and foreigners. Pukhtuns would rarely use the term Pathan for themselves because it is an appellation used by non-Pukhtun

6. I promise to refrain from antisocial customs and practices.
7. I promise to live a simple life, to practice virtue and to refrain from evil
8. I promise to practice good manners and good behaviour and not to lead a life of idleness.
9. I promise to devote at least two hours a day to social work.
10. I shall be fearless and be prepared for any sacrifice.

Historians differ on the accuracy of these statutes. However, a second version more or less states the same things but in different words. The statutes in the second version were translated from Pukhto from the files retrieved from the Peshawar Police Archive<sup>197</sup> and are provided in Appendix A of this thesis.

This oath sheds light on the society in itself and its social issues and problems. The oath not only emphasises the rejection of revenge (statute 2) but also the factors which can trigger revenge (statute 3, 4 and 6). This oath

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people and that 'the term Pathan carries derogatory connotations related to the British Empire and is almost never used as a self-description.' According to the administrator in British India and historian, Olaf Caroe 'the appellation Pathan is the Indian variant of Pukhtanah, the plural of Pakhtun [and that] no Afghan or speaker of Pakhtu or Pashtu ever referred to himself as a 'Pathan', and that the word was an Indian usage. The corresponding word in the classical Pakhtu of the Peshawar Valley is Pakhtun, plural Pukhtanah, of which the Indian word Pathan (with a hard or cerebral 't') is a, Hindi corruption.'

Sruti Bala, *Waging Nonviolence: Reflections on the History Writing of the Pashtun Nonviolent Movement Khudai Khidmatgar*. Peace & Change, 38.2 (2013), (p. 152).

Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans: 550 bc-ad 1957* (MacMillan; St Martin's Press 1958) p. 407.

<sup>197</sup> Shah, pp. 27-28.



in itself is important because it binds *KK* members (and other Pukhtuns) to refrain from revenge and violence. Those who have already been victims must not take revenge and those who are not victims must not act violently so as not to instigate revenge in response.

As for the feelings of Pukhto victims who decide not to take revenge, how do they assuage their feelings of anger and revenge? Statute 3 of the oath which asks to forgive the oppressor is exactly in accordance with Islamic teaching in the Holy Quran: *'the recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah: for (Allah) loves not those who do wrong.'* *The Qur'an 42:40 (A. Yusuf Ali)*. This ties up the point that I made earlier in this chapter about Bacha Khan's blending together of the teaching of Islam with the tradition of Pukhto because 'he knew it very well that Pakhtuns love their traditions and religion equally.'<sup>198</sup> 'He reintroduced the non-violence philosophy of Islam.'<sup>199</sup> Backed up by Islamic teaching, the oath became acceptable to all. It also added to the popularity of *KK* and as a result the members and followers increased in great numbers.

Those Pukhtuns who were against the idea of non-violence also accepted it because of these Islamic values attached to it. This also blocked the planned negative criticism of the British-paid Muslim mullahs who were against this movement.

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<sup>198</sup> Ul Hassan, p. 215.

<sup>199</sup> Rauf, p. 38.

The *KK* consisted of two main wings: (unarmed) Militant and Social. As evident from the examples given earlier in this chapter, the duty of the unarmed militant wing was to stage road blocks, conduct patrols, prevent clashes between rival factions and take the lead in 'fill[ing] the jail (Jail Bharo) campaigns by courting mass arrest in civil disobedience actions calling for the boycott of British goods'.<sup>200</sup>

By contrast the duty of the social wing included: establishment and management of Azad (Free) schools, 'training camps for the welfare of people, coordinated voluntary services such as feeding poor people and free repairs of the houses, sanitations and semi-formal education programs.'<sup>201</sup> 'Fifty seven such schools were opened in three years from 1921 to 1923.'<sup>202</sup> However, 'the official record lists only fifty one schools in the year 1924.'<sup>203</sup>

*KK* organized frequent meetings of the members. These 'meetings were of an agitational [sic] character, with performances of political verse, poetry, and drama and with speeches from senior members.'<sup>204</sup> 'One of the peculiarities of these gatherings was declamation contests, singing of

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<sup>200</sup> Bala, p. 133.

<sup>201</sup> Bala, p. 133.

<sup>202</sup> Rauf.

<sup>203</sup> Stephen Alan Rittenberg, 'The independence movement in India's North-West Frontier province, 1901-1947' 0408-0408 (unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 1977).

<sup>204</sup> Stephen Alan Rittenberg, 'The Independence Movement in India's North-West Frontier Province, 1901-1947' 0408-0408 (doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 1977).

patriotic songs and staging of dramas.<sup>205</sup> While gathered to promote Pukhto literature, the members used these media to express themselves, present their manifestos and reach a wider audience on a larger scale. In a way, it was for them a safe form of gathering and communication for instance, in 1927, around 80,000 people participated in the annual meeting of the Azad School at Utmanzai, *KP*.

Though Pukhtun culture has a vast history of storytelling, special attention was paid to the performance of drama by *KK* members, who used these Azad schools to educate the people as the majority of the populace was illiterate at that time.

### Drama in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa

Drama and theatre existed in the subcontinent long before the advent of the British. However, it was not until 1904 that both drama and theatre were introduced in the *Pukthun* dominated region (present day *KP* and *FATA*). In 1904, a theatre company by the name of Alfred was introduced by the British, which staged an Urdu drama *Khwab-i-Hasti* (The Dream World of Existence). It was written by Urdu's most prolific writer Agha Hashar Kashmiri (1879-1935), who is also commonly known as the Shakespeare of Urdu. *Khwab-i-Hasti* is an Urdu adaptation of *Macbeth*. He later started his own company by the name of Shakespeare Theatrical Company. This introduced Pukhtuns to theatre and stage productions and as a result, another theatre was established in 1906 by Syed Fazl Ali Shah. In 1911, the *Dadabhai Mumbai Theatrical Company* came to Peshawar, which performed

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<sup>205</sup> Rauf, p. 49.

15 plays in a month.<sup>206</sup> Pukhto drama (as well as novels) are a product of this period.<sup>207</sup> The English word ‘drama’ is also used in Pukhto language, which further supports the claim that it is a later development in Pukhto Literature.<sup>208</sup>

This late introduction and acceptance of theatre tradition in *KP* may be because Pukhtun culture has its own equally entertaining stage in the form of storytelling. Perhaps, the vibrant tradition of storytelling was so strong in Pukhtun culture that it never felt an urge for (modern) drama and theatre tradition. But when they saw it in the form of these theatre productions, Pukhtuns immediately recognized it and started writing their own dramas. Peshawar, the capital of *KP*, had always been famous for its folktales and storytelling, particularly the *Qissa Khwani Bazaar* (The Market of the Storytellers).

### **Qissa Khwani Bazaar (The Market of the Storytellers)**

In Pukhto, *Qissa* literally means ‘story’ and *Khwani* means ‘telling’ — Story Telling. *Qissa Khwan* is a storyteller. *Qissa Khwani* was (and still is) ‘an

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<sup>206</sup> Muhammad Zubair Hassrat, 'Introduction', in *Tamashey*, ed. by Muhammad Zubair Hassrat (Dubai: Da Amarato Pukhto Adabi Tolana Markaz Dubai, 2014), (p. 11).

<sup>207</sup> María Isabel Maldonado García, and Bakht Munir, 'Origins of the Pashto Language and Phases of Its Literary Evolution', *Journal of Research (Humanities)* 52 (2016), 145–167 (p. 145).

<sup>208</sup> A study on western loanwords in modern *Pashto* (Pukhto) conducted by Herbert Penzl provides a list of loanwords borrowed by Pukhto language. Drama is one of the borrowed words. Cited in Raazia Hassan Naqvi and Muhammad Ibrar Mohmand, 'Cultural History of Indian Subcontinent with Special Reference to Arts and Music', *Institute of Social Work, Sociology and Gender Studies (ISSG), University of the Punjab*, (2012), 1-12 (p. 8).

important stopping-place for traders, because here the caravan routes from China, India, Persia and Turkestan joined. [...] the travellers used to meet in the renowned Qissa Khwani Bazaar, where they would exchange stories learnt on their travels'.<sup>209</sup> Described as the 'Piccadilly of Central Asia' by Sir Herbert Benjamin Edwardes, the Commissioner of Peshawar from 1853 to 1862, it is said that the 'alleys and lanes of Qissa Khawani Bazaar appear to be straight from the Arabian Nights'.<sup>210</sup>

In the Old City [Peshawar], among the many shops and stalls in the Khyber Bazaar around the Darwash mosque, you will find a narrow street where the houses climb into the sky with their ornamented balconies exploding out towards each other. This street is known as the Qissa Khawani Bazaar, the street of storytellers. Over the centuries, fabulous intricate tales have been elaborated there between men relaxing over bubbling amber shishas, trying to outdo the professional story tellers, or amongst those more quickly sipping sweet syrupy tea in glasses at the chai stalls.<sup>211</sup>

The Bazaar of the Storytellers is the major nexus for the continued invention, perpetuation, and re-enforcement of Pashtun values; it caters not to outsiders, but to the Pashtun themselves; it is here that for generations exemplary tales of tribal valour and romantic entanglements have been originated and sung to musical accompaniment.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Naqvi and Mohmand.

<sup>210</sup> Maneesha Tikekar, *Across the Wagah: An Indian's Sojourn in Pakistan*, (Bibliophile South Asia, 2004), p. 111.

<sup>211</sup> Robert JC Young, 'What is the Postcolonial? Anglican Identities and the Postcolonial' in *Lecture, Lambeth Conference, University of Kent, Canterbury* vols 21 (2008).

<sup>212</sup> Charles Lindholm, 'Review Of: WI Heston and Mumtaz Nasir, the Bazaar of the Storytellers', (1993), p. 241.

Besides its importance as a place for social gathering and storytelling, *Qissa Khwani Bazaar* has always been a seat of learning for the Pukhtuns as well as foreigners. One of its narrow streets which is called *Jangi Mohallah* – the fighter’s street - is a hub for the printing and publishing business and this is where literature of all sorts is published. On the one hand, *Qissa Khawani Bazaar* has generated storytelling as a medium of communication and reinforcement of social and cultural values in the region. On the other hand, it always has been the place for most of the region’s social, political and religious gatherings. It has served as a hub for social change. Ideas for change have been exchanged here either in the form of storytelling and/or political gatherings. As a result, it has been also treated harshly by outsiders and/or militants because of its significance and importance. *Qissa Khwani Bazaar* captures and tells the stories of hundreds of people who are killed in recent terrorist attacks, which have cost more than five hundred lives.

Such terrorist attacks on the *Qissa Khwani Bazaar* also inform us of the British attack on the gathering of *KK* members in 1930 when they later met to hold a non-violent protest. After the arrest of Bacha Khan and other *KK* leaders by the British troops on April 23, 1930, a crowd gathered at *Qissa Khawani Bazaar* in protest, demanding the release of the prisoners. ‘Although the crowd was loud it was nonviolent,<sup>213</sup> however, the subsequent indiscriminate firing of the British troops on the unarmed nonviolent protestors led to the murder of two-three hundred people.<sup>214</sup> Due to this massacre, hatred of the people towards the British troops and

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<sup>213</sup> Johansen, p. 62.

<sup>214</sup> Shah and Wiqar, p. 99.

administration increased and more and more people started to join and support *KK* movement.

During this incident, the Garhwal Rifles, the famous regiment who won greater glory in World War 1 while fighting for the British, refused to open fire on the unarmed nonviolent people present in the procession at *Qissa Khawani Bazaar*.

At one point the government ordered its crack Garhwal Rifles to fire on the crowds. Faced with unarmed men, women, and children lying down to be slaughtered, the Garhwalis refused ... 'we will not shoot our unarmed brethren'.<sup>215</sup>

The news about the refusal of Garhwal rifles spread across the country and became a celebrated act of heroism. The soldiers, however, were severely punished which included lifetime banishment and service in overseas British colonies. For many, there was fifteen years of imprisonment.<sup>216</sup> What this refusal of soldiers did was that it gave 'the British a chilling reminder of the "Great Mutiny"'.<sup>217</sup> It spread the message of the loss of power and control of the British over the troops which further added to the *KK*'s popularity and justification of their cause.

In collaboration with the Pakistani National Folklore Archives, Wilma Heston, in her book, *The Bazaar of Storytellers*,<sup>218</sup> retells hundreds of stories of

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<sup>215</sup> Easwaran, p. 123.

<sup>216</sup> Easwaran, p. 123.

<sup>217</sup> Easwaran, p. 123.

<sup>218</sup> Wilma Louise Heston and Mumtāz Naṣīr, *The Bazaar of the Storytellers* (Lok Virsa Pub. House, 1988).

*Qissa Khwani Bazaar*, which are mostly in the centuries old tradition of *badala* (story song). Most of these stories come from either the Pakistani National Folklore Archives or the chapbooks sold in Qissa Khwani Bazaar. *Badala*, not to be confused with *badal*, closely resembles the English word Ballad. *Badala* is a Pukhto word which literally means ‘music’ or ‘song’. In written form, *badala* is mostly referred to as ‘qissa’ and/or ‘dastan’, which means ‘story’. The book is divided into two parts.

The first [part of the book], entitled “Romances Old and New”, focuses on the related themes of love, jealousy, marriage, and elopement. [...] The second part of the book, called “Battles for Honor, God and Country,” incorporates stories extolling the virtues of bravery in warfare, self-sacrifice, and patriotism.<sup>219</sup>

These stories of honour, revenge, death on one hand, and love and romance on the other, allow us ‘an insight into the deepest problematics of the culture itself, such as the tension between female seclusion and ideal of love, and between the constraints of kinship and the assertion of manly independence.’<sup>220</sup>

Therefore, the introduction of drama (as a genre) by the British in the region attracted local writers to use it particularly as an educational tool to address social and cultural problems of Pukhtuns. Because Pukhtun writers were already equipped with the art of storytelling, they easily grasped the art of drama writing.

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<sup>219</sup> M H Sidky, 'The Bazaar of Storytellers-Heston, WI, Nasir, M', (Nanzan Univ 18 Yamazati-Cho Showa-KU, Nagoya 466, Japan, 1990), 365-67.

<sup>220</sup> Lindholm, pp. 241-42.



Pukhto drama flourished as a genre under the banner of *KK* and for this reason Bacha Khan is considered as 'the pioneer who started stage dramas'.<sup>221</sup> During the *KK* resistance, Pukhto drama was used as a tool to address the British atrocities as well as to bring social reform. *KK* used these Azad schools as theatre to achieve their objectives; one of which was also to encourage the rejection of revenge practice. Besides social reform, the discouragement of revenge was also of paramount importance for successful non-violent protest against the British. The members of the movement successfully made use of the medium of drama to address the then issues (which included *badal*).

Pukhto dramas were loaded with implicit and explicit messages for the people for the purpose of social reform and awareness of freedom: both from the British, and from the negative traditions present in the society, such as revenge practice. Their often-violent stories were carefully crafted and staged to promote nonviolence and they toured the country to reach the maximum number of audience. These dramas were a success notably because they presented familiar content, and that the audience could see the action on the stage and it spoke to the people of the region in their own language. Poetry, prose, and novel genres were already explored before the movement but there was no significant work in the genre of drama and if there was, it has not survived.

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<sup>221</sup> Fazal-ur-Rahim Marwat, 'Origins, Growth and Consolidation of Khudai Khidmatgar Movement', *Pakistan Perspectives*, 17.1 (2012), (p. 135).

## ***Azad Pukhto Dramas***

The Servants staged dramas to instruct people in nonviolence. Bacha Khan faced resistance not only from the British, but also from the Muslim mullahs and from large landowners who felt that social and democratic reforms threaten their economic interests and political power.<sup>222</sup>

Initially, Pukhto dramas written during the *KK* movement were published episodically in a Pukhto journal called 'Pukhtun'. Started by Bacha Khan, the journal was first published in 1928 at Utmanzai, *KP*. The exact number of these dramas written during the time are not known. However, twelve of these Pukhto dramas are collected into and published in a single book called *Tamashey*<sup>223</sup> by Zubair Hassrat in 2014. In this chapter, I will briefly discuss two of these plays: *Dard (Pain)* and *Speera Margey (The Unfortunate Death)*.

Due to the nature and influence of these dramas, the British administration either confiscated or destroyed them, immediately after they were written and/or performed. Besides, those actors who performed in these dramas were also imprisoned by the British administration. Perhaps that is the reason why these dramas were performed by the students of Azad schools and not by professional artists. Azad schools' children staged and performed in these dramas. One such instance of such confiscations of the Pukhto dramas and imprisonment of the student actors is the Pukhto play *Dard [Pain]*, written by Ameer Nawaz Khan Jalya, in 1932.

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<sup>222</sup> Johansen, p. 64.

<sup>223</sup> Muhammad Zubair Hassrat, *Tamashey*, (Dubai: Da Amarato Pukhto Adabi Tolana Markaz Dubai, 2014).

## Dard [Pain]

*Dard [Pain]* is the story of a Pukhtun family — husband, wife and two sons — set against the background of the freedom movement for independence from the British Raj before the 1947 Pakistan-India partition. The play starts with a dialogue between a character named Pukhtun and Zamana (Time), where the latter is personified. Pukhtun laments and recalls the past days of the glory of his people, whereas Zamana taunts him and instigates him to regain it. Meanwhile, a British administrator, who is only addressed by the title 'General' in the play, forces the people of the village of Utmanzi to sign deeds of transfer of property. The government takes their land and houses by force and those who refuse are taken into custody and put in prison.

When Pukhtun returns home, the wife asks him to fight against the British to take revenge in the name of their fellow villagers who lost their lives defending their land and homes. Acting according to Pukhto, the husband revolts against the British but is captured. Then, under the obligation of *badal*, the two sons, Fida and Nisar, ask their mother for permission to take revenge, but are killed in the process. Their father, Pukhtun, who was in prison all this time, laments the death of his sons helplessly in the following words. '*Ma kho wail che rapasey der der alam de, badal akhasto da para ba rashey kho hessok ranghlal behtara da che khpal zan pakhpala marr kam*'. 'I thought that the whole *Pukhtun* world would follow to rescue us, take our revenge, but no one came. It is better to kill myself so that no one know about my state'.<sup>224</sup> Then, he commits suicide inside the prison by hanging

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<sup>224</sup> Translated from Pukhto to English. Amir Nawaz Jalya, *Dard*, in *Tamashey*, (Dubai: Da Amarato Pukhto Adabi Tolana Markaz Dubai, 2014).

himself with the turban that was once the symbol of his pride and his Pukhtun identity.

While depicting the atrocities of the British troops and the subsequent deadly reactions of the people, *Dard* appeals to the emotions and sense of honour of Pukhtuns in order to demonstrate the devastating effects of revenge and violence. The play highlights the consequences of revenge and violence but at the same time, it instils a sense of nationalist spirit in its readers and audience. Perhaps that is why the British immediately saw it as a threat.

*Dard* was not only immediately banned by the British Raj and all copies confiscated but also all the actors who performed were imprisoned.<sup>225</sup> It was performed by the students of Azad School in the village Prang, Charsadda, KP (then N-W.F.P) on March 25, 1931. Staged at night, 'some 168 students took part in it [and] it was watched by 10,000 people.'<sup>226</sup> On the next day of this performance, 'the then British Commissioner of Charsadda ordered immediate arrest of all students and the writer. Some students were arrested; however, the writer and some students escaped.'<sup>227</sup>

This ban, confiscation and the subsequent imprisonment of the students also mark the significance and influence of the play and its role. Apart from the demand of the play where the 168 actors had to perform a procession

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<sup>225</sup> Abdul Wahid, 'Pa Pukhto Adab da Khudai Khidmatgaro Shairoano Adabi Pairzawani' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Peshawar, 2004), (p. 213).

<sup>226</sup> Sohail, Ahmad, and Inamullah, p. 161.

<sup>227</sup> Sohail, Ahmad, and Inamullah, p. 161.

within the play, such a huge cast adhered to the *jail baro* (fill the jail) strategy of the *KK* members. Mass arrests would inflict a financial burden on the British administration. What appears to be the foremost reason for the inclusion of such a large number of student actors was that the British administration would not treat the students as harshly as they would other political people. Doing so could well incite an uprising among the students all over the region. Second, because these students were not political activists, they attracted a large number of other students across the region.

This incident and the subsequent arrest of students and ban on the play increased the popularity of this play and encouraged other performances of the play. To recall an instance, the renowned educationist and then politician Abdul Qayyum Khan, who established Islamia College, which is one of the oldest institutions in the region, requested to restage these dramas in Peshawar. This added to the popularity and increased the demand of these plays.

The banned and confiscated copies were, however, stored in the British Library. It was not until 1985 that a number of previously banned examples of subcontinental literature were released by the British Library,<sup>228</sup> including *Dard*. Upon the refusal by the British Library, London, to photocopy or reprint the play, Dr. Khalid Khan, the former principal of Government College, Peshawar, *KP*, Pakistan, copied the entire script by hand.<sup>229</sup> Now, the

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<sup>228</sup> The Express Tribune, 'Act Two: Pashto Play on Struggle for Freedom from British Raj Reprinted', 2013. < <https://tribune.com.pk/story/645957/act-two-pashto-play-on-struggle-for-freedom-from-british-raj-reprinted/> > [accessed 6 March 2015]

<sup>229</sup> The Express Tribune.

play is available in print form, reprinted by Bacha Khan Trust Educational Foundation.<sup>230</sup>

### **Speera Margay [The Unfortunate Death]**

*Speera Margay [The Unfortunate Death]*, written by Fazl Rahim Saqi, also deals with the issue of revenge, but the specific factors that are depicted in this drama are dowry, female education and suppression of women, honour and shame, and social pressure. It tells the story of two brothers — Khushal Khan and Mashal Khan — and their families. Nor Gul and Gul Andama are the son and daughter of the elder brother, Khushal Khan and Alam Gul is the son of the younger brother, Mashal Khan. Gul Andama is betrothed to Alam Gul on the condition that the latter must provide a specified dowry. In the process of the collection of dowry, Alam Gul loses his father, land and wealth. To back out from the wedding contract would mean shame for him and his family. He therefore sells his family's only property, the source of their income, in order to fulfil the requirement of dowry. Meanwhile, Khushal Khan dies on the day of his daughter's wedding due to excessive eating, which symbolises his greed for wealth.

After the marriage, domestic fights occur on daily basis between Alam Gul's mother, Maroofa, and Gul Andama. One day Maroofa out of frustration hits Gul Andama's head with a sharp stone which causes the latter's death. When Gul Andama's brother finds out about the death of his sister, he rushes to her home to take revenge and kills Maroofa with the same sharp stone.

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<sup>230</sup> An institution set by the Provincial Government of KP with a mission to empower the under-privileged people through quality education. *Bacha Khan Trust*, 2014 <<http://bkefoundation.org/>> [accessed 6 March 2015]

Upon the sight of his dead mother and wife, Alam Gul kills Nor Gul with a knife and thus completes his action of revenge. Later, he admits to the jury that he killed Nor Gul.

*Speera Margay* deals with very sensitive topics in Pukhtun culture: dowry, women's education, the suppression of women, and revenge. Few girls were allowed to go to school at this period. Hanna Papanek notes that by 'the 1920s a few thousand Muslim women in undivided India had received modern education.'<sup>231</sup> In a scene which highlights the importance of female education, Noor Alam (brother) stops Gul Andama (sister) from attending school for the reason that education is not meant for girls. He argues that people will laugh if she goes to school once she becomes either an adult<sup>232</sup> or betrothed. Gul Adama's reply is full of questions which stresses the importance of education for women, and endorses a resolution passed in support of women rights by the prominent India Muslim League in 1932. She compares life at home without education with lifetime imprisonment. Not having any rationale, Khushal Khan blames education for spoiling her, making her disrespectful to her parents, and stops her from going to school any more. He states '*dagha kho sabaq de che pasaath de che starge oshlai*'

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<sup>231</sup> Hanna Papanek, 'Purdah in Pakistan: Seclusion and Modern Occupations for Women', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, (1971), 517-30 (p. 523).

<sup>232</sup> Roughly, it would mean an age of 12. Gul Andama is about 13 years old when she gets married.

(It is the education which is a nuisance, and which makes people disrespectful).<sup>233</sup>

Despite her vocal character, Gul Andama is depicted as an obedient as well as a helpless follower of her father, brother and husband. Not only is she denied education but also she is wedded without her consent, and eventually ends up dead. Referring to such miseries of women during the partition of 1947 partition of Pakistan and India, participants in Papanek's study express that 'they [women] knew that education would have helped them'.<sup>234</sup> It is lack of education that results in the deaths of most of the characters in the play.

Though the play ends with the completion of revenge, it strongly condemns the *badal* practice. Noor Gul and Alam Gul both take their revenge in adherence to the Pukhto code of *badal*. Alam Gul, however, before he is hanged, laments his revenge and further curses the factors which led to the death of his father, mother and wife. His last words, which are in verse form, are addressed to the audience/readers and are a message to refrain from revenge and other negative cultural aspects of the society.

The drama ends with a lament by the mother of Gul Andama who is on her death-bed. It presents a vivid picture of the misery that results from revenge-action. She complains '*Sok nishta che obah me krri yu ghot pa khula ke twey / na mor ao plar laram, na mey khawand shta, na mey zwey*'

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<sup>233</sup> Translated from Pukhto to English. Fazl Rahim Saqi, *Speera Margey*, in *Tamashey*, ed. by Muhammad Zubair Hasrat (Dubai: Da Amarato Pukhtano Adabi Tolana Markaz Dubai, 2014), p. 316.

<sup>234</sup> Papanek, p. 523.



(Is there nobody who can pour few drops of water in my mouth / Neither I have father or mother nor husband or son).<sup>235</sup> With such powerful scenes, revenge no more seems to be the plausible custom because it explicitly shows them the after effects of revenge in the form of Alam Gul and Gul Andama's mother.

Similarly, *Dree Yatiman (Three Orphans)*, written by Abdul Akbar Khan Akbar is another example of these dramas. 'The theme of the drama was the atrocities inflicted upon the poor by the landlords and the hypocrisy of certain ulema (religious scholars or mullahs) who enjoyed the patronage of the government'.<sup>236</sup> This links up with the point that I made earlier about the British paid mullahs who wrongly accused *KK* for being friends with Hindus, Bolsheviks and Nazis.

It is understood and agreed by historians and scholars alike that *Dree Yateeman (Three Orphans)* is 'one of the first plays ever written in Pashto [language]'.<sup>237</sup> Thus it can be inferred that it may have been the first staged Pukhto play. However, Zubair Hassrat in his recent collection of Pukhto dramas performed during *KK* movement claims that Pukhto drama *Tarbor (Cousin)* written by Abdul Akbar Khan in the year 1926-27 was the first drama written and staged.

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<sup>235</sup> Saqi, p. 327.

<sup>236</sup> Translated and cited in Rauf.

Muhammad Azam Azam, 'Pukhto Adab ke da Drami Irtiqā', *Pukhto*, Monthly (1985-86), p. 129.

<sup>237</sup> María Isabel Maldonado García, and Bakht Munir, 'Origins of the Pashto Language and Phases of Its Literary Evolution', *Journal of Research (Humanities)* 52 (2016), 145–167 (p. 162).

Where these dramas emphasised the role of education, social justice and patriotism, plays like *Dard*, *Dree Yateeman* (and other plays like *Tarboor*, *Taleem Jadeed Tehzeeb Jadeed* etc) received enormous appreciation from masses. The successful nature of these dramas can also be inferred from a letter written by the then Inspector General of Police of KP (then N-W.F.P). With an embedded threat, he requested the Chief Minister 'to persuade the Red Shirts not to enact a number of dramas depicting various phases of civil disobedience movement, such as manufacture of salt, the picketing of liquor shops, lathi [baton/truncheon] charges by the police and various scenes in Haripur jail. Such things as depicting lathi charges by police can do nothing but harm'.<sup>238</sup> The last sentence in the letter shows the intentions of the administration and police to use force against the people involved in these dramas. The elements mentioned in this letter not only suggest the nature and content of these dramas but also the agitation it caused to the British administration, which, as can be inferred, speaks for the success of these dramas.

To sum up, Pukhto dramas proved helpful to reject revenge and encourage nonviolent resistance against the British. They attracted the audience and showed them what was then prevalent in the society. These plays did not directly instruct the people to refrain from revenge and/or other negative social and cultural elements. They presented violence and revenge but at the same time showed the consequences. The embedded messages coupled with the efforts of teachers to educate the children particularly in Azad schools discouraged revenge and encouraged nonviolence. These plays

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<sup>238</sup> Farhad Jan, 'Khudai Khidmatgar Movement in NWFP; its Nature and Direction', (MPhil Thesis University of Peshawar, 2012), p. 13.

could have equally served the purpose of declaring *Jihad* and inciting the Pukhtuns to fight against the British; however, they were used for constructive purposes. In a way, these plays played a similar role to *Hamlet*, which shows revenge and violence but discourages them too. Therefore, the section below briefly explores similarities between *Hamlet* and Pukhtun culture particularly in the terms of revenge to demonstrate the potential of *Hamlet* (like Azad Pukhto *dramas*) to address the issue of revenge in Pukhtun culture.

### Revenge in *Hamlet* and Pukhtun Culture

The revenge stories of Hamlet, Laertes and Fortinbras in *Hamlet* have enough potential to draw the attention of young students of KP. *Badal* in Pukhto demands revenge for a father's murder in the same way the ghost demands revenge from Hamlet. 'Remember me' is the cry of the ghost which in comparison is also the demand of Pukhto in *badal*. Both demand and instigate revenge.

The ghost instigates Hamlet to act and demands, 'If thou did'st ever thy dear father love' and 'Revenge his soul, and most unnatural murder' (1.5.23 and 25). In response, Hamlet replies, 'Haste me to know it, that I with wings as swift | As meditation, or the thought of love | May sweep to my revenge' (1.5.29-31). The ghost encourages him when it hears Hamlet's response: 'I find thee apt [for revenge]' (1.5.32). The use of words like *sting*, *shameful*, *virtuous Queen*, *damned incest*, *falling off dignity*, *cut off*, *horrible*, *O horrible*, *most horrible*, *bear it not* and *sting* by the ghost also instigates Hamlet to take revenge. This and the similar selection and use of words in

*Hamlet* relates to the revenge-related vocabulary in Pukhto. The words like *shame*, *falling off dignity* and *bear it not* refer to *badal* code, where not to avenge is an act of shame and loss of honour and dignity.

Besides the obvious similarity of Hamlet's revenge, Laertes' anger to avenge his father's murder and Ophelia death has much in common with the real-life revenge incidents in *KP*. Unlike Hamlet, Laertes is reckless and eager to take revenge against anyone involved in his father's murder, even the King. The news of his father's murder makes Laertes vengeful and vulnerable. Claudius exploits the vulnerability of Laertes when he asks him 'Will you be ruled by me?' (4.7.57). Laertes promptly replies, 'So you will not over rule me to peace' (4.7.60). Laertes' reply shows his eagerness to take revenge of his father's murder. By contrast, Claudius's reply 'to thine own peace' suggests the treachery of Claudius to use Laertes against Hamlet. Claudius' exploitation of Laertes resembles those Pukhtuns who have lost their fathers, particularly in the present insurgency in *KP*, which leaves them vulnerable for similar exploitation. In both cases, what else could be a better way of exploitation than using revenge and the victim-mentality of the avengers.

Thus, similar in role to the Azad Pukhto plays, *Hamlet* has the potential to address the issue of revenge in *KP*, where it is widely read in colleges and universities. In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I demonstrated that the dramaturgical construction of *Hamlet* rejects revenge within the play. I also demonstrated that because of this construction *Hamlet* also allows readers (and adapters) to use it as a tool to reject revenge outside the play. The next chapter demonstrates the way the play is used as a tool to reject revenge

outside the context of the play and address other relevant contemporary issues around the world.

The next chapter looks into the adaptations of *Hamlet* and the way they have been used to discourage revenge and violence, particularly in cultures (regions) where it is inevitable to avoid them. It tests whether or not the adaptive *Hamlet* performs the same role of rejecting revenge as it does within the context of the play.



## Chapter 4: A *Hamlet* for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pakistan

There is a play tonight before the King:  
One scene of it comes near the circumstance  
Which I have told thee [Horatio] of my father's death (3.2.75-77)

For murder, though have no tongue, will speak (2.2.589)

This play within the play, also referred to as The Mouse Trap is one of the most frequently discussed scenes in the play to such an extent that it has become a touchstone of criticism.<sup>239</sup> Hamlet adapts *The Murder of Gonzago* to address the issue of his father's murder. Perplexed by his father's death, his mother's remarriage and most of all by the appearance and message of the ghost to take revenge, Hamlet plans to appropriate *The Murder of Gonzago* to his situation and present it in front of the King. For this reason, he even adds extra lines to the play in order to fit it to his situation. 'You could for a need study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which | I would set down and insert in't' (2.2.535). He tailors the play around the incident of his father's murder.

The adaptive version of *The Murder of Gonzago* states Hamlet's situation and personifies his thoughts about the murder of his father, his uncle's guilt and his subsequent revenge. Hamlet adapts it to his own need, that is, to question the King and judges his reaction to find the truth about his father's murder. 'I'll have these players | Play something like the murder of my father [...] I will observe his looks' (2.2.590-592). Hamlet, asking for the addition of the dozen lines to the 'play' for a reason, advises the first player to 'Suit the

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<sup>239</sup> Yu Jin Ko, "'The Mousetrap' and Remembrance in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*", *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 23.4 (2005), 19-33 (p. 5).

action to the word, | the word to the action' (3.2.17-18) and presents the message (most probably his father's foul murder) 'as 'twere the mirror up to nature' (3.2.23).

Like *Hamlet*, *The Murder of Gonzago* is also open to interpretation. Its desired outcome depends on how Hamlet and other characters around him interpret the reactions of Claudius as well as Gertrude. 'Let your own discretion be your tutor' (3.2.16) are the words of Hamlet to one of the actors of the mousetrap play. These words mark Hamlet's own discretion to judge the guilty conscience of the King and Queen. However, what Hamlet intends is to determine and catch the guilty conscience of Claudius through this play which in return would reveal the truth to him and enable him to make up his mind about the revenge. Whether Hamlet successfully did or did not make up his mind after the play, Claudius certainly did. Claudius certainly sees the play as a threat mainly because of the resemblance of the avenger Lucianus (in *The Murder of Gonzago*) with Hamlet. Therefore, he has no choice but to kill Hamlet.

The addition of extra lines in *The Murder of Gonzago* suggests Hamlet's (as well as Shakespeare's) awareness of the play as well as its flexibility to appropriate it to his situation. He carefully embeds his message in the play without changing the main plot. He could have chosen any other play for this purpose. Instead, Hamlet chose *The Murder of Gonzago* because of its resemblance, suitability and the flexibility so as to address the issue of the murder of his father.



This also raises a question about that why Shakespeare chose to stage *The Murder of Gonzago* in *Hamlet*. He could have chosen any other revenge tragedy written before him, for instance, *The Spanish Tragedy* or *Solimon and Preseda*. In fact, *Solimon and Preseda* is also a play within a play which bears some resemblance with *Hamlet's The Murder of Gonzago*. Aeschylus' *Oresteia* could have been an equally good choice for Shakespeare. Orestes says, 'O Zeus, grant that I may avenge the death | of my father'; and Electra's pleas, 'I pray that one may appear to avenge you, father | and that the killers may in justice pay with life for life'. Instead Shakespeare chose *The Murder of Gonzago* because it best fits Hamlet's situation. Also, it equally draws a meaningful reaction from Claudius. Used as a dramatic technique, Shakespeare used the play to his advantage to address Hamlet's dilemma of revenge. Shakespeare adapts the play to fit Hamlet's situation and his subsequent revenge; similarly, people around the world adapt *Hamlet* to address similar contemporary problems. Besides, to put it in the words of Gordon McMullan, Shakespeare, 'was first and foremost an adapter'.<sup>240</sup>

Although the words of Hamlet, 'so tell him [Fortinbras and other people] with th'occurents more and less | Which have solicited. The rest is silence' (5.2.362-363) are meant for Horatio in the play, they appeal to the readers and adapters of *Hamlet* worldwide alike. Adapters of *Hamlet* tend to use the 'occurents' of the play and tell the story with their own motifs, which in return suit their needs and serve their purposes. Like Hamlet, the adapters and appropriators of the play adapt and use *Hamlet*. They appropriate the

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<sup>240</sup> Will Gompertz, 'Why is Shakespeare More Popular than Ever?', *BBC*, 2016  
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-36114485> > [accessed 19 December 2016]

play to address various problems of their countries. Similar to Hamlet's insertion of the lines/message in to the actor's play, the adapters fit in their own story in order to put across their messages, which may serve their purpose, for instance, the reformation of their society.

The adapted play of *The Murder of Gonzago* in *Hamlet* speaks for Hamlet. In similar way, *Hamlet* speaks for the adapters and appropriators. As a result, the adaptations of *Hamlet* speak against the social-political issues that are addressed in that production. The motives behind adaptation may vary from situation to situation and country to country. They may represent the wrong doings of a country which the adapters try to address or feel the need to address. These wrong doings, not necessarily revenge, may include social, cultural, political or religious issues of a country, which may be categorised as problems.

As long as there have been plays by Shakespeare, there have been adaptations of those plays. For almost four hundred years, playwrights have been taking Shakespeare's works and remaking them, in an overwhelming variety of ways, for the stage.<sup>241</sup>

In the past fifteen years the offspring of Shakespeare studies and cultural studies, what we might call "Shakespearean cultural studies", has emerged as one of the most robust areas of Shakespearean criticism. There are several indications that this critical field has come of age. Sessions on contemporary adaptations are now regularly included in the programmes for international and regional Shakespeare conferences.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier, *Adaptations of Shakespeare: A critical anthology of plays from the seventeenth century to the present* (Psychology Press, 2000), p. 1.

<sup>242</sup> Douglas Lanier, 'Shakespeare and Cultural Studies: An overview', *Shakespeare*, 2.2 (2006), 228-48 (p. 228).

'We live within the shifting boundaries of a shrinking world, where particular localities and cities are integrated via computer, networks and electronic media which bypass national frontiers.'<sup>243</sup> Talking about the shrinkage of the world due to the internet, John Joughin argues that Shakespeare is very much part of this virtual world where everyone may perceive and interpret him/his plays in their own socio-cultural contexts. However, Shakespeare's crossing of the national frontiers is no more limited to virtual world, the recent Globe to Globe project took Shakespeare's *Hamlet* across the world on a 2 year tour, where it was performed in almost all the countries of the world. A total of 293 performances of the play were staged at 202 venues in 197 countries around the world.

Similarly, the project *Multicultural Shakespeare in Britain 1930-2012* is a major Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded research project at the University of Warwick which further expands the notion of Shakespearean cultural studies. Under the subtitle, *British Black and Asian Shakespeare*, this project aims to map the history of non-white actors' and directors' growing role in British cultural life over several generation; by their involvement in the performances and re-interpretations of Shakespeare's plays.<sup>244</sup>

Referring to the presence of Shakespeare's plays in different languages around the world, Aaron Heslehurst in a BBC documentary *Living*

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<sup>243</sup> John J. Joughin, ed., *Shakespeare and National Culture* (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 13.

<sup>244</sup> *British Black and Asian Shakespeare*, 2015  
<<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/research/currentprojects/multiculturalshakespeare/>> [accessed 18/01 2016]

*Shakespeare* remarks: 'they [Shakespeare's plays] are here in Chinese, Russian, Japanese, Hindi, but the impact of Shakespeare's works around the world can be proven in more than a thousand translations.'<sup>245</sup> Dennis Kennedy notes that Shakespeare's plays regularly cross national and linguistic boundaries with apparent ease and that some foreign performances have a direct access to the power of the plays.<sup>246</sup> The trend to reinvent Shakespeare's plays is on the rise in the modern world, so much so that the terms appropriation and adaptation are becoming part of Shakespeare's criticism.

This reinvention of appropriations and adaptations interpret a text from a new angle.<sup>247</sup> To consider an example of such text, Christy Desmet refers to the short story *Gertrude Talks Back* by Margaret Atwood. 'It is a monologue that rewrites Hamlet's closet scene from the perspective of Gertrude, its passive auditor, and ends with a witty twist: "Oh! You think what? You think Claudius murdered your Dad? ... It wasn't Claudius, darling. It was me".'<sup>248</sup> Salman Rushdie's *Yorick* in his collection of stories, *East, West*, rewrites *Hamlet* from the perspectives of the minor character; Yorick the Jester, who is also the protagonist of his story. Similarly, Mamduh Adwan's *Hamlet Wakes up Late* is another example which provides a different perspective of

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<sup>245</sup> 'Living Shakespeare' *BBC News*, 2016  
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07ytbty>> [accessed 4 November 2016]

<sup>246</sup> Kennedy, Dennis, ed., *Foreign Shakespeare* (Cambridge University Press, 1993). p. 2.

<sup>247</sup> Adrienne Rich, 'When we dead awaken: Writing as re-vision', *College English* 34.1 (1972), 18-30 (p. 18).

<sup>248</sup> Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer, *Shakespeare and Appropriation* (Psychology Press, 1999), p. 9.

the play where Hamlet is shown as a drunkard and Ophelia as a prostitute. This adaptation reveals the political corruption and unrest of the Arab World, particularly Syria's. Like *Hamlet's* Mouse Trap, allegorical *Hamlets* were designed to catch the guilty conscience' of Arab rulers. Such and many more new angles are explored regularly by the adapters of Shakespeare's plays all around the world.

These new perspectives in the form of appropriations and adaptations create a new parallel world of the plays of Shakespeare in which the texts of the plays are presented in entirely different contexts. This world of adaptations is what Linda Hutcheon calls 'heterocosm' in her theory of adaptation.<sup>249</sup> The adaptations of Shakespeare's plays create a separate heterocosm, where they have an entirely new meaning, interpretation and appeal to the audience. They also voice the contemporary problems of the heterocosm in which they are appropriated. According to Hutcheon, the original work that is adapted, in this case *Hamlet* does not lose its originality. In fact, it adds to the creativity and flexibility of the work. While Hutcheon argues for the expanding scope of adaptation as a field of study, I scrutinize *Hamlet* in accordance with it.

In a similar line of argument, while commemorating 400 years of Shakespeare, a Bollywood actress, Kalki Koechlin, emphasises the role of Ophelia and retells the story of *Hamlet* from Ophelia's perspective. Referring to the different roles Ophelia has to play such as Laertes' sweet sister and Hamlet's 'breeder of sinners', Koechlin expresses, 'this is the dilemma

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<sup>249</sup> Hutcheon.

facing India's women, we are expected to be traditional and pure, while by others we are encouraged to be independent and sultry. There is conflict and confusions in our minds and these pressures can become unbearable.<sup>250</sup> Koechlin recalls the real-life incident of Jyuti Singh, who was raped on a moving bus by six men in Delhi, India 2012 and further draws comparison between Ophelia and modern day Indian women. In the character of Ophelia, she sees Indian women who are caught between desire and expectations. Unable to fulfil either they commit suicide like Ophelia.

To put an emphasis on the role of Ophelia and to understand *Hamlet* from a feminine perspective, Koechlin expresses her hope for women not to drown in the river but swim across strongly to the other side. This reminds us of strong women like Saba Qaiser in *A Girl in the River*, who lives not only to tell the tale but also commits to save precious lives like Jyuti Singh's.

Therefore, Ophelia (through *Hamlet*) becomes a significant and powerful archetype through which to represent women like Saba and Jyuti Singh; the likeness of which we also see in the female characters of Pakistan's *Shrew* and *Winter's Tale* (see chapter 1). While various adaptations of *Hamlet* focus on the character of Ophelia as the protagonist to voice various gender related issues, Paul Griffiths' *Let me Tell You* retells the story of Ophelia through Ophelia, which gives a complete new meaning to *Hamlet*.

According to the British Universities Film and Video Council (BUFVC) database, since 1890, in film media alone, there are twelve hundred and forty seven adaptive versions of Shakespeare's plays. In all of Shakespeare's

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<sup>250</sup> 'Living Shakespeare', *BBC News*, 2016  
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07ytbty>> [accessed 4 November 2016]

plays *Hamlet* has been filmed the most, that is, two hundred and fifty nine times, followed by *Romeo and Juliet* which is filmed two hundred and nine times.<sup>251</sup> Since 2000 alone, the film media has presented seventy two productions of *Hamlet's* adaptations. Some of these films are even in local languages, for instance, an Indian version *Khon ka khon*, which may be translated as 'blood for blood', is in Urdu. Semih Celenk's *Hamlet in colour in Turkey* (2004) in Turkish Language and Mahmud Sabahi's *Hamlet narrates Hamlet* (2009) in Farsi are few of the examples of the adaptations of *Hamlet* in languages other than English. The frequency of these appropriations and adaptations speak volumes about the popularity, suitability, value and power of *Hamlet*.

Similarly, a recent book *Presenting Shakespeare: 1,100 Posters from Around the World* by Mirko Ilic and Steven Heller, provides the graphic poster-illustrations of the adaptations of Shakespeare's plays around the world. The posters in the book inform us of different trends of adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. 'There are always interesting new angles through which to approach Shakespeare's plays, just as there are always new ways in which to present them on stage or screen.'<sup>252</sup>

In terms of new angles to approach Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet* has been used as a constructive play to address the contemporary problems of our time, for instance, as a means of rehabilitation for inmates. 'He as the other

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<sup>251</sup> According the database of BUFVC accessed on 12/01/16

<sup>252</sup> Mark Sinclair, 'All the world's a stage - Shakespeare and the poster - Creative Review', *Creative Review*, 2015 <<https://www.creativereview.co.uk/all-the-worlds-a-stage-shakespeare-and-the-poster/>> [accessed 21 January 2016]

inmates in this cast of “Hamlet: Prince of Denmark” have all faced that choice: whether “to be” to begin a new life in prison, by coming to terms with what they have done and make what amends they can, “not to be” never to outgrow the men they were when they committed their crimes; not to do the hard work that reformation takes.<sup>253</sup> *Shakespeare Behind Bars (SBB)* in North America, *Shakespeare Inside; Hamlet in South African Prison* in South Africa and *The Shakespeare Prison Project* in Wisconsin, USA are few of examples *Hamlet’s* constructive use as a play to rehabilitate the inmates.

Rob Pensalfini dedicates his book *Prison Shakespeare: For the Deep Shames and Great Indignities*<sup>254</sup> to projects like *SBB*. He elaborates that *Shakespeare Behind Bars* is the longest, highest profile and most documented of all Prison Shakespeare projects. Pensalfini has described all the details of the productions of these plays in his book. One of the most recent examples of this project is *Hamlet Behind Bars* for prisoners sentenced for life-time imprisonment in Rezina Moldova.

The objectives behind these Shakespeare in prison projects are mostly the same, that is, *SBB*, for instance, ‘offers theatrical encounters with personal and social issues to incarcerated and post-incarcerated adults and juveniles, allowing them to develop life skills that will ensure their successful reintegration into society’.<sup>255</sup> Talking about drama as a therapy during the

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<sup>253</sup> Mary Wiltenburg, “Choosing ‘to be’”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 2012 <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0723/p11s01-legn.html>> [accessed 4 Nov. 2016]

<sup>254</sup> Rob Pensalfini, *Prison Shakespeare: For These Deep Shames and Great Indignities* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016).

<sup>255</sup> ‘Shakespeare Behind Bars’, (n.d.). <<https://www.shakespearebehindbars.org/>> [accessed 4 November 2016]



rehearsals for *Hamlet Behind Bars* in Rezina, the director of the department of Penitentiary Institutions, Igor Guja, stated that such activities ‘help them [inmates] leave behind criminal behaviour and become responsible members of our society again.’<sup>256</sup>

Participation in these theatrical productions also allowed inmates to readily associate with the characters whose roles they had to perform. ‘The inmates had chosen their parts in the play; many we were surprised to learn, had picked roles related to the crimes they had committed.’<sup>257</sup> The reason for this selection can be many fold. First obviously they could act the role more easily. Second, they could relate to the role they had to play. Most importantly, they could readily identify themselves with the characters. For instance, ‘one of the prominent ideas in the play [*The Tempest*] is the acknowledgement of previous crimes, and this prominence makes it unavoidable for the inmates to explore their own pasts when attempting to embody the characters. It may even act as a means of catharsis for the crimes they had committed. Thus, it shows the use, value and importance of Shakespeare’s plays as a therapeutic device to allow inmates, who may have similar experiences as the characters of the plays, to reassess their crimes and find a new level of meaning in their lives.

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<sup>256</sup> ‘Hamlet behind bars in Rezina - rehabilitation through theater for life-prisoners’, The Norwegian Mission Experts of Rule of Law Advisers to Moldova, 2016. <<http://www.norlam.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=96&id=888#.WO95bk2QxHg>> [accessed 10 December 2016]

<sup>257</sup> Mary, W, “Choosing ‘to be’”, *The Christian Science Monitor*. 2012. <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0723/p11s01-legn.html>> [accessed 4 November 2016]

Projects like *SSB* mostly stick to the original plot of *Hamlet* (and other plays of Shakespeare). The dramaturgical construction of the play as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis allows the readers and audience, in this case the inmates, to develop an empathetic connection with the play. As a result, the play may act as cathartic reliever agent/device.

The focus of this thesis is not on the investigation of *Hamlet* (and other plays of Shakespeare) and its subsequent influence regarding the rehabilitation of inmates, but on the fact that it was and is still used as a constructive play for socio-cultural and political reformation by addressing the pressing issues of a country. In this case, instead of sticking to the original plot of the play, *Hamlet* is mostly adapted into a new context. Again, the power of the dramaturgical construction of *Hamlet*, as already discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, allows adapters to adapt the play into new contexts for constructive purposes. While *Hamlet* is widely adapted constructively around the world and used as a therapy that might even educate psychotherapists,<sup>258</sup> there are equal chances that it may fail to produce the desired influence. Nevertheless, exploration of such (both successful and unsuccessful) influences help us to better understand the therapeutic role of *Hamlet* to address pressing problems of a country which may act as catharsis for its people.

What is it about *Hamlet* that makes it one of the most appropriated, adapted and performed plays of Shakespeare? ‘*Hamlet* is like a sponge. Unless produced in a stylized or antiquarian fashion, it immediately absorbs all the

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<sup>258</sup> Onel Brooks, 'How Might *Hamlet* Help to Educate Psychotherapists?', *Psychodynamic Practice*, 14.2 (2008), 207-14 (p. 209).

problems of our time',<sup>259</sup> are the words of Jan Kott expressed over 50 years ago. After all these 50 years, in fact from the time it has been written, *Hamlet* still has the capacity to absorb and address the problems in our times. *Hamlet* has been adapted in at least thirty different countries, and these adaptations address importantly different aspects or facets of the play.<sup>260</sup> Increase in the number of appropriations and adaptations of *Hamlet* to address contemporary problems around the globe speak of the suitability of the play to modern times. In the post 2000 era the number of appropriations and adaptations of *Hamlet* have increased rapidly around the world.

In this chapter I discuss why adapters appropriate and adapt *Hamlet*. What purpose does it serve for the adapters to adapt *Hamlet*? Why is it important to adapt *Hamlet*? In order to do so, this chapter seeks to identify the reasons behind such adaptations by providing a detailed critique on the adaptation of Hamlet — *Haider* — and how it is used to address various problems (including revenge) in Kashmir. In this chapter, I also present a critique of how the therapeutic *Hamlet* addresses the mental health problems and various psychological disorders in Kashmir and, as a result, how it might help young Kashmiris like Hamlet to reassess their situation and find new level of meaning of their lives. In contrast to *Haider*, I also present a critique of another adaptation of *Hamlet* — *Prince of the Himalayas* — which fails to realise the power of the play, and thus, fails to

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<sup>259</sup> Kott, p. 49.

<sup>260</sup> Parviz Partovi Tazeh Kand, 'Adaptations of Hamlet in Different Cultural Contexts: Globalisation, Postmodernism, and Altermodernism' (doctoral thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2013), p. 9.

produce the desired influence on its audience. As my study deals with *Hamlet* in Pakistan, the settings of these adaptations also share geographical boundaries with Pakistan, which is why I choose *them*.

### *Haider's story*

The film starts with Hilal Meer, who is Haider's (Hamlet's) father and a medical doctor by profession, providing treatment for a freedom fighter suffering from appendicitis.<sup>261</sup> Dr Meer brings him home for the operation instead of hospital for the reason that Indian army may capture or shoot him. Ghazala, the film's counterpart of Gertrude, is against Dr. Meer's decision to bring the freedom fighters home for treatment. She asks Dr Meer a meaningful question 'which side are you on?'<sup>262</sup> She doubts whether Dr Meer is in favour of freedom fighters or the Indian army. To side with any means enmity with the other. When Ghazala asks him about which side he on, Dr. Meer replies: 'on the side of life'.<sup>263</sup> This statement encapsulates one of the themes of this adaptation.

This scene is followed by a crackdown by the Indian army on Anantnag, Haider's village, where these freedom fighters are present in Dr Meer's

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<sup>261</sup> In the film they have been referred to as freedom fighters as well as militants and terrorist. Indian army consider them as militants and terrorists whereas they themselves and several factions of Kashmiri people consider them as freedom fighters because they are fighting for the independence of Kashmir. For clarity and neutrality, I will use the word that they use for themselves, that is, freedom fighters. Similarly, all other names, like 'fake militia' that appear in this thesis are taken from the film.

<sup>262</sup> English subtitles in *Haider*.

<sup>263</sup> English subtitles in *Haider*.

house. All the village male members are herded to a ground and they are asked to pass one by one in front of a jeep. A masked man is seated in the front seat of the jeep. This man is an informant and his job is to identify any person who may have helped the freedom fighters or has been involved in any activity against the Indian management. He presses the horn every time he sees someone who may have been involved or sided with the freedom fighters. When Dr. Meer comes in front of the jeep, he presses the horn but this time a little longer than usual. The longer horn was a signal to the Indian army about the presence of the freedom fighters in Dr. Meer's house. The freedom fighters are given a chance to surrender, which they refuse. Heavy arms are used to bring the house down and kill the freedom fighters. Dr. Meer is taken to an Indian camp for further investigation where ultimately he is tortured to death. With no recorded trial and/or chance to prove his innocence or justify his act, his name is added to the list of missing people.

Haider (Hamlet) returns from the Aligarh Muslim University<sup>264</sup> in India, to search for his father. During his childhood, he was sent to India for studies by his parents: mainly to keep him away from harm and/or any sort of involvement with freedom fighters. Because, once Haider was caught by his mother, Ghazala, with a gun in his school bag, which was given to him by his class fellow.

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<sup>264</sup> The university has a symbolic significance as it was founded and established by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in 1874 as Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, which in 1920 became Aligarh Muslim University. While imparting Islamic and oriental education along with English and western sciences which Sir Syed considered the key to success, this university played a pivotal role in politics of the subcontinent, creation of Pakistan in 1947 and uplifting the conditions of the people. It also led the famous Aligarh Movement for awakening the people against the then British Raj.

On his way back from the university, he is stopped at an Indian check post and is searched and asked about his movements by the Indian soldiers. He is even questioned about his research study at the university. His research topic 'The Revolutionary Poets of British India' and the use of the new name of his village, Islamabad instead of Anantnag, gets him in trouble.

Immediately, he is taken into custody for further investigations. Haider's research study has a symbolic significance as it sets the stall for his struggle and rebellion against the Indian army later in the film. Arshia (a combination of both the 'Ophelia' and the 'Horatio' characters), who is a journalist in the film, bails out Haider and takes him to his house. Later, Haider walks into his uncle Khurram's house to see him seducing his mother, Ghazala. He leaves the house with intense feelings of anger wanting to kill his uncle and mother.

Haider is supported by Arshia and two friends, the film's counterparts to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Haider spends most of his time in search for his father in police stations and Indian army camps through most of the film. Arshia assists him in finding his father. She even discourages him to take any help from the freedom fighters; however, they eventually get to Haider through her.

Instead of the ghost, a human counterpart is introduced in the film by the name of Roohdar. Roohdar is an Urdu word which means *spirit* or *soul*, but this Roohdar character is dressed in a white *shalwar qameez*,<sup>265</sup> *Pakool* (woollen hat) and *Sader* or *Chader* (shawl) which is a typical Pukhtun dress. Dressed up in traditional Pukhtun clothes, he is often seen surrounded by

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<sup>265</sup> A long shirt down to the knees and baggy trousers.

armed men, which presents him as translation of *Hamlet's* ghost in his armour.

According to Arsia's father account, Roohdar is a Pakistani spy working with the freedom fighters against India. Though he does work for and with freedom fighters, there is no clear evidence of him being a Pakistani agent in the film. He shares a same prison cell with Dr. Meer. Roohdar and Dr. Meer are together when Khurram is revealed as an Indian informant and that is how he knows everything about Haider and his family. Later, Roohdar and Dr. Meer are shot together by the Indian army and thrown into a river. Roohdar reveals to Haider that his father was tortured in one of the Indian camps and shot to death by the army in one of the camps and his body thrown into *Jhelum River*.<sup>266</sup>

While in the same Indian torture camp, Dr. Meer asks Roohdar to deliver his message to Haider, 'tell him to take revenge from my brother [uncle Khurram (Claudius)], tell Haider to shoot him in the eyes which seduced his mother and orphaned him.'<sup>267</sup> Through *Roohdar*, it is revealed to Haider and to us (audience) that it was Ghazala who informed Khurram about the presence of the freedom fighters in the house. Khurram then informed the Indian army about it, which ultimately led to Dr. Meer's arrest and his subsequent tragic death. Roohdar also passes on the message left by him for Haider. One of his accomplices gives a gun to Haider to take revenge from Khurram. Haider is given a gun by one of the accomplices of Roohdar.

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<sup>266</sup> Jhelum is one of the rivers which constitutes the mighty Indus River. Jhelum River originates in Kashmir and flows through Pakistan and India.

<sup>267</sup> English subtitles of *Haider*.

When Roohdar tells Haider about the murder of his father, in the background there is the *Azaan*, a Muslim call for prayer, and the Friday sermon in Arabic, which is specifically used to preach, and convince people of Islamic teachings. Roohdar's selection of this time and day adds a sense of sacredness to his revelation to Hamlet about his father's murder and the message to take revenge. On the contrary, when Ghazala learns about Roohdar's exploitation of Haider for revenge, she tries hard to persuade Haider not to take revenge.

Guns only know how to take revenge,  
Unless we set free from our revenge/vengeance, we cannot attain true  
freedom.  
Remember, revenge begets revenge.<sup>268</sup>

The first shot of Ghazala in the film is as a teacher in a classroom of very young children, where she is teaching English to the students. Her first words are in the form of a question — 'what is a home?' — followed by her explanation of home, which the students repeat after her. She teaches English with partially Indian accent where wrong syllables are stressed in a word. For instance, the word 'acts' is pronounced as *actus* with a strong emphasis on 't'. Similarly, the word 'loved' is pronounced as *laavud* with a strong emphasis on 'v' and 'd' sounds. We see similar use of English throughout the film particularly in the dialogues of Ghazal and Arshia.

While it promotes the local English accent, the question Ghazala poses — what is home — is of high importance. She explains to the students that homes consist of brothers, sisters, fathers and mothers, and it is the duty of

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<sup>268</sup> English subtitles of *Haider*.



all members of a home to share and care for each other. Ironically, she does not mention husband and wife as part of a home. *Haider* is certainly a story of Ghazala's (as well as others') home. Ghazala's role is that of a mother, wife and teacher, who desperately tries to save her home.

Once Ghazala realises that Haider is about to join the freedom fighters for his vengeance, she commits a suicide attack. She uses a suicide jacket provided to her by Roohdar. She sacrifices her life for the sake of Haider but in return she herself becomes a victim of Roohdar's exploitation. This suicide blast kills Khurram's men, who have come to kill Haider who was about to cross the border of Pakistan for military training. The blast also leaves Khurram mutilated and Haider injured. The words of his father to take revenge and mother's not to take revenge reverberates in Haider's mind while he decides to kill his mutilated uncle. In the end he overcomes his revenge feeling and listens to his mother's message, that is, not to become a victim of the revenge practice. This is Bhradwaj's and the film's message too. *Haider* finishes on the note of hope to discourage the young Kashmiris from practicing revenge. Although many killings take place in the film, justice, as a character, prevails in the end, which reminds us of Dr's. Meer words in the beginning of the film, 'on the side of life'<sup>269</sup>.

## Roohdar

Similar to the role of the ghost in *Hamlet*, Roohdar has a pivotal, enigmatic and ambiguous role which in many ways embodies the ambiguities of the

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<sup>269</sup> English subtitles of *Haider*.

play — albeit rather differently. The ghost in *Hamlet* and Roohdar in *Haider* act as the identifiers of wrongdoings, that is, the murder of Hamlet's and Haider's fathers respectively.

Roohdar is portrayed in a way to show that he is a spy of Pakistan. Khurram shows a picture of Roohdar taken in Pakistani army uniform as evidence that he is a Pakistani agent and the killer of Dr. Meer. However, despite the hints in the film and Khurram's account, there is no clear evidence in the film that Roohdar is a Pakistani agent or the killer. In fact, he is never shown killing anyone in the film. We hear about Roohdar's Pakistani affiliations in the film from those characters who are depicted as non-trustworthy. However, at the same time, his physical appearance raises all sorts of doubts in the minds of the audience and literary critics, because the dress he wears throughout the film is a typical Pakistani-Pukhtun dress.

The national dress of Pakistan (and Afghanistan) is *Shalwar Kameez* and is mostly associated with *Pukhtuns* of the region. This costume comprises of *Shalwar Kameez*, *Sader* or *Chadder* (Shawl) and *Pakool* (woollen hat). *Shalwar Kameez* are also worn by the Indian Muslims too, but we hardly see anyone else in the film wearing similar dress. Kashmiris *Kameez* (shirt) is too long and is worn mostly as a coat rather than a shirt as opposed to Pakistani dress.

*Pakool*, however, is local to *Pukhtuns* and is traditionally worn by people of the North-West Pakistan and Afghanistan. Of late, the woollen cap is associated with militants as we see a frequent use of it in the Hollywood movies as well other social media videos. Militants are frequently shown

wearing this cap. Keeping in view Roohdar's involvement in the conflict of Kashmir, his Pukhtun attire could well be a reference to the past invasions of Pukhtun tribes on Kashmir, particularly in October 1947, immediately after the creation of Pakistan. The possibility behind Roohdar's attire may be because of Pukhtuns several invasions of Kashmir in the past.

If presented as an obvious Pakistani agent, it would have limited the scope and nature of the character. It would have ended up like any other typical biased character in Bollywood movies that are based on Pak-India conflict. It is the presence of this mysterious nature of Roohdar's character which gives the narrative leverage to reveal the tortures of the Indian army, Pakistani involvement in the region and other contemporary issues. The mystery around Roohdar's character intensifies when he is shown walking down the street of Kashmir all alone in one scene and accompanied by armed men in another. He himself does not fight but is mostly shown as their leader. The irony of the situation is that he (and the film-crew) is similarly surrounded by armed local police for security behind the scenes. Roohdar's appearance in the film and on the set of the film both present two different yet true sides of Kashmir's life. Figure 1 is a picture of Roohdar from the set of the film *Haider*.



Figure 1: Roohdar being protected by security officials on the set of *Haider*.

This still can be seen to exemplify the real life of common Kashmiri people who face the Indian army and freedom fighters in their daily life. The difference, however, is that Kashmiris are not protected by either, in contrast to these actors. Instead, many Kashmiris become victims mostly as depicted realistically in many scenes of the film.

Guns are abundantly present in *Haider*. Not only are these guns used by the Indian army and freedom fighters but both groups are shown to possess a stockpile of arms and ammunitions. The presence of these guns recalls the arms dealer in Al Bassam's *Al Hamlet Summit* who would sell his guns to those who would pay him the most. If *Haider* raises question about whether it is the freedom fighters or Indian army who use these guns, in the context of the recent increase in clashes between the civilians and Indian army in real life, it is the latter which is using them against the former.

The presence of such a large number of guns in the movie speaks for its presence in the real-life Kashmir, particularly in the recent (2016) clashes between the Indian security forces and civilians. About 36 people have been killed and over 1,500 injured by the Indian army.<sup>270</sup> The excessive use of pellet guns from close range has resulted in deaths and casualties, the worst of which are eye injuries, where the doctors have reported that many will lose their vision. The number of eye injuries due to these pellet guns is so high that the Indian government had to send a team of eye specialists.<sup>271</sup> It presents a bizarre situation because it was the Indian security forces in the first place who caused these eye injuries. Hence, the specialist team's visit for the treatment also appears as a cover-up for the Indian army's excessive use of force. Although *Haider* was released in 2014 and these eyes injuries reports are from 2016, we see Roohdar wearing dark glasses to cover up the eye injuries that he presumably sustained during Indian captivity. Thus the character of Roohdar is very important to understand the problem of Kashmir.

In the case of *Haider*, Roohdar's role is not limited to only deliver Dr Meer's message of revenge to Haider and instigate him. Through Roohdar, Bhardwaj addresses another issue which adds to the conflict in the region and that is the exploitation of victims by the Indian army, freedom fighters and other militant organizations. Roohdar encourages and trains the young

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<sup>270</sup> 'India sends eye specialists to Kashmir to treat pellet injuries', *BBC News*, 2016 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-36794364>> [accessed 4 November 2016]

<sup>271</sup> 'India sends eye specialists to Kashmir to treat pellet injuries' *BBC News*, 2016 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-36794364>> [accessed 4 November 2016]

Kashmiris like Haider to fight for the freedom fighters against the Indian army. Whether Roohdar is genuinely a spy or not is debatable; what is certain though is that he uses and exploits people like Dr. Meer, Haider and Ghazal, and takes advantage of their situations. The character of Roohdar is symbolic. He is not an individual but works as an organisation or faction. There is always another Roohdar to replace him if he dies. His dialogue with Dr Meer while they are in the Indian torture camp is very significant which explains his character. The conversation between the two is as follows:

Dr.Meer:       Roohdar, it seems we will be killed together as well

Roohdar:       You can die doctor, but I won't

Dr. Meer:       And how is that?

Roohdar:       Because, you are the body and I am the soul, you are mortal, I am immortal

Dr. Meer:       Roohdar! Are you Shia or Sunni

Roohdar:       I am the river and the tree, I am Jhelum, I am Chinnar, I am both a temple and a mosque, Shia and Sunni, I am a pundit, I always was, I am and I will always be.<sup>272</sup>

This dialogue sheds light on Roohdar's character as a representative of an ideology, that is, free Kashmir. As a result, it brings out Kashmir as a character in the form of him. Besides, the scenography and the fabulous shots of mountains and streams also help in creating the character of Kashmir. During the film, we see various glimpses of the beautifully decorated traditional *Shikara* boats. *Shikara* is somewhat similar to the shape of gondola but it has a top which protects it from sun, rain and snow.

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<sup>272</sup> English subtitles in *Haider*.

They are also called houseboats. Mostly used for tourism, *Shikara* is also used as a house particularly by poor people. Historic sights of Kashmir are also vividly shown in the film, for instance, the Martand Sun Temple where the song *Bismil* is shot.

Kashmir in itself rises as a character where Muslims, Hindus and people from other religions live together. This is what Bhardwaj projects through this film. Also, this is what makes *Haider* a unique and different experience for the audience and critics alike. Other Bollywood films made on the subject at hand are mostly propagandist in nature as they always show Pakistan as the root cause of terrorism in Kashmir and India. *Haider*, however, focuses on the problems faced by Kashmiri people. However, it is not completely impartial, for instance, the controversial character and get-up of Roohdar.

### To seek revenge or to forgive

The conflict of Kashmir dates back to 1947 where the Kashmir's Maharaja (prince) Hari Singh hesitated over whether to join Pakistan or India; mainly due to the political and military pressure imposed upon him by the two countries respectively. Predominantly a Muslim territory, Kashmir remained independent for over two months (August-September 1947).<sup>273</sup> In October 1947 the Maharaja wrote to the Indian government for help against the aggression of the Pukhtuns of the tribal areas. The Indian governor-general Mountbatten advised the Indian leaders to secure the accession of Jammu

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<sup>273</sup> Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War* (IB Tauris, 2000), p. xi.

and Kashmir to India first before sending troops for help.<sup>274</sup> The documentation for the accession to India and its acceptance by the governor-general was completed in the space of two days. In response, the Pakistani governor-general Mohammad Ali Jinnah asked his British military commander to deploy regular Pakistan army in Kashmir. However, the general's council told him that 'since the territory was now legally and constitutionally part of India, such a deployment would amount to a declaration of war on India, inviting a broader India-Pakistan war.' Later, at the end of the India-Pakistan war over Kashmir in 1949, the territory was divided in Indian-occupied Kashmir and Azad Kashmir under Indian and Pakistani control respectively. Despite this division, Kashmir has been a flashpoint between Pakistan and India and as a result it is one of the most militarised zones in the world.<sup>275</sup>

Therefore, this Pak-India conflict over Kashmir issue compels the residents to take sides. While *Haider* retells the story of *Hamlet* and highlights the contemporary problems of Kashmir's conflict, it also reflects the feelings and emotions of young Kashmiris who are torn apart by the decades-old ongoing conflict in the region. Young Kashmiris are left with limited options in their struggle for freedom and right of self-determination. They are mostly forced to side with Indian army or freedom fighters. Not to side with any and to stay neutral is an impossible choice which itself often leads to death.

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<sup>274</sup> Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 36.

<sup>275</sup> Bose, p. 37.



Young Kashmiris even become scapegoats for crimes they have not committed. A report based on the disappearances of people in Kashmir states that there is much scapegoating, stereotyping, and profiling of the types who fall within the radar of the security forces.<sup>276</sup> We see the strong presence of the issue of taking sides in *Haider*. However, young Kashmiris are shown to choose between Indian army and freedom fighters in the film instead of Pakistan and Indian. In the context of Kashmir, the disappearances of people, the reflections of which we see in *Haider*, are a form of scapegoating ordinary civilians for the actions of the terrorist groups.<sup>277</sup>

In *Haider*, the concept of taking sides is well presented through the two brothers, Dr. Meer and Khurram. Being a doctor, Hilal Meer provided treatment to all equally, irrespective of their involvement with any group. We also see Dr. Meer providing treatment for an appendicitis not bullet injuries. In a way it speaks for Dr. Meer that he treats his patients regardless of who they are. 'He is neither allied with any terrorist group nor has [he] any political positions'.<sup>278</sup> However, providing treatment to freedom fighters is what causes his arrest and subsequent torture and death. Khurram on the

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<sup>276</sup> Teresa Crew, "If They Are Dead, Tell US!" A Criminological Study of the "Disappearances" in Kashmir', *Internet Journal of Criminology*, (2008), 1-28 (p. 7).

<sup>277</sup> Crew, p. 7.

<sup>278</sup> Gohar Ayaz, Zia Ahmed, and Ali Ammar, 'Hamlet-Haider: From Rotten Denmark to Rotten Kashmir', *International Journal of English and Education*, 4 (2015), 116-23 (p. 118).

other hand is inclined to side with the Indian army where he acts as an informant for them, whereas Haider is left stranded between the two.

During his childhood, Haider was sent abroad to study at the Aligarh University in India by his parents. This way he could stay out of any trouble and any potential involvement in the Kashmir conflict; with the possibility that he may return as a person who would not become a victim of choosing sides. He is left stranded when he returns home to find his father disappeared, house burnt, and mother in a relationship with Khurram. Arshia assists him to find his father as well as helps him to stay away from trouble. While she also discourages him not to side with the freedom fighters, *Roohdar* encourages him to join the freedom fighters in order to avenge his father's murder. Haider's choice to side with the Indian army or freedom fighters essentially coincides with the decision he has to make about whether or not to take revenge.

The dilemma of choosing sides becomes more obvious as the film progresses. Arshia's father, for instance, informs her about *Roohdar*. He reveals that *Roohdar* is acting as double agent for both sides. He adds that when *Roohdar* was arrested by the Indian army he worked for the Pakistani government. After his arrest, he agreed to become an Indian informant but upon his release he joined the freedom fighters instead. This information comes from Arshia's father who is a local police officer. Later, after *Roohdar*'s second arrest, he is put in the same torture cell with Dr. Meer, where both are tortured and forced to side with Indian army. They are even tortured to say 'Jay Hind' (Long Live India), which they refuse. By showing

these and similar torture scenes, *Haider* highlights the issues about mental health in Kashmir.

In the scene in which Roohdar appears for the first time in the film, a mother is pleading with her son to enter their home as he stands traumatised and expressionless just outside the door. Even Arshia who is passing by fails to convince him to go inside the house. Meanwhile Roohdar approaches, searches and questions the son like any Indian soldier would do. Then, he asks the son to go inside the house. The son obeys Roohdar and enters his home. Roohdar refers to Arshia's news article on psychological disorders in Kashmiri people due to the war, which the latter had previously published in a newspaper. Roohdar further explains, 'People have been traumatised by the search operations conducted by the Indian army so much so that they would not dare to enter their own houses without being searched and told to do so.'<sup>279</sup> *Haider* is of paramount importance for the representation of the real life problems experienced by Kashmiri people such as the rise in mental health issues.

'Mental health experts in the state's summer capital, Srinagar, said that there has been a staggering increase in the number of stress and trauma related cases in the Kashmir valley and these psychological problems have also given rise to general health problems like diabetes, cardiac problems and hypertension'.<sup>280</sup> A survey conducted in Kashmir reveals that the mental

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<sup>279</sup> English subtitles in *Haider*.

<sup>280</sup> Asima Hassan and Aneesa Shafi, 'Impact of Conflict Situation on Mental Health in Srinagar, Kashmir', *Bangladesh e-journal of Sociology*, 10.1 (2013), 101-26 (p. 105).

disorders in both men and women have shown an alarming increase, particularly in late 90s and onwards.<sup>281</sup>

Patient population based studies conducted so far have clearly testified to the fact that a majority of people living in Kashmir are suffering from psychological problems and a significant segment of population have developed some kind of mental disorder, be it depression, trauma related disorders or substance abuse, to name a few.<sup>282</sup>

*Haider* draws a picture of post-traumatic stress. Haider himself, for instance, is diagnosed by a doctor to have post-traumatic stress disorder, when he acts violently to kill his uncle. A survey of records from the out-patient department of Srinagar's hospital for psychiatric diseases by Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF)<sup>283</sup> shows that in 1980s approximately 100 people were treated in a week. The number of patients increased to 200-300 per week in post 2000 era.<sup>284</sup> 'In year 2002, the number had gone up to 48000 patients a year. By December 2004, 62000 patients had already visited the psychiatric services of the department.'<sup>285</sup>

'Studies based on these patients [with Post-traumatic stress disorder] found women and children to be the worst hit.'<sup>286</sup> In one of the scenes of the song

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<sup>281</sup> Mushtaq A Margoob and Shiekh Ajaz Ahmad, 'Community Prevalence of Adult Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in South Asia: Experience from Kashmir', *JK-Practitioner*, 13.Suppl 1 (2006), 18-25 (p. 19).

<sup>282</sup> Margoob and Ahmad, p. 19.

<sup>283</sup> An international independent humanitarian organization.

<sup>284</sup> Hassan and Shafi, p. 106.

<sup>285</sup> Margoob and Ahmad, p. 19.

<sup>286</sup> Margoob and Ahmad, p. 19.

titled *Jhelum*<sup>287</sup> in the film, where Haider is in search of his father, a truck arrives in the compound of a hospital. It is full of the blood-soaked bodies of dead Kashmiris. There is no clear evidence of who shot them. Suddenly, a boy soaked in blood jumps off of the truck. He starts to dance in frenzy while the bystanders watch him. He walks away dancing from the truck and people. It clearly suggests that he has lost his senses and is mentally unstable due to the trauma he has been through.

Mental health has been neglected far too long. In spite of eleven fold increase in psychiatric diseases due to ongoing conflict, tremendous stressful conditions, overwhelming fear and uncertainty during the last 18 years, not much attention is being paid to expand and modernize the present infrastructure.<sup>288</sup>

According to a survey conducted by the department of Accident & Emergency, Psychiatry in Sher-i- Kashmir Institute of Medical Science, Srinagar in 2009, 'the results reveal that the prevalence of depression is 55.72 [%] in Kashmir.'<sup>289</sup> These reports and *Haider's* subsequent representation of such grave issues comment on the vulnerability of unstable minds due to victimization and traumatising in Kashmir. Anger and frustration about state-injustice, combined with mental illness or emotional instability may well make them easy subjects for exploitation by Indian army, freedom fighters and other militant organisations. These characters from the film depict different categories of victimization and traumatising in Kashmir.

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<sup>287</sup> Also name of a river in Pakistan.

<sup>288</sup> Syed Amin and AW Khan, 'Life in Conflict: Characteristics of Depression in Kashmir', *International journal of health sciences*, 3.2 (2009), 213-23 (p. 215).

<sup>289</sup> Amin and Khan, p. 218.

In depicting these health issues and psychological disorders, the film also adapts and reframes the question of whether Hamlet is really mad or not. The ambiguity around Hamlet's madness is readily present in the character of Haider too. In one scene, a doctor does diagnose Haider to be suffering from psychological disorder, but there is no clear evidence of his madness. Haider does act strangely and wears worn-out clothes but it could well be because of the circumstances that have developed.

On the one hand, during his madness episode, Haider only tells Arshia that he has been given a gun by an accomplice of Roohadar to kill Khurram, which Arshia reveals to her father, Parvaiz. Parvaiz then informs Khurram. When asked about the gun by Khurram, Haider immediately turns to Arshia and stares at her in mistrust, which suggests the possibility that he may be sane. Similarly, his arrangement for a play within a play — *Bismil* — shows his sanity and his mistrust for Khurram and Roohdar.

On the other hand, Haider does kill the Salman brothers (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern) and Parvaiz in the fit of madness. But it is more of an act of self-defence and survival rather than planned revenge-murders. *Haider* certainly takes its cue from *Hamlet* because Hamlet also kills Polonius (directly) Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (indirectly) but all this happens in the heat of the moment and is a matter of self-defence and survival rather than pre-planned revenge-murders.

This similarity between the situation of Hamlet and Haider and the ambiguity around the madness of Hamlet is not a coincidence but careful design which is triggered by the dramaturgical construction of the play.

Whether it is the ambiguity around the madness of Hamlet and Haider or the mystery around the ghost and Roohdar, it is the power of the dramaturgical construction of *Hamlet* that allows the adapters to create similar desired effects. It is therefore absolutely essential to distinguish between an adaptation (like *Haider*) of the play and a mere retelling of the story with a twist (Arab *Hamlet* by Tanius 'Abdoh). The Arab *Hamlet* by Tanius 'Abdoh (see chapter 3) diverts from the tragedy of the play when the ghost blesses Hamlet from heaven after the completion of revenge. It is limited to just another revenge story, which has nothing to do with Shakespeare's tragedy.

*Haider*, by contrast, though in many respects far from the story, captures the power of the tragedy in a new setting. For instance, the Mouse Trap scene in *Hamlet* is presented in *Haider* too where *The Murder of Gonzago* is adapted into a dance number *Bismil*. Though adapted, it essentially captures the power of the play within a play as well as *Hamlet*.

### The Mouse Trap Song *Bismil*

#### Bhand Phather

For the performance of the mouse trap, Bhardwaj uses the centuries old tradition of Bhand Phather, 'a distinct Kashmiri performing art combining mimicry, buffoonery, music and dance, which emerged some 2000 years ago and reached its culmination in the tenth century'.<sup>290</sup> Bhand Phather is a traditional folk drama/theatre where plays/stories are presented in the form

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<sup>290</sup> Archana Kumari, 'Changing Forms of Folk Media in Kashmir' in *Traditional Media and Development Issues*, ed. by Ambresh Saxena (Kanishka Publishers 2014), p. 7.

of songs and dances, at times accompanied by puppets or human-actors acting as puppets. These stories are often satirical, humorous and/or farcical in nature. 'Bhand Phather is a traditional folk theatre style combination of play and dance in a satirical style where social traditions, [and] evils are depicted and performed in various social and cultural functions.'<sup>291</sup>

Bhand Phather is the oldest and richest art form of our folk theatre, which has preserved our theatre art form in all its manifestations. It has survived in all times only for its popular idiom, versatile metaphor and unique style in content, presentation and performance. These folk and wandering performances are spread all-over Kashmir and have peculiar dress, improvising wit and humour in their acting, dancing and music.<sup>292</sup>

In the Kashmiri tradition, Bhand refers to a folk actor and Phather refers to dramatic performance with imitation and exaggeration.<sup>293</sup> Meant to depict a satirical representation of an event to bring out evil, what else could fit more perfectly than Bhand Phather as an alternative for the Mouse Trap scene. The style of Bhand Phather that has been adopted in the song *Bismal* not only serves the purpose of mouse trap but also revives the spirit of this old tradition in new form. This dance number on the occasion of the wedding of Khuraam and Ghazala not only enacts a play resembling Haider's father

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<sup>291</sup> Firdoos Ahmad Sheikh, 'An Overview of Dambali Dance in Kashmir Valley: Past and Present Status', *IRC Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Social and Management Sciences*, 2 (2014), 78-80 (p. 78).

<sup>292</sup> Bashir Yasir Bhawani, "Bbyasir.Blogspot.com: Theatre Kashmir", 2009 <<http://bbyasir.blogspot.co.uk/2009/10/folk-theatre-of-kashmir.html>> [accessed 26 December 2016]

<sup>293</sup> Farooq Fayaz, 'Bhand Pather-Traditional Theatre of Kashmir', *Kashmir Folklore: A Study in Historical Perspective*, (Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2008) p. 79.



death, it surely serves the purpose of bringing out and depicting evil, in the form of Khurram and other evil characters around him.

There is an explicit reference to the Bhand tradition in the scene where Khurram, Parvaiz and their men celebrate the Khurram's victory in local elections. International news teams are shown covering the elections and the Bhand celebrations. To add to the irony of situation, one of the English reporters comments on the tradition: 'the traditional folk entertainers known as Bhand are enacting a play which speaks of a new Kashmir, a peaceful Kashmir.'<sup>294</sup> The comment on the one hand showcases the tradition of Bhand mainly as a source of entertainment but with a purpose. Peace in Kashmir is what this Bhand wants to highlight. However, ironically, it relates to the false hopes given to the Kashmiris about peace and stability. This Bhand play brings out the evil of rigged elections in Kashmir. In reference to the armed resistance put up by Kashmiris against the Indian army, Sumantha Banerjee points out that this resistance is mainly due to the Indian state's 'refusal to accommodate their [Kashmiris] demands through democratic avenues [...] throttling the normal democratic process there through a series of "rigged elections"'.<sup>295</sup>

### *Bismil*

Serving the same purpose as the Mouse Trap Scene, the dance number *Bismil* is set in the tradition of Bhand Phather. This adaptive scene in the

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<sup>294</sup> Reporter's words in *Haider*.

<sup>295</sup> Sumanta Banerjee, 'The Politics of Violence in the Indian State and Society', *Internal Conflicts in South Asia*, (1996), 81-95 (p. 88).

form of song is in line with the Bollywood tradition where songs are an integral part of movies. The literal meaning of the word *Bismil* is 'wounded lover' or 'sacrificed lover'. This song is a fairy tale of a couple whose story resembles the situation of Dr. Meer and Ghazala. This song is equally open to meaningful interpretations for the characters within the film as well as the audience and literary critics.

*Bismil* is written by Sampooran Singh Kalra, popularly known by his pen name 'Gulzar' and the music for this song is composed by Bhardwaj. *Bismil* won best singer and song direction awards in the National Film Award 2015. The song is a mixture of Kashmiri and traditional Pukhto music. The use of the musical Pukhtun traditional stringed lute-like instrument *Rabab* gives it the touch of Pukhto music. 'Rabab inspired us'<sup>296</sup>, and shaped the dance, which is a mixture of folk dance and martial art. The music gave way to the dance which enacted the fight and anger of Haider. 'It is not about the dance, it is about his fight.'<sup>297</sup> With a life of its own on social media, *Bismil* is a unique song. It is different from other Bollywood songs in various ways.

The scenography of *Bismil* presents colourful costumes, masks, painted faces, Kashmiri dress. From Ghazala's dress to the costume of the puppets enacting female roles, red colour is predominantly seen in this song. The huge red puppet which represents the devil (Khurram) also wears a red mask and gloves. Red wooden puppets are used to set the boundary of the stage for this song whose presence becomes more obvious due to the

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<sup>296</sup> Vishal Bhardwaj, '*Haider*'. [DVD video]: an adaptation of William Shakespeare's Hamlet'.

<sup>297</sup> Vishal Bhardwaj.

background of snow-covered ground and surroundings. Symbols like these 'have the virtue of being unshakably traditional and almost universal in impact, like red for danger.'<sup>298</sup> The red colour also plays an important role in the religious rituals, for instance, driving out witches and evil.<sup>299</sup> Perhaps this is why we see the overuse of the colour red in *Bismil* because of its importance as a symbol for danger and violence. Even the lyrics of the song contain the excessive and repetitive use of the word *laal* meaning red colour.

It is not the first time we see the colour red in the movie; the red scarf made by Arshia for her father, is seen throughout the film particularly in those scenes where there is violence, murder and blood. In the closet scene, for instance, Parvaiz and his men try to arrest Haider. Upon refusal, Parvaiz uses the same red scarf to tie Haider's hands. He then orders his men to kill Haider in a pre-planned fake police encounter. On their way they encounter an accident, where Haider gets a chance to kill the two guards (Salman brothers) and escapes.

Later, Ghazala and Haider meet at their own burnt family house. The red scarf is shown lying on the ground near the house where Haider has dropped it accidentally. Parvaiz comes across it while on his usual patrol. He comes inside the ruins of the house. Upon seeing a gun in Haider's hand, he tries to pull out his own gun. Instead, Haider shoots him dead. We see Ghazala in a red dress and red shawl in the same scene, which adds to the

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<sup>298</sup> John Louis Styan, *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice: Symbolism, Surrealism and the Absurd*, Volume. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 3.

<sup>299</sup> Victor Witter Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, (Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 258.

symbolic meaning of the presence of red colour, that is, blood, murder and violence. Thus the red colour, whether in the form of this red scarf or Ghazala's and Arshia's red clothes, or Haider's red wool hat, has symbolic a meaning in the film.

Though composed for the mouse trap scene, *Bismil* signifies other things such as the use and repetition of the word *Jhelum*, a river which originates in Kashmir and flows through Pakistan and India. *Jhelum* is also the title of another song in this film which symbolises the importance and significance of this river. *Jhelum* River originates from Verinag Spring in Kashmir and flows into Pakistan where it is joined by other rivers to form the mighty Indus River. 'The headwaters of all the rivers flowing into Punjab [Pakistan] and then joining as tributaries of the Indus were in those parts of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab [India] that were in India.'<sup>300</sup>

While both countries are heavily dependent on Indus water particularly for agriculture purposes and productions of electricity, Pakistan's 'agriculture and food security depended on some durable agreement with India ensuring uninterrupted flow of waters through the river basins of Jhelum, Ravi, Chenab and Sutlej.'<sup>301</sup> Similar to the claims of Pakistan and India over Kashmir, the two countries have a long history of conflict over the control of

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<sup>300</sup> Jyotindra Nath Dixit, *India-Pakistan in War and Peace*, (Routledge, 2003), pp.124-25.

<sup>301</sup> Dixit, p. 125.

waters of the Indus River. One of the 'source of Indo-Pakistan tensions was the Indus waters dispute.'<sup>302</sup>

This water conflict led to the Indus Water Treaty, a water distribution treaty, in 1960 between the two countries arranged by the World Bank.<sup>303</sup> According to this treaty the control of the three eastern rivers was given to India and the three western rivers, including *Jhelum*, to Pakistan. One of the largest earth filled dams, Mangla Dam, is built on *Jhelum* River to produce electricity. Before the Indus Water Treaty, there was a long history of struggles and fights between Pakistan and India over the waters of these rivers. Looking at it from this angle only, control of Kashmir would also mean control over the water supply which both India and Pakistan depend upon.

There is a recent escalation of tension over the waters between Pakistan and India. The newly established government of Narendra Modi wants to build the huge water storage facilities and canals over its western rivers. 'Experts say Delhi is using the water issue to put pressure on Pakistan in the dispute over Kashmir'<sup>304</sup> because Modi previously expressed that 'blood and water cannot flow at the same time.'<sup>305</sup> This dramatic use of water as a diplomatic weapon has led to the escalation of tension particularly in 2016 where India

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<sup>302</sup> Undala Z Alam, 'Questioning the Water Wars Rationale: A Case Study of the Indus Waters Treaty', *The Geographical Journal*, 168 (2002), 341-353 (p. 342).

<sup>303</sup> Previously called the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

<sup>304</sup> Navin Sing Khadka, 'Are India and Pakistan Set for Water Wars?', *BBC News*, 2016 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-37521897>> [accessed 3 March 2017]

<sup>305</sup> Justin Rowlett, 'Why India's Water Dispute with Pakistan Matters'. *BBC News* 2016 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-37483359>> [accessed 3 March 2017]

has blamed Pakistan for the use of power against the Indian armed forces on the Line of Control (LoC), Kashmir. Indiscriminate firing and shelling of both countries have caused several casualties and deaths on either side of the LoC.

Consider in relation to this political discourse, the song titled *Jhelum* and the repetitive use of the word Jhelum in *Bismil* refers to the blood that flows in the river, whether it be that of Dr. Meer or real-life soldiers and civilians. The following table contains just a few of the lines of *Bismil* which conveys both the message of violence as well as justice.

Lyrics (Roman Urdu)	English Translation
Jhelum – Jehlum Laal lal hua Laal lal hua	Jhelum (River) Red, red, your colour is red (Red due to blood) Red, red, your colour is red
Kashmir ke paani ki taaseerein	The effect of Kashmir’s water
Ghul hayin zanjeerien takdeerein	Chains and fates have dissolved
Zinda hai wo zinda hoga	He (it) is alive, he (it) will be alive again
Mujrim bhi sharminda hoga	And the culprit will be punished

Figure 2 : Lyrics of *Bismil* song from the film *Haider*

The lyrics not only refer to that incident of Dr. Meer but also to the actual bloodshed that has taken place over the decades of war between Pakistan and India over the control of water and Kashmir. However, I argue that *Bismil* also carries a message of hope and peace too. It urges the audience for peace and calls for the stabilization of the region. This is visible in the

last stanza of the song. This is also a message Bhardwaj forwards to the audience, that is, message of peace and stabilization of Kashmir. Apparently, the *Bismil* song seems different from The Mouse Trap scene in *Hamlet*. In addition to serving the same purpose of finding the guilty conscience of Khurram, it enables Bhardwaj to put across the message of peace. *Zinda hay wo zinda hoga | Mujrim bhi sharminda hoga* (He (it) is alive, he (it) will be alive again | And the culprit will be punished) is a message Bhardwaj gives through *Bismil* and *Haider*. The use of the word 'wo' in the lyrics is a personal pronoun and refers to the country Kashmir. The word 'mujrim' meaning culprit (criminal) refers to Khurram, that is, Khurram will be punished for his wrong doings. However, it may also be an allegorical reference to the atrocities and tortures of the Indian army and/or the issue of Pakistani involvement in the politics Kashmir. Thus, it suggests the evil forces which are responsible for the violence and killings in Kashmir will eventually be punished and/or exposed to the people. Though a very sensitive topic, *Haider* successfully exposes such evil forces at work in Kashmir to its audiences. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why it was declared controversial immediately after its release.

In the interview with Bhardwaj and Shahid Kapoor in the UK Asian magazine, Viji Alles ask a question about the sensitivity of the topic in *Haider* while at the same time he refers to another movie which was banned by the Indian Censor Board due to its association with the assassination of Indra Gandhi.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Indra Gandhi was the first (the only so far) female prime minister of India from 1966-1977. She was assassinated in 1984.

Shahid Kapoor immediately replies, 'it's a fictional film' based on *Hamlet*.<sup>307</sup> What makes *Hamlet* such a powerful and most adapted play is that it allows adapters to address and challenge specific national problems in a relatively safe way. In the same interview, Shahid Kapoor also added that *Haider* is not about Kashmir only; it is about any war stricken area and it is the adaptive versions of *Hamlet* which portrays the sufferings of that area. An example of such as adaptation can also be seen in the previously discussed adaptation of Nawar Bulbul in Zaatari camp, Jordan (see chapter 2).

Thus, such adaptations as well as the various scenes they depict may refer to separate issues that may not be directly relevant to the main theme of the film, yet they are equally essential and demand attention. Indeed this illustrates how powerful these adaptations can be to address contemporary issues which are life threatening on a large scale.

The character of Khurram and his private militia reflect the problem of pro-government militia, where they disguise themselves as freedom fighters and carry out various mission in their name. The issue of such private militia groups is not limited to Kashmir only but extends to Pakistan too. They mostly work for those who pay them the most: just like the western arms dealer in Al Bassam's *Al Hamlet Summit*. There is a similar scene in *Haider* where a private militia group takes on the guise of freedom fighters and kill a civilian before posting the video of the killing on a social media. The presence of such private militia and foreign fighters is a hot topic in

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<sup>307</sup> Vishal Bhardwaj and Shahid Kapoor, 'Haider- Vishal Bhardwaj and Shahid Kapoor', in *UK Asian*, interviewed by Viji Alles (United Kingdom, 2014) < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Cp38K4L2sg> > (accessed 21 March 2016)



Pakistan. The number of private militant groups and foreign fighters disguised as Muslims is on the rise, particularly in the tribal area of Pakistan. The number of foreign fighters in the tribal areas alone were 'estimated to be more than 8000 as per a report presented to the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Yousaf Raza Gillani in July 2008.'<sup>308</sup> This also reminds us of the non-Islamic behaviour of demonic permanent tattoos found on the bodies of the terrorists (disguised as Muslims) who attacked Peshawar airport in KP, Pakistan in 2012.<sup>309</sup> While tattoos are forbidden in Islam, this incident raised several alarming questions due to the fact that the attackers claimed to be Muslims. Whether he was a foreign fighter or a converted Muslim, who tattooed his body before conversion, is a debatable question, however, it certainly posed serious challenges for the Pakistani government to tackle terrorism.

*Haider*, for instance, also revolves around another grave issue of missing people and/or enforced disappearances. The issue of enforced disappearances in Kashmir is a problem which has been addressed in the media reports for decades. In Kashmir, civilians are taken into custody mostly by the Indian army, mostly for the reason and/or slight suspicion of an individual's involvement in activities against India. 'Kashmiris live in a state of constant fear of arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, sexual harassment, torture, and custodial deaths.'<sup>310</sup> They are rarely reunited with

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<sup>308</sup> Sana Jamal and M Ahsan, 'Tehrik-E-Taliban Pakistan-Analyzing the Network of Terror', *International Relations and Insights Analysis Report 6* (2015), p. 25.

<sup>309</sup> Jamal and Ahsan, p. 25.

<sup>310</sup> Haley Duschinski, 'Destiny Effects: Militarization, State Power, and Punitive Containment in Kashmir Valley', *Anthropological quarterly*, 82 (2009), 691-717 (p. 704).

their families again, an example of which can be seen in the case of Dr. Meer. Besides him, we see glimpses of other disappeared people particularly in scenes where Haider searches for his father.

According to the United Nation's International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2006:

For the purposes of this Convention, "enforced disappearance" is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.<sup>311</sup>

Enforced disappearance thus involves systematic kidnapping, hiding and eventual murder of people who are considered by the state, or by any political institution, as a danger to the foundations or vital interests of the political system.<sup>312</sup>

The issue of forced disappearances is not new in Kashmir and despite all the efforts of the Human Rights organizations, there hardly seems to be a decrease in the number of related cases. Though it is hard to trace the exact number of the enforced disappearances, according to surveys conducted by Human Rights bodies, 'more than 80,000 people have died in the conflict so far, and 8,000-10,000 youth disappeared in [Indian] custody since 1989.'<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> United Nations Human Rights, 'Committee on Enforced Disappearances', 2016. <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CED/Pages/ConventionCED.aspx>> [accessed 28 September 2016]

<sup>312</sup> United Nations Human Rights, 'Committee on Enforced Disappearances', 2016. <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CED/Pages/ConventionCED.aspx>> [accessed 28 September 2016]

<sup>313</sup> Gowhar Geelani, 'Kashmir: The Forgotten Conflict', *Race & Class*, 56 (2014), 29-40 (p. 31).

The Association of Parents of Disappeared People (APDP) in Kashmir, has been developed due to the vast number of such disappearances. APDP helps to find disappeared people. Initially started as movement, it has become an organization against enforced disappearance. The chairperson of APDP, Parveena Ahanger, recently (2016) visited the United Kingdom to address this issue to a wider audience and to raise awareness internationally about it. Similar to the issue of enforced disappearances addressed by Haider, Parveena Ahanger recently (2016) visited the UK to speak on the issue.

Banners of APDP and the play cards with slogans and/or pictures of the disappeared people are frequently shown in the scenes in the film where Haider actively searches for his father. Mostly, women hold play cards with 'Half Widow'<sup>314</sup> written on it too. Ghazala practically lives a life of a half widow after the disappearance of Dr Meer and before the marriage with Khurram. It is because she is not certain of Dr. Meer's death. During this time, she even uses the term half widow for herself.

Half Widow is a term commonly used for those women whose husbands are either missing or have disappeared in the Indian army's custody in the ongoing conflict in Kashmir. These half widows carry a burden of sufferings and anxieties where they are unsure of their as well as their husbands' fates. After the disappearance of the husband, women are placed on the threshold between waiting and living of knowing and not knowing what comes next. For half widows, whether the disappeared husbands will return or not is a

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<sup>314</sup> These banners and play cards are in English Language.

question for which, at times, they have to wait for decades. On top of it, the law fails to identify or clarify the marital status of these women.<sup>315</sup>

The lives of the half widows are uncertain because they may find evidence about the deaths of their husbands at any time. Every time mass and unmarked graves are found in the Indian occupied Kashmir, the chances to reunite with their husbands decrease. There is a reference to such an unmarked grave in Kashmir in *Haider*. The graveyard is in Boniyar village, where Haider's father is buried, and is only marked with numbers. Haider's father's grave is marked as number 318. His grave is identified because of the picture that he had in his shirt. Mostly, gravediggers are the only people who can identify such graves as can be seen in Haider's father's case.

'There are an estimated 6,000 mass and unmarked graves in different parts of Indian-controlled Kashmir'.<sup>316</sup> The graveyard scene in *Haider* reflects upon hundreds and thousands of real life stories of Kashmiris looking for their disappeared family members, who eventually end up looking for evidence in these mass and/or unmarked graves. One such instance of a real-life case is of a 22-year long search for Razia Sultana's father who disappeared in the village of Boniyar in Kashmir (the same place which has been mentioned in *Haider*). It was this 22-year quest for her father which ultimately led the Human Rights groups to the unmarked graves in Boniyar. In Boniyar, it was the combined effort of Razia Sultana and the department of Human Rights and Justice in Kashmir to put forward a preliminary report called "Buried

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<sup>315</sup> Ritu Dewan, 'What Does Azadi Mean to You?', *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir*, (London: Zed Books, 2002), p. 151.

<sup>316</sup> Geelani, p. 31.

Evidence”, which revealed the presence of 2,700 unmarked graves spread across 55 villages of Kupwara, Baramulla, and Bandipora districts.<sup>317</sup>

In 2003, Atta Mohammad, 65, a farmer, was forced by the police and the Indian Army to become a gravedigger on what was until then a wasteland. “I wasn’t a professional. It took me four hours to dig a grave,” he recalls. “But as the body count rose, I was digging graves at a faster rate.”<sup>318</sup>

He remembers burying the first body. “That night, I vomited. I couldn’t sleep at all. The mutilated face kept haunting me,” he says. The experience made Mohammad decide not to dig any more, but the bullet ridden bodies started to come in threes and fours; one day the toll was nine. Just like cops and soldiers, families too started pouring in, but very few were successful in identifying the graves of their relatives.<sup>319</sup>

Atta Muhammad was a grave digger in Kashmir who died on 11<sup>th</sup> of January, 2016 at the age of 75. He claimed to have buried around 235 unidentified dead bodies brought to him by the Indian forces and police. He was one of the few witnesses who testified in the government’s investigation of unmarked grave case in Kashmir. A tribute was paid to him by APDP, ‘in the last 25 years of violent repression, Atta Muhammad received 235 unidentified bullet-ridden dead bodies; most of whom the armed forces claimed are [were] militants killed in encounters. This included the dead body of a six month old baby girl.’<sup>320</sup> Over time, when possible, Atta

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<sup>317</sup> Shoma Chaudhury, 'The Breached Moat Signals That Something Is Shifting in Indian Democracy', *Tehelka*, 27 October 2012, p. 10.

<sup>318</sup> Chaudhury, p. 10.

<sup>319</sup> Chaudhury, p. 10.

<sup>320</sup> Nasreen Ganai, 'Kashmiris Pay Tribute to Brave Loc Grave Digger, 2016 < <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-3394394/Kashmiris-pay-tribute-brave-grave-digger-buried-235-bullet-ridden-corpse-Line-Control.html> > [accessed 4 October 2016]

Muhammad kept belongings of the dead for the family members of the deceased for identification purposes. In *Haider*, we see a similar aged character, who shows the belongings of Dr. Meer to Haider for the identification of the former's grave.

The issue of enforced disappearances is not limited to Kashmir; it also extends to other countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, China and Tibet too. There are hundreds and thousands of cases of such disappearances. According to the media reports, the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (CIED) was seized with 1,265 cases as of Dec [December] 31 [2014, in Pakistan]. But the Defence of Human Rights (DHR) claims that the total number of cases of missing persons [in Pakistan] is 5,149 and 252 of them surfaced in 2014 alone.<sup>321</sup> The number of missing people in Pakistan is on the rise. Thus, *Haider* not only appeals to the Kashmiri audience but to the Pakistani, Afghani and worldwide audience too.

According to the 2013 Human Rights report, the 'authorities resorted to extra-legal measures such as enforced disappearance and strict house arrest'<sup>322</sup> in Tibet, Hong Kong and Macau. Although with different political motives, Tibet's situation resembles Kashmir's particularly in terms of extrajudicial killings, executions without proper trials, enforced disappearances, mass arrests, suppression of freedom of speech and suppression of the right to choose their governments. Similar to the Pak-

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<sup>321</sup> Nisar Iqbal, 'SC Seeks Report on Number of Missing People', *DAWN*, 2015 <<https://www.dawn.com/news/1156658>> [accessed 26 July 2016]

<sup>322</sup> '2013 Human Rights Reports / Shenyang, China - Consulate General of the United States', <[www.shenyang.usembassy-china.org.cn](http://www.shenyang.usembassy-china.org.cn)> [accessed 28 September 2016]

India control over Kashmir, 'under the banner maintaining social stability and combating separatism, the government [China] engaged in the severe repression of Tibet's unique religious, cultural and linguistic heritage.'<sup>323</sup> Thus, *Haider* may appeal to the people of Tibet particularly in terms of the problems mentioned above.

Despite her rejection of revenge, Ghazala commits suicide which in a way resembles the self-immolation acts of Tibetan monks and nuns. There are separate figures of 83 and 26 self-immolation acts recorded in the years 2012 and 2016 respectively. Also, the message of non-violence in *Haider* coincides with the philosophy and teaching of non-violence of the Dalai Lama. Both suicide attacks and self-immolation acts are opposite to the teachings of Islam and Buddhist philosophy of nonviolence respectively, however, apparently, they are used by members of either side as a weapon and last resort to put across their respective messages. The representation of such acts in adaptive versions of *Hamlet* such as *Haider* relate to real life people and incidents.

Indian external affairs minister, S.M Krishna in his meeting with China's foreign minister, Yang Jiechi expressed that 'Kashmir is to us, what Tibet, Taiwan are to you.'<sup>324</sup> The resemblances of various circumstances in *Hamlet*

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<sup>323</sup> Siddharth Varadarajan, 'India Tells China: Kashmir is to us what Tibet, Taiwan are to you', *The Hindu*, 2010 < <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/India-tells-China-Kashmir-is-to-us-what-Tibet-Taiwan-are-to-you/article15687050.ece> > [accessed 28 September 2016]

<sup>324</sup> Siddharth Varadarajan, 'India Tells China: Kashmir is to us what Tibet, Taiwan are to you', *The Hindu*. 2010. < <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/India-tells-China-Kashmir-is-to-us-what-Tibet-Taiwan-are-to-you/article15687050.ece> > [accessed 28 September 2016]

as well as *Haider*, could well relate to the issues of Tibet. However, there are various Chinese adaptations of *Hamlet*, such as *Prince of the Himalayas* which attract our attention for somewhat similar reasons. *Prince of the Himalayas* is set in Tibet. Numerous parallels can be drawn between *Hamlet*, *Prince of the Himalayas* and China-Tibet conflict. However, as necessary for this thesis, and due to the difference in political motives of Pak-India involvement in Kashmir, the following section only focuses on the revenge aspect of the film. I analyse how the topic of revenge is dealt with in *Prince of the Himalayas*; and consider specifically whether or not it rejects revenge in the Tibetan context.

### *Prince of the Himalayas*

*Prince of the Himalayas* is an adaptation of *Hamlet* which is set in pre-Buddhist Tibet under the shadow of Himalayas. It is directed by Sherwood Hu and is the combined production of Shanghai Film Studios and Hus Entertainment. It was released in 2007. *Prince of the Himalayas* retells the story of *Hamlet* but mostly in accordance with the philosophical principles of Confucius in order to promote peace and living in harmony with nature. *Prince of the Himalayas* rereads *Hamlet* as a revenge play and, as a result, becomes a mere anti-revenge film. It deviates from the original story and loses its connection with Shakespeare's tragedy. *Prince of the Himalayas* is therefore the story of Lahmoklodan (the Hamlet figure) and his inner struggle about revenge, that is, whether to take revenge or to forgive. It reminds us of China's first adaptation of *Hamlet* on screen by the name of *Frailty, Thy Name is Woman*, released by Shanghai studio in 1948. While 'it tells the story of a woman who marries twice and struggles for



independence' it has 'little connection with Shakespeare's monumental drama.'<sup>325</sup>

The controversy about the title of the film may offer a hint about the China-Tibet conflict. But this is not to say that the film offers a deep criticism of the China-Tibet conflict as one might expect from it. Where *Prince of the Himalayas* provides few hints in the film about the China-Tibet conflict, it by no means offer a deep criticism of Chinese policies and nor does it address the problems of Tibet. The original title of this film was *Prince of Tibet* which was rejected by the Chinese film authorities.<sup>326</sup> According to Yujing M.A., 'there are three alternative titles for the film, *King of Tibet*, *Prince of the Himalayas*, and *The Legend of A Prince*. It is striking that the first choice *King of Tibet* was not approved by the Chinese film authorities.'<sup>327</sup> The reason 'may be that "Tibet" was deemed to connote a separate entity and "King" was seen to suggest a majority royal rule; by contrast, the "Himalayas" as a designator points to extraordinary natural phenomena and to a vaguer set of regional meanings.'<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Wu, Hui. Shakespeare in Chinese Cinema, *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance*, 10(25), (2013), 71-81 (p.74).

<sup>326</sup> Mark Thornton Burnett, *Shakespeare and World Cinema*, (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 140.

<sup>327</sup> MA Yujing, 'Sexuality and Silence: The Representation of Ophelia in a Tibetan Adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet', *早稻田大学大学院文学研究科紀要. 第2分冊* 61(2015), 135-144 (p. 135).

<sup>328</sup> Yujing, p. 135.

*Prince of the Himalayas*, which is a 'story of love and forgiveness'<sup>329</sup>, 'did not achieve commercial success, but has since attracted attention in the academic field and has won prizes in festivals in Morocco, Italy and the U.S.'<sup>330</sup> Hui Wu may claim the popularity of the film; however, it has attracted little attention in the academic field since it was released in 2006. The limited discussion that is available on the film mostly expresses warm admiration for its anti-revenge nature, representation of the themes of forgiveness and peace, and portrayal of Tibet as a character.

Critics such as Ingo Berensmeyer explain this failure of the adaptation by suggesting that the *Prince of the Himalayas* merely used '*Hamlet* as a vehicle to present a rather touristy perspective on the quaintness of ancient Tibet.'<sup>331</sup> He further adds that *Prince of Himalayas* failed 'since its concerns, both formally and in terms of narrative content, are more local than transcultural.'<sup>332</sup> However, I argue that the reason for its failure is that despite its adaptation of *Hamlet*, it fails to understand the technicalities and dramaturgy of the play. As a result, it alienates itself from the original tragedy and becomes a mere revenge story in a new context.

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<sup>329</sup> Yujing, p. 135.

<sup>330</sup> Hui Wu, 'Shakespeare in Chinese Cinema', *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance*, 10 (2013), 71-81 (p. 75).

<sup>331</sup> Ingo Berensmeyer, 'Cultural Ecology and Chinese Hamlets', *New Literary History*, 42 (2011), 419-38 (p. 429).

<sup>332</sup> Berensmeyer, p. 432.

*Prince of the Himalayas* story

The film starts with Kulo-ngam (the Claudius figure), on a snowy landscape begging for forgiveness from the 'spirit of heavens'. The wolf-woman, a character solely created for the movie to represent good, piety and justice, appears in the same scene and utters, 'the king is dead, with a new king a river of blood will flow'.<sup>333</sup> This dialogue is very symbolic and refers to two things. First, it refers to the blood that will be spilt in the process of Lhamoklodan's (the Hamlet figure) revenge. Second, it refers to the blood of Odsaluyang (the Ophelia figure) that flows in the water while she gives birth to her and Lhamoklodan's baby. The wolf-woman rescues the baby while Odsaluyang dies.

When Kulo-ngam and Nanm (the Gertrude figure) were young, they were in love with each other but Nanm was made to marry the old King instead. After their marriage the old King found out about the previous love life of the two. He planned to kill them both. In order to protect himself and Nanm, Kulo-ngam had to kill the old King. He then became king and married Nanm.

Just as in *Hamlet*, the ghost of the old King appears and reveals the secret of his death to Lhamoklodan. It is the wolf woman character who later reveals the true story to Lhamoklodan. Torn between the thoughts of taking or not taking revenge, Lhamoklodan arranges for the play within the play to validate the words of the ghost. The wolf-woman troupe performs the mousetrap play. She later tells Lhamoklodan that his revenge and stay in Jiabo will bring disaster and cause deaths. Lhamoklodan leaves Jiabo but

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<sup>333</sup> English subtitles.

returns back in order to face his fate. On his return he finds out that Odsaluyang is dead.

To add to the misery, Lhamoklodan find out that his real father is not the old King but Kulo-ngam. Meanwhile, as Lhamoklodan had killed Lessar's (the Laertes figure) father, Lessar challenges the former to a duel. To ensure his success, Kulo-ngam poisons the sword of Lhamoklodan (Hamlet). However, he exchanges his sword with Lessar at the beginning of the fight, intentionally. Lessar strikes Lhamoklodan and injures him. Certain of her son's death, Nanm drinks the poisoned wine which is meant for Lessar and dies.

While Lhamoklodan is injured the ghost of his father appears again and asks him to complete the revenge by killing Kulo-ngam. The wolf-woman also appears and discourages him. In order to put Lhamoklodan out of the misery of not knowing whether to take or not to take revenge, Kulo-ngam kills himself with the poisoned sword. This reminds us of Gertrude's suicide in *Haider* in order to save her son. The wolf-women brings the new-born son of Lhamoklodan which she rescued from the river. Lhamoklodan declares him as the new King of Jiabo with the hope of spreading love and discouraging hate and revenge.

#### Discussion

Lhamoklodan's "question is not 'to be or not to be', but to seek revenge or to forgive."<sup>334</sup> This dilemma of Lhamoklodan becomes complicated when the

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<sup>334</sup> Hui Wu, 'Shakespeare in Chinese Cinema', *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance*, 10 (2013), 71-81 (p. 77).

uncle against whom he sought vengeance turned out to be his real father. Apart from highlighting the Tibetan (in fact Chinese) social taboos of love, where it is unthinkable for a man to fall in love with his sister in law, it seems hard to determine what Hu would achieve with this twist. Potentially, this twist may help Lhamoklodan to make up his mind about the revenge. It could well instigate him to immediately take revenge or not take it at all. Chances of inclination towards not taking revenge are more. The similarity between Lhamoklodan and his son's birth, where both are born outside the contract of marriage, enable Lhamoklodan to realise the situation of his mother and father. All of this visualises the internal conflict of Lhamoklodan.

Similarly, the two characters — the ghost and wolf-woman — add to the misery of Lhamoklodan's internal conflict. The ghost of his father urges him to take revenge from Kulo-ngam. In contrast the wolf woman discourages him to do so. Lhamoklodan struggles to make up his mind. The two characters represent good and evil, that is, the ghost acts as an evil figure whereas the wolf-woman acts as an embodiment of good. Both try to influence Lhamoklodan. Left stranded, he is tempted and compelled throughout the film to side with one or the other. The ghost reminds Lhamoklodan 'your choice is the ultimate truth', thus leaving the burden of taking or not taking revenge on his shoulders. Lhamoklodan must choose which side he wants to be on in order to get out of this dilemma: to revenge or to forgive.

To choose between the ghost and wolf-woman is what torments Lhamoklodan. The wolf woman and ghost, two characters of the film, symbolically represent the dual-state of mind of Lhamoklodan. Torn apart,

Lhamoklodan must choose and take sides. Though too late, Lahmoklodan does listen to the wolf-woman in the end. She brings the boy, Lhamoklodan and Odsaluyuang's son, who is declared as the new King. 'In Tibetan adaptation, the Prince lives on in his heir so that life is an endless circle, and love eternal.'<sup>335</sup> The film ends on a note of hope and love in the form of the young King. '*Prince of the Himalayas* eventually overcomes hatred and teaches love.'<sup>336</sup>

*Prince of the Himalayas* extracted a message of rejection of revenge from *Hamlet*. Although it establishes the value of the play and its dramaturgical construction to reject revenge, *Prince of the Himalayas* does not offer much beyond the scope of rejection of revenge. In a way, it explains why it has attracted little attention particularly in the academic field and that too from revenge angle. Thus, it suggests that the film does not do justice to the text (of *Hamlet*) and, therefore, fails to understand the play, which has the scope to address contemporary problems around the world as demonstrated by *Haider*.

Similarly, Bhardwaj in *Haider* maintains *Hamlet's* ambiguities, for instance, in his treatment of the character of Roohdar. By contrast, Hu introduces a wolf-woman as an anti-ghost-revenge character, which dissolves the mystery and ambiguity around both characters. The role of the wolf-woman is limited to ease the internal conflict of Lahmoklodan and stop him from taking revenge and/or inflicting harm on himself and others around him. Recalling

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<sup>335</sup> Wu, p. 180.

<sup>336</sup> Wu, p. 79.

the remarks regarding the film's role to discourage revenge and hatred, and encourage peace and love, the message of the wolf-woman coincides with the message of this film. Thus, *Prince of the Himalayas* acting as the wolf-woman potentially carries a message of peace and love for its audience (but mostly for the people of Tibet as the film is in the local Tibetan dialect rather than mandarin or English) who may have the potential to act or react violently because of the China-Tibet conflict. For instance, though there are no self-immolations in the film, it may put across its message to those Buddhists who either encourage or favour the act of self-immolation. Both *Haider* and *Prince of the Himalayas* seek to naturalise *Hamlet* in different countries. Both successfully reject revenge in the films as well as in their respective countries by inspiring the audience to disapprove of it. But *Haider*, in addition, is politically complex and has widespread success whereas *Prince of the Himalayas* lacks this complexity and success.

In terms of *Haider*, with the capacity to reach a wide range of audience, the use of an adaptive *Hamlet* portrays Kashmir the way Kashmiris would have wanted to present it before the audience to speak for them. Inspired by *Haider*, Theatre for Kashmir presented a Kashmiri adaptation of *Hamlet*, *Uff Ti Karakh Na* in a local language, which adds to the tally *Hamlet's* adaptations and their value to address issues around the world. Performed in August 2015 in Sri Partap College, Kashmir, while depicting a Catch 22 situation, this adaptation revolves around the 'indecisiveness of Hamza [Hamlet] who ultimately may or may not reach a decision.'<sup>337</sup> Along with

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<sup>337</sup> 'KashmirLife, 'Hamlet's Kashmir version "Uff Ti Karakh Na!" staged at SP College', 2015 < <http://www.kashmirLife.net/hamlets-kashmir-version-uff-ti-karakh-na-staged-at-sp-college-84208/>> [accessed 6 October 2016]

academicians and a general audience, this adaptation attracted English Literature students from universities as it is part of the curriculum at university level in Kashmir.

Such adaptations of *Hamlet* and the depiction of Hamlet as an indecisive protagonist refer to the similar old fashioned criticism of the play as discussed in the Introduction to this thesis. *Hamlet* as a revenge play and Hamlet as a procrastinator may appear an out-dated criticism of the play. But the prevalent culture of revenge in *KP* and the acceptance of revenge in Kashmir because of the ongoing conflict make the revenge plot more relevant and important than ever.

However, there is a need to change the way it is taught in *KP* universities. Instead of presenting the play as a mere Elizabethan revenge story and Hamlet as a procrastinator, there is a need to make the play more socially useful. Therefore, there is a need for a change to use the play as an educational tool to reject revenge and address the contemporary problems of Pakistan, particularly *KP*.

While there is enough material for students and teachers to draw a comparison between *Hamlet* and Pukhtun culture, the next chapter demonstrates the potential and influence of the play to enable young students to reject revenge in real life. Does Hamlet have the same capacity to address the problem of revenge in *KP*? Can *Hamlet* inspire and make the young students of *KP* question the necessity of revenge in Pukhtun culture? These are the questions that I will be looking into in the next chapter.



## Chapter 5: Influence of *Hamlet*: an Investigation

### Background

With Education, one's ignorance will be diminished. Revenge culture in our traditional society will disappear.<sup>338</sup>

#### Response 1

Public educational institutes teach 'manners' to pupils. Some pupils respect properly-mannered teachers more than their parents. I notice a big difference in attitudes between pupils who have acquired proper manners at schools and parents without an education. Pupils also learn skills to solve daily problems. They learn to listen to others and respect their opinions. In traditional society [for instance Pukhtun society], people use violence to solve problems.<sup>339</sup>

#### Response 2

These are the responses of Executive District Officers (EDOs) of Education Department in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KP) recorded by Taro Komatsu for his project. The project focused on the status (and impact) of education in Post Devolution Pakistan.<sup>340</sup> Komatsu's study recognized that 'the society was

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<sup>338</sup> Taro Komatsu, 'Qualitative Inquiry into Local Education Administration in Pakistan', *International journal of educational development*, 29 (2009), 219-226 (p. 224).

<sup>339</sup> Komatsu, p. 224.

<sup>340</sup> In Post Devolution plan, local government bodies are authorised to run the administration of their institutes (departments) with minimal interference from the federal government. However, the administration and supervision of curricula remains with the federal government and provincial governments must take

changing and education had to deal with the changing social circumstances.<sup>341</sup> The participants of his study emphasised the role of education and identified it as 'a change agent in reducing violence prevalent in their [KP's] society.'<sup>342</sup> They also referred to real life cases to highlight the influence of education on students and teachers. However, questions such as how and what precise measures are needed to make this role of education more effective and productive to diminish violence need further probing.

Although Komatsu's study deals with matters relating to primary and secondary education in KP, the responses of the EDOs give us an insight into KP's education system in general. The responses also emphasize the role of teachers to be equally important as that of education. Response 1, for instance, suggests the role education plays in the reduction of the prevalent culture of revenge. The statement seems arbitrary particularly in the present-day Pakistan where there is a rise in the criticism about the inclusion of violent materials in the existing curricula (textbooks) of schools as well as higher education.

While policies are adopted and strategies made by the Pakistani government to tackle terrorism, questions are raised by critics about the educational system and the respective curricula, for instance, 'have we ever sought to

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approval from the curricula wing of the Federal Ministry of Education in Islamabad, Pakistan for the publication of textbooks.

<sup>341</sup> Taro Komatsu, 'Decentralization and Accountability Contexts: District Education Officers' Perspectives on Education in Post-Devolution Pakistan', *國際教育協力論集*, 14 (2011), 189-203 (P. 195).

<sup>342</sup> Komatsu, p. 195.

question how our educational system might be promoting extremism? Have our curriculums been properly scrutinised for inappropriate, extreme content, e.g- why is it that primary school students are exposed to sensitive content (such as warfare, conflicts, ethnicity, sectarianism and hatred) at such an impressionable age? [...] Have we considered that education can work, instead, to counter extremism and promote peace? ...Unfortunately, the values are lacking in a system, where books often build letter recognition fluency with examples such as 'g for gun' and 't for tank.'<sup>343</sup>

Similarly, the Compulsory Education of Arabic Bill 2015 is still currently under discussion in the National Assembly of Pakistan, which addresses the question of whether the lack of Arabic as a subject in the curriculum was the cause of terrorism in Pakistan. Where on the one hand a member of the National Assembly Parveen Masood Bhatti stated that terrorism is increasing because students were not studying Arabic, she also claimed:

We have started focusing on the English language, and parents put their children in English-medium schools and do not bother teaching their children the Arabic language. It is because of this attitude that terrorism is increasing.<sup>344</sup>

Naïve as it may sound, questions like these are appearing in the media reports and academic articles more often than before. The federal education sector not only monitors the curricula but they also put in continuous efforts for rectifications. However, every time proposals are made to change the

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<sup>343</sup> Mohammad Ali, 'Extremism in Books', in *DAWN*, 2016) <<https://www.dawn.com/news/1261474>> [accessed 14 February 2017]

<sup>344</sup> Ikram Junaidi, 'Terrorism Increasing because Children are not Taught Arabic', *DAWN* 2017 < <http://www.dawn.com/news/1314975/> > [accessed 17 February 2017]

curricula in Pakistani schools and colleges,<sup>345</sup> for instance, the curriculum of Islamic studies, there always appears to be a debate over the inclusion or exclusion of certain aspects of Islam, such as, *Jihad*. Topics like ‘In Northwest Pakistani Schools, Jihad is back on the books’<sup>346</sup>, ‘KPK [KP] government excludes Jihad verses from textbook’<sup>347</sup>, and ‘Verses on Jihad in syllabus: KP to rectify “mistake”’,<sup>348</sup> appear in the media reports in Pakistan more frequently than before. Several changes are made ‘to the curriculum to indirectly promote peace since violence had badly affected children in the region’.<sup>349</sup>

However, after protest from religious factions of the society particularly religion-based political parties, the excluded material on *Jihad* was reintroduced into the curriculum of Islamic studies by the Education Department of *KP*. Such inclusion or exclusion apparently may seem a simple attempt to modify or develop the curriculum, but it can have a significant impact on the minds of the young students. There are more chances that the inclusion of the decontextualized verses in the textbooks

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<sup>345</sup> Pakistani universities are autonomous bodies. They are allowed to make changes to the curricula by their concerned selected bodies within the universities.

<sup>346</sup> RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, ‘In Pakistani Schools, Jihad Is Back’, 2015 <<http://www.rferl.org/a/26831708.html>> [accessed 16 February 2017]

<sup>347</sup> Ikram Ullah, ‘KPK Government Excludes Jihad Verses from Textbook’, *TheNewsTribune* 2012 <<https://www.thenewstribune.com/2012/03/07/kpk-govt-excludes-jihad-verses-from-textbook/>> [accessed 16 February 2017]

<sup>348</sup> Sadia Shah, ‘Verses on Jihad in Syllabus: KP to Rectify “Mistake”’, *DAWN*, 2013 <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1036457>> [accessed 16 February 2017]

<sup>349</sup> Sadia Shah, ‘Verses on Jihad in Syllabus: KP to Rectify “Mistake”’, 2013 <<http://www.dawn.com/news/1036457>> [accessed 16 February 2017]

may present messages contrary to the Quran. Perhaps, they may also appear contrary when they are analysed outside the context of the textbook.

For such reasons, the Pakistani education system — the curricula and textbooks — have been under scrutiny for quite some time, both within and outside the country. Various material has been identified as violent in the curricula particularly at primary and secondary levels as well as in the religious schools (Madrassas). There is a rapid increase in relevant studies particularly post 9/11 about such contents with a view to removing it from the curricula. Iftikhar Ahmad's study on relation of Pakistani curricula, state and religion in 2004, Dr. Marie Lall's study on the comparison of extreme content in Pakistani and Indian text books in 2008, and Christine Fair's study on Pakistani Madrassas education and militancy in Kashmir in 2008 are just a few of the notable examples.

While such studies successfully point out the violent materials in Pakistani curricula, there is a common understanding behind these projects.

'Individuals exposed to extreme educational content, supported by violent culture and structural problems of their respective country can produce violence.'<sup>350</sup> However, the inclusion of Jihad related topics in the Pakistani curricula does not mean that students are taught and encouraged to go for Jihad. They are primarily meant to bring awareness in the young students and question the necessity of Jihad, particularly the way it is misrepresented and misunderstood in the current scenario of the war against terrorism.

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<sup>350</sup> Faisal Munir, 'Understanding the Role of Education in Promoting Violence and Terrorism in Pakistan', (MS thesis UiT Norges arktiske universitet 2015), p. 6.

Therefore, I argue that similar material which may show (or may have a tendency to promote) violence, for instance, revenge in *Hamlet*, may not necessarily promote violence and revenge. Instead, it may actually help to reject revenge and discourage violence, and thereby prove a useful educational tool for rehabilitation and social reforms. This, however, does emphasize the role of teachers to use the violent material for constructive purposes.

This chapter investigates the violent material in terms of revenge in *Hamlet* and further explores its influence on young students. Rather than promoting violence and revenge, in practice it does the opposite and invites them to question the same revenge. Hence, in the case of *Hamlet*, it may act as a source to discourage violence rather than promote it. It is not the English language (or Arabic language or any other language) or studying in English-medium schools which promotes terrorism. Instead, such teaching materials have the potential to prevent terrorism. Indeed, it may not be the content of the course which has the tendency to promote violence but how the material is taught. Questioning violence and revenge heavily depends on the role of the teachers and how they use the materials provided in the curriculum.

This effective and influential role of teachers is also evident from Response 2 of Komatsu's study. It not only highlights the role of teachers to influence students but also show the use of violence by Pukhtuns as a means to solve problems. Therefore, through education, teachers can guide students not to use violence as a means to solve problems. They can also educate them to be non-violent in circumstances, which may incite violence and situations where society may expect them to be violent. Hence, Pakistani teachers,

through drama (*Hamlet*) have the platform to reject revenge, which would eventually help in the decrease of violence in the region.

This chapter seeks to ascertain the experience of *Hamlet* as a dramaturgical construct, which questions the revenge ethos, and is capable of modifying entrenched beliefs amongst young Pakistani students engaged in reading of the play. It provides concrete evidence for the way in which *Hamlet* is read in a culture where revenge is both current and pervasive. It also investigates and explores the understanding of the students and teachers of *Hamlet* and its relevance to Pukhtun culture particularly in terms of revenge: whether or not the students and teachers associate and relate incidents of *Hamlet* with the real-life incidents in Pukhtun society. If so, what is the impact and influence of *Hamlet* on the students? And whether the participants merely compare and relate *Hamlet* to Pukhtun culture particularly in terms of revenge and do not use it as a medium to reject revenge.

My investigation also includes a consideration of teachers' perspectives on the inclusion of the play in the syllabus of the *KP* universities and their opinions of the relevance (or not) of its content to Pukhtun culture. The purpose here is to add to the syllabus such relevance particularly about revenge and its subsequent rejection, in order to help the future students of *KP* universities to avoid Hamlet's situation. This inclusion in return may help the teachers to teach *Hamlet* by not merely equating it with *badal* but rather to compare, question, and thereby reject it.

This investigation determines the value of drama in education and in social development. While numerous studies have been conducted on Pakistani

Urdu dramas, no significant research has been conducted on the value and influence of *Hamlet* in a Pukhtun context.

## Methodology

The research methodology for this investigation is essentially a mixed method strategy which makes use of an interpretive approach.<sup>351</sup>

‘Interpretive research involves using issues, language, and approaches to research that empower the participants, recognize their silenced voices, honour their individual differences, and position both the researcher’s and the participant’s views in a historic/personal/political context’.<sup>352</sup> Jennifer Mason supports the view that mixed methods enhance and extend the logic of qualitative explanations about the social world.<sup>353</sup> Mixing methods are mostly qualitatively driven but the quantitative method adds to the validity of the data collected.

This study was conducted in two parts concurrently open-ended semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C) and a closed ended questionnaire with a three point likert scale (see Appendix C). There was a total of thirty

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<sup>351</sup> In accordance with the Ethical approval, ID Number 14053, of the University of Southampton, all the names and details of the participants are confidential. Please see Appendix B for the ethical approval. I have not attached the research protocol in the Appendixes of this thesis for the reason of the complete confidentiality of the participants.

<sup>352</sup> John W Creswell, and others, 'How Interpretive Qualitative Research Extends Mixed Methods Research', *Research in the Schools*, 13 (2006), 1-11 (p. 5).

<sup>353</sup> Jennifer Mason, 'Mixing methods in a qualitatively driven way', *Qualitative Research*, 6 (2006), 9-25 (p. 9).



six participants, including three teachers of English drama who teach *Hamlet* in KP universities. Thirty participants were selected for the questionnaire and six participants for the interviews. The class of thirty students, who have read *Hamlet* in the class, were selected randomly whereas the six participants for the interviews were selected for a reason. Three of the interviewees were students who have similar real life experiences to Hamlet. Not only had these three students experienced revenge like Hamlet but they had successfully refrained from it (unlike Hamlet). The other three interviewees were the teachers of English drama who taught *Hamlet* in KP universities and had previously expressed the presence of similarities between *Hamlet* and Pukhtun culture.

The responses of the students collected give us first-hand information that inform us of the way these students perceive *Hamlet* when they read it in class. The way *Hamlet* is initially perceived by the students in the context of revenge coupled with the old-fashioned criticism of the play, as discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, may not prove helpful in combating revenge. In fact, it may present revenge as a justified action. As a result, this does not do justice to the play because it is structured to reject revenge rather than promote it.

Despite the obvious parallels between the revenge matter in *Hamlet* and Pukhtun culture observed in the responses of the majority of participants, the old-fashioned criticism does not allow them, particularly the teachers, to reject revenge. Thus they miss the opportunity to use the play as an educational tool for social reform by rejecting revenge in the region. It is therefore essential to teach *Hamlet* in a more sophisticated way, which does

justice to the play as well fulfilling the role of a social reformer by combating *badal* in *KP*. This study is the first of its kind and no significant research has been carried out in regard to rejection of revenge through the use of English Drama.

Details of all the participants are confidential and certain details, which could lead to the identification of the participants, are omitted in order to keep complete confidentiality. The transcriptions are not included in the appendices of this thesis but where necessary quotes are used throughout this chapter to elucidate the argument. In the sequence of the interviews from one to six the participants are hereafter referred to as Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Teacher 1, Teacher 2 and Teacher 3. The participants of the interview did not fill in the questionnaire nor were the participants for the questionnaire shown the interview questions: this was to ensure unbiased responses of the two groups. The questionnaires are anonymous.

Based on the content of the interview questions and the questionnaire, a content-based analysis is presented where three major themes are identified. The themes are: *Hamlet* as a revenge play and the practice of *badal*, the justification of Hamlet's *badal*, and the influence of *Hamlet*. Based on the responses of the interviews and questionnaires, an accumulative analysis is presented under the respective categories. Instead of providing qualitative analysis followed by quantitative analysis, I provide both simultaneously for clarity. Also, where necessary the results are counterchecked against each other.

The following table presents the quantitative responses.

**Table 2: Quantitative Responses**

S. No.	ITEMS/QUESTIONS	RESPONSES		
		Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree %
1	<i>Hamlet</i> is a play about revenge	93.33	6.66	00
2	Hamlet is capable of taking revenge	30	20	50
3	Hamlet is justified in taking revenge for his father's murder in the context of the play	80	3.33	16.66
4	Hamlet is justified in taking revenge for his father's murder in the context of <i>badal</i> in Pukhto	100	00	00
5	Hamlet would have reacted quickly to avenge his father murder if he were living under the code of Pukhto	93.33	3.33	3.33
6	I believe Hamlet should have avenged his father's murder instantly	56.66	13.33	30
7	Hamlet delays because he is not sure that revenge is justified	53.33	13.33	33.33
8	Hamlet is a coward because he did not take revenge instantly	60	13.33	26.66
9	<i>Hamlet</i> makes us think of the revenge stories that we have in our culture and literature	96.66	00	3.33

S. No.	ITEMS/QUESTIONS	RESPONSES		
		Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree %
10	I am aware of stories similar to <i>Hamlet</i> in Pukhtun culture and literature	96.66	00	3.33
11	I am aware of incidents of revenge in Pukhtun culture and society	96.66	00	3.33
12	I have knowledge of revenge in Pukhtun culture	100	00	00
13	I have experience of revenge in Pukhtun culture	26.66	3.33	70
14	I have personally been placed (or exposed to) in a situation similar to Hamlet's where I have been expected to take revenge	16.66	00	83.33
15	I have experience (knowledge) where I have not agreed to take revenge for justice in Pukhtun culture	60	20	20
16	I believe revenge is justified in certain circumstances.	66.66	00	33.33
17	Reading and understanding <i>Hamlet</i> has enabled me to question the wisdom and necessity of taking revenge.	83.33	00	16.66
18	Reading <i>Hamlet</i> and thinking about its structure has made me question the	56.66	40	3.33

S. No.	ITEMS/QUESTIONS	RESPONSES		
		Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree %
	revenge concept in Pukhto			
19	<i>Hamlet</i> has the potential to influence similar real-life characters who encounter situations like him	70	16.66	13.33
20	Hamlet is incapable of taking revenge	50	20	30

## Discussion

### *Hamlet* as a revenge play and the practice of *Badal*

‘There is a huge relevance of this play to the social context of Pukhtuns.’<sup>354</sup>

All the interviewees explicitly mentioned and highlighted certain aspects of *Hamlet* as having parallels in Pukhtun culture. The most obvious resemblance is the matter of revenge in both. The following remarks of the participants mark revenge as the most obvious resemblance between the two. ‘It [*Hamlet*] is still relevant to our society’,<sup>355</sup> ‘*Hamlet* is basically a very rich drama. It tells us a revenge story of three main characters; Hamlet

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<sup>354</sup> Student 1

<sup>355</sup> Student 3

Laertes and Fortinbras,<sup>356</sup> and ‘the concept of badal and revenge in *Hamlet* are very much alike’.<sup>357</sup>

These responses raise a further question concerning why the students immediately thought of the revenge element when asked about the relevance of the play to Pukhtun culture. Potentially, they could have mentioned the friendship between Hamlet and Horatio or the love affair between Hamlet and Ophelia or obedience and submissiveness of Ophelia or, most importantly, the element of procrastination which dominates classroom teaching because of the presence of the old-fashioned criticism about the play (see Introduction). The obvious reason for the identification of such a parallel appears to be this old-fashioned teaching of the play. However, the equally important reason for this ready identification with the play in terms of revenge is the rise in the number of revenge incidents in the region resulting from the present insurgency.

In a recent report published by the United States Department of State about crime and safety in Peshawar alone in 2012, revenge and honour killings were marked as common reasons for the increase in violence in the region.<sup>358</sup> According to the report, a hundred and six cases of violence were reported in *KP* during the first three months of 2016. Most of these cases were related to revenge. These were either personal revenge attacks or militants’ revenge attacks against the government. In a recent assessment

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<sup>356</sup> Student 2

<sup>357</sup> Teacher 2

<sup>358</sup> 'Pakistan 2016 Crime & Safety Report: Peshawar', ed. by OSAC United States Department of State (Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S., 2016).

carried out by South Asia Intelligence Review in 2012, the *Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP)<sup>359</sup> has a set a ‘revenge wing’ that carry-out attacks against any Pakistani government’s step against them.<sup>360</sup> ‘If you attack us, we will take revenge for the innocents’<sup>361</sup> was the message given out by the spokesperson of TTP after the attack on the Army Public School (APS).

In similar line of argument, Waleed Khan, a 14 Year old boy and the survivor of Army Public School massacre in Dec 2014, who received eight gun shots, expressed after his recovery that ‘I will join Army [Pakistan Army] to take revenge of my martyred friends.’<sup>362</sup> The Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif made a similar commitment directly to the affected students of the APS and their families on the first anniversary of the school massacre: ‘my children, today I make this promise to you, that I will take revenge for every drop of your blood.’<sup>363</sup>

Whether it is personal enmity or militants’ response to the government’s policies or government’s commitment to wipe out terrorism from the

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<sup>359</sup> Pakistan-based Taliban Organization.

<sup>360</sup> Tushar Ranjan Mohanty, ‘Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Unending Bloodbath | Meghalaya: Dangerous Relapse’, *South Asia Intelligence Review (SAIR)*, Vol. No. 11.25. 2012. <[http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/sair11/11\\_25.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/sair/Archives/sair11/11_25.htm)> [accessed 15 February 2017]

<sup>361</sup> Edward Mickolus, *Terrorism, 2014-2015 : A Worldwide Chronology* (Jefferson, North Carolina : McFarland & Company, 2013), p. 296.

<sup>362</sup> Dunya News, ‘Surviving 8 bullets: Resilient APS student aims to join Pak Army – Pakistan’, *Dunya News*. 2015 <<http://dunyaNews.tv/en/Pakistan/312997-Surviving-8-bullets-Resilient-APS-student-aims-to>> [accessed 15 February 2017]

<sup>363</sup> Zee News, ‘Pakistan vows revenge on Peshawar attack anniversary’, 2015 <[http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/pakistan-vows-revenge-on-peshawar-attack-anniversary\\_1835159.html](http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/pakistan-vows-revenge-on-peshawar-attack-anniversary_1835159.html)> [accessed 15 February 2017]

country, revenge is the common denominator in these cases. This is precisely why *Hamlet* appeals to the students of *KP*: it seems to be a mere fictional story because they see such incidents in real life with real life consequences. And this also why the students readily identify the revenge parallel between the play and Pukhtun culture.

'If somebody kills your father or son or any family member, you are supposed to kill the offender according to the Pukhto code of *badal*. Hamlet's father was killed, he was his legal heir and he was the one supposed to take revenge.'<sup>364</sup> When I was student, I believed that Hamlet had to take revenge and that Hamlet was right in taking revenge.<sup>365</sup> These responses emphasise the obligatory role of revenge in Pukhtun culture.

In the Pukhtun community, incidents related to blood revenge occur regularly. The most frequent cause of it is the murder of someone's father. It becomes inevitable for the son to take revenge. The revenge responsibility passes on to other immediate family members if the victim has no heir. The responsibility for revenge may also extend to other tribesmen if the victim family has no one to take revenge. We can see reflections of this in the play *Dard (Pain)* (see chapter 3) when the wife first asks her husband to take revenge in the name of their fellow villagers. When the husband fails and is captured, she asks her sons to take revenge in place of the husband. If the offender, in this case, flees or dies of a natural cause, the revenge is still taken from one of his family members. Though un-Islamic, there is no

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<sup>364</sup> Student 1

<sup>365</sup> Student 2



letting go or forgiveness because mostly the tradition and culture overpowers religion in such matters. 'In cases of murder generally that person is murdered in *badal* who is considered as the most influential and worthy in the family of the offender, called *sar saaray*, so as to inflict greater loss to the offender's family.'<sup>366</sup>

All the participants in the interviews also associated the increase in revenge related incidents to the recent rise in violence in the form of suicide attacks, bomb blasts, kidnapping and terrorist attacks particularly on education institutions in *KP*. 'The victim mentality and the perspective of injustice can cause violence.'<sup>367</sup> The victim-mentality supported by the tradition of revenge has resulted in the growth of revenge-mentality among the Pukhtuns.

'Pukhtuns try to be rational but events drag them to take revenge';<sup>368</sup> one consequence of this is that 'people in the region have grown more revengeful.'<sup>369</sup> This reminds us of Hamlet's situation, 'How all occasion do inform against me I And spur my dull revenge!' (4.4.32-33). Hamlet is forced into action due to the circumstances that developed around which mainly includes: the murder of Polonius in the heat of the moment, the death of Ophelia, a letter summoning his death and the fight with Laertes. All these events present Hamlet as a victim of circumstances, where he appears to develop a victim-mentality which forces him to act violently in order to

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<sup>366</sup> Sultan-I-Rome, 'Pukhtu: The Pukhtun Code of Life', (p. 3).

<sup>367</sup> Erich Marquardt and Christopher Heffelfinger, *Terrorism & Political Islam: Origins, Ideologies, and Methods; a Counter Terrorism Textbook*, 2nd Edition', (Combatting Terrorism Center, Department of Social Sciences, 2008) p. 56.

<sup>368</sup> Student 2

<sup>369</sup> Teacher 1

defend himself. His self-defence is commonly misunderstood as the completion of revenge. Ernest Jones refers to the dramatic effect of the character and behaviour when he states: 'Hamlet successfully claims our interest and sympathy to the very end'.<sup>370</sup> It is, however, the presence of this victim-mentality supported by the tradition of revenge which attracts the (sympathy of) students of *KP*. In a society like that of the Pukhtun's where revenge is obligatory, the revenge story of Hamlet and other revengeful characters in the play are bound to attract the readers and students. More importantly, *Hamlet* does not appear as merely another revenge story but something with which the students can readily associate themselves.

While all the participants in the quantitative study express the knowledge of *badal* in Pukhtun culture, 96.6% of the students show awareness about revenge stories and real life incidents that are similar to *Hamlet's* case. As a result, 93.3% of the students consider *Hamlet* as a revenge play. Rather than disagreeing as to whether or not *Hamlet* is a revenge play, the remaining two are undecided. One of them, however, agrees that *Hamlet* does make him think of similar revenge stories and real-life incidents.

What we gather from these responses is that *Hamlet* is read, understood and interpreted as a revenge play in the classroom. This can be accounted for in two ways: in terms of the teaching of *Hamlet* as a revenge play and the students' identification of the revenge parallel between the play and Pukhtun culture. This, however, does not imply that the play is only understood in terms of revenge. What it signifies is that because of the

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<sup>370</sup> Ernest Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (New York, 1949), p. 139.

deep-rooted revenge culture in the society, *Hamlet* is mostly read in relation to revenge. It is concluded that students as well as teachers relate the incidents of the play mostly with the revenge incidents in Pukhtun society but they do not explicitly use it to reject this revenge. The danger of drawing superficial comparisons between the two is that it might end up supporting revenge and violence. Thus, *Hamlet* has the potential to act as a catalyst to make the students think about the revenge process and revenge stories/incidents in Pukhtun culture. This marks the start of *Hamlet's* influence on the students.

Besides revenge, the elements of procrastination and submissiveness of Ophelia in *Hamlet* are two other essential factors which also attract *KP* students. 'There are a number of events or number of characters and incidents in *Hamlet* which are relevant to our culture, for instance, the submissive role of Ophelia'.<sup>371</sup> All the interviewees compared the submissive role of Ophelia with the submissive role of Pukhtun (as well as Pakistani) women. In Pukhtun culture, 'an ideal wife or daughter is supposed to be submissive [...] a protector of family honour and her own chastity'.<sup>372</sup>

Whether it is the matter of honour or forced-arranged marriages of daughters and sisters as in patriarchal society, women are generally expected to be submissive and obedient. Any relationship, for instance, outside marriage (pre-marriage and/or extra-marriage) stimulates honour

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<sup>371</sup> Student 1

<sup>372</sup> Ruksana Ayyub, 'Domestic Violence in the South Asian Muslim Immigrant Population in the United States', *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 9 (2000), 237-48 (p. 243).

and demands honour killing. This submissive role of Pakistani women stimulated in the minds of the students as well as teachers reminds us of the real-life incidents of women like Saba Qaisar in *A Girl in the River* and the British born Pakistani Shafelia Iftikhar, Sonia in the *Murdered by my father*; reflections of all which we see in the Pakistani adaptations of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Winter's Tale*.

The responses of the interviewees also emphasise parallels between these women and Ophelia. It ties up the point of the relevance of the character of Ophelia with real life people in (KP) Pakistan, whose dead bodies were found in the water too. We also see this issue of bodies in water or dead bodies thrown/found in water in Dr.Meer's and Roohadar's cases in *Haider*.

Roohdar survives like Saba where Dr.Meer drowns like Ophelia. This suggests that the power of the play resides in its dramaturgical construction: a consideration which is reinforced in different cultural responses and readings of Ophelia.

In a similar line of argument, 'there are various aspects which I understand are relevant to Pukhtun culture. One of them is the element of procrastination.'<sup>373</sup> In reference to recent terrorist attacks in the region and the government's delay in response, Teacher 1 expressed that 'the present government procrastinated too much to take action against the terrorists.'<sup>374</sup> This response ties up the point with the similar media reports about the indecisiveness of the Pakistani Prime Minister on affairs of the country,

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<sup>373</sup> Student 2

<sup>374</sup> Teacher 1

particularly those that are related to tackle terrorism, as discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

Now that the responses of the participants have established the relevance of *Hamlet* to Pukhtun culture, the next category analyses the justification of Hamlet's revenge in Pukhtun context. Whether students consider Hamlet's revenge justified both in the play and according to Pukhto code of *badal* compared to their personal life experiences is what this next category probes/analyses.

### Justification of Hamlet's revenge

'If I ask students inside the class, was Hamlet justified in taking revenge according to the code of *badal*, I told you, 90 percent would raise their hands that he was justified.'<sup>375</sup> While all the teacher-participants expressed that the idea majority of Pukhtun students would accept the fact that Hamlet is justified in taking revenge for his father's death, the student-participants also agreed with it too. Recalling his first reading of the play, even Teacher 3 expressed that 'Fifteen years back when I first read *Hamlet*, I considered it (Hamlet's revenge) as an absolute and right act.'<sup>376</sup> Apparently, it may appear a generalised statement by the teachers, however, the responses of items 3 and 4 of the questionnaire support the fact that 80% and 100% of the students support that Hamlet's revenge is justified in the Pukhtun code of life.

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<sup>375</sup> Teacher 3

<sup>376</sup> Teacher 3

It is evident that 80% of the students agree that according to the code of *badal* Hamlet's revenge is justified within the context of the play. In accordance with the Pukhto code of *badal*, all the students agree that revenge is justified. This acceptance shows how deep rooted *badal* is in the culture, but it does not necessarily mean that given the situation all the students would actually take *badal*. Their responses may vary. For instance, those students who indicated that they had encountered an experience of revenge like that of Hamlet, have a different (contrary) opinion about the justification of Hamlet's and/or real life revenge incidents, which I discuss in the next section – the Influence of *Hamlet*.

Mixed opinions about Hamlet's capability to take revenge are found in the responses to the questionnaire. While 56.6 % of the students believe that Hamlet should have avenged his father's murder instantly, 60% of the students consider Hamlet a coward for not taking revenge instantly. This drop in the percentage of students' agreement about the justification of revenge suggest two things. First, there is a general understanding among *Pukhtuns* to take revenge later in life rather than instantly. There is a famous Pukhto saying about this: 'After a hundred years a Pakhtun takes his revenge and he says, "Still I have taken it quickly"'.<sup>377</sup> It is mainly to keep the offender in a state of fear. But this delay in revenge also allows time for elders and/or third parties to intervene and resolve the matter peacefully. It ties up the point with the EDO's remarks of Komatsu's study about the transfer of one of the teachers to a locality where he had enmity. 'The

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<sup>377</sup> Mohammad Nawaz Tair, *Rohi Mataluna: Pashto Proverbs* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), p. 69.

teacher's leave of absence would buy some time for this [reconciliation through elders] to occur'.<sup>378</sup>

Second, on the contrary, the drop in the percentage about the acceptance of revenge also suggests students' non-acceptance of revenge as an absolute and obligatory action. Deep down, it marks the start of their questioning about the necessity of revenge. It reminds us of the similar responses for the questions asked by Yusuf Jan Utmanzai in his program *Khyber Watch* as discussed in the Introduction of this thesis. In the program, common *Pukhtuns* on the street apparently praised his get-up of an aggressive young man with a gun. But when they were questioned about the necessity of revenge and violence, all the people he interviewed condemned revenge and the means that lead to violence. The three student-participants for the interviews are similar examples who defy revenge and question its necessity. Not only did they reject revenge; they also refrained from it.

### Influence of *Hamlet*

'Hamlet is a coward, he should have taken revenge of his father's murder instantly.'

Student 1

'Hamlet is not a coward. He should not have taken revenge.'

Student 1

Where revenge in the form of *badal* is practiced in a culture, remarks and responses like, 'Hamlet is a coward, he should have taken revenge of his

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<sup>378</sup> Komatsu, p. 221.

father's murder instantly' are commonly heard. The acceptance of revenge and the increase in violence and aggression due to the present insurgency in *KP* (as well as Pakistan) give way to such remarks. However, what is important is the shift in the understanding of the students from 'Hamlet is a coward' to 'Hamlet is not a coward'.

Based on real-life revenge experiences, the interview-participants expressed the presence of a strong relationship between them and Hamlet. It is this identification with Hamlet that creates an empathetic connection between the two. Where a mere revenge story may amuse these young students, *Hamlet* appeals to their emotions and feelings particularly those related to revenge. Previously referred to as coward, the students explicitly stated that Hamlet is not a coward. In fact, while talking about reasons for this change, Student 3 mentions that 'I got a lesson from Hamlet that one should not take revenge' because, as supported by Student 2, 'ultimately revenge ends up in a disaster.' Student 1, further added that he did not want to end up like Hamlet. Thus, it establishes the potential of *Hamlet* to create this empathetic connection with its readers and audience. Hence, it acts as a change-agent, which allows the students to think about the necessity of revenge and the option to decide not to take revenge.

The rejection of revenge by a student in the classroom may sound insignificant in response to the strong presence of the *badal* culture in *KP*. What is important here is to understand that because Pukhtun society is a segmentary lineage society<sup>379</sup>, one student's rejection of revenge culture can

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<sup>379</sup> Referred to as tribal society where members of the family, close or distant relatives/members stand with each other against any attack from outsiders.



lead to the whole family's rejection of revenge. Where blood feuds pass on from generation to generation one student's rejection of revenge stops the chain of this blood feud. Teacher 3 remarked that 'as teacher to convince one of my students who is revengeful, not to take it, it means that I have saved the whole family I have saved the society and this thing will filter down in the society.'<sup>380</sup>

The influence of *Hamlet* on the students is also evident from the responses of the questionnaire. 83.3% of the students consider the play to have the power which in return allows them to question the wisdom and necessity of revenge. While 40% of the students are undecided on the matter, 56.6% of the students agree that *Hamlet* enables them to question revenge in Pukhto. 70% of the students agree that *Hamlet* has the potential to influence people who encounter situations like him in real life. This ratio supports the responses of the interviewees, who also agreed with the potential of *Hamlet* to address the issue of *badal* and influence real life people not to take revenge. Similarly, 26.6% of the students, who admitted to having encountered revenge incidents, are also of the opinion that *Hamlet* has the potential to reject revenge outside the context of the play.

Similarly, the responses of the students, suggest that they tend to relate their own experiences of revenge to those incidents which are in *Hamlet*. This relation enables them to create an empathetic connection with the play and Hamlet and that is where they begin to think that 'Hamlet is not a coward'. They begin to realise that not taking revenge is not cowardice,

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<sup>380</sup> Teacher 3

which immediately make them defy the Pukhto code of life where not taking revenge is considered to be an act of shame and cowardice. Just as they begin to question revenge in *Hamlet*, similarly, they begin to question revenge in Pukhto too. In *Hamlet*, it is the construction of the extraordinary number of interrogative structures (see chapter 2) which questions the wisdom and necessity of revenge, which in return influences the young students to question *badal* in Pukhto. It is also the dramaturgical construction of *Hamlet* which draws similar reactions from the teachers who consider the play as a safe form of criticism. It is similar to the way the adapters think of *Hamlet* as a safe form of criticism.

The teacher-participants also explicitly mentioned the importance of *Hamlet* in terms of revenge. The responses of the teachers are particularly important because while they were interviewed they drew parallels between the play and Pukhtun culture. This suggests that these comparisons are in the minds of the teachers when they teach *Hamlet*. However, it is more important to actually use the play to combat *badal* rather than merely provide comparisons which may promote revenge. As it occurred to them during the interview, the teachers mentioned the importance of the role *Hamlet* can potentially play in discussing various social issues in class including revenge. For instance, Teacher 2 and Teacher 1 remarked respectively that ‘I think *Hamlet* is the play which can give us a cushion, a leverage to talk about revenge openly in class’ and ‘I believe that *Hamlet* has this potential to play the role of mitigating or reducing the practice of *badal* in a very effective and in a very meticulous way’.

Thus, the responses to the questionnaire suggest that the role of *Hamlet* to address the issue of *badal* in this way is similar to the role various adaptations play to address contemporary problems around the world. Whether used in a class or appropriated in an adaptation, both can provide a safe way of criticising of contemporary problems. This sense that it can be adapted and used as a safe way of criticism as well as an educational tool to question many contemporary problem comes from the dramaturgical construction of the play. The play which is in the form of questions allows its readers to question contemporary problems of a given country.



## Conclusion

This section presents the overall summary and conclusion of this thesis. Each chapter in the thesis is an independent unit with its own research questions adhering to the broader aim of the thesis. It consists of five chapters which are structured in such a way as to present the logical development of the main argument. The Introduction and Chapter 1 outline the topic at hand and provide a contextual frame for understanding the presence of Shakespeare and his plays, particularly *Hamlet*, in Pakistan. Although *Hamlet* has received little scholarly attention recently in Pakistan, it has frequently appeared in the media reports of Pakistan where parallels have been drawn to refer to various problems in the country. These parallels between *Hamlet* and various contemporary Pakistani problems, such as revenge, have been discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. Revenge is commonly practiced in Pakistan and it is also an equally contributing factor to the increase in violence in the country.

Before drawing further parallels between the revenge in *Hamlet* and *Pukhtun* culture and its treatment in Pakistan, it was essential to understand how revenge is treated by Shakespeare in the play in itself. Therefore, in chapter 2 of this thesis, I presented a critique of the dramaturgical construction of *Hamlet* (particularly the presence and construction of three hundred and above interrogative structures) and the way it allows its readers to reject revenge within and outside the context of the play.

By establishing the fact that *Hamlet* does allow its readers and audience to question and reject revenge, in Chapter 3, I presented a detailed account of

the *Pukhtun* revenge culture and how it resembles the revenge in *Hamlet*. Parallels were drawn to set the stall that can *Hamlet* be used as an educational tool to question and reject revenge in real life. I also highlighted the way efforts have been made historically to discourage and reject revenge among *Pukhtuns*, one of which is the use of the medium of drama. In order to show such efforts, I briefly discussed the use and role of *Pukhto* dramas written by the *Khudai Khidmatgar* members during the British Raj in the 1920s-40s. These dramas were written and used to highlight the then problems of the time and also to discourage the revenge practice and other negative traditions successfully, resulting in the social development of the *Pukhtuns*.

In Chapter 4, I demonstrated how *Hamlet*, particularly in the form of adaptations, has been used previously to address real life problems and successfully reject revenge outside the context of the play. For this purpose, I provided case studies of *Haider* and *Prince of the Himalayas*. Through these two adaptations, I demonstrated that *Hamlet* does have the potential to allow adapters (and readers/audience) to use the play as a tool to address contemporary problems and reject revenge in real life.

Through a mixed method approach, chapter 5 investigated the potential of *Hamlet* to modify entrenched beliefs among young Pakistanis engaged in a reading of the play at KP universities. The study demonstrated that *Hamlet* does have the potential to enable its young readers at *KP* universities to relate to the revenge incidents in the play and as a result allow them to question and reject it.

This study is of enormous importance and benefit for modern-day Pakistanis especially students because universities across the country are experiencing a rise in the number of violent incidents perpetrated by students. The funder of this study, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM), is no exception. The most recent violent incident at AWKUM took place in April 2017. A student of the department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Mashal Khan, was lynched by a mob of students. Apparently he was accused of blasphemy. As I write, the case is under investigation and the university is closed until further notice.

A similar violent incident took place in the University of Punjab in March 2017. It was a clash between two rival student-federations/unions — Pukhtun Student Federation (PSF) and Islami Jamiat -i- Talaba (IJT, religious students' group). The clash occurred because IJT tried to sabotage a cultural event organised by PSF. The incident left eighteen students injured. The police had to intervene and used force and tear gas to disperse students and regain control of the situation. The administration had to shut down the university for four days to ease the tension among students and stop the revenge cycle.

Similar clashes erupted between PSF and Seraiki Student Federation (SSF)<sup>381</sup> in the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST) in June 2015. A member of PSF was accused and beaten by SSF for harassing a female student. The clashes erupted between the two groups and continued for three days, when the PSF took revenge for their injured member. On the

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<sup>381</sup> Seraiki is name of a language spoken in parts of Sindh and Punjab in Pakistan. The people are also called Seraiki.

third day a brawl started between the two groups in which guns were shot. Eleven students sustained injuries. Clashes like these continue to occur in universities where each party tries to take revenge for the harm inflicted upon them by the other. Such clashes pose a serious threat to education. Additionally, such incidents may also prove more dangerous if we take into consideration the armed training provided to teachers and administration staff for protection against violent terrorist attacks (see chapter 3).

These clashes between the students take place not only in KP but extend to other provinces of Pakistan as evident from the above examples. Similarly, the revenge factor also extends to other parts of Pakistan and has equal devastating effects (see chapter 1). Therefore it is a national dilemma rather than regional (KP). Although this study discusses the regional problem of revenge in KP in detail, the implications of its argument extend to all Pakistan and Pakistani universities. The solution and recommendations about the teaching of *Hamlet* in this thesis can also be applied to all universities across Pakistan.

No doubt universities, with the help of the government, have introduced official security procedures for safeguarding against any kind of violence or terrorist attack but these are preventive measures. They do not educate or teach students to reject the practice of violence and revenge. A change in the mind-set to discourage and reject violence only comes from education. *Hamlet* and this study certainly have a role to play in this change.

This is why it is more important than ever to address such appalling situations in Pakistani universities, especially in AWKUM. Now is the right



time to teach *Hamlet* to raise awareness about violence and to use it as an educational tool to combat revenge practices in Pakistan. In order to do so, reliance on the old-fashioned criticism of *Hamlet* has to come to an end. The capacity of *Hamlet* to combat revenge and violence in modern-day Pakistan makes it possible for me, through this study, to persuade the education authorities in Pakistan to change the syllabus of English literature. It is the right time for this change because education authorities, like the Higher Education Commission (HEC), are regularly arranging meetings with universities and conducting workshops and conferences to explore different means to counter violence.

These changes can be effectively implemented in the mainstream 4 year degree program launched in 2015 across all Pakistani universities by the HEC. New pedagogical parameters are set as part of this program, where the teachers of English drama, for instance, are required to provide examples from everyday life while teaching drama. In other words, teachers have the opportunity to appropriate plays to a Pakistani context and provide examples from daily life, if any. However, mere comparisons may not do justice to the play and to the culture with which it is compared. There is a danger that a mere comparison, for instance between revenge in *Hamlet* and in Pukhtun culture, may end up replicating the problem identified in the *Arab Hamlet* by Tanius 'Abdoh. One possible consequence of such a superficial and dangerous misreading is that the revenge code in Pukhto may be seen to be blessing the Pukhtun avenger just as the ghost in the *Arab Hamlet* blesses Hamlet from the heavens (see chapter 3). Against such a dangerous reading this study provides guidelines for teachers on how to teach *Hamlet* effectively to fight against violence.



## **Appendix A: Khudai Khidmatgar's Oath**

1. With sincerity and faith, I offer my name for *Khudai Khidmatgarship*.
2. I will sacrifice my wealth, comfort and self on the service of my nation and for the liberation of my country.
3. I will never have 'para jamba' (party feeling) [taking sides], enmity with or wilfully oppose anybody; and I shall help the oppressed against the oppressor.
4. I will not become a member of any rival party nor will I give security or apologise during the fight.
5. I will always obey every lawful order of every officer of mine.
6. I will always abide by the principle of nonviolence.
7. I will serve all human beings alike and my goal will be the attainment of the freedom of my country and my religion.
8. I will always perform good and noble deeds.
9. All my efforts will be directed to seeking the will of God and not toward mere show or becoming an office-holder.



## Appendix B: ERGO Approval

**Sharif M.M.**

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**From:** ERGO <ergo@soton.ac.uk>  
**Sent:** 02 March 2015 01:00 PM  
**To:** Sharif M.M.  
**Subject:** Your Ethics Submission (Ethics ID:14053) has been reviewed and approved

Submission Number: 14053

Submission Name: Hamlet in Pakistan

This email is to let you know your submission was approved by the Ethics Committee.

You can begin your research unless you are still awaiting specific Health and Safety approval (e.g. for a Genetic or Biological Materials Risk Assessment)

Comments

None

[Click here to view your submission](#)

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ERGO : Ethics and Research Governance Online  
<http://www.ergo.soton.ac.uk>

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DO NOT REPLY TO THIS EMAIL



## Appendix C: Questionnaire and Interview- Questions

Questionnaire

### Topic: *Hamlet* in Pakistan

Dear Participant:

Your participation is voluntary and will remain anonymous. Moreover, your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used only for academic purpose. Only the researcher will have access to the information you provide.

The response options mentioned opposite to each question item abbreviates as follow:

Agree = A      Undecided = UD      Disagree  
= DA

S. No.	ITEMS	RESPONSES		
1	<i>Hamlet</i> is a play about revenge	A	UD	DA
2	Hamlet is capable of taking revenge	A	UD	DA
3	Hamlet is justified in taking revenge for his	A	UD	DA

S. No.	ITEMS	RESPONSES		
	father's murder in the context of the play			
4	Hamlet is justified in taking revenge for his father's murder in the context of <i>badal</i> in Pukhto	A	UD	DA
5	Hamlet would have reacted quickly to avenge his father's murder if he were living under the code of Pukhto	A	UD	DA
6	I believe Hamlet should have avenged his father's murder instantly	A	UD	DA
7	Hamlet delays because he is not sure that revenge is justified	A	UD	DA
8	Hamlet is a coward because he did not take revenge instantly	A	UD	DA
9	<i>Hamlet</i> makes us think of the revenge stories that we have in our culture and literature	A	UD	DA
10	I am aware of stories similar to <i>Hamlet</i> in Pukhtun culture and literature	A	UD	DA
11	I am aware of incidents of revenge in Pukhtun culture and society	A	UD	DA



S. No.	ITEMS	RESPONSES		
12	I have knowledge of revenge in Pukhtun culture	A	UD	DA
13	I have experience of revenge in Pukhtun culture	A	UD	DA
14	I have personally been placed (or exposed to) in a situation similar to Hamlet's where I have been expected to take revenge	A	UD	DA
15	I have experience (knowledge) where I have not agreed to take revenge for justice in Pukhtun culture	A	UD	DA
16	I believe revenge is justified in certain circumstances.	A	UD	DA
17	Reading and understanding <i>Hamlet</i> has enabled me to question the wisdom and necessity of taking revenge.	A	UD	DA
18	Reading <i>Hamlet</i> and thinking about its structure has made me question the revenge concept in Pukhto	A	UD	DA
19	<i>Hamlet</i> has the potential to influence similar real-life characters who encounter situations like him	A	UD	DA

S. No.	ITEMS	RESPONSES		
20	Hamlet is incapable of taking revenge	A	UD	DA

### Interview Questions

1. What is your understanding of the play *Hamlet*?
2. How and/or which aspect of the play *Hamlet* appeals to you the most and why
3. Did you think Hamlet's revenge was justified when you first read the play? If yes *how* and if No *why*?
4. What is your understanding of the concept of revenge, such as *badal* (in Pukhto)
5. Do you have/know any personal experiences of *badal*?
6. How do you see revenge in *Hamlet* in the light of the *badal* concept in *Pukhtunwali*?

### Transition to Next set of questions

1. How do you perceive *Hamlet* after your real life incidents similar to those in the play?

2. What influence/s has the play had on you after going through those incidents?
3. Did you see any similarities? If yes what are those similarities and what is the effect/impact of it?
4. What changes do you perceive in your thinking and opinion about *Hamlet* before and after these incidents?
5. Did it change your perception of *badal*? In what way?
6. After reading and understanding *Hamlet*, do you consider it to have the potential to change your (or other's) opinion about the wisdom and necessity of taking revenge?

The first same set of 6 questions will be asked from the teachers, however the second set of questions included:

1. Do you see *Hamlet* as a play relevant to the present situation of KP, Pakistan?
2. What aspects of the play do you tend to focus on more when addressing the relevance of the play within the present Pukhtun and Pakistani social and cultural contexts?
3. Do you see *Hamlet* as a play relevant to the present situation of KP particularly related to revenge in it and revenge in Pukhtun culture? If yes, in which aspects?
4. Do you consider the play more appropriate to resemble the *badal* concept in Pukhto? If yes why?

5. Have you come across students who may have identified themselves with Hamlet or any other character in the play? If yes in what way?
6. What other relevance of the content of the play to the Pukhtun culture have you come across while teaching *Hamlet*?

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