The cultural capital of Shakespeare's Hamlet in Haider

Abigail Shantini K.

2021

Abigail Shantini K. (2021). The cultural capital of Shakespeare's Hamlet in Haider. Master's thesis, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. <https://hdl.handle.net/10356/154699>

<https://hdl.handle.net/10356/154699>

<https://doi.org/10.32657/10356/154699>

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SINGAPORE

**THE CULTURAL CAPITAL OF SHAKESPEARE'S
HAMLET IN HAIDER**

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SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
*2021***

The Cultural Capital of Shakespeare's Hamlet in Haider

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A thesis submitted to the Nanyang Technological University in partial
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the support of the English department, particularly Professor Boey Kim Cheng and Professor Graham Matthews.

To Dr. Wong Yeang Chui: I am greatly undeserving of your patience and guidance. Any keen insight in this project is a result of your influence. Thank you for always being honest with me, and meeting me where I am.

To my ROHEI & TCCD family: For showing me that I have more to offer than I think I do, you have been more integral to this journey than you will ever know. To be with you is to be in the presence of my answered prayers.

To my Cell: What a joy it is to be in your company. Thank you for being there for me throughout this journey, you make my heart happy.

To Clement & Claire: I am so greatly indebted to your steadfast faith. For being such a comforting presence and standing in the gap for each one of us, I adore you both.

To Grace, O Wen & Solomon: For being the family I chose, surprising me constantly, and reminding me who I belong to. I love you more than I care to admit. To many more years of spurring and sharpening.

To Lindsay Chong: The Hamlet to my Horatio. Thank you for your belief that surpasses death.

To Benjamin Ezekiel: Thank you for always being available to discourse with me. I am grateful for our friendship.

To Theodore Craig Reyes: Thank you for always doing a sappork. You are all that and then some.

To Vanessa Chua: My own one. Thank you for being there for all the moments, big and small. You make me better.

To Michael & Benjamin: In this process, you have proven to me that we know each other as we always were, that we live outside the touch of time. For holding my hand and reminding me who I am when I forget, I am proud and grateful in equal measure. Thank you for not outgrowing me.

To my Mother: You are my oldest friend and biggest blessing. I hope this makes you proud. I love you forever.

For my Father,
who has loved me always and in all ways.

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SUMMARY

This project explores the concept of cultural capital in relation to *Haider*, a Hindi film adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. It attempts to understand and exhibit *Hamlet*'s symbolic resonance and show how adaptations of *Hamlet* add to the source text, bringing previously underemphasized parts of the work to the forefront.

This thesis uses the forms of cultural capital, namely institutionalized, objectified, and embodied cultural capital as a handle in which to understand the expressions of power, love, and loss in *Haider*. In closely comparing *Hamlet* and *Haider*, I show how the sagacity of *Haider* lies in its deft departures from the source text, whilst still embodying the essence of the work.

In turn, this thesis aims to show how the relationship between adaptation and source text is more symbiotic than parasitic, though the two works function as separate entities. In showing this relationship, readers are bearing witness to the reclaiming of narratives, allowing individuals to build for themselves a home where there was none.

INTRODUCTION: CULTURAL CAPITAL OF SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET

As one of Shakespeare's most celebrated tragedies, *Hamlet* has been consistently interpreted and translated over many years for many different audiences. *Haider*, a Bollywood adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, is one such adaptation. The film, released in 2014, imagines what Hamlet would look like if it took place in 1995, situated in the heavily contested region of Kashmir. The result is a work that challenges our pre-existing notions of Hamlet and adds nuance to the portrayal of the Haider, his community, and the reality of living in Kashmir. This work stands as a testament to the legacy of Asian adaptations of Shakespeare, that actively engage with the themes of canonical Shakespearean texts. By closely examining *Haider* and *Hamlet*, this project aims to show how the framework of cultural capital brings previously underemphasized parts of *Hamlet* to the forefront. It also aims to show that the process of adaptation is not one-sided, but that the relationship between adaptation and source text is symbiotic. It is through this symbiotic relationship that marginalized voices are given representation.

The works that fall under the umbrella term of 'Asian Shakespeare' are varied, and therefore resist easy categorization. Considering the different genres, mediums, cultural backgrounds, geographies, and time periods, it is challenging to find a working all-encompassing definition of 'Asia', let alone Shakespeare's foray into the continent. Scholarship on this topic has provided categories for these instances of Asian Shakespeare, with James R. Brandon observing three long-term, widespread models of Asian Shakespeare: canonical, indigenous, and intercultural. (Lei, 2), and Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan astutely attributing Shakespeare's prestige in Asia to 'colonial instigation, nationalist appropriation, and intercultural revision' (Kennedy,

3). Coupled with these factors, Shakespeare's works have universal themes, making it easy to adapt to different contexts. For my purposes, I refer to Rustom Bharucha's definition of 'New Asian explorations of Shakespeare' (1). Here, the focus is not on 'contextualizing or translating Shakespeare within a specific location in Asia. Rather, Shakespeare is the pretext for dramatizing different cultural productions and differences across Asia (Bharucha, 1). This narrows the scope of this project to privilege the Asian experience, meaning that it would be concerned with instances where 'Asian' concerns, specific to context, are represented through the narrative of Shakespeare's work. Therefore, Shakespeare is 'mobilized as a catalyst (literally, a foreign element), producing a counter text, or more precisely, a metatheatrical performative event where the dramatic text of Shakespeare as such is not the issue.' (Bharucha, 1). This definition is more representative of the active dialogue between the Shakespearean work and an Asian context and concerns. The work that is produced through this interaction is more concerned with representing the essence of the text and the lived reality of a community and through that process, gives that community a measure of agency.

Throughout this project, I will attempt to privilege what Alexander Huang refers to as the 're-framings of Shakespeare's plays that reaffirm local reading positions.' (32). This study seeks to be investigative instead of comparative, hinging on the universality of Shakespearean works. It is perhaps this particular quality that gives Shakespeare his continual significance in Asia. It can be said that 'Asian Shakespeare adaptation speaks to his timeliness in various cultural moments of modern Asian history, whether or not with colonial and postcolonial registers' (Yang, 6). This suggests that the works of Shakespeare have always assisted in comprehending one's identity, on a personal and national level. We see that 'our imaginations of modern

Asias are coincidental with our re-inventing of the western Bard so that he exists in multilingual, multicultural Asian communities with protean identities' (Yang, 10). The works that can be considered Asian Shakespeare require reinvention, to align with the ever-evolving Asian identity and the nuances that are within a western context. The work that results is context specific, yet fluid. These works aim to represent the essence of culture and narrative, whilst adhering to a localized context.

In the paper 'Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction', Pierre Bourdieu introduces the concept and context of cultural capital. The paper ties the concept of cultural capital to social reproduction. Bourdieu acknowledges there can be limited social mobility, as the author asserts that some classes are excluded from 'high' culture. The transmission of cultural capital helps reproduce intergenerationally the social-class structure, suggesting that whatever 'culture' is passed down has a direct correlation with class. The paper also features the earliest definitions of cultural capital, which is described as 'linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture' (80). In 1986, he published an article titled 'The Forms of Capital'. In it, he suggests that cultural capital can be understood as a kind of cultural knowledge or resource that invests the bearer with symbolic power. (80) The paper asserts that cultural capital can exist in three different states: embodied (internalized cultural dispositions), objectified (cultural goods), and institutionalized (educational credentials). These 'capitals' then contribute to one's class. He also explicitly names family and the educational systems as responsible for inculcating dominant values. The combination of these cultural capitals results in 'habitus' and 'fields'. 'Habitus' is defined as 'judgements, values and methods of classification and activities of everyday life' (Bourdieu, 471). These instances of 'habitus' are then

actualized in ‘fields’. ‘Fields’ are defined as the ‘arenas of struggle for control over valued resources’ (Bourdieu, 473). It is in the interaction between habitus and field, as a result of the close examination of cultural capitals, that we are able to see the relations of power that are present in a society.

The theory of cultural capital allows us to examine the power relations of specific subsets of society while ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ interact to make cultural capital operational. The concept of cultural capital has also impacted the way we view art and literature, and how we understand the emergence of the elite. This is critical when we consider the general trend of Shakespeare’s introduction in Asia being largely affiliated with the elite in Asian nations. The concept of cultural capital combined with the aforementioned concept of ‘field’ created a new way to discuss fields of cultural production. The text suggests that ‘art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences, and thus contribute to the process of social reproduction’ (Bourdieu, 2). This asserts that art is a key differentiating factor of social class. Bourdieu sees symbolic power as closely intertwined with- but not reducible to – economic and political power, and thus serves a legitimating function. This asserts that symbolic power has real-world repercussions. The emergence of the elite is an illustration of this. The reproduction of cultural capital has a large hand to play in forming the elite in society. In his article ‘The Sociology of Elites’, Khan defines the elite as ‘those who have vastly disproportionate control or access to a resource’ (361). As such, the elite have ‘disproportionate control through using cultural capital as markers to establish a group identity and exclude elements that do not measure up to that identity’ (Abad, 161). These notions are particularly interesting when considering the effects of adapting Shakespeare. These patrons are assumed to have a predisposition to activities

that one would relate to high culture. After all, the ‘staging or seeing Shakespeare can be considered as a form of cultural capital in its objectified form’ (Abad, 161). These could include having high literary and dramatic tastes, educational sophistication, and a fluency in the language of power-English (Abad,161). An appreciation of Shakespeare then becomes a mark of distinction, allowing these patrons to access a high-status position. An association to Shakespeare is arguably as powerful as the works themselves, as they suggest a higher class and proving the existence of symbolic power.

The merit of this cultural capital framework hinges on its ability to make sense of the effects of cultural knowledge that imbues one with symbolic power. Within the context of Asia, it must be acknowledged that the works of Shakespeare come with irrevocable colonial connotations. The notion of culture and class is complicated by this power dynamic between the colonizer and the colonized. The means of understanding class politics and power must differ as a result. Cultural capital provides a systematic means of understanding the manifestations of this symbolic power, through internalized cultural dispositions, cultural goods and educational credentials, by anchoring the nebulous notion of power into more measurable categories. Since so much of Shakespeare’s presence in Asia is related as a class concern, and cultural capital is fundamentally concerned with class, the use of this framework provides a novel means of understanding works of Asian Shakespeare.

The correlation of cultural capital and Shakespeare has been used in the past to investigate the effect of Shakespeare within an Asian community. In the article ‘Shakespeare as Cultural Capital’, Ricardo G. Abad explores the effect of Shakespeare as cultural capital in the context of Filipino theatre history. In his research, Abad

asserts that this was done by making Shakespeare relatable to specific audiences, bringing Shakespeare to different communities, and getting these people in those communities to perform it themselves (174). This suggests that when a community or an individual actively participates in the retelling of a narrative, and in the process, changes its context and emphasis, the narrative then can take root and have a more personal contextualized significance. Communities then have a stake in these narratives because they now no longer represent outsider influences. This demonstrates that cultural capital translates into social capital within an Asian context, specifically to ‘building solidarities among community members, solidarities which they can deploy to handle community issues’ (178). This suggests that committing to the process of adaptation is integral to a community, and the survival of the parent text. This process also aligns with Huang’s aforementioned approach to ‘reaffirm local reading positions’ (32), giving these communities a means of legitimizing their interpretation of the source text. This shows that an adaptation, if done well, can expedite the synergizing of a community, and represent not only the original text, but the pertinent themes within the work that reflect the social concerns of the adaptation.

When comparing two texts, one will inevitably touch on the concept of intertextuality. The term was first coined by Julia Kristeva in the 1960’s and speaks of the interrelationship between literary texts (Allen 2). Heavily influenced by Saussure and Bakhtin (Allen 6), the theory suggests that the process of making meaning exists outside of a text and is instead achieved through a process of referring and relating (Allen 1). While there are some particularities of intertextuality that prove useful when comparing *Hamlet* and *Haider*, Intertextuality primarily allows for the examination and close comparison of the interactions between these works, showing the origins and allusions present within the work. Whilst this process is useful in showing how these

texts overlap, it does not show how the works build upon one another. Cultural capital treats the process of adapting a parent text with vested interest is crucial because cultural capital fundamentally hinges on the ways in which individuals relate with one another, and the consequence of these interactions. Though instances of intertextuality are useful in exhibiting the reality of these individuals, is not as explicitly concerned with the ownership of this symbolic power. Bourdieu originally utilized the framework to measure the formation of different class groups and their symbolic power, the same framework could also prove useful in charting the transfer of symbolic power between a source text and an adaptation. Hence, the framework of cultural capital is useful in determining the symbolic resonance of these works, showing how the themes in *Hamlet* ripple through *Haider*, bringing previously underemphasized parts of the work to the forefront.

As a work, *Hamlet* is also exceeding aware of itself. As Hamlet navigates complex power dynamics, his self-reflectivity results in a kind of meta commentary. He is constantly attempting to understand himself in relation to the system that raised him. Much of Hamlet's frustration stems from the fact that he is a product and possessor of power, disenfranchised by a system of which he is a part. This is especially relevant when considering the aforementioned notion of Asian Shakespeare. Identity and locality cannot be divorced from Asian Shakespeare, it serves as means of comprehension more than facilitating conclusion. Hamlet functions in a similar way, as it raises more questions than it answers. Considering the postcolonial undercurrents that are present in impetus makes *Hamlet* a natural and compelling source text, as it seeks to facilitate understanding and grasp at meaning, instead of providing definitive answers. The partnership of this work with the cultural capital framework, with reference to Asian Shakespeare scholarship, seeks to privilege the process over the

product, result in a study where *Hamlet* can be acknowledged alongside an adaptation of it, in equal measure.

When we think of Shakespearean texts that are universally loved and known, one would be remiss to overlook *Hamlet*. One of Shakespeare's most popular works, *Hamlet* continues to attract global audiences consistently. Mark Burnett writes 'inside cultural practices centred on Shakespeare as a global icon, and against the backdrop of worldwide celebrations and commemorative events, the pre-eminence accorded *Hamlet* is striking' (5). The play *Hamlet* has a quality that allows it to be accessible for all audiences. The production of the 'Globe to Globe *Hamlet*, a two-year-long tour that saw a 'sixteen actors and actresses had travelled across the seven continents in an attempt to prove that Shakespeare can entertain and speak to anyone, no matter where they are on earth' (Perni, 1) is an indication of this. The fact that *Hamlet* was chosen speaks to its appeal as a play and as a narrative. The production toured 197 countries and was performed in front of hundreds of thousands of spectators, even being awarded an UNESCO patronage for its commitment to different local communities and its promotion of culture. This is especially interesting considering this production offered a 'simplified iconic version' of *Hamlet*, choosing to privilege 'straightforward meanings over academic interpretations' (Perni, 2). It is easy to see why Mark Burnett would continue to assert that '*Hamlet*, as it signifies in particular regions and nation-states, and as a play that carries with it distinctive traditions of appropriation, has continued to establish itself as a key object of investigation.' (5) Therefore, it can be said that audiences responded well to the most essential parts of the play. The fact that this endeavour was a critical and commercial success is an indication of the play's ability to entertain and resonant with audiences, suggesting that absolute fidelity to a source material is not needed to guarantee substantial symbolic power.

The content of *Hamlet* aligns greatly with the notion of cultural capital. All of the individuals in *Hamlet* grapple with their own symbolic power. All the characters are constantly in the process of examining and re-examining the ways in which they portray themselves, as they take into account the perception of others. It is in this web of social interactions that we see the operational aspects of cultural capital, namely ‘habitus’ and ‘fields’ come into play. The measure of cultural capital is an attempt to understand these seemingly oppositional forces, to understand the ‘tangled dance of dispositions and positions from which practice springs’ (Wacquant,1). Cultural capital can exist in three different states: institutionalized (educational credentials), objectified (cultural goods) and embodied (internalized cultural dispositions). A close reading of these three states of cultural capital lend themselves to more nuanced readings of *Hamlet*, to understand the power dynamics that emerge from these interactions. It is important to note that these power dynamics will not extend to the relationship between source text and adaptation. u-While instances of close readings of *Hamlet* will be included to establish context, it will not be the authority to which is value of the adaptation is judged. *Hamlet* will be references to anchor values, emotions of the characters and as a representation of their motivations and inclinations, without the authority of canon. Fundamentally, this work does not seek to assess *Haider*’s fidelity to *Hamlet*. Instead, by comparing the two works alongside one another, this thesis aims to show how both texts build upon and converse with one another.

The film form of this adaption situates it within the minority of Asian Shakespeare adaptations, warranting further analysis. Within Asian Shakespeare scholarship, the focus remains largely on theatre productions. Though these provide fascinating reference points, it can be said that ‘Shakespeare’s modernity, and perhaps postmodernity, is especially ostensible in the cinema. Shakespeare movies have

become a genre in the film industry as well as in Shakespeare performance studies since the last quarter of the 20th century.’ (Yang, 8). Film allows for a process of making something one’s own. It gives the unique experience of being able to actualize a particular vision and provide a full immersive adaptation. It is ‘precisely this potential for adaptation to challenge traditional disciplinary boundaries that has always identified its greatest potential to filmmakers, everyday moviegoers, and academic scholars.’ (Corrigan, 41). In Walter Benjamin’s 1936 seminal work ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, he puts forth the argument that identifies this ability of film to challenge and overturn the categories and positions that distinguish traditional arts and literatures, claiming that the ‘auratic’ reading and viewing formations of those classical arts must give way before the cinema’s radical remakings, transformations, and adaptations. (Corrigan, 41). The dynamism that the medium of film provides aligns with the commitment to remaking that this project aims to enforce, making it an appropriate choice for this study.

To fulfil this commitment to remaking, film has to be seen as an adaptive practice. Timothy Corrigan’s framework that details the relationship between the terms ‘adaptation’ and ‘discipline’ is particularly useful when considering these challenges. He asserts that ‘on one hand, adaptation, in its specific and more general sense, suggests alterations, adjustments, and intertextual exchanges, while on the other, discipline denotes and connotes rules, boundaries, and textual restrictions’ (Corrigan, 30). He then goes on to suggest that ‘the changing relationships between literature and film and how viewers and scholars have understood that relationship can be mapped across this gap between film as an adaptive practice and film as a discipline. The many textual, cultural, and industrial territories inhabiting this gap become the prominent fields where the cinema’s textual integrity, its cultural status, and its scholarly and

academic boundaries are often hotly contested.’ (Corrigan, 30). This work serves to privilege the film as an adaptive practice, exhibiting how *Hamlet* and *Haider* converse with each other.

As we consider the implications of adapting from the stage to screen, the immediate impression that an individual forms when watching a film is also of particular interest. In considering audience response, ‘first and last impressions, or what psychologists call the effects of primacy and recency’ (Lake, 112) are crucial. James H. Lakes suggests that the effects of primacy and recency, when used in film, suggest a kind of ‘artistic coherence, even in the productions that do not provide psychological closure (Lake, 112). He goes on to prove that it is ‘natural and predictable to recall both first and last impressions more readily than those in the middle and that last impressions can eradicate those which immediately precede them’ (Lake, 112-113). For this reason, film serves as a compelling and dynamic impression that reinforces notions of the original. After all, ‘when primacy and recency mutually interact, so that impressions are reinforced by the first, the impact is especially potent’ (Lake, 113). It is therefore crucial that we pay attention to film adaptations because they provide such particularity. The medium of film arguably affords its creator with the most agency, the audience consumes a curated series of imagery intended to elicit reaction and facilitate recollection. The issue of translation also takes on a differing role. Instead of a literal burden of clarity and making meaning that you would have in text-to-text translation, film is preoccupied with representing notion. Though tasked with representing a narrative, the method in which the tale is elucidated will inevitably reveal a predisposition to certain themes and stylistic choices. Film reflects creative direction more frankly. Often, the creative choices in storytelling are held to as much scrutiny as the subject matter of the film itself, making it a unique synergy of form and

content. Therefore, film's ability to represent particularity that is present in Asian adaptations of Shakespeare, as well as its ability to provide agency, make it the most suitable medium for this endeavour. The medium of film synergizes well with the concept of cultural capital. Cultural capital as a concept is effective if a critical mass is presupposed. Unlike a theatrical production, the measurables of a cinematic production are comparatively more transparent and direct. A film must reach the masses to attain critical and commercial success.

Shakespeare in India is an institution in its own right. Apart from the Western world, it can be said that India has had 'longest and most intense engagement with Shakespeare of any country anywhere' (Chanduri, 1). The departure of the British from India in 1947 as a political force did not dampen the study of Shakespeare and English Literature in Indian colleges and universities (Iyengar,1). This means that generations of Indian students were exposed to Shakespeare and taught to value the work. Iyengar contextualizes Shakespearean influence within the systems of higher education in India as a manifestation of colonial influence. He suggests that 'during the early phases of English education in India, their university students were initiated into English letters by British scholars, or by Indian scholars who had themselves sat at the feet of English teachers and were eager to prove worthy the profession of literature' (6). There was a continual privileging of education systems that emphasized canonical English works. Within India, 'Shakespearean traffic progressed in parallel on the stage and through the printed word. Needless to say, the cross-lingual exchange was underpinned by direct access to the original English works: a relatively minor strand in the stage encounter, much more important in print, above all in the educational curriculum.' (Chanduri, 1). The influence of these works was so far reaching that those scholars and researchers considered it of unique interest as early as

the 1960s. As such, it provides a differing reference point compared to the other nations, as its affiliation with Shakespeare was varied and institutionalized for the masses from the start. Thus, the study of an Indian cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare would showcase a dynamic where the characterization of internal and external influence proves challenging, as the boundaries between colonizer and colonized are difficult to define.

Kashmir and Jammu feature prominently in *Haider*. Originally one of the largest of the princely states of British India, Kashmir was created by a Hindu chieftain who was recognized as the maharaja of the area by the British in 1846. When the partition of India occurred in 1947, the rightful ownership of Kashmir then became a hot button issue, competing Indian and Pakistani claims to the land, as it was in the geographical territory of both India and Pakistan land (Bose 164). Considering the area was ‘populated with diverse religious, ethnic, linguistic and caste communities’ (Bose 164), it was difficult to find a racial or religious majority group that fully represented the Kashmir as whole. With both nations continually laying progressively aggressive claims to the area, a series of protests and attacks lead to the Insurgency of Kashmir in 1989, escalating the area into a full conflict zone. This, in turn, lead to the increased presence of militants and increased violence. Crackdowns, curfews, and mass arrests became the norm, and the army would frequently open fire against any protests they encountered (Mathur 22). *Haider* is situated during these fraught years of constant violence.

Much of the scholarship that surrounds Kashmir has to do with contested identities. The violence that is present in Kashmir is a direct result of the symbolic capital that is present within the land. As cultural capital concerns itself primarily with

representing symbolic power, this approach could hold a multiplicity of meaning, allowing Kashmir to take on differing definitions wherever appropriate.

In the film, *Haider*, *Hamlet* is reimagined as a political drama. In this critically acclaimed Hindi film, Haider, a young student, returns to Kashmir at the peak of the conflict to investigate his father's disappearance and is thrown into the politics of the state. The film is realistic and gritty. It does not shy away from the realities of conflict, instead bringing it to the forefront of the work. It is these particularities that allow *Haider* to emphasize aspects of *Hamlet* that are specific to his experience.

The existing scholarship on *Haider* predominately revolves around the political allegories of the work. Abhishek Sarkar and Michael Slater have written extensively on the ways that the political state of Kashmir informs Haider's personality and choices. In doing so, they do not draw a distinction between Haider and Kashmir. As this study aims to compare *Hamlet* and *Haider*, it aims to show the adaption instead of the work alone.

As an adaptation of *Hamlet*, *Haider* is deeply referential, as exemplified by the title, and reinterprets Hamlet's struggle to commit to a call for action. We see that 'family issues and personal identity are tragically entangled in terrorism, politics, and national identity' (Huang, 226), making it difficult for Hamlet to achieve stability. The film also shows a great deal of awareness, with the ending of the film being deliberately ambiguous. Indeed, we are 'not shown whether or how Haider finds a new path in life; rather, we see rolling intertitles which bring us back to our contemporary reality' (Huang, 226). This project aims to dissect the film *Haider* in three sections that will show how the film reimagines key tenants of *Hamlet*, through a close examination of the aspects of cultural capital, and how they manifest themselves in the

film. Instances of institutionalized, objectified and embodied cultural capital will be explored with a corresponding section each, united in the way that they draw out binaries that are present in the work.

The following chapters each analyse a facet of *Haider* that represents institutionalized, objectified and embodied cultural capital. These include the power that results from the use of the English language, the reality of women who objectify themselves for survival and the coexistence of communal and individual definition of tragedy. Though these facets may seem disparate, they are consistent in the way that they exhibit a particularity of the experience in Kashmir.

This first chapter will be dedicated to institutionalized cultural capital. This capital deals with the educational institutions one is affiliated with and the perception that results from that higher education. As such, it can be seen as a means of understanding Hamlet's educational background and the privilege that brings him. It can also be a means of understanding the symbolic power of the English language in Asian adaptations, where English is not the native tongue. An examination of these interactions would be useful in ascertaining the extent to which the English language, and the educational institutions and attitudes related to the study of English, have symbolic power within an Asian context. In *Haider*, it is used to connote educational credentials or external status symbols of the like. In the film *Haider*, cultural identity and patriotic expectation have institutionalized representations. This is often intertwined with the English language, which is used as a means of asserting legitimacy. The disjointedness of language and meaning serves to show these symbols of institutionalized power fail to preserve order, acting as a symbol for the state of affairs in the nation. Attempts to use English can seem disjointed and must be seen as

intentional attempts to assert power. In the uncertain time Haider is set in, language must be counted on to set boundaries and facilitate understanding. However, much like in *Hamlet*, the language underscores fundamental failing in the fabric of the institutions, and an inability to communicate clarity. The use of the English language is ultimately an illustration of competing habitus, showing how individuals within a postcolonial society communicate resistance.

The second section will be dedicated to objectified cultural capital. Objectified cultural capital is a means of understanding goods that are irrevocably linked with a culture. These goods could function as representations of what the culture values and what aspects of their practices they choose to preserve. Within *Hamlet*, this framework could be useful in understanding the position women have within the narrative and within a set cultural context. Often, women are objectified and reduced to a set of impressions and expectations that are thrust upon to uphold. This framework is useful in understanding the dangerous consequences of such a reductive practice. Within Haider, objectified cultural capital is used to connote objects that hold great cultural and symbolic significance. They are crucial as they function as symbols for the community to draw strength from and means to comprehend one's identity. This is exemplified through the female characters in the work. The woman in the film, namely the Ophelia and Gertrude equivalents, cannot escape idealization. They are protected and treated like venerated objects, constantly placated instead of heeded. Because they hold such symbolic significance, they turn to self-objectification as a means of attaining agency. As such, this treatment serves as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, that the characters show an awareness of. The close examination of the treatment of Ghazala as a mother figure, treatment of Arshia and her alignment of loyalty and the violence that befalls them, will serve as a cautionary tale of the effects of internalizing

objectifying notions, suggesting that any agency given through self-objectifying action is illusory. It also acts as a larger commentary on the lack of agency available to women in a postcolonial context

Lastly, embodied cultural capital speaks to internalized cultural dispositions, meaning the way in which an individual is relating to others in light of a cultural expectation. This state of cultural capital is most preoccupied with one's behaviour under duress, as it is in those situations that one acts instinctively. It is also interested in the cultural differences when it comes to universal values. This framework would be useful in understanding the actions that come out of a desire. One of the main undercurrents of the play is Hamlet deliberating if he should take action and how he chooses to do so. The application of this would differ across cultural contexts. Within *Hamlet's* cultural context, avenging his father would mean murdering the man who was responsible for his death, Claudius. This 'eye for an eye' approach does not take into account the communal repercussions of such an act. This is exemplified through the film's portrayal of Haider himself. While the work does peg him as a deliberately contemplative individual, it also is clear that he is a man defined by his actions. This marked change is a direct response to his environment. Haider is defined by action because his environment dictates it. Though he strives to do so, his surroundings do not allow him to act as an individual. His contemplations of personhood cannot be divorced from his nation or his community. The magnitude of significance placed on his actions mean that he is not able to attain resolution. Hamlet's means of enacting his desire are highly individualized, whilst Haider's approach is largely and more intentionally informed by his political context. He is unable to see himself outside of a political agenda. Haider's fragmentation of the self is a consequence of existing in a conflict riddled environment over an extended period.

Therefore, closely examining *Haider* and *Hamlet* through the framework of cultural capital facilitates a systematic means of looking at aspects of both works. It is in this interaction that previously underemphasized parts of *Hamlet* to the forefront, and sagacity of *Haider* is exhibited. In these interactions, the process of adaptation is shown to be dynamic, as the relationship between adaptation and source text is symbiotic. It is through this symbiotic relationship that marginalized voices are given representation.

CHAPTER ONE: LANGUAGE AND POWER

An otherwise Hindi film, *Haider* features instances of individuals peppering English into their daily vernacular. The use of the English language in *Haider* cannot be divorced from its colonial roots, as the language of governance and education. As such, instances in which characters choose to use English in an otherwise Hindi setting must be seen as intentional attempts to assert power. Using the framework of institutionalized cultural capital, this section aims to show how the use of the English language at key moments of the film, specifically in instances where individuals assert their education or the law, are acts of asserting class and legitimacy. This chapter will also act as a larger commentary on the viability of the English language as a language of resistance, showing how it is both a boon and bane in a post-colonial environment.

When discussing Institutionalized cultural capital, we refer to the recognition that one attains from institutions. To understand how this recognition translates within interactions, habitus must be expounded on. Habitus is the means in which cultural capital is embodied. It refers to aspects of cultural behaviour that seem natural or innate but are in fact, learned behaviour (Buchanan, 1). An individual's habitus is decided through their prior experiences. This, in turn, inevitably informs their future interactions. The development of one's habitus involves the development of dispositions and behaviours that are beneficial to the particular social context that an individual exists in, to facilitate success in that situation. Therefore, a well-developed habitus would be key in ensuring situationally specific success and would inevitably inform the way one navigates social interactions.

A result of learned behaviour, habitus does not occur in a vacuum. As habitus is simply a term to connote habits and dispositions that one adopts as a result of one's

particular upbringing, one's habitus could change depending on what is expected of them. This also means that one could develop multiple or competing habitus throughout one's lifetime.

Bourdieu suggests that 'different conditions of existence produce different habitus' (170), indicating that differing circumstances would result in different types of habitus, producing a more nuanced and complex definition of success. Indeed, Masood Ashraf Raja asserts that it is 'within the gap between these two corresponding functions of the habitus that one can learn the governing system of appraisal within a specific lifestyle' (349). This suggests that it is in the grappling with competing habitus that one can estimate and arrive at a judgement of what is valuable.

If Bourdieu encourages us to 'think of cultural capital in the same way we think of economic capital' (Harker, 118), then habitus is a resource that indicates and facilitates power and privilege. If one's habitus is in the embodiment of cultural capital, and one can have multiple or even competing habitus within oneself, the instances where one chooses a habitus over another must be seen as a deliberate act. The choice of privileging one habitus over another is then a result of honed situational awareness and should be seen as a conscientious attempt at an affiliation with dominant power in that context. After all, habitus is a learned behaviour, and it is only natural that one would privilege the appropriately advantageous habitus.

The notion of competing habitus is particularly pertinent when applied to a post-colonial context, as it acts as an apt illustration of the dichotomous identity of one living in a post-colonial context. Post-colonial contexts are defined by the 'result of this interaction between imperial culture and the complexity of indigenous cultural practices.' (Lazarus, 1). There are differing code of conduct, belief systems and

inclinations involved in ‘imperial culture’ and ‘indigenous cultural practices. These differing power dynamics would give rise to differing sets of social expectations. Consequently, what would constitute as acceptable behaviours would also differ. The post-colonial subject is then at the mercy of these varied expectations. This would lead to them developing dichotomous habitus, to suit their context. This dichotomy could be categorized as an internal and external habitus. The latter would concern itself with the code of conduct that would be deemed to be acceptable within the perimeters of imperial culture, whilst the former would concern itself with the ideals of an indigenous cultural practice. Much like the act of code-switching, one must change one’s deposition in order to appear appropriate. Therefore, it can be said that the competing habitus that exists to reflect the differing power dynamics that an individual must grapple with in a post-colonial context.

The framework of competing habitus, particularly an internal and external habitus, allows for nuanced expression of what constitutes power within the context of *Haider*. Due to its setting, issues of identity and nationalism are at the forefront of the work. It can be said that the notion of nationalism within the Indian subcontinent was ‘historically structured upon the cultural contradiction of British modernity and tradition’ (Chrisman, 186). Partha Chatterjee contends that the contradiction was resolved through the production of a bifurcated “discourse” in which nationalism posited an “inner” space of traditional cultural and spiritual essence, gendered feminine, and an “outer” space of “Western” progress and secular modernity.’ (Chrisman, 186). This dichotomy indicates multiple power dynamics, and the struggle between and internal and external space. This notion is also seen in the

This is particularly interesting when we consider the historical context of

Haider. Set in Kashmir in 1995, *Haider* takes place in the midst of the Kashmiri Insurgency, a revolt against the Indian administration within Kashmir and Jammu. It is particularly interesting that this nationalist discourse still holds true. Though the Kashmiri Insurgency is primarily a dispute between India and Pakistan, the Indian administration actively adopted colonial policies. Suvir Kaul asserts that the government of independent India ‘renewed both colonial legislation and colonial attitudes to deal with challenges to its authority’ (66). He also makes explicit that this was not a ‘problem of inheritance’, but rather a concerted effort to ‘enforce the boundaries it inherited from its colonial predecessor’ (71). The existence of these administrations and institutions that hold and consolidate power through colonial practices suggests a massively disproportionate relationship of power. Within the context of *Haider*, the comparison of these contradictory forces, between internal and external habitus, and where one decides to align oneself, would then act as an indication as to which affiliation is more beneficial to the individual.

Language is one such marker of where one chooses to affiliate oneself between internal and external habitus. Language has always had significant symbolic resonance. In his book, ‘Language and Symbolic Power’, Bourdieu suggests that interactions are all symbolic exchanges, and that language communicates this symbolic power. He asserts that ‘the relations of communication par excellence - linguistic exchanges - are also relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized’ (35). He makes clear that instances of spoken interaction are telling of the latent power dynamic that exists, and that these power struggles are actualized within conversation. Therefore, language, specifically one’s spoken language, which one decides to employ in a given context, is indicative of where an individual would like to affiliate themselves. The

investigation of instances of a spoken language also acts as a means to quantify instances of one aligning oneself to a habitus. When attempting to appear congenial to an imperial culture, it would be more likely that one would use the English language. This would then be an indication of alignment with external habitus, instead of the internal one.

With this illustration of competing habitus, I would like to suggest that the use of spoken English is an indication of an external habitus that endows the speaker with privilege. By examining the instances of spoken English in *Haider*, we see an appeal to a particular power structure that favours them in that instance. In Kashmir, where borders are not clearly defined and power is in constant flux between numerous stakeholders, individuals would be expected to adapt and move between different situationally appropriate habitus. Examinations of instances of spoken English in *Haider* then serve as a means of understanding when a colonial affiliation in a post-colonial setting is beneficial. They also act as a larger commentary of the positionality of individuals whose nation in is flux. This chapter will also explore how the use of the English language is both a boon and a bane in expressing nationalist sentiments.

The link between institutionalized cultural capital and education is a longstanding one. As institutionalized cultural capital deals with the cultural capital that one can possess as a result of a relationship between oneself and an institution, educational establishments are a natural choice. Not only are they catered for the masses, but their primary purpose is also to impart knowledge based on a set curriculum. This set curriculum can be seen as a means of conserving a particular cultural past and set of cultural expectations, whilst the act of teaching can be seen as an act of emphasis, to ensure continuity, creating habitus. Richard Harker writes

‘Bourdieu's work is one of the few coherent accounts of the central role that schools have in both changing and in reproducing social and cultural inequalities from one generation to the next. He achieves this analysis in relation to education through an exploration of the tension between the conservative aspect of schooling (the preservation of knowledge and experience from one generation to the next (re-production)), and the dynamic, innovative aspect (the generation of new knowledge (pro-duction)).’ (88). This process of ‘reproduction’ is particularly pertinent. It ensures that practices are consistently reproduced, which effectively creates a system that produces an elite group and encourages elitist behaviours and beliefs. Bourdieu has argued that it is the culture of the dominant group (the group (or groups) that control the economic, social and political resources) which is embodied in schools, and that it is this 'embodiment' that works as a reproduction strategy for the dominant group (39). Educational institutions and the advantages they provide their students can then be seen as a controlled example of the process that creates a dominant habitus that decides what is successful and what isn't. It can be said that ‘those with the appropriate cultural capital are reinforced with 'success', while others are not’ (Harker, 89). This effectively creates a system that produces an elite group and encourages elitist behaviours and beliefs, further encouraging an unequal distribution of power within society. In the same way our ‘dominant economic institutions are structured to favour those who already possess economic capital, so our educational institutions are structured to favour those who already possess cultural capital, in the form of the habitus of the dominant cultural fraction’ (Harker, 89). This system ensure that power is consistently in the hands of like-minded people with similar backgrounds. It is abundantly clear that education reproduces cultural capital, and the privilege that is associated with it. The use of the English language within an Indian context should

then be seen as instances in which individuals actively privilege one habitus over another.

If we are to ascertain if the use of the English language as akin to employing external habitus and those instances as attempts at resistance, we must understand the general trends of the use of English in postcolonial works. Within the sphere of postcolonial studies, there has been mixed responses to the issue of English being an effective tool of resistance. These generally fall into two camps, with some choosing to disregard English and privilege their native tongue, and some choosing to see it as a viable alternative to their native language and a means of resistance. Considering the Indian subcontinent's long and storied history with the English language, most authors and creators of postcolonial works have a tendency to lean towards the latter. One such prominent figure is writer Salman Rushdie. In his essay 'Imaginary Homelands', he posits that 'those of us who do use English do so in spite of our ambiguity towards it, or perhaps because of that, perhaps because we can find in that linguistic struggle a reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world, struggles between the cultures within ourselves and the influences at work upon our societies. To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free' (17). It is in this process of adapting the English language that one is able to find freedom through autonomy. In using the language, individuals are given a measure of power, allowing them to shift the power dynamic and attain some of the power that was not given to them, engaging in a process of redefining meaning on their own terms.

When contextualizing this issue back to the context of *Haider*, it is important to note that partition narratives serve as a unique subset of post-colonial works within the Indian subcontinent. The existence of Kashmir, where *Haider* is set, is a direct

result of the Partition of India that occurred in 1947. It can be said that the realities that Haider attempts to communicate exist on the basis of a colonial oversight. As such, the realities of the individuals living in that community have to be understood with that in mind. Debrati Dutta writes ‘the memory and the reality of that dismembered past that in popular discourse has been coined as “Partition of India” was not only a watershed epoch in the history of the sub-continent but also an event that has for many generations now been treated as an enigma, a riddle, an ambivalence, a metaphor of postcolonial times’ (275). She goes on to note that this conundrum results in a ‘fragmentation of identity and creates an idiom of rootlessness, symptomatic of the post-colonial malady of an exile’ (276). Partition narratives shed light on individuals who are oppressed as well as displaced. In a highly militant and political context such as *Haider*’s, language is a pertinent concern as it relates directly to the way in which one is able to express oneself and one’s affiliations. Amid a crisis of identity, language is a welcome means of making meaning, allowing one to create a narrative for their own purposes.

The English language in India has always had a significant relation to education. The language landscape of India is one that involves a wealth of differing dialects from multiple regions. It is perhaps due to this diversity that India does not have an official national language, though the constitution of India does state that Hindi and English are co-official languages. This suggests that ‘despite ecologically ruinous language planning during British colonial times, there is immense linguistic diversity in India due to an obsessive language loyalty that is the culture, or in Bourdieuan terms, the ‘habitus’, of South Asia.’ (Viash,188). Therefore, we see that there is a presence of both an external and an internal habitus here. Even though the English language is widely used, it did not replace dialect in importance. Instead, these

languages co-exist, and have differing significances depending on their circumstances. In the case of education, English plays a particular role. The film *Haider* makes this correlation clear within the opening prologue. Prior to the title card, the film features a scene in a school. Following an establishing shot of the school building, we see a classroom of young children in uniforms, and a teacher at the front of the class. The teacher is revealed to be Haider's mother, Ghazala. In the classroom, she asks her students 'What is a home?' (Haider, 03:14) She then continues, answering her own question as the children echo her words 'It's brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, it is unselfish acts and kindly sharing and showing your lov-ved ones you are always caring.' (Haider, 03:14-03:44). In *Haider*, the strong relationship between education and the English language is made clear within the first ten minutes of the film. It is particularly interesting that English is being used in this rumination of the meaning of home. Throughout the film, all other mentions of 'home' are in Hindi, suggesting that the academic context informed the language used. The fact that English is the de-facto choice when it comes to education and the fact that it remains an official co-language of India, post-independence, is testament to its importance. Considering India's history as a colony, the use of the English language in education speaks to the power and prestige that language manifests in external habitus.

A knowledge of Shakespeare can be said to be an outward indication of external habitus. A knowledge of Shakespeare and his works is an indication of a canon that is inextricably linked with connotations of colonial education. Amirta Sen asserts that 'the legacy of Shakespeare was part of a hegemonic colonial apparatus that sought to regulate large sections of the Indian population through English language and literature. While it is true that Shakespeare also provided the means by which former empires, including India, could write (and perform) back, the bard remains

linked with elite modes of knowledge transmission'(5). It is important that we locate *Haider* within the longstanding tradition of elite knowledge transmission. One cannot separate *Haider* from *Hamlet*. Indeed, *Haider* assumes a level of familiarity with Shakespearean work from its audiences. The ability to recognize that the play is in fact *Hamlet* is critical in order to fully understand the film's potent political criticism. By transposing *Hamlet* into this context, Bhardwaj chooses to make Kashmir the protagonist of the film. He trusts that the audience has an awareness of the plot, thus providing a handle to which they can understand the situation in Kashmir. Though *Hamlet*'s position in the canon suggests that the plot is somewhat general knowledge, familiarity with the text assumes a level of cultural capital that remains 'confined to those benefitting from a certain brand of education' (Sen, 7). As such, the film assumes a measure of institutionalized cultural capital upon its audiences, for them to fully understand the allusions that the director is making. These further asserts that instances of the English language in the film are not accidental, but rather intentional signposts that should be examined carefully.

A remnant of colonial power, the English language is often taught alongside Hindi in schools in India. This practice is not without criticism, due to the 'language's associate with colonial rule and the desire to protect one's own language and cultural identity' (Manuel, 702). Despite this, there is a long-standing correlation between material success and the mastery of the English language (Manuel, 703). In Kashmir, this correlation proves to be true. English plays a major role in the education, medicine, engineering, and business sectors. In Jammu and Kashmir, English is a compulsory subject in all government and private schools. (Teli and Nisar 174). The languages relation to power is due to its relation to success. This is due, in part, to the creation of a system of elites that emphasizes a particular success, creating a dominant

habitus. This association also allows it to be a tool that one can use in class mobility. The ability to speak the English language is seen as an attempt to affiliate oneself with the clout that occurs from being associated with this elite group. The English language must then be seen as a means to enact one's institutionalized cultural capital. If we are to think of cultural capital like economic capital, and English as a means of enacting institutionalized cultural capital, we must then think of instances where characters use English as appealing to external habitus. In the same way that the goods that one spends money on can be seen as a reflection of an investment in a lifestyle, or a reflection of wealth and class, the use of English must be seen as a proactive choice in asserting an association with an elite group. This also aligns with Bakhtin's notion of 'heteroglossia' and the binaries that exist within language. These are useful in showing multiplicity of meaning, and the binary that is present in the postcolonial identity. Fundamentally, Bakhtin's work is anchored in the concept of otherness. This is especially useful when considering dual identities, as 'a return to Bakhtin helps us to retain not only the notion of subjecthood, of the struggle for identity and agency, but also that of the inevitably 'double-voiced' nature of a marginalized 'othered' subject' (Allen 160). Therefore, when individuals actively choose to use their institutionalized cultural capital in favour of a cause, they are privileging external habitus over the other, and asserting their power by choosing to align with the dominant power present.

Within the context of *Haider*, the use of English is the most prominent marker of an elite education, and by extension the colonial power and prestige that comes with it. This is due, in part, to the historical context of the state of Kashmir, where *Haider* is located. The state of Kashmir that we know of today was a result of colonial rule in India. Much of pre-independence India was made up of 'princely states', where there was a local authority figure that governed with the approval of the British East India

company. This meant that the populace and existing government had to accept overall British sovereignty. After the partition of India in 1947, where British India was divided into India and Pakistan, both nations laid claim to Kashmir. It is important to note that the methods employed by the Indian government are reminiscent of their colonial predecessor. The Indian administration favoured policies that gave the Indian government a disproportional amount of unregulated militant power. One of the more prominent policies was the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). Enacted in Kashmir in 1990, it was invoked as a response to the breakdown of normal governance in the state, or parts of it, being declared as “disturbed”. This paved the way for the army to be brought in to restore normalcy in a hostile environment caused by militancy, insurgency, or proxy war by a neighbouring country (Desai, 7). The implementation of the AFSPA meant that Kashmir was effectively plunged into a state of emergency, disenfranchising local governments. Enforcers of the AFSPA were given nearly free reign. With the ability to arrest anyone without a warrant and legal immunity for their actions, we see that the Indian administration’s preferred mode of governance is similar to colonial rule. The disproportionate power dynamic present in this context speaks to hegemony over enforcing law and order. Therefore, *Haider* invites us, as audience members, to re-examine our expectations of what colonial power looks like. There is no white man, or any stereotypical representation of colonial power. Instead, it makes itself known through prevailing attitudes. We see that the Indian administration is championing colonial methods, policies, and attitudes. This suggests that these colonial practices have merit and are efficient in helping one seize power. The association with British power gives the English language institutionalized cultural capital because it enacts a specific ideal in an uncompromising fashion, similar to the system that gave rise to elites, and allowed

colonial masters to stay in power. The usage of English then becomes a tool of colonial commentary because the language cannot be divorced from colonial legacy and its clout.

English also carries very strong colonial connotations, as it relates to class. In India, the British were absolute in their view that Western literature was the only kind of literature worth learning. There was an ‘unquestionable supremacy of English literature over Indian writing laid the cornerstone of both imperial education and administration’ (Pillai, 145). The British politician Thomas Babington Macaulay wrote ‘Minute on Education’ in 1835, in which he stated ‘the intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education.’ (10). Though clearly biased, it was very influential and heavily informed the educational policy in India, where the British mode of education was transposed. It was determined that ‘the pattern of studies in rhetoric and logic then current in England provided a convenient model for adaptation in India’ (Viswanathan 46). As a result, the European model of classical humanism was implemented. This was a strategic move as it ensured the obedience of the masses, as it was designed to suppress retaliation. A curriculum that focused on classical humanism ‘assured protection of the integrity of native learning, defusing potential protest by Indians against overtures of cultural domination’ (Viswanathan 46). It is clear that ‘Macaulay’s words, while testifying to the imperialist agendas of British educators, also bear witness to the feeling of inferiority that the “learned natives” or “orientalists” had for their own languages and literatures’ (Pillai, 146). English was recognized to be the superior language by both colonizer and colonized alike. In post-independence India, there was ‘an established hegemony of English language and culture, which manufactured native consent and enhanced the processes of civilizing

and institutionalizing that were necessary to the governance of the British Raj and the Indian national government.’ (Pillai, 147). With regards to Kashmir and *Haider*, this context is key as the British Raj had a heavy presence in Kashmir. With English carrying the association of an official language, it is no wonder that it held on to the connotation of power and significance.

Haider himself benefits from this elite education. After the opening title card, the film opens with him returning from Aligarh Muslim University. We first meet Haider as he disembarks from a bus to go through a security checkpoint. He stands in line, waiting to be searched, holding his identification documents, with a full rucksack on his shoulders. When he is questioned, he provides his university identification card upon request, showing us that he enrolled in the history department of the University and is in the Master of Philosophy programme (*Haider*, 13:50-14:58). Not only is he a postgraduate student, but his project is also one that revolves around an independent project, of which he decides his curriculum. It is safe to assume that Haider is very much a representative of an elite Indian class. The scene continues with a lieutenant asking Haider what the subject of his research is. Haider then replies, in English, ‘revolutionary poetry in British India’ (*Haider*, 14:23). He could have chosen to speak in Hindi, yet he uses English as a means of emphasizing the content of his research. Here, we see Haider showing situational awareness and appealing to his external habitus. By speaking in English, he not only asserted that his area of study was one that he excelled at but encouraged his interrogator to be sympathetic to him. Considering that his interrogator was a member of the Indian administration in Kashmir, Haider’s use of English must be seen as a calculated attempt to align himself more closely, creating commonality. The use of English strengthens his position. It is safe to assume that Haider spoke in English as a means of readdressing the power

imbalance. In doing so, he leverages his institutionalized cultural capital and elite education to his advantage, using his external habitus to address the power imbalance and assert his personal autonomy.

The notion of competing habitus and attempts to align to an external habitus through speech is present within *Hamlet*. There is a precedent set within *Hamlet* of characters having to outwardly state their habitus. In *Hamlet*, much like in *Haider*, the characters establish that the context that *Hamlet* is set in is wrought with tension. Individuals have to make explicit what their allegiance is, over who they are. In the first scene of the first act of the play, we meet Barnardo and Francisco, both guards in Elsinore. Barnardo starts the play with ‘Who’s there’ (*Ham*. I.i.5), making to clear that he is unaware that it is his fellow guard Francisco before him. Francisco responds ‘Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.’ (*Ham*.I.i.6). It is clear that they are suspicious of one another. The fact that this interaction opens the play makes this atmosphere of apprehension that much more palatable. Barnardo then declares ‘Long live the King’ (*Ham*. I.i.7). Here, it is made clear to us that we are in a nation where it is beneficial to show loyalty to the King, instead of announcing his identity. Barnardo’s choice is intentional here. By invoking his support for the King, he quickly aligned himself with an entity that is more powerful, appealing to the dominant power of that context. This is not a situation that is unique to Barnardo. Shortly after, Horatio and Marcellus, who are meant to stand guard with Barnardo, enter the scene. Francisco again asks, ‘Who’s there?’ (*Ham*. I.i.19). Yet again. Both Horatio and Marcellus identify themselves by their loyalties over themselves. Identifying themselves as ‘Friends to this ground’ and ‘liegeman to the Dane’ (*Ham*. I.i.20-21), they chose to emphasize intimacy and commonality before all else. Both responses are also deliberately vague. The use of the term ‘liegemen to the Dane’ suggests allegiance to

the Danish king, but they do not specify who the king in question is. Horatio's use of 'friends of this country' is particularly intriguing. Rather than pledging allegiance like his compatriots, he chooses to emphasize his intimate relationship with the country instead of the king. Therefore, we see that these characters appeal to their external habitus in the way that they assert their loyalties so far as it is useful and beneficial to them.

Unlike in *Hamlet*, Haider's deferent to external habitus does not always lead to a completely favourable outcome. Though the English language is linked to elitist origins and acknowledged, it does not give one a free pass. Instead, because of the English language's relation to power, Haider's mastery of the English language leads to a fundamental distrust of his expression. There is a correlation between education and radicalized action that is present in *Haider*. In the film, after being interrogated about his educational background, Haider is asked what his final destination will be. Haider answers, 'Islamabad.'. This causes him to be detained, as it suggests an allegiance towards Pakistan. Islamabad being the capital of Pakistan, an affiliation with it would be considered anti-Indian, resulting in the soldiers then perceiving Haider as a threat, and detaining him. With assistance from Arshia, Haider's childhood friend and romantic interest, that snafu is explained away as a misunderstanding. Arshia tell the soldiers to look at Haider's poetry, showing them that he is a poet and therefore would be expected to use language creatively. (*Haider*, 15:34) The lieutenant questions Haider, asking 'Your love for Kashmir... is expressed as Islamabad?' (*Haider*, 15:38). Arshia quickly retorts 'Sir, Islamabad is another name for Anantnag' (*Haider*, 15:40). Anantnag can be considered to be the administrative capital of Kashmir. It is also locally known as Islamabad. Both names are used for the town, Anantnag being commonly used or associated with the Hindus and Sikhs and

Islamabad being used or commonly associated with the Muslims. By reframing Haider's use of 'Islamabad' as a means of pledging allegiance to the favourable side, Arshia appeals to the sensibilities of internal habitus, categorizing the act as a cultural misunderstanding. What was seen as a threat can now be received as homage to their cause, effectively deescalating the situation. The lieutenant accepts this explanation with a warning, as he says with a chilling smile, 'I know... But for us... there's just one Islamabad... across the mountains in Pakistan...' (*Haider*, 14:42). With this, he is drawing clear definition. He then hands Haider's book of poetry back to him, replying in English, 'By the way... nice poems. Very difficult huh. But be careful with such beautiful inspiration. Okay?' (*Haider*, 15:47). When speaking to Haider, he reverts to English, intentionally choosing to communicate with him in a differing language from what was spoken prior. His use of the phrase 'be careful with such beautiful inspiration' is particularly thought-provoking. He insinuates that Haider's learned background will be viewed as a threat and warn him to exercise caution. In this warning, he demonstrates an awareness of Haider's ability to manipulate language to his advantage. It is almost as if he is encouraging Haider to quell any desire to react, suggesting he still views Haider as a legitimate threat, as he recognizes that Haider's wordplay. The fact that Haider was viewed as a threat so quickly is a clear indication that he has the ability to incite sentiments should he so chose to do so, speaks to his recognition of the fact that Haider is attempting to assert external habitus. The lieutenant reminds him that his thoughts have the potential to translate into radical action. In doing so, he acknowledges Haider's institutionalized cultural capital, recognizing that his education provides him with leverage, as well as an ability to shift sentiment by manipulating meaning. Here, we see that Haider must balance between internal and external habitus. His mastery of both the English language and Hindi

languages allow him to actively engage and appeal to the habitus that is associated with both languages. Though his writings are brimming with nationalist sentiment, his mastery of the English language and his education allow him to evade harsh reproach under the guise of poetic license. Haider uses the legitimacy that comes from his mastery of the English language to evade dire consequences. His ability to speak the language and leverage on poetic license and wordplay allow for a numerous interpretation of his writing and speech. This, in turn, gives him a measure of privilege, as his radical speech and sentiments would be considered more culturally acceptable. Haider's education therefore enables him insulation from dire consequences, pushing him towards radicalized action.

The relationship between education and a tendency towards radicalized action is not unique to *Haider*, indeed it is prevalent in *Hamlet* as well. The play draws a clear correlation between higher education and authority. In the first scene of the first act, whilst encountering the ghost, Marcellus declares 'Thou art a scholar. Speak to it, Horatio' (*Ham.* I.i.54). In his distress, he calls upon Horatio to speak to this apparition, on the basis of the fact that Horatio is more well educated than he. Horatio is expected to know what to say in this situation because he is more highly educated. This interaction suggests the belief that a higher education translates to a heightened ability to express oneself accurately and appropriately. Hamlet takes advantage of this belief, manipulating his words so as to avoid outrightly saying what he means. This behaviour is prevalent from his introduction in the play. In the second scene of the first act of the play, we are finally introduced to the titular character of Hamlet. His uncle, Claudius and his mother, Gertrude, have just been married after the death of his father. Though Hamlet is in the midst of grieving, that does not stop him from being critical of the situation. His first spoken dialogue is not to anyone in particular, but a

conspiring aside to the audience, stating ‘A little more than kin, and less than kind’ (*Ham.* I.ii.245). This quippy remark sums up his attitude succinctly, indicating he is distrustful of the current circumstances. Claudius addresses him, asking ‘How is it that the clouds still hang on you?’ (*Ham.* I.ii.246), questioning Hamlet’s grieving countenance. Hamlet then replies, ‘Not so much, my lord, I am too much in the sun’ (*Ham.* I.ii.247). There is a double meaning in the word ‘sun’ here. Not only does it act as foil to Claudius’s description of Hamlet being under a ‘cloud’, but it also serves as a cunning means of asserting his loyalty to his late father. Indeed, it can be said that much of his contemplation in the work is a result of his academic training. His vigorous interrogations of his situation speak to a practice of questioning information given to him and the ability to manipulate the language to suit his purposes. Therefore, it can be said that there is a correlation between higher education and radicalized action. Not only does education encourage independent thought, but it teaches one to justify their actions. Whilst this drives Hamlet to further sharpen his thoughts and contemplate his actions in greater detail, it drives Haider to direct drastic measures.

Haider is more prone to drastic action because he is able to leverage on his external habitus as a means of avoidance. His awareness of how to accurately and persuasively employ language depending on his social circumstance is a by-product of him living in the post-colonial society. As a subject within this highly volatile and dangerous environment, where loyalties and ties are consistently questioned, he must be consistently aware of the way that he is portraying himself and how he is being portrayed to other people. His mastery of the English language allows him a measure of power and freedom because of the language’s association with elite education. Ironically, it is when afforded this freedom, that he then has the ability to be more

outright and daring in his pursuit against his oppressors.

In the film *Haider*, the habitus that allows Haider to understand action, also allows him to be more daring in his opposition. Even when he appears to be demonstrating signs of mental instability, it is obvious that he has a clear understanding of the situation around him and his position within it. Haider shows a keen awareness of the fact that the laws that govern him and the people around him are subjective. This mindset is a clear indication of his external habitus. His ability to question and his keen understanding of the concept of law over the letter of the law show his legitimacy and his awareness. By choosing to directly challenge the laws that govern him by stating them in a language that is not his own he draws attention to the fact that he is not blind to the repercussions of these laws. In *Haider*, the mastery of the English language is a double-edged sword. The same habitus that affords Haider this depth of comprehension is also what allows him to be more daring in his opposition. Haider understands that the power of law lies in collective obedience, and questions that notion. In his seminal work, 'Language and Symbolic Power', Bourdieu defines legal discourse as 'creative speech which brings into existence that which it utters' (42). In that utterance, he suggests that language has the ability to 'create what it states' (42). This means that while language has the ability to draw attention to a reality, it also has the ability to change that same reality. Bourdieu continues to explicate that legal discourse 'derives its power to produce existence by producing the collectively recognized'. This means that language has the power to produce a reality so long as there are masses that are willing to abide by them. This is especially significant given Haider's highly militant reality, where the power of the law has a large impact on his day-to-day tasks. Interestingly, Haider attempts to draw attention to the law shows his awareness of the power of the collective. Using the English

language, he attempts to use his external habitus to challenge the status quo, directly challenging the legislation that governs his life. His leveraging on his external habitus exhibits his awareness and desire to change his reality. His retaliation is pointed and precise because he notices discrepancies to a depth that others do not possess. By leveraging on his external habitus, he intentionally ascribes legitimacy to his point of view, and hopes that others will recognize it as well.

Haider leverages on his external habitus in an attempt to ascribe legitimacy to his nationalist sentiment. This is exemplified in instances where English is used to draw attention to the law and the power it wields. When we first meet our protagonist Haider, he discovers that his childhood home has been desecrated and his father is missing. The rest of the film is then pushed forward by Haider's desire to find his fathers and gain clarity on the events that led to his disappearance, all the while holding on to hope that his father is alive. At the climax of the film, Haider addresses the people gathered in the town square, after locating his father's grave. Head shaven, eyes wild, his appearance is dishevelled. Haider launches into an anecdote turned political commentary on the state. He starts with 'Hello... Hello... mic testing one, two, three... Can you hear me? Hello... UN council resolution number 47 of 1948... Article 2 of the Geneva convention and article 370 of the Indian Constitution... raises but one question! Do we exist or do we not? If we do, then who are we? If we don't, then, where are we? Do we exist at all? Chutzpah is our problem.' (*Haider* 1:24:04-1:24:42). Whilst Haider delivers this speech in both English and Hindi, he uses English for all the law terminology in the first half. He then employs Hindi when contemplating the position of Kashmir and asking if they exist or not. Haider does not merely quote these statutes of the law, he announces them, intending to draw attention to his speech. While the majority of the crowd is Kashmiri, though there are a

smattering of armed officers present. These armed officers serve as a representation of an Indian presence at the scene and are meant to ensure law and order. The use of English to serves to emphasize those particular treaties, and are an act of aggression on Haider's part, directed towards the Indian soldiers and the power they wield. It is important to note that the film makes an explicit correlation between the English language and the Indian administration. This correlation is made throughout the film through the consistent usage of the English by individuals affiliated with the Indian administration. This notion is further established in a scene that clearly demonstrates an abuse of power. We see an officer of the Indian armed forces state in English to an ally, 'the army will run the operation, but your support will be crucial in recruitment and intelligence' (*Haider* 41:38:37-41:40.04). He follows that with 'Lets catch and kill' (*Haider* 41:50:07). These instances of spoken English demonstrate an unwavering desire to possess and enact power that Haider and audiences of the film would be made aware of prior. By directly quoting the laws that give the Indian armed forces its legitimacy, Haider addresses their actions directly. By reciting them in their legal format, he not only demonstrates an awareness of these laws, but also a keen knowledge. By reciting this act, Haider demonstrates a keen awareness of the power imbalance that is present as a result of this law. By announcing it in English, he seems to be trying to incite a reaction, challenging the armed forces. If he was trying to assert a nationalist agenda, it would have made more sense to utilize a language that aligned with most of the crowd present. When appealing to the majority Kashmiri audience, he asserts his internal habitus instead, choosing his native tongue to communicate questions of identity and belonging. This shift between the two habitus allows him to effectively challenge the Indian armed forces whilst appealing to much of the crowd. In these actions, Haider demonstrates an awareness of the importance of the collective

majority abiding by the law. In this instance, he models the resistance that he wishes to inspire. By quoting the law and challenging its existence, Haider shows he has an awareness of this act and holds them accountable for their actions. Haider is only able to do this because he is leveraging on his external habitus. His ability to understand the nuance and specificity of the laws is a direct result of his language competency. By speaking it in plain, specific, legal language, he engages in an act of resistance and protests the armed forces that are present.

In this act of retaliation against his oppressor, Haider's mastery of the English language allows him to communicate his intentions with specificity, making clear his deference to an external habitus. His choice to use the word 'chutzpah' is an example of that. Chutzpah is a term that connotes a particular audacity. Haider uses the term as a means of illustrating the position of the armed forces in Kashmir. He tells a funny and compelling anecdote of a man who robs a bank teller, only to request that an account be opened in his name for him to store the stolen cash. Whilst this illustration entertains the crowd, it also directly critiques the actions of the Indian armed forces. Indeed, he emphasizes how Chutzpah and AFSPA sound similar, using wordplay that directly condemns the act of parliament that granted authority to the Indian armed forces in Kashmir. In using this illustration, Haider is appropriating the meaning of the word for his own purposes. This instance is reflective of existing language relations that 'take into account the literatures in English as well as those in Indian languages' (Ashcroft 117). Anantha Murthy suggests that the relationship of the ancient languages (Tamil and Sanskrit) to the modern vernaculars is analogous to that of Latin and modern English, suggesting that all texts mix the two, much like English texts demonstrate a varying mix of Latin and vernacular elements (Ashcroft 117). This process is viewed positively, as the individual retains his tradition whilst 'embracing

the contradictions of his own position as a mark of creative potential' (Ashcroft 118). Haider's choice to leverage on his external habitus with the use of the term 'chutzpah' whilst simultaneously engaging internal habitus by illustrating the term to the crowd with a relatable anecdote, exemplify this. In occupying this liminal space, Haider leverages upon both habitus to ensure his nationalist sentiments are communicated with nuance.

Haider's use of the term 'Chutzpah' is an act of wordplay that works to his nationalist agenda of reclaiming power. The concept of appropriation and linguistic sign is useful in thinking about the politics of language, one's intention when communicating and how one makes meaning. In using the term 'chutzpah', Haider takes a foreign word and builds on the meaning through recontextualising it, effectively making a foreign word a specific and apt descriptor. Though it is not an English word, the English language is one that consistently borrows and takes from other languages. Known as 'lexical borrowing', it traces its roots to the 'translation of foreign authors that motivated the introduction of borrowed words into English. Borrowed words also served an aesthetic purpose, satisfying the desire to attain expression in an elegant and ornamented style'(Francoeur, 287). As such, this practice is a facet of the language that he adopts. With regards to post-colonial culture, language and ideology, Afolayan suggests that it is one's intention that meaning is made, writing, 'Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language, rather it exists in other people's intention: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own' (9). This approach takes into account the power struggle that is present within the language and suggests a means of readdressing it. Iesar Ahmad discusses this concept with regards to post-colonial writers and their adaptive practices of English, suggesting that this act helps to

represent their complex cultural identity, suggesting that the act of appropriating the dominant colonial language carried the weight of their cultural syncretism and linguistic hybridization. This addressed the inadequacy and incapability of the standard English language and its fixed referentiality (Ahmad,222), allowing these individuals the chance to use the dominant colonial language to represent their complex cultural identity, allowing them to subvert power dynamics with how they say what they say, as well as what they say. I would like to assert that this approach has merit in Haider's context as well. Though the term that he uses is not English, he does appropriate the term for his own purposes to illustrate his very particular reality. Ironically, Haider himself demonstrates the term by using it. It is indeed audacious of him to use that term, to bring in a Hebrew word as a means of critiquing oppressive Indian power to a Kashmiri crowd. The notion of Chutzpah is one that is so specific that Haider himself has to explain it to the crowd, to bridge the gaps in their meaning. It is for this particular reason that his use of the term also allows him a particular safety; his explanation of it allows him autonomy of meaning. In defining the term, he is able to also define his position in a way that affords him safety under the guise of creative license. If he were to choose an English word or an English illustration, it would register more immediately to the substantial number of individuals affiliated with the armed forces present. Indeed, his chutzpah is that he would use a word that is foreign to all present, instead of leveraging on an English or Hindi word, and still manage to communicate effectively. Whilst this deference to external habitus allows him to illustrate the particularity of his situation, it also affords him an ambiguity that lays the groundwork for him to become more confrontational, both in his speech and choice of language.

After explaining the concept of chutzpah to the crowd and receiving a

favourable response, Haider recites, ‘Armed Forces Special Powers Act, section 5, rule 4, point A. Any commissioned officer, warrant officer, non-commissioned officer or any other person of equivalent rank in the armed forces may, in a disturbed area, (a) if he is of opinion that it is necessary to do so for the maintenance of public order, after giving such due warning as he may consider necessary, fire upon or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death, against any person who is acting in contravention of any law or order’ (*Haider* 1:27:15 -1:27:47). After which, he repeats ‘law and order’ enough time that the crowd that surrounds him chants the phrase along with him. In this instance, Haider engages in direct resistance. His performance has its desired effect. The soldiers begin to advance towards Haider, at the behest of his uncle, after his is finished reciting this section of the act. It is clear that Haider is perceived as a threat at this point, whilst before, they were told to stand down and observe. Haider’s choice to directly quote the edict serves to undercut its power. By directly stating the edict, Haider draws specific attention to the language and the inherent power imbalance that exists within it. The use of the terms ‘if he is of opinion that it is necessary to do so’ and ‘even to the causing of death’ are indicative of degree of power that is held here. The fact that one can choose to enact ‘death’ on the basis of an ‘opinion’ speaks to a lack of accountability of power. With a law that gives such blanket power to its enforcers, Haider reinforces this law to show that the most audacious critique he could offer up is that of the law itself.

In conclusion, the use of English in *Haider* serves as both a boon and a bane to those that use it. It can be asserted that the English language serves as the encompassing medium through which this constant process of making and re-making is seen. Within the context of *Haider*, the English language can serve as a means of legitimizing oneself, as well as affirming the colonial roots of Indian nationalism. It is

in the individual's choice of when, where and how they chose to assert their external habitus using the English language that determines their motivations and desires. This process of making meaning that is present in these instances draws greater questions to the effectiveness of the English language as a tool of resistance to a nationalist cause. What unfolds in these instances in an incredibly nuanced communication of a set situation that deserves greater attention and greater study. While the English language is a powerful tool that aids in the expression of these political assertions, perhaps is it only in the acknowledgement of these competing habitus that complex nature of nationalism and resistance in post-colonial nation can be represented.

CHAPTER TWO: WOMEN AS OBJECTS OF AFFECTION

In the film *Haider*, Ghazala, Haider's mother, calls herself a 'half-widow'. In conversation with Haider, she ruefully remarks 'The wives of disappeared people are called 'half-widows' here. I have no choice (57:09- 57:40). Though the phrase is intended to illustrate her liminal position with regards to her marital status, it is also an apt image to illustrate her position as a woman in her community. The women in the film, namely the Ophelia and Gertrude equivalents, occupy a liminal space. Though they have their own motivations and desires, they cannot achieve them because they cannot escape idealization. Consistently objectified, they constantly have the expectations of others imposed upon them, hindering them from achieving their own goals, and causing them to be responsible for events outside of their control. Simultaneously, they are treated like venerated objects, constantly placated instead of heeded, placed on a pedestal and protected, and expected to be passive. Perhaps most telling of this are the instances for which this mindset is reflected in their own actions and speech, where both Arshia and Ghazala use themselves as tools of barter to plea with Haider. Because they hold such symbolic significance, they can only achieve true agency through acts of violence, making them the primary tragic figures in the work. Using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of objectified cultural capital and Martha Nussbaum's notions of objectification, this section will explore the instances in *Haider* where women are treated as cultural objects, and show it is only in acts of violence that they are able to subvert expectations and affect change.

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital is a means of understanding the symbolic power, that exists in the institutionalized, embodied, and objectified state. Objectified cultural capital is defined as the cultural capital that exists in the cultural

goods, including but not limited to pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, or machines (Bourdieu, 48). These objects serve to transmit cultural knowledge, and by extension, class. Bourdieu writes that ‘cultural goods can be appropriated both materially—which presupposes economic capital—and symbolically—which presupposes cultural capital. It follows that the owner of the means of production must find a way of appropriating either the embodied capital, which is the precondition of specific appropriation or the services of the holders of this capital (50), suggesting that the individuals that obtain these objects exhibit cultural capital and henceforth would have the symbolic power that one’s owns. These items are meant to serve as physical indications of taste and class, suggesting that the owner is imbued with a particular dominant culture. Objectified cultural capital is the only capital of the three that can be transmitted nearly immediately. When operationalized, this means that the cultural capital that is associated with the object can be transmitted to the owner directly, whereas the effects of institutionalized cultural capital and embodied cultural capital would require time to fully materialize, though it is important to note that this quality extends only to the object itself and not to ways in which the object is valued. (Kraaykamp, 211). Indeed, it is in the way that these objects are treated that we can ascertain their impact. The transactional nature of objectified cultural capital encourages the notion that the possession of these goods will lead to symbolic benefits for the owner. It is in the possession of these cultural goods that individuals can reap their benefits.

In comparison to embodied cultural capital and institutionalized cultural capital, research on objectified cultural capital is uncommon and limited. Studies done primarily revolve around comparing cultural goods and the effect on cultural capital across generations, or the effect of objectified cultural capital in an educational setting

to reproduce class. Gerbert Kraaykamp rightfully identifies the importance of objectified cultural capital in his work 'The Intergenerational Reproduction of Cultural capital: A Threefold Perspective'. His study of the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital places objectified cultural capital on an equal level of importance as institutionalized and embodied cultural capital (209). Whilst it is useful in explicating the practical aspects of cultural capital, it does not investigate the immediate effect on an individual when they are the recipient of the object that transmits objectified cultural capital. As the theory of cultural capital has roots in examining the effect of education over generations, the trend of research tends to investigate various aspects of an education system. Within an Asian context, studies predominantly focus either on the intergenerational effect of cultural capital as it relates to academic achievement or on the effect the forms of capital (institutionalized, objectified and embodied) have on educational results. A study done in 2010 by Yamamoto and Brinton explored the relationship the role of cultural capital within the Japanese education system defined objectified cultural capital as the possession of goods that related to high status culture and found a correlation between objectified cultural capital and further education (75). These findings suggest that the accruing of objectified cultural capital results in increased educational attainment, showing a correlation between the forms of capital, namely institutionalized and objectified. Byun Soo-Yong built upon that research in a study that was contextualized to South Korea. The study explored cultural capital in South Korean education systems by attempting to establish a correlation between socioeconomic status, cultural capital, and academic achievement (219). Results suggest that the socioeconomic status related to objectified cultural capital and objectified cultural capital positively related to academic achievement. These studies show that the concept of cultural capital is useful and highly applicable to Asian

contexts. Whilst this approach is useful in exploring intergenerational shifts, it does not examine the effects of an individual upon attaining objectified cultural capital.

Present research also does not explore the effects of objectified cultural capital where the objects in question are in fact individuals. This occurs when an individual is not given proper agency and is as treated as an object. This concept is rooted in the work of Immanuel Kant. In 'Lectures on Ethics', Kant suggests that one's desire is the catalyst that leads to the process of objectification. He makes the distinction between love and sexual inclination, suggesting that when one 'loves them merely from sexual inclination, it cannot be love; it is appetite' (155). It is in this appetite that one sees another as a thing to be consumed. Kant continues, 'in loving from sexual inclination, they make the person into an object of their appetite. As soon as the person is possessed, and the appetite sated, they are thrown away, as one throws away a lemon after sucking the juice from it ... for as soon as anyone becomes an object of another's appetite, all motives of moral relationship fall away; as object of the other's appetite, that person is in fact a thing, whereby the other's appetite is sated, and can be misused as such a thing by anybody' (156). In this, Kant suggests that there is a predisposition towards selfishness in this process. Where one projects their desire on another, they are unable to recognize the other as a being with autonomy and are inclined to behaviour that can be belittling or degrading. The notion of being 'possessed' speaks of a state of complete ownership, reinforcing this lack of autonomy. This concept was then further built upon with the work of Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, that showed that objectification facilitated disproportionate power dynamics. In the work 'Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law', Catherine Mackinnon builds upon Kant's work by showing how pornography encourages men to look at women as sexual objects for consumption. She assigns individual value in a similar

way to Kant, defining a person as ‘free and rational agent whose existence is an end, as opposed to instrumental. In pornography, women exist to the end of male pleasure’ (173). Thus, she shows that in the process of being objectified, the rational capacity of a woman is not taken into consideration. She continues to show that ‘pornography participates in its audience’s eroticism through creating an accessible sexual object, the possession and consumption of which is male sexuality’ (173), emphasizing yet again that possession is a key part of the objectification process. Similarly influenced by the work of Kant, Andrea Dworkin’s work provides a more in-depth definition of the effects of objectification. In ‘Against the Male Flood: Censorship, Pornography, and Equality’, Dworkin breaks down the types of subordination that women face as a result of pornography. She suggests ‘objectification occurs when a human being, through social means, is made less than human, turned into a thing or commodity, bought and sold. When objectification occurs, a person is depersonalized, so that no individuality or integrity is available socially or in what is an extremely circumscribed privacy. Objectification is an injury right at the heart of discrimination: those who can be used as if they are not fully human are no longer fully human in social terms; their humanity is hurt by being diminished’ (30-31). She suggests that when a woman is objectified, her inherent humanity is lessened. These works show an overwhelming trend of objectification that exists within the study of feminist theory and show how deeply ingrained the process of objectification is within the female experience.

Building on these works, Martha Nussbaum seminal work ‘Objectification’ showed the extent of the impact of the term onto daily vernacular and showed that there could be potentially positive outcomes objectification, instead of solely negative ones. After exploring various examples of objectification, she identifies seven features that occur when one is treated like an object:

1. Instrumentality: The objectifier treats the object as a tool of his or her purposes.
2. Denial of autonomy: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in autonomy and self-determination.
3. Inertness: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity.
4. Fungibility: The objectifier treats the object as interchangeable
 - a) with other objects of the same type, and/or
 - b) with objects of other types.
5. Violability: The objectifier treats the object as lacking in boundary-integrity, as something that it is permissible to break up, smash, break into.
6. Ownership: The objectifier treats the object as something that is owned by another, can be bought or sold, etc.
7. Denial of subjectivity: The objectifier treats the object as something whose experience and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account.' (257).

In this list, she details the aspects that are involved in the process of objectification and showing what is entailed in 'making into a thing, treating as a thing, something that is really not a thing' (257). This breakdown shifts the scholarship away from one that is predominately moralistic in its core, to that differentiates the differing aspects, allowing greater research to be done in these subcategories. This is useful as a complimentary theory to objectified cultural capital as it operationalizes the benefits that can be accrued in possessing these objects, and motivations for which one must obtain this objectified cultural capital. Much of the criticism that surrounds objectified cultural capital is that it is predominately a measure of economic worth, making the examining of objectified cultural capital limited in its scope. By

repositioning objectified cultural capital as means of understanding the extent to which individuals are objectified, through Nussbaum's theory of objectification, we can examine how an individual is objectified and access symbolic resonance they gain through the process.

A particularly concerning consequence of this theory of objectification is the phenomenon of self-objectification. As identified by Fredrickson and Roberts, the process of self-objectification is defined as 'the adoption of a third-person perspective on the self has opposed to a first-person perspective' (Fredrickson, 173). This results in women placing a larger importance on the perception that others have of them instead of their own actions. Women also come to 'surveil and treat themselves as objects to be evaluated on the basis of their appearance' (Calogero, 575), causing serious repercussions on the way that women perceive and position themselves. Fredrickson and Roberts's research primary focused on the body as the site of objectification, arguing that women are prone to using an 'observer's perspective as the primary view of their physical selves', resulting in 'habitual body monitoring' (Fredrickson, 173). The work also drew a correlation between this phenomenon and a spectrum of mental health issues that are more statistically more prevalent in women. In these instances, 'self-objectification is the primary psychological mechanism that accounts for the link between women's experiences of sexual objectification on a cultural level and their bodily and subjective well-being at an individual level' (Calogero, 575). Owing to the fact that self-objectification is a 'psychological strategy that allows women to anticipate, and thus exert some control over, how they will be viewed and treated by others' (Calogero, 575), the investigation of these instances present a unique area in which to examine a measure of agency in women who may seem otherwise powerless.

The means in which these women chose to objectify themselves can also act as an indication of societal expectations, illustrating how rigid these standards are.

The idea of self-objectification is particularly interesting when we consider the setting of *Haider*. Set in conflict-ridden Kashmir, the women in *Haider* find themselves inhabiting non-traditional roles due to the armed conflict. Whilst ensuring the safety and security of the family was a traditionally masculine responsibility, the ever-dwindling number of men because of fighting meant that women had to take on the responsibility of representing the family unit in the face of hostile societal reactions. Women had to ‘shoulder the family responsibilities and support their men’ (Sikander, 24). This is especially challenging as social norms ‘inhibit women visiting police stations, army camps and detention centres’ (Sikander, 24). Regardless, they were forced to do so by circumstance, and suffer disrepute as a result. The disappearances of many of the men in Kashmir also gave rise to ‘half-widows’. These were women whose husbands were presumed dead, though there is no proof of the death. These women have no opportunity to recognize and reconcile the death of their loved one, finding themselves in a state of prolonged grief. They often at the mercy of their male relations for support, as they find themselves in the position of being solely responsible for their household and children (Qutab, 257-258). It is also important to note that, at the time, women would not have been able to receive an inheritance. Despite Kashmir being Muslim majority region, a Muslim Personal law Shariat Application Act that ensures the Islamic law of inheritance was only passed in 2007. Prior to that, the right to inherit was not legally binding, placing women in deeply uncertain positions. (Sikander, 24). Thus, women were very much at the mercy of their male counterparts. Knowing how they were perceived in the eyes of the men was critical to their survival.

This is not unlike *Haider*'s source material, *Hamlet*. In both works, the women are heavily defined by their male counterparts. Continually defined by their passive nature and limited agency, both Gertrude and Ophelia are primarily defined by the feelings they elicit in their male counterparts. Within scholarship, they serve strong symbolic functions, with their actions serving the purpose of indicating everything from religious imagery to the state of the nation. Considering the extent to which they are objectified, it would be useful to examine instances of personal manifestation of prolonged societal objectification, which lead to self-objectification. Considering these contexts, it would be remiss to overlook these instances of self-objectification.

By further focusing on the instances of self-objectification on the part of women in *Haider*, we are able to more closely examine instances where women have to leverage on their perception to exercise their desires. In this perceived submission and weakness, they can sway the opinions of the men around them and achieve their goals to some degree. This suggests that there is power through submission, relating to larger questions of agency within the female experience.

Though these frameworks prove to be useful in understanding the different aspects of cultural capital, it is not without criticism. The process of objectification remains difficult to define, with critics like Nancy Bauer suggesting that bringing specifics to the process of objectification would serve to help to identify it but serve no preventative function. In her work, she suggests that the 'philosophical literature sets out to delineate the marks and features of sexual objectification, it is bound not only to fail but to miss the very phenomenon it seeks to illuminate' (23), suggesting that the identification of instances of objectification may be too rigid, effectively failing to encompass it, making it more of a hinderance instead of help. Whilst valid, this

concern does not hold regarding this study. By focusing on instances of self-objectification, there is a shift away from defining objectification to examining the ways in which women objectify themselves to leverage their positions in relationships, lessening the possibility of misidentification. The medium of the work examined also facilitates close examination. Since *Haider* is a film, the diegesis functions as boundary. The medium of film requires an intentionality of storytelling, leading to an elimination of possibilities. In a film, the narrative is predicated on certain consistencies on the part of the characters and setting. By applying these approaches to a film, one can further examine these instances, and the consequences in their interpersonal relationships of the characters, with great nuance.

The film does not strictly follow chronological events, but rather adopts a nonlinear approach in explicating the narrative. This is used to delve deeper into key points of Haider's past, providing context while establishing the nature of the relationship between Haider and his parents. Through these instances, we see that there are clear distinctions drawn in the relationship between Haider and his mother and Haider and his father. For all intents and purposes, Haider sees his father as his hero, relating strongly to him and having a deep desire to emulate him. Much of the film is narratively fueled by his insatiable desire to find his father, and his inability to come to terms with his death. Concurrently, Haider's relationship with his mother is one that is more intimate than most. Their relationship is rife with oedipal undercurrents, with Haider often treating his mother as an object of desire. Defined as the 'subconscious sexual desire felt by a child for a parent of the opposite sex' (oedipal, adj.), the tension established in their relationship is one that limits Ghazala even further. Ghazala recalls Haider being jealous of her husband, recounting that Haider would say 'when I grow up, I will marry my mother' when he was a child.

(*Haider* 1:42:11). He describes her beauty as ‘venomous’ and ruefully wonders aloud, ‘who would want to share you’ (*Haider* 1:42:35). In Haider’s possessive speech lies the crux of their dynamic. Haider is unable to see that his idealization of his mother results in him seeing her as a possession, instead of a person. Haider struggling with the idea of ‘sharing’ his mother suggests that there was a time that he believed her to be completely his. When we look at the way that Ghazala communicates with Haider, it is not a challenge to see why Haider would come to that conclusion. Ghazala demonstrates a level of devotion that seems more akin to a lover than a maternal figure. She shows absolute devotion to Haider, telling him that ‘except you, I have no other reason to live... and I still don’t. I bore those long painful years only for you’ (*Haider* 55:58). Whilst Ghazala’s singularity of devotion is touching and admirable, it also gives us insight into the way that she chooses to express herself. In showing that she would do anything for her son, she shows that she would choose to surrender her autonomy for his well-being. Her readiness to do so warrants further exploration. It is also noteworthy that Haider’s relationship with Ghazala makes him less empathic to her situation. Though he has a strong emotional attachment to her, his desire for her makes his uncle, Khurram, a natural enemy. As his primary desire is possession and not protection, Ghazala is not insulated from the consequences of Haider’s actions. Indeed, we see that Ghazala makes the ultimate sacrifice for Haider’s benefit.

Ghazala cannot do anything without the support of the male figures in her life. Through an analepsis, we see a younger Ghazala discovering a gun in Haider’s belongings as she tidies his room. Ghazala badgers him repeatedly, frustrating Haider into angrily declaring ‘Yes! Yes, I am!’ (*Haider* 49:29) when asked if he would go across the border to receive weapons training, effectively confessing his loyalties to the militant cause. Distraught by this discovery and determined to curb these activities,

she seeks the advice of her father-in-law, Hussain. He suggests sending Haider to university. When she expresses that Haider's father would not allow this to happen, Hussain states 'I'll make sure he does, and you just have to convince Haider, okay?' (*Haider* 50:37). Though she is deeply concerned for her son, her word alone is not enough to guarantee action, even to her husband. For anything to happen, she must seek the approval of the men in her life. Against this backdrop of repressive rule, burgeoning militants, and intense bloodshed, it is understandable why she would default to delivering ultimatums in the interest of efficiency.

Though her husband acquiesces to the idea, Haider is unwilling to consider the possibility. We see him declaring, 'I won't go, I want to stay here... with father' (*Haider* 53:16) and promptly leaving. Haider does not see his mother's concerns as valid. Directly following this, we see Haider playing cricket with his adolescent cohorts. With her arms crossed, Ghazala stops in front of Haider. With tears in her eyes, she pleads, 'I am going to ask you for the last time, will you go or not?' (*Haider* 54:10). When Haider adamantly refuses, she uncrosses her arms, revealing a handgun that she holds to the temple of her head. She then repeatedly asks 'will you go or not' (*Haider* 54:18) ignoring Haider's attempts to deescalate the situation ('mother would you please listen', 'mother please') (*Haider* 54:22). Ghazala is willing to leverage her life in the interest of protecting her son. She resorts to threats of suicide to frighten Haider into submission, wanting him to feel guilty and obliged towards her, and therefore compliant. Ghazala exhibits internalized self-objectification. In this process, she partakes in the denial of autonomy, by surrendering her self-determination to Haider. She has a keen awareness of the capital she possesses with regards to Haider and wields it to advance her agenda. By choosing to resort to such drastic action, she demonstrates that the only way for her to exert control over the situation is to

relinquish it. Her lack of autonomy leads her to choose manipulative and absolute action.

Her propensity towards absolute actions is known to Haider. He recognizes this behaviour and credits it with being the main reason for his departure from home. In fact, he blames his mother for causing him to leave his home and father for university, suggesting that he considers that things might have been different had he remained. Whilst feeding her, he quietly states ‘please stop this drama’ (*Haider* 47:49). This interaction is telling of how Haider has internalized the attitudes towards his mother and demonstrates them himself. The act of feeding her is one that is infantilizing, though intimate. It is noteworthy that he waits until this moment to chide her, almost wanting to placate her with his act of service. When Ghazala attempts to clarify by questioning what it is she explicitly did, Haider replies ‘emotional blackmail. You do it all the time. You would either stop eating or leave home. You would cry all night or threaten suicide. That is how you sent me away to Aligarh. Banished me from my home... away from my father...’. (*Haider* 48:28) To Haider, having to leave his father is leaving his home, showing that he blames his mother for choosing to displace him. After a moment, Ghazala states ‘if I hadn’t pushed you to Aligarh... you know well where you would have ended up’ (*Haider* 48:52) To Ghazala, there is no price too large to pay for the safety of Haider, even if it means being on the receiving end of his ire.

Ghazala’s behaviour is not specific to Haider. She also leverages on her position as an object of affection towards Khurram. Ghazala appeals to Khurram by equating his affection for her to his decision to let her speak to Haider. Weaving through slain bodies, we see Ghazala approaching the site of conflict. Khurram asks

‘what are you doing here’ (*Haider* 2:24:35). In response, Ghazala says gravely, ‘please spare my son. I’ll get him to surrender’ (*Haider* 2:24:42). After Kharrum gives no response, she moves forward towards the house that Haider is hiding out in. At this point, Kharrum physically holds her back, not allowing her to progress any further. This gesture, though protective, is also primarily restraining. Unable to go any further, Ghazala then says, ‘if you ever loved me, please give me one chance’ (*Haider* 2:24:52). In this instance, she defaults to absolute action, using Kharrum’s affection for her to ensure that he complies with her request. She manipulates the situation, reframing it as a test of love. By doing this, Kharrum now has a vested interest in doing the very opposite of what he was planning to; keeping Haider alive.

Ghazala’s constant leveraging of her position is not done by choice, but rather, as a response borne out of necessity. With limited autonomy, a default to absolute action is a means of ensuring her voice is heard. As an object of affection, she is subjected to stringent and suffocating expectations. Her body being a site of desire, the men comply for fear of losing her. Though Ghazala has the agency and ability to sway the hearts of the men around her, the men cannot separate their view of her from who she actually is. When she does not align with their expectations, she is seen as inconsistent, resulting in distrust. Therefore, these instances of self-objectification have limited effectiveness. As devoted as Khurram and Haider are to her, they consistently use her for their own agenda, and blame her when circumstances that they set into motion do not have their desired outcome. As a result, Ghazala is often at the receiving end of harsh criticism and infantilizing remarks although her decisions are rooted in a desire to protect the ones she loves.

Queen Gertrude is also unfairly assigned blame in the play *Hamlet*. Upon rashly stabbing Polonius, Hamlet turns to his mother and viciously rebukes her with ‘Leave wringing of your hands. Peace. Sit you down and let me wring your heart. (*Ham*.III.iiii.35-37). To ‘wring’ is to twist to the breaking, speaking of the vindictive action Hamlet intends to enact on his mother. When we consider the intensity of Hamlet’s wrath, and how it is mirrored in Haider, we can understand why Ghazala would objectify herself in a bid to deescalate the situation. In these instances of self-objectification, Ghazala can successfully lessen Haider’s wrath and align him to a course of action that is more beneficial for her.

Though Ghazala is aware of the power dynamics at play, she is powerless to enact any change. She tells Haider, “I knew you’d blame me for everything. Well... I am used to it. I know you love your father more than you love me. But you have no idea... what I went through when you were away. Hilal was always busy with work. And I... used to wail thinking about you. I used to wait for you to come home in the holidays. I have been destined to long, to wait.” (*Haider* 57:03). Haider fails to recognize that Ghazala exists in a liminal position. She is held responsible for outcomes where she is powerless to affect change. She continues, ‘Your father never really cared about me. That is why he gambled his life...our home...our honor...your future, everything! (*Haider* 56:47). This statement sheds much light on Ghazala’s reality. She is at the mercy of the decisions made by her husband. Though we have seen her attempt to change her reality, her circumstances keep her passive. Trapped in a prison of social convention, she has no choice but to be dependent on the men in her life.

Along with Gertrude, Ophelia is a prominent female character in *Hamlet*. While diverse in view and focus, the scholarship surrounding Ophelia primarily revolves around her symbolic function. It is never a question as to if Ophelia is objectified, but rather attempts to ascertain to what extent this happens. In her roles as a dutiful daughter, doting sister and Hamlet's beloved, she inhibits the expectations of others. As such, she is most often categorized by her passive nature, her function in the play is reduced to the images that she inspires, with much of the discourse focusing on her 'flowers, madness, death, or nymphomaniac tendencies rather than trying to understand her unique character and how it might function in the play' (Resetarits, 215). Ophelia is also often defined by her relationship with Hamlet, with writers suggesting that Ophelia serves as a 'feminine counterpoint to Hamlet's tragedy at least' (Fischer, 2) to amplify his tragic experiences. More recently, the discourse has shifted to consider the possibility that Ophelia played a more active role, with the works of Tynelle Ann Olivas and Richard Fikelstein contending that Ophelia demonstrates subjectivity but chooses to downplay it for the sake of decorum. C. R. Resetarits suggests that Ophelia's perceived weakness is, in fact, a conscientious decision to 'absorb and/or mirror the emotions behind the speech of others', making her a 'receptacle of those emotions' (216). This added dimension creates complexity to her role, as it suggests that by holding space for her counterparts, Ophelia acts as 'Hamlet's emotional antithesis, not overthinking but over-feeling: she waits for the emotions of others to flow through her and then she responds' (216). This behaviour validates the emotions of those around her and suggests that Ophelia is a far more active participant than previously thought.

A majority of the research that deems Ophelia a willing and active participant focuses on Ophelia after she had descended into madness, suggesting that she has

more control over her actions than previously thought. Though these interventions are worthwhile, there is a strong tendency to focus on the performative nature of her madness, her appearance or the latent meaning of her gestures and gifts. This approach downplays Ophelia's intentionality, implying that the mantle of madness affords her with the freedom to speak freely. I believe these characteristics of Ophelia do not exist in isolation. Ophelia does demonstrate her agency through the subtle expression, arguably showing a deeper awareness of her position in other parts of the text, prior to her descend into madness. In her acknowledgement of the instances of objectification, she abides by the expectations that are set for her. In fulfilling these expectations, she is given a measure of agency through perceived submission. Arshia, the Ophelia equivalent in *Haider*, does not have the privilege of being passive. The nature of her relationship with Haider, coupled with the work being set in an active conflict, leaves her little to no room to be passive. The large degree to which she demonstrates agency is directly proportionate to the severity of the consequences that she faces. By examining these instances of Arshia's self-objectification in *Haider*, we see that the character and agency of Ophelia is not determined by her choices but rather her circumstances. Even though Arshia possesses far more agency than Ophelia, she is not able to escape a tragic fate. The close reading of these two characters exemplifies the severe consequences of being an active participant in a deeply patriarchal society, suggesting that any agency attained from the process of self-objectification is illusory.

Though Ophelia and Arshia suffer consequences as a result of their relationship with Hamlet and Haider respectively, their treatment and involvement with their objects of affection differ vastly. Whilst Ophelia's affection for Hamlet is clear, she is passive compared to Arshia. Though she has great affection for him, she remains loyal and obedient to her father, as is expected of her. She is far more insulated by position

and patriarchy, and her actions are indicative of that. As a combination of both the best friend and the love interest, Arshia plays a far more active role Haider. Whilst there are strong patriarchal forces present in her life, her relationship to Haider and her environment causes her to disregard them and take more severe risks. Within her own family unit, she is constantly denied of subjectivity, with her thoughts and experiences being side-lined or completely disregarded. Whilst this bolsters her into being a more active player in pushing the narrative forward, she also faces more severe repercussions, as she is less insulated. Therefore, Arshia's instances of self-objectification are far more direct and noteworthy, as they match the circumstances that call for it. Arshia understands that to choose Haider is to pledge loyalty to his causes. For Arshia, aligning with Haider would mean choosing him over her family, and the protection that comes with it. Her tendency to objectify herself while expressing her affection for him are foreboding of the immense sacrifice she is willing to make for him.

In *Hamlet*, Ophelia's expressions of affection are measured and aim to encourage a more congenial impression of Hamlet. In these instances, she demonstrates an awareness of her position within society, and uses it to represent information at hand favourably. The first time we hear of Ophelia's affection for Hamlet is in response to questions from her father and brother. This is not a situation where she is allowed to speak freely and can indulge in the joy that comes from being the object of one's adolescent ardour. Instead, she actively petitions for Hamlet's genuine affections, believing him to be honest in his declarations of love. Her primary purpose is not to express her affection, but rather to convince those around her of his virtues by giving evidence of his authentic feelings. This is exemplified in the following short exchange with her father.

OPHELIA. My lord, he hath importuned me with love

In honourable fashion.

POLONIUS. Ay, “fashion” you may call it. Go to, go to.

OPHELIA. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,

With almost all the holy vows of heaven. (*Ham.I.iii.110-114*)

Here, we see that Ophelia emphasizes that Hamlet’s affection is ‘honourable’, meaning that his expressions of love have been respectful and serious. When her father brushes off the claim, thinking Hamlet to be disingenuous, she further advocates for his legitimacy by emphasizing his ‘countenance to his speech’, suggesting that his expressions and actions have matched his declarations of affection, disproving the notion that he is acting on impulse. She continues by stating that he has expressed affection for her ‘with almost all the holy vows of heaven’. The use of ‘vows’ here is indicative not only of his pure intentions, but also suggests that his purpose is marriage. By insinuating this possibility, Ophelia is demonstrating her willingness to entertain his advances seriously. However, she does not speak directly on how she feels about him. Indeed, she demonstrates a keen awareness of the fact that her opinion does not count as much as her father’s. She categorizes these advances as ‘vows’ only after they are spurned as being a passing fad by her father. She is also constantly reporting his speech, almost as if maintaining distance to ensure that she is seen to be objective and not overly emotional. It is clear that the measured nature of her speech is choice, as she is greatly affected by Hamlet’s actions. It is only when she is spurned from him that we see an indication of how invested she is. Ophelia laments that she ‘sucked the honey of his music vows’ (*Ham.III.i.156*), suggesting that the poetic nature of his claims swayed her into submission. The term ‘sucked’ is a verb, indicating that she was an active participant in the relationship. The terms ‘honey’ and

‘music’ also bring to mind the romantic conventions of courtship, suggesting that she was caught up in his charm and her feelings for him.

Though she suffers dire consequences are a result of being rejected by Hamlet, he is not the main driver of her demise. Martha C. Ronk asserts that Ophelia is represented as the projection of others—her father and brother and Hamlet set aside her statements about herself and revise her into obedience’ (21). It can be argued that her fate is primarily the responsibility of her father, who actively chooses to make her a pawn in his larger aim of consolidating power within the court. With reference to the definition of objectification above, Polonius demonstrates the ‘treatment of another as something that is owned’ (Nussbaum, 289). This is exemplified in Polonius’s introduction of Ophelia to Gertrude. He says, ‘I have a daughter—have while she is mine—’ (*Ham*.II.ii.108). Here, he reinforces the idea of his ownership of her until she is married, defining her as an object that is constantly defined by a male presence. Polonius also objectifies his daughter by denying her subjectivity and actively disregarding her as something whose feelings and experience do not need to be considered’ (Nussbaum, 291) using economic terms to connote her value. He encourages her to ‘be somewhat scantier of your maiden presence, set your entreatments at a higher rate’ (*Ham*.I.iii.121-122). The use of ‘higher rate’ connotative of the way in which he views her as an object. He recommends that she ‘set your entreatments at a higher rate’, as if the laws of supply and demand of a good apply to her. In wanting her to appear like a rare commodity, he shows that though he treasures her, her value does not lie with her personhood. Rather, is directly linked to how far it her desirability can be in an asset to his goal of consolidating power and achieving favour. Ophelia demonstrates a keen understanding of this. Her loyalties are not directly expressed because they have no consequence in this instance. She deals with

only vows that are made concerning her, that she has to obey. Indeed, she applies economic terms when speaking of herself. When broaching the topic of Hamlet's affectionate advances, she tells her father 'He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders of his affection to me' (*Ham.*I.iii.100), with 'tenders' being connotative of an economic offer. Ophelia indicates that she is anything but ignorant of her position in society. She understands that her compliance to these societal norms is expected and necessary.

While her compliance allows for protection, she is not insulated from Hamlet's scorn. When insulting Ophelia, Hamlet's choice of words is telling. Enraged, he declares 'If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry. Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny' (*Ham.*III.i.136-138). In this damning statement, Hamlet reveals Ophelia's reality, exemplifying how the perception of her is far more important than who is really is. Hamlet's casting away of Ophelia betrays the insidious truth; compliance to societal norms does not ensure that one is kept in good graces. Perhaps it is the destabilizing experience of her being spurned, despite her acceptance of her lack of autonomy and awareness of the boundaries that govern her, that lead to her madness.

Arshia has no such luxury. Her words and actions have drastic consequences in the grand scheme of the film. As a journalist amid conflict, she is defined by the ways in which she actively represents the world that *Haider* situates itself in. Her occupation also gives her access to restricted areas that Haider would otherwise not be able to enter, such as army bases and hospitals. After all, it is Arshia who comes to Haider's rescue in the beginning of the film, when he runs into trouble at the border. Far more rebellious than her Shakespearean counterpart, she defies decorum. When met with the

disapproval of her father and brother, she continues interacting with Haider in spite of it. It is important to note that Arshia takes on dual roles. She also functions as the Horatio figure, being a primary support system. As Hamlet's closest confidant, Horatio acts as a foil to Hamlet in the way that he processes information. He consistently demonstrates the ability to feel accurately but control his reactions. Indeed, Hamlet commends him and calls him a man that 'is not passion's slave' (*Ham*.III.ii.65), speaking to his rational responses. Similarly, Arshia is pragmatic in her approach. Reflecting on how she bailed Haider out of being detained at the border, she jokes, 'Haider, that Masala Dosa wouldn't budge. I told him that you are a poet, not a militant. And we are engaged to be married. He wanted proof. I told him to read your diary. All the poems have been written for me' (*Haider* 16:08-16:32). Here, she demonstrates a keen awareness of the situation and uses her position as leverage. The impression of her as a devoted fiancée would suggest that Haider was a romantic, quelling concerns of him being radical or dangerous. Her knowledge of his poetry speaks of the close familiarity between them. Her use of the term 'Malasa Dosa', a popular Indian food, to describe the Indian officer, reads like an inside joke, as if she is speaking to a close friend. Immediately, Arshia and Haider's relationship seems to be far more intimate than Ophelia and Hamlet's relationship. Amirta Sen asserts, 'Arshia thus comes to combine the roles of both Horatio and Ophelia, making her a more conscious participant in Kashmir's political life. If she makes love to Haider and dances to distract him from his grief, it is also she who first meets Roohdaar and, like Horatio, brings him the first clues to his father's death' (95). By pushing the plot forward, Arshia makes herself more vulnerable as an active participant. Therefore, it is made abundantly clear that Arshia's is a character that pushes the plot forward significantly, suggesting that she is primarily defined by her actions.

In the film *Haider*, the film shows a montage of the Haider and Arshia, depicting their relationship as they progress from friends to lovers. Showing them being both physically and emotionally intimate, the montage ends with Haider contemplating his life out loud, with Arshia listening with great concern. As he moves to consider death, he pulls out a gun, musing in Hindi that he must choose between dying and being killed, exhibiting signs of drastic action that one would expect from an individual who does not possess all his mental faculties. Visibly distraught, Arshia faces Haider, and places his hand upon her head, asking him to promise her that he will not resort to any drastic action. This action is suggestive of how Arshia views herself. By placing Haider's hand on her head, she shows she submits to him and recognizes his power over her. Like Ghazala, Arshia feels the need to influence Haider by pledging herself to him to sway him into differing behaviour. This behaviour is textbook self-objectification. Arshia exhibits an awareness of her significance to Haider, leveraging her significance to him to persuade him away from detrimental action. It is particularly telling that this exchange happens after they have been intimate with one another. The origin of the phenomenon of self-objectification comes from internalizing an accumulation of experiences in which a woman is sexually objectified. From this, women then 'view and treat themselves as objects to be evaluated on the basis of their appearance – or to self-objectify' (Calogero, 575). Much like one swears upon a holy text when taking an oath, by placing his name on her head and asking him to swear on her, Arshia surrenders her autonomy and invites Haider to see her as a venerated symbol, viewing herself as an object. Arshia shows that she has internalized an objectified view of herself, as well as a willingness to gamble the appeal of her person and her body as a means to sway Haider's decisions.

When her actions do not elicit a reply, she maintains consistent eye contact and declares, in English, 'I have 'lovve-d' you more than my life. (Haider 1:38:40). In this tender moment, Arshia makes a vow to Haider. The fact that she declares this whilst his hand is upon her head speaks to her willingness to sacrifice herself for Haider. She is pledging herself in body and in soul to him, forsaking all else for him. In saying that she values Haider more than her life, she renounces the protection that comes from the patriarchal forces in her life, specifically her family. Though these forces can be repressive, they also offer her protection in her reality of heightened violence and tension. The fact that she chose to confess her feelings in English legitimize it to a vow of allegiance. Arshia's choice to use English is a means of communicating that she understands what is at stake, and to not take her words lightly. After all, English is the language of the individuals that wield power in Kashmir, and Arshia is well acquainted with that fact. It is ironic that the language that she employs to emphasize her legitimacy undercuts her vow. Her mispronunciation of 'loved' is met with laughter on the part of Haider. He replies by correcting her pronunciation, laughing as he says 'loved...V. D softly. Not 'lovve-d', it's 'loved' (*Haider* 1:38:45). He brushes over her vow and chuckles whilst embracing her, trivializing her words. He responds the way one would if they were to hear something from a child. In this instance, he is able to hear but not listen. While he corrects Arshia's mistake with finesse, he cannot comprehend the depth of her declaration. By focusing on her form instead of her meaning, he actively elevates himself, believing that she knows not what she says. This interaction betrays Haider's attitude of disregard. Not unlike Polonius's actions to Ophelia, Haider denies Arshia of subjectivity and chooses not to take her feelings into account. He does not believe that Arshia will make good on her vow. This proves to be a fatal flaw, as Arshia subsequently makes good on her vow through

drastic action that cannot be ignored. In proving that she loved Haider than her life and killing herself at the thought of not being with Haider, she leaves him distraught.

It is noteworthy that both the Ophelia and Gertrude equivalents in *Haider* are unable to escape a tragic demise, despite increased agency. The notion of tragedy that we have come to expect from an adaptation of Shakespeare is a by-product of colonial tradition. Poonam Trivedi states that ‘tragedy as a genre was introduced to Indian literary culture through Greek and Shakespearean drama in colonial times’ (24). This suggests that a lack of a direct indigenous equivalent to this genre, prior to colonial intervention. She continues ‘Hindu philosophy, positing rebirth, did not hold death as a finality but as a steppingstone into a future existence. Hence the aim of creative expression was to show the ultimate harmonization of the earthly and metaphysical realms.’ (24). The prevailing cultural perception towards death suggests an alignment to a higher purpose. This is especially significant when we consider that it is only through violent deaths that characters are allowed to regain complete agency and affect change they want to. Indeed, both the Gertrude and Ophelia equivalents, named Ghazala and Arshia respectively, enact their own deaths to protect Haider. In choosing to sacrifice themselves in place of Haider, they effectively chose to sacrifice themselves for another, choosing the route of martyrdom. The notion of rebirth also suggests that their actions were not rooted in a desire to cease to exist, but rather were a means to a continued differing reality. This added dimension makes the characters seem even more virtuous, making their deaths all the more tragic.

The nature of the deaths of the women in *Haider* are indicative of their tragic circumstances. Both Arshia and Ghazala take their own life to protect Haider. This fate and their deaths can be seen as a direct result of their stifled reality. We see that a

‘women’s entrapment also serves to fundamentally atrophy their character and make them depleted in their capacity for self-care or the care of others’ (Quayson 243). In the deaths of Arshia and Ghazala, we experience what Martha Nussbaum calls ‘causal plausibility’, where the victim of suffering elicits sympathy as they shown to be not culpable or their fate, that even if they were, the scale of the catastrophe outstrips their degree of culpability and that the catastrophe has undermined the sufferer’s capacity to undertake ethically informed action. The combination of these factors results in causal plausibility, which elicits sympathy for the sufferer in literary tragedy. (Quayson 267). Their suffering is so disproportionate their actions that is clear that they have no agency or capital of their own.

Unlike in *Hamlet*, Haider walks away injured, but very much alive at the end. This is primary due to Ghazala’s actions. She appears in the midst of what seems to be Haider’s final moments, as he is hiding out in a graveyard. She begs him to surrender, but when he will not relent to her request, she leaves. Whilst the militants steady themselves to open fire, Ghazala throws off her scarf to reveal a suicide bomber's vest. The film dramatically slows as she looks up to the sky in surrender, with both Khurram and Haider running towards her to stop it. They are too late. In this act, Ghazala takes responsibility for her earlier unwitting betrayal. Afterall, ‘it is ultimately Ghazala and not Haider who avenges the treachery that brought misery into their lives. It is an act that ironically involves her reverting, as we have seen, to the terrorism she condemns; but it is also what makes her the tragic hero of the film.’ (Sen, 96). Though deeply loved, Ghazala was not insulated from the consequences of her actions. She shows herself to be the ultimate martyr, sacrificing herself for her son.

In conclusion, whilst this chapter is concerned objectified cultural capital and the privileges it endows its owner with, the power of the patriarchy means that any capital generated from this is ultimately illusory. In these instances of self-objectification, the women themselves should be able to gain a measure of agency to change their situation. Instead, these characters face heavy scrutiny and meet deeply tragic ends. The characters of Ghazala and Arshia serve to show us the consequence of self-objectification. Even though these women are given a measure of agency, they are only able to affect change to a limited degree. Whilst it is clear that they are able to sway the actions of the men around them, they primarily affect their emotions over their actions. Indeed, their instances of self-objectification overwhelmingly result in the women being placated rather than heeded, with the men citing these instances as justifications to disregard their sentiments. Fundamentally, these women serve as a cautionary tale of the effects of internalizing objectifying notions that one's community places on an individual, suggesting that any agency given through self-objectifying action is illusory.

CHAPTER THREE: TRAGEDY IN DISPOSITIONS

In a snow-covered graveyard, Haider digs a grave. He stops digging when his shovel strikes a skull, picking it up and holding it at an arm's length. Audiences will recognize this iconographic pose, primed in the seats to expect some version of the 'Alas poor Yorrick' (Ham.V.i.160) speech, ruminating on the transience of life. Before Haider can utter a word, a young boy pipes up, asking 'Grandpa, why do skulls grin' (*Haider* 2:16:21). After one of the three grave diggers dismisses the young boy's questions, Haider answers 'because the dead know they never fully lived, and it never ends with death' (*Haider* 2:16:21). Distilled in this short scene is the fundamental difference between *Haider* and *Hamlet*. Hamlet is defined by his reflections of mortality, that hinges on the difference between life and death. Haider reimagines these meditations on mortality and shifts their focus. He does not focus on the fleeting nature of humanity, but rather on how death is not an end. This suggests a differing viewpoint on the nature of suffering and what one deems tragic. Whilst Hamlet's had the opportunity to consider his own mortality, Haider cannot separate his identity from his community or the state of his nation. Explored through the lens of embodied cultural capital, this chapter attempts to understand the repercussions on an individual living in prolonged conflict, and the difference between individual and communal definitions of tragedy.

The third of the three forms of cultural capital posited by Pierre Bourdieu is embodied cultural capital, which refers to one's disposition. This disposition is what an individual deems to be the very essence of themselves, considering the culture that they were brought up in (17). Embodied cultural capital is defined as 'the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body' (Bourdieu,17). These dispositions are acquired over time and have to do with one's tastes and preferences. Within academic

scholarship, embodied cultural capital has largely been used as means of understanding culture specific behaviours and habits. It is ‘accumulated in a lifelong process of socialization and it takes place in large part unconsciously’ (Kraaykamp, 210).^u These studies include the works of Lina Guan and Laura Patterson, who use this framework as a means of intervention to understand the specific behaviours that are reflected in niche social groups, such as affluent Caucasian women (Patterson, 1) and English-as-a-foreign-language teachers in a university in Sichuan China. (Guan,1). There is precedent for using this framework in highly specific social contexts. Embodied cultural capital has also been used to ascertain how children perform academically across generations (Kraaykamp,3), though it is often used in comparison with the other two modes of cultural capital. As embodied cultural capital is inseparable from the individual, this framework proves useful in understanding one’s behaviour that results from one’s surroundings. It shows how internalized cultural expectation manifest themselves in behaviours. This approach gives us a handle to understand the fundamental differences between the dispositions of *Haider* and *Hamlet*, and how that affects the narrative. Whilst their desires act as their primary motivation, Hamlet and Haider differ in the means that they employ in their execution. Hamlet’s means of enacting his desire tends to skew towards being highly individualized, whilst Haider’s approach is more communal, and is informed by his political context.

Hamlet is often primarily characterized by his consistent contemplation, as he culminates towards an action. This process is decidedly individual. Hamlet whittles down what course of action is the most appropriate as he vacillates between the facts and his feelings. The opening lines of his most famous soliloquy are ‘To be, or not to be? That is the question’ (Ham. III.i.58). His contemplation sets up a clear binary that

hinges on existence, and his question is singular. His thoughts revolve around his personhood. His commitment to this process shows that Hamlet expects a catharsis that comes from resolution.

Though Haider is similarly expecting of this catharsis, his surroundings do not allow him to act as an individual. His contemplations of personhood cannot be divorced from his nation or his community. The magnitude of significance placed on his actions mean that he is not able to attain resolution.

In comparing the two works, we see that *Haider* builds on *Hamlet* to show the larger consequences of prolonged conflict in a community and acts as a larger commentary on the consistency of cycles of violence that are prevalent in post-colonial narratives.

As the dispositions that determine embodied cultural capital are predetermined by the setting, the settings of these instances of embodied cultural capital are just as significant as the behaviours themselves. As embodied cultural capital concerns itself with dispositions, it allows for a means of understanding expectations that result from a particular upbringing. *Haider* is set in Kashmir in 1995, a very particular time that hold significance when understood in relation to the way Kashmir has been depicted within Bollywood film. In the 1960's, Kashmir was considered an exotic destination. It was billed as a 'visual register of modern love' (Gopal,817). The films that were produced in the 1960's tended to revolve around the trope of 'a non-Kashmiri (usually male) travels to the valley and falls in love with a local, an event elaborately figured through multiple romantic duets. The milieu, its histories and cultural particularities, pose no impediment to successful couple-formation but supply instead an exotic charm.' (Gopal,817). As a setting, Kashmir has a history of being a fantastical location based on how foreign it is. The topic of Kashmir as a homeland, and the politics that

accompany that, are rarely discussed.

Haider does not take a conventional approach to Kashmir. Within Bollywood tradition, it problematizing Kashmir, attempts to represent the reality of the conflict-ridden state. This is not to say that *Haider* departs from Bollywood convention altogether. As a work, *Haider* leans on Bollywood conventions at junctions of the narrative to emphasize the reality of Kashmir. *Haider* employ techniques that one would expect in Bollywood film at instances where the film draws attention to its own form. The expectation of the performative break in Bollywood is one that facilitates a fantasy. It is where the film puts a pause on the plot, and we explore the desires or feelings of the protagonists. They serve to suspend time. The inverse is true for *Haider*. These performances accelerate the plot and shed light on the narrative at hand. One such example is the play-within-a-play that Haider is involved in. This part of the narrative is suitable for a performative intervention and Haider takes full advantage of that. Indeed, through the ‘trademark Shakespearean episode, the play-within-the-play, for its most lavishly shot and widely disseminated excerpt, the film harnesses the semantic and logistic networks of Bollywood to consolidate its ties with Shakespeare’ (Sarker, 13). The effect of these interventions is that it affects how time is experienced. Another example of this is a sequence that features a love song, showing the development of Haider and Arshia’s relationship. Though they do not sing or dance in unison to this song, it does have a ‘paradiegetic’ function, a routine for Bollywood, which ‘allows us to experience the elaborate development of a romantic relationship in the course of a few moments’ (Hogan 165). The practice acclimatizes us to the sensation of accelerated time and increased pace. This sets a precedent for the speed at which decisions must be made. This, in turn, changes the way characters communicate with each other and their choices.

From the moments of the film, we see Kashmir as a site of conflict. This portrayal of violence and opposition is used to illustrate the differing motivations of the characters. This makes it difficult to understand any of the characters outside of their political affiliations. This results in the ‘contested and explosive locus of Kashmir enmeshing the personal with the political and the political with the personal within a dense network of relations which makes extricating their discrete threads virtually impossible (Dadabhoy, 16). This inability to separate the personal from the political creates immense pressure on the characters in *Haider*. Every action has a personal and national repercussion. This is especially true for the titular protagonist, Haider.

Haider consistently uses the state of Kashmir as an allegory for his own contemplation, exhibiting that he is not able to separate the personal from the political. Aptly communicated by the film’s adaptation of the ‘to be or to be’ soliloquy, Haider is no mere shadow of Hamlet. As a character, Haider is fundamentally changed by the situation he is in. Surrounded by consistent conflict, his questioning takes on a differing facet. In *Hamlet*, Hamlet contemplates his reality by uttering the immortal lines ‘To be, or not to be? That is the question’ (Ham. III.i.58). By asking this question, Hamlet is ruminating on if it is better to live or die. Complex as it may be, this question hinges on the absolute fact of Hamlet’s existence, as he considering moving forward or ending it all. For Haider, the question is not in existence, but rather what to accept as truth. He wonders aloud ‘to believe or not to believe, that is the question. And yet the answer hides in yet another question. To trust the surging beats of the heart or to heed the caution of the sober mind. To kill or to die?’ (*Haider* 1:37:36-1:38:15). His contemplations carry an undercurrent of action and a duality of truths. The ‘surging beats of his heart’ and ‘the caution of the sober mind’ are states in which one cannot be passive. The dichotomy that is drawn between Hamlet’s ‘be’ and

Haider's 'kill' is telling. In Haider's reality, to exist is to be adversarial. The characteristics that Haider possesses as a direct result of his surroundings place him in direct opposition to the long-standing assumption of Hamlet as a character who delays. As a result of 'human crisis in Kashmir, Haider is already established as a focused and determined man of action (unlike the Shakespearean counterpart)' (Sarkar, 35). In the midst of an active conflict, the execution of action is tantamount to survival. The lack of divide between the personal and the political results in Haider having to consistently make deft decisions, even if it is detrimental to himself.

Hamlet demonstrates that he is acutely aware of the advantages of appearing to be acting alone. When he writes to Claudius to inform him of his unexpected return to Denmark, he takes great pains to emphasise that he is without company. The first line of his letter reads 'You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom (Ham. IV.vii.43). The description 'set naked' suggests not only that Hamlet has very little possessions with him, but also that he has no army with him. The use of 'you shall know' also suggests that by this time, the news of Hamlet's arrival has likely reached Claudius. He uses his very first line to establish that he has no military accompanying him, minimizing his threat to Claudius, and actively disproving any other scenario. The tone of Hamlet's correspondence is brief and direct, a marked departure from the flowery convoluted language of prior scenes. The combination of these elements is evidently new to Claudius, who wonders if it is 'some abuse' (Ham. IV.vii.48) or some trick. Claudius then clarifies upon the request of Laertes that he is sure that it is Hamlet's handwriting, proving that the letter is from Hamlet himself. It is noteworthy that Hamlet consistently posits that he is without military aid and acting alone. Even in his own earlier correspondence to Horatio, he urges him to 'repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death' (*Ham.* IV.vi.16), as if to remind him of what a

vulnerable position he is in. Haider has no such sense of self-preservation. As we approach the dramatic climax of the film, we find Haider in a graveyard, resting in a safehouse, accompanied by militant gravediggers. He observes a funeral, wondering who has passed away. It is only when he sees Arshia's brother that he realizes the body being buried is his beloved. Despite the warnings of the gravediggers, he leaves the safe house, rushing towards the burial site, consumed by grief. (*Haider* 2:18:10). Haider exhibits a complete lack of situational awareness. Everyone but him can tell that he is walking into his own grave. Though one might argue that this is simply the reaction of a man consumed by grief, this is also a man who has shown himself to be capable to act in self-defence. After all, Haider shot Arshia's own father Pervez at point-blank range (*Haider* 2:08:37), and immediately fled the scene to avoid being captured. This occurred after his mother contemplated suicide in front of him and pleading him to shoot her and 'end her miserable life' (*Haider* 2:06:47). He has shown the ability to be alert during highly emotionally charged situations and have remarkable clarity and survival skill. Yet, he is unable to recognize how vulnerable he is in this situation.

The notion of 'nakedness' or being without a military presence is striking, given the later turn of events. This lack of military presence does not prevent the bloodshed that takes place at the end of the play. None of the characters escape with their lives. Yet, *Haider* reimagines what the final scenes of the play would look like if *Hamlet* had an army at his disposal and was deemed a traitor. These circumstances magnify the already tense relationship between Haider and Khurram. The strong military presence on both sides in this confrontation deems them to be decidedly opposing forces at war. This final confrontation reveals to us the magnitude of loss that results from conflict. We leave the snow-covered graveyard stained red, littered

with unknown casualties. The film does not shy away from the gory nature of war, and explicitly shows the price of violence. In an environment where the threat of death remains so consistently close, Haider's communal focus acts to mitigate the constant loss. His definition of tragedy is communal, allowing him to make meaning in the midst of senseless violence. His embodied cultural capital affords him with the ability to focus on the political state of things and allows him to rationalize and contextualize the ceaseless loss of life because of conflict.

The comparison of the gravediggers in each work functions to shed light on the cycles of violence that are present in these contexts. In *Hamlet*, we meet the gravediggers as they are debating Ophelia's death, wondering if she is deserving of a Christian burial. Their conversation is filled with quips, and rife with societal commentary. The conversation is equally balanced, with one gravedigger asking a question to facilitate the delivery of lines such as 'And the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even Christian' (*Ham* V.i.28), a scathing remark on how affluence brings freedom. They function as comic relief in an otherwise desolate circumstance. It is no accident that 'the description of grave-diggers and clowns are equated in the dramatis persona of the early versions of the play' (Jenkins, 562). The tragic truth of this scene is rooted in the information everyone is aware of but Hamlet. Arthur Nason, who writes on the use of comedy within tragedy, suggests that the gravedigger scene is a 'comic passages that, by relieving the tension, contribute to the tragic effect of the passages that follow (30). Their ability to have 'mirth at such a time and place, contribute the last needed touch of pathos (32). Though comedic in nature, the words of the gravediggers are anything but light. They demonstrate that they can recognize humanity in a way that escapes Hamlet himself. The grave diggers demonstrate a

remarkable humanity in the way they speak of the deceased. The gravediggers are 'able to isolate joys and beloved individuals in their own times, not insisting that a past experience be unnaturally superimposed upon the present. Hamlet, on the contrary, is unwilling to thinking of past joys undivorced from present grief' (Hunt,143). Whether discussing Ophelia or Yorrick, the gravediggers can separate their own reality and empathetically contemplate the existence of another, to a higher degree than Hamlet. Their focus is decidedly individual. On more than one occasion, they demonstrate the ability to honour the entirety of an individual. After all, 'were the gravedigger to view the skull simply as a skull, he would never playfully wish a pestilence, a death, upon Yorick. This common oath testifies to how intensely the gravedigger is moved by his vivid memory of the living person. In his mind's eye, he sees Yorick himself.' (Hunt,147). This suggests a recognition of the entire individual and all their facets, even in death.

In *Haider*, the grave diggers take on multiple roles. However, there are some marked differences from *Hamlet*. Here, there are three gravediggers, and the deceased for whom they are digging these graves are not specified. The depersonalization of the graves that they are digging are testament how much lost is part of their life. Upon their introduction, they begin singing a slow rhythmic song that features deeply melancholic lyrics such as 'Oh why don't you come, my dearly departed', 'neither twilight nor sunset, only darkness' and 'a nest for your soul, so go sleep' (*Haider* 2:14:26). The decision to have these grave diggers perform this song has often been seen as a deference to the conventions within Bollywood film. Scholarship on the scene has largely billed it as an appropriate moment for musical entertainment, asserting that the 'film has the grave-diggers croon in unison the song Aao na ('Come on along') to the beat of their shovels, adapting a key Shakespearean moment to a

Bollywood mode of entertainment (Sarkar, 5). This assessment, though accurate, does not consider how well it is able to represent the sobering reality of Kashmir. The existing scholarship on this scene shows how it is. Instead of focusing on the aesthetic value that the grave diggers bring to the film; I assert that the grave diggers serve as an illustration of the nature of death in Kashmir.

The grave diggers speak of death in plurality. They are shown to have a more cavalier attitude towards death, though it deeply affects them. We see them resting in the graves they have dug, calling out 'Haider, we have been waiting for you. Dig a grave and get some rest' (*Haider* 2:15:48). Their comfort level with something that has such proximity to decay, and death indicate how it is part of their reality. Their portrayal is reflective of their melancholic surroundings. Their song is not specific to an individual, there is far too much loss to be able to individualize the experience. The line 'neither twilight nor sunset, only darkness' speak to the consistent presence of death within their lived experience. This is further exemplified in their reaction to grieving, such as the scene in which a grave digger wakes and sips tea whilst observes a funeral (*Haider* 2:17:38) calmly. The ability to view a funeral, the process of recognizing and grieving one's life, as a casual spectator, speaks to their proximity to it. Their comedic quips are not rooted in insightful societal comedy, but rather their indifferent reactions to tragedy. For them, this misery is mundane.

The gravediggers in *Haider* are also reimagined as active participants of violence. Gone are the contemplative clowns that honour the deceased. The militarization of these minor characters serves to enforce that survival in *Haider* is a constant fight. To exist is to be active in conflict. In the film, they immediately arm themselves (*Haider* 2:20:17) and proceed to attack the armed forces that come to oppose Haider. They take on the role of Haider's protectors and fight to ensure his

survival. They sing a short reprise of the song sang earlier (*Haider* 2:21:41), as they take aim and effectively kill the members of the armed contingent that has come with Khurram to eliminate Haider. Unlike the gravediggers in *Hamlet*, the gravediggers in *Haider* do not have the privilege or the capacity to consider the sanctity of life. The reality of battle means that there is no difference between the taking a life and burying a body. We witness first-hand the loss a life due to violence, as one of the gravediggers pays the price for Haider's rash behaviour. A gravedigger is shot through an open window, and instantly dies. The other gravedigger is distraught at the loss of their compatriot, cradling his body and shouting 'brother' repeatedly (*Haider* 2:22:48). Though death is a common occurrence, its presence is still shown to be deeply distressing. After kissing his forehead, the gravedigger, devastated, rushes out of the safe house, heading straight into the heart of the battle. He holds a grenade and advances towards a line of heavily armed men, each of whom are shooting him directly. The blood spurts out of his chest as he is fatally wounded repeatedly. His last act before his falls is to fling a grenade towards the advancing heavily armed group of men, killing several of them (*Haider* 2:22:57). This episode is representative of how these cycles of violence are reproduced and show the presence of conflict and loss of life only serves to continue the cycle. Ghazala's warning to Haider that 'revenge only begets revenge' (*Haider* 2:26:28) is shown not just in Haider's experiences, but also in the life and decisions of minor characters, proving that these notions deeply affect reality.

There are many instances of bloodshed in *Haider*. This instance is telling of the cycles of violence that plague this state. Within the span of a couple of minutes, we are introduced to and witness the swift death of a man. His death then sets about a chain of events that results in the death of others. We witness life, friendship, and profound

sadness, and yet we do not even know his name. This begs the question, how many more nameless individuals shuffled off the mortal coil without recognition. The film's decision to draw attention to a person who remains nameless throughout speaks to a communal definition of tragedy.

The end of the film features a gruesome confrontation between Haider and Khurram. Both are injured by the bomb that Ghazala utilized to end her own life, and Khurram begs Haider to end his suffering. Haider, in an act of mercy or malice, chooses to leave him and walks out of frame. (*Haider* 2:23:54). Regardless of his motivation, Haider chooses to spare Khurram's life, perhaps finally heeding his mother's warning. A marked departure from the man of action Haider is throughout the narrative, he shows remarkable restraint. However, this decision does not translate into peace. Rather, it is representative of a despondent and severe reality, that remains difficult to define.

To understand the ending of the film, we must also acknowledge that the circumstances that surround the ending of this film beg a different way of understanding tragedy. In comparing the ending of *Hamlet* and *Haider*, the ending of *Haider* is left much more ambiguous, almost as if it creates more questions than it answers. We are left in the wake of much destruction, with no possible conclusion in sight. A marked departure from *Hamlet*, the ending reveals a differing understanding of tragedy. To understand the ending of the film, we must also acknowledge that the circumstances that surround the ending of this film, the differing definitions of tragedy and the cultural expectations that are present in this context.

To grapple with the complex issues that *Haider* raises, an understanding of tragedy must first be established. Aristotle's *Poetics* aims to provide a definition of

tragedy that assists to explain the distressing circumstances. The text defines tragedy as ‘an imitation of an action that is complete, and whole, and of a certain magnitude; for there may be a whole that is wanting in magnitude’ (10), along with a segmentation of the different parts that are key to a tragedy, specifically Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, Song (8), arranged in order of importance. He also placed particular emphasis on the sequence of tragic events, as that is a key part of the most crucial aspect of tragedy, Plot. He asserts that ‘an end, on the contrary, is that which itself naturally follows some other thing, either by necessity, or as a rule, but has nothing following it.’ (Aristotle, 10). The finality of an ending is then considered to be key in reinforcing tragedy. This aligns with the key tenants of tragedy as being an action that is ‘whole’, or one that is self-contained. This ability to conclude a narrative with a clear resolution, in spite its complexity, is key.

Whilst this is useful and important in understanding what makes up a tragedy, it is also decidedly narrow in scope. Aristotle chooses only to focus on works that are contemporary to his time. The work is also deliberately general with its definitions. The notion of magnitude is constantly brought up throughout the work as a part of the definition of tragedy, though the work fails to get to the crux of what this magnitude entails or how we are to understand its implications. György Lukács speaks on the effect of tragedy, asserting that “every real drama involves the dread felt because of the inevitable downfall of the greatest people in society, yet even within the aimless self-mortification we find an affirmation of life” (Lukács, 166). This ‘affirmation of life’ suggests that it is only in these profound moments of loss and suffering that we can appreciate life and achieve a kind of catharsis.

Chinua Achebe writes ‘real tragedy is never resolved. It goes on hopelessly forever.’ (Quayson, 3). This notion is the marked difference between a theorized

tragedy and the reality of an individual living in the midst of conflict within a postcolonial context. The deep loss that reverberates from being in a hostile environment is nearly palpable. The cycle of conflict that is present in *Haider* cannot be ignored. These individuals are robbed of catharsis. The presence of death in the work is overt and constant. They are not given the opportunity to grieve, because they live in a state of mourning, either for themselves, their community, or their nation. Achebe continues 'conventional tragedy is too easy. The hero dies and we feel a purging of the emotions. A real tragedy takes place in a corner, in an untidy spot, to quote W. H. Auden. The rest of the world is unaware of it.' (Quayson, 3). *Haider* reminds us that the recognition of death is a privilege. In the representation of Kashmir, *Haider* points to and exemplifies existing cycles of violence that keep the post-colonial subject in this state of flux. It also illustrates the differences in embodied cultural capital that define the boundaries of tragedy. Though death is the great equalizer, the effect of this loss differs greatly, decided by communal and cultural circumstances.

Hamlet's death is a tragedy, but it brings about resolution. It is only in his death that there is a transfer of power that is peaceful. Had he remained alive, the conclusion of the narrative would not have been definitive, or as tragic. The ending of Hamlet facilitates a catharsis, allowing us, as the audience, the ability to bear witness to the shift of power. Hamlet sets into motion events that lead to the demise of the entire royal family, giving Fortinbras an assured victory, allowing Denmark to be conquered by a foreign power. We leave knowing and recognizing Hamlet's story. We honour his wish and continually 'tell his story' (Ham. V.ii.16). There is a sense of peace in the recognition that his last wish is being fulfilled, both by the characters in the play and by audiences alike.

Haider has no such privilege. Even though he eliminates the threat against him, he's left with the carnage, and no one left to carry the proverbial crown. It is clear that 'earlier images of military excesses make it amply clear that Haider can survive only provisionally, that too only as a militant.' (Sarkar,7). His life will always be defined a particular conflict. He will never be able to thrive, his is an existence that will always be primarily defined by uncertainty and preoccupied with survival.

Fundamentally, the ending of *Haider* illuminates the reality of the conflict in the region. Haider is left to explore the reality of a warzone, where there are more questions than answers. Though he emerges from the conflict alive, the Haider that we met in the beginning of the narrative is dead. His primary desire to seek revenge on behalf of his father is gone. He is at the centre of a conflict that he contributed to but did not start. He has lost all of his loved ones. Haider is not able to attain any meaningful resolution for himself and the film does not provide an alternative path forward. This image is a poignant representation of the reality of so many who live amid conflict. Unlike in *Hamlet*, the work is not haunted by the ghost of a person but of its people, suggesting that the 'real spirit haunting the film is that of the geography's aborted yet ongoing quest for freedom' (Dadabhoy, 17). Kashmir is defined by its spectral quality, existing on the borderline of states but never being able to definitively be in one. Kashmir 'remains colonized and occupied geography, its post coloniality indefinitely deferred and denied.' (Dadabhoy, 17). Neither us nor Haider know what he is stepping into when he disappears from view.

Whilst the narrative of the film comes to an end, the final thing the audience experiences is an epilogue title card. This epilogue title card draws the audience's attention to the state of Kashmir in reality, pulling them out of the diegesis of the actual film. Not only are audiences deprived of a conclusive ending, they are reminded

that the violence and carnage they witnessed is not a thing of the past, but rather an ongoing reality for some. This situation is telling of an individual living in a post-colonial context, where authority and autonomy are consistently in flux, and there is no resolution to be had. Poetically put by Michael Slater, 'Haider's fate is left unresolved is especially fitting in the context of the film's political allegory, since the conflict in Kashmir continues to unfold today. We cannot yet know how the story ends.' (385). The ending of *Haider* serves only to remind us of the complexity that is present in a conflict-ridden nation. Perhaps we, like Haider, are meant to stagger off, struck by our reality and unsure of what is next for us.

The world of *Haider* is one that is violent and difficult to understand. The use of embodied cultural capital allows to understand the disposition of Hamlet and Haider as works. With the use of embodied cultural capital, the representation of reality is clearer.

CONCLUSION: PASS AND FELL

In conclusion, the framework of cultural capital is an attempt to quantify the unquantifiable and acts as an anchor of ephemeral feelings and values into something concrete. By identifying significant instances that possess cultural capital, it illustrates that the symbolic resonance that is present throughout *Haider* and *Hamlet*. Though these two works vary greatly over geography and time periods, they inform one another when compared. In theory, placing these works in an East and West dichotomy and making them natural foils to one another would set up an easy basis for which to compare them. Reality, however, is vastly different. *Hamlet* and *Haider* are testament to the fact that these categories are not so easily defined and decided upon.

In the first chapter, I investigated the relationship between language and power, showing how language provides an individual with a measure of institutionalized cultural capital. Though this foray proved successful, it did not allow the individual in question to communicate freely. The issue of English as a language of resistance is not resolved. If one wishes to use language to enact freedom and autonomy, it still falls short of that purpose. We see that the use of the language is equal part bone and bane to those who chose to utilize it.

The second chapter features a discussion on women as objects. In instances where woman objectify themselves, they are given a measure of objectified cultural capital, and are able to sway the thoughts and opinions of the men around them. Though successful in doing so, the consequences of these practices are fatal. Whatever measure of objectified cultural capital they gain is illusory. Even in their deaths, they are disparaged and disregarded.

The third chapter explores the notion of embodied cultural capital with regards to differing definitions of tragedy. Though each definition is appropriate for the

respective work, the embodied cultural capital in *Haider* exhibits a communal approach to tragedy, shedding light on the magnitude of loss in Kashmir, and the long-term effects of prevalent cycles on violence on an individual.

In every chapter, a binary relationship of some sort is explored. Whether it is the relationship between one's native language or English, the presence or lack of power through submission or the merits of a communal or individual definition of tragedy, we see that reality exists in the intersection of these states. Namely, that real life takes place somewhere amid these conflicting ideals. Indeed, the nature of Shakespeare is similar, as it 'engenders 'hybrid' subjects, but is itself hybridized by the various performances, mutilations and appropriations of his work' (Loomba and Orkin 8). As a 'hybrid' subject of many differing origins, *Haider* raises many questions that do not have easy answers.

As a work, *Haider's* strength lies in the fact that it does not allow us to conveniently ignore these problematic occurrences. Afterall, *Haider* takes many aspects from reality. In its representation, it points to the reality and actual events of the past. If the violence in *Hamlet* seems needless, the violence in *Haider* is senseless. It is deeply sobering that the conflict in Kashmir continues to this day, showing no signs of slowing down.

Hamlet declares 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes between the pass and fell incensed points of mighty opposites.' (Ham.V.ii.64-66). In this utterance, Hamlet classifies the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as collateral damage, as a necessary evil in the meeting of two great forces. While Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are not particularly sympathetic characters, Hamlet's cavalier attitude to the fact that he is responsible for their death betrays an insidious truth; the price of war never truly falls on the ones that enact the conflict, but rather the individuals that are

caught in the crossfire. It is the victors, these ‘mighty opposites’ that are given license to decide the narrative. This notion is also present in *Haider*. Pervez, in a bid to get Haider to soften his defiant position to find his father, cautions him by saying ‘when two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled (45:45). In this statement, the work reinforces the notion of the price of conflict falls on the individuals caught in the crossfire, who are easily overlooked or forgotten.

By pitting *Hamlet* and *Haider* against each other, a space where these ‘mighty opposites’ can be reclaimed emerges, allowing for us to tell the stories of those who are often forgotten. From the nameless gravediggers, the entrapped women and even Haider himself, this entire study serves to privilege the narratives of marginalized individuals, whose stories are not widely told. *Haider* brings these stories to the forefront, backed by legitimacy of the canon that *Hamlet* provides.

At its core, this project is an exercise in empathy. In accommodating and legitimizing these adaptations of classic canonical texts, we bear witness to the telling and retelling of stories that validate the experiences of individuals that have been othered. It would be predictable to place them in opposition to one another, but what each chapter of this work has proved is how entwined the source text and the adaptation are. They are not in competition with one another, but rather sharpen one another, much like the ‘pass and fell’ of duelling swords.

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