



## Linguistics Largeness: From ‘Romeo and Juliet’ to ‘Adam Khan aw Durkhanai’

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**ABSTRACT-** With its comparative approach, comparative literature demonstrates the historical, thematic, cultural and linguistic relations between the world literatures. Eastern and Western literature, being the zenith of today’s literary terrene, with two different poles, are examined in this paper with reference to Romeo and Juliet and Adam Khan aw Durkhanai. Finding the differences and similarities between the two love stories is the focus of the current study. These similarities as well as differences simultaneously affect the cultural and theatrical representation of both the societies. The two cultures and literatures in which they are set are different on the basis of language, culture, norms, and customs; while at the same time, they are similar on the grounds of onomastic, socialization and some cultural notions. Under the ambit qualitative methodology, the researcher uses Intertextuality and Textual Analysis to extract the distinctions and similitude.

**Keywords:** Shakespeare’s plays, eastern and western cultures, intertextuality, adaptations, comparative literature.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Comparative study aims to describe similarities and differences across two different literary pieces. This study is quite common in literature and is called Comparative Literature. Comparative literature has intrinsically content and form which facilitate the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of literature (Zepetnek, 2011). Comparative literature has no boundaries; thus, acts like a wingless bird. Therefore, it can be regarded as the examination of different literature somehow similar literatures, without borders (Sontake, 1995). As a discipline, it requires exceptional linguistic ability, theoretical knowledge, and high intellectual caliber. In relation to Comparative Literature and to provide function to it, a technique is used to conduct research in the field. This technique is known as intertextuality. The technique facilitates studying similar traits in two texts of different languages and cultures; it is the relationship between two texts. A literary work is a creation of not only the author himself but it is the amalgam of other similar texts in the past and present and is strongly bonded with the grounds of language itself. Any text that is constructed from “a mosaic of quotations; is the absorption and transformation of another” (Kristeva 1986, p. 37). Even they get mixed up sometimes, due to the distortion, which, in the words of Syed Shujaat Ali, “is the result of mixing up of two parallel, simultaneous, and distinctly running strains of stories” (Ali, p. 194, 2013). Besides this reason, according to Syed Shujaat Ali (2016), the reason can also be due to “the absence of the medium of writing and word for word transmission” (Ali, p.22, 2018).

*Romeo and Juliet*, an English tragedy, is about the feud of two families, Montague and Capulet, whose rivalry starts from a trivial fight between servants. On the other hand, in Pukhto Literature, the romantic story of *Adam Khan and Durkhanai* is reiterated among many folktales. The folktale is about a love affair between the enthusiastic, Adam Khan and the fragile beauty, Durkhanai. They both belong to Swat. In relation to Western and Eastern cultures and languages, epitomizing *Romeo and Juliet*, a romantic tragedy by William

Shakespeare and *Adam Khan and DurKhanai*, a Pukhtun romantic folktale, the researcher has utilized intertextuality to compare and contrast both the texts, in such a way that points out similarities and differences in their content and form. The technique will relate two tragedies of different cultures, *Romeo and Juliet*, written in late 16<sup>th</sup> century by William Shakespeare and *Adam Khan and DurKhanai*, a Pukhtun folktale, written in 17<sup>th</sup> century in couplets. The study evaluates the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of the two tragedies.

In Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the Prologue is acquainted with the audience as a sonnet to demonstrate the themes of Love as well as feud. Sonnets were often adopted to approach the subject of Love in conflict. On the contrary, in Pukhtun society, *The Bazaar of the Storytellers (1989)* is a collection of Pukhtun folktales and heroic legends. All the stories in the book are translated into English by authors who used recordings of Pukhtun verses sung by professional minstrel-bards. One of the principal shortcomings of this book is the authors' reliance on secondary sources, which lack important details of the Pukhtun storytelling context. *The Bazaar of Storytellers (1989)* is divided into two parts. The first part is entitled as *Romances: Old and New*, and the second part is named as *Battles for Honor, God and Country*. The first part of the book includes a Classic Romance called *Adam Khan and DurKhanai* (Nasir, 2011). Little is known about the author or the narrator of the Romance. It is believed to be narrated in seventeenth century in the form of heroic couplets. It survived in 19<sup>th</sup> century Manuscript and was first published in 1960 by *Pukhto Academy*. *Adam Khan and DurKhanai* has been translated from the verses of a late 19<sup>th</sup> Century poet, Sayyid Abu Ali Shah. The story has been called the Pukhtun *Romeo and Juliet*, because both the stories explore the themes of Love, courtship, and marriage. According to Syed Shujaat Ali (2013), "In versified form, this story with the same title was found by the researcher in two different booklets of 216 and 96 pages respectively. It is available in prose forms also. This story, which is more fit to be described through the medium of prose, has been described in the medium of poetry which is due to the preference of poetic form over prosaic form in the age of primary orality" (p. 171).

In the stories, the perspective of society and culture towards Love remains the same: conservative and narrow-minded. The stories focus on the universality of human passions, emotions and feelings and how these affect the people of different cultures.

The study is aimed at exploring the similarities and differences between two texts, particularly English and Pukhto (English translation), Western and Eastern, with reference to *Romeo and Juliet* and *Adam Khan and DurKhanai*. Furthermore, it also attempts to make Shakespeare understandable to his readers in Pukhtun society by comparing it with a traditional folktale of Pukhto. Consequently, the Pukhtun readers would develop their knowledge regarding Shakespeare and the Western culture.

Comparing the nature of Western and Eastern plays or folk literature, the paper tries to answer the following questions: What connects *Romeo and Juliet* with *Adam Khan and DurKhanai*? How *Romeo and Juliet* and *Adam Khan and DurKhanai* follow the same path but different directions? How the characters of Shakespeare orate the chronic issues in Pakistan?

The study contributes to Pukhto as well as English Literature; thus, increases awareness about how the two cultures are similar in many ways, despite the major differences in culture and language. It also casts light upon the universality of human passions, emotions and feelings; and how these affect the people of different cultures. Apart from contribution to Pukhto literature, the study is a document in English language that will attract Western scholars and historians, particularly, to study Pukhto literature. The research strengthens the realm of Interdisciplinary genre established in Pakistan.

#### **Storyline of Adam Khan and Durkhanai:**

Adam Khan, the protagonist of the century-old folk tale, lives in *KoozBazdara* (lower locality of Swat), in a wedding, happened to fall in love with the prettiest and shrewd girl of *Bara Bazdara* (upper locality of Swat). A single glance of Adam Khan also flared up the heart of Durkhanai, creating the scene of *Romeo and Juliet*.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Having the qualitative nature, the study scrutinizes the two texts under the ambit of different variables of the Textual Analysis. The researcher utilizes the concept of Intertextuality to examine two different cultures and literature, and, consequently, filters the differences and similitudes in considerably two opposite-yet-similar literatures. In a quest for the appropriate results, the applied intertextuality and comparative study brings forth the differences and similarities between western and eastern cultures and literatures.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Shakespeare's plays are adapted in a number of other languages around the globe, thus, projecting his universality and genius of transforming, and putting influence upon, other literatures as well. His literary genius is well-elaborated by Gordon McMullan: "Shakespeare was first and foremost an adapter" (Gompertz, 2016, para. 13). This implies that Shakespeare is a writer of such a caliber that he can be used by different literatures to represent their lives and reflect on their social setup. He is not just adapted but his plays have been comparatively examined too. Not just his original plays but the movies that are made upon them, highlighting the genius of Shakespeare, have also undergone comparative scrutiny. To illustrate the two movies based on the lives of two great literary figures of their age: *Shakespearean Love* and *Becoming Jane* have undergone comparative research. Jerold's *Becoming Jane* can relate to John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love*, because the former follows the path opened by the later. There are numerous intertextual connections in both the movies but the central one is related to the main character of the story: the writers play the role of the main character in their own story. Jane Austen comes to be the protagonist of her own novel; while Shakespeare is considered to be the hero of his own play.

Moreover, the comparative study of Shakespeare is not just limited to the cultural and social level but his plays *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It*, are said to be influenced by *The New Testament* as well. The relationship of the characters, the dramatic structures of the play, imagery, and themes are shaped in the light of *The New Testament*. The theme of love, which is central to both the plays and *The New Testament*, makes them similar in signified (Hurtgen, 2006).

Bhansali (2013) has shaped the Western play in Eastern manner in the form of a film, *GoliyonkiRasleela: Ram Leela*. The classical tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* is adapted as *Ram Leela* in a provincial Indian town instead of Verona. The two powerful families of Capulet and Montague are represented as Saneda and Rajadi, who have established criminal empires beyond the reach of law and order. This movie is influenced by the Western presentation of the original play, and has been blended with Bollywood dramatic essence to bring forth something unique (Films).

In a similar line of argument, the researcher presents a comparison between *Adam Khan and DurKhanai*, from East, and *Romeo and Juliet*, from West. The Western story has been depicted in Eastern clothing. The intertextual background has provided a platform for comparative critics to study Shakespeare in relation to other plays and cultures. The comparison of Shakespeare's plays with Bible and other Eastern plays has acknowledged the existence of the platform. Apart from the comparative study of plays, the movies based upon Shakespeare and Jane Austen have also been studied through the lens of comparative literature. Thus, in relation to comparative study, Shakespeare has been explored by multiple critics in multiple ways. Therefore, this research is intertextual in nature; it studies the play, *Romeo and Juliet* in comparison to Pukhto Folktales, *Adam Khan and DurKhanai*.

### IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Pukhto and English in the Attraction Zone**

Every literature has a particular context and institution which is magnetized differently to another culture and literature. Despite the differences, literatures can attract each other in particular areas and can stand on equal ground with equal footing. Orr (2003) pointed to this feature regarding intertextuality in different texts that the intertextual system creates patterns of one literature and then relates it to others; thus, expressing one literary piece through another. Despite the cultural and linguistic differences between *Adam Khan and DurKhanai*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, the two works are similar on many levels, such as, social level (Relationship and Friendship), Religious level (The Priest/Friar and Pir/Saint), Onomastic or Nomenclature, Cultural level (Festivity), Dialogue and Discourse and Lexical and Syntactical level (Linguistics).

#### **1) Socialization and Literature**

Socialization is the process of getting acquaintance with the society and to acquire different lessons through practical association to it. Friendships and associations in a community are the stimulators that help a character achieve his or her ambition in the society. Sontake (1995) proposes that comparative study involves not only the literary devices but the social institutions that surround an individual in the society. Thus, socialization and literature go abreast, with the former being material and the later more or less ideal. According to Syed Shujaat Ali (2016), "An oral utterance conveys more meanings that are part of the real

setting and total situation and of which only a nominal and partial segment can be represented by written words. In the act of writing, we do not have the rich context around that helps us convey a lot without depending too much on words, nor do we use our nonverbal and paralinguistic features to communicate ideas. It brings the speaker and listener out of face-to-face interaction and places them in the position of a writer and reader, who are chronologically and geographically distant from each other (p. 102)".

The protagonists in both the stories have a strong relationship with their age fellows. At the very start of the stories, protagonists Adam Khan and Romeo are introduced to readers along with their two fast-friends Miru and Balu and Mercutio and Benvolio, respectively. Similarly, the heroines of the plays have a similar relationship with their maid/nurse. In the former Gulanai helped DurKhanai and in the latter the Nurse supported Juliet during the escape.

The ideology of capitalism is vivid in both the stories. The nurse and the maid both belong to the lower class of society working for the elite families of Ta'us Khan and Capulet, respectively.

## **2) Bilabials: The Linguistic Connectors of Boundaries**

When bilabials transcend boundaries, stories represent each other. Zepetnek (2011) described the relationship between two texts through linguistics methodology and terminologies. He argued that the paradigmatic analysis of two different literatures can converge on a similar point, phonologically, morphologically or syntactically.

In a similar line of argument, there are certain names of the characters which are somewhat alike in the stories. They are phonologically and morphologically similar up to a certain level. For instance, Miru and Mercutio are the two friends of Adam Khan and Romeo respectively, whose names sound similar to each other. Both the names start with the [M] and sound somewhat alike. Balu and Benvolio, both starts with [B] sound. Similarly, other characters, Payu Khan and Paris, who are the would-be husbands of Durkhanai and Juliet respectively, also have similar names. Both the names start with [P] and give the same sounds in the start. The phonological relationship is based on the same Bilabial sounds. Thus, this relationship between the two stories makes them similar on the linguistic level.

## **3) Conservatism, Love and Society: What is at Stake?**

Every society has narrow-mindedness in its collective unconsciousness; when their collective ego is threatened, they revive and revisit their doctrines of cultural and notional rules and customs, for their self-defense (Jung, 1959).

The lovers were not allowed to meet each other publicly, partly because of the less-modernized society, and partly because the norms of the societies were strict. In both the stories, the lovers meet during night-time so that no one could see them. This hidden rendezvous is implicative of the conservative attitudes or cultural values of the societies. Furthermore, Festivity is also a part of culture. Every culture has its own festivity which is different from that of the other culture. In both the stories, the lovers meet on different occasions. Adam Khan and DurKhanai met at her cousin's wedding. Adam Khan was sent there for a purpose, that his dream would be fulfilled, as it is evident:

*Adam Khan and DurKhanai:*

"Adam Khan together with friends of his own age set off to visit the faqir. Pirsalih raised his hands in prayer and he offered a prayer for Adam, "May courage from prayers accompany him!" and he said, "Go, May God anoint you with a dream fulfilled!" (p. 63).

Adam Khan together set off from that place and he arrived at the village of Baskai (DurKhanai's cousin), my right-thinking man! The wedding of Baskai made a commotion in which various omens appeared" (p.66).

Similarly, Romeo meets Juliet at a slightly different social gathering. However, like Adam Khan, Romeo was also sent at the ball for a purpose. His friend Benvolio forced him to go in order to get over his beloved, given as:

*Romeo and Juliet:*

Benvolio: "At this same ancient feat of Capulet'sSups the fair Rosaline whom thou so loves  
With all the admired beauties of Verona. Go thither, and with unattainted eyes  
Compare her face with some that I shall show,  
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow."

(Act 1, Scene 2, Page 4)

On the other hand, marriage is considered equally important in both cultures. Though western culture is different from that of eastern culture yet marriage held the same status in both. Adam Khan wanted to tie the knot with DurKhanai but meanwhile, she was married to Payu Khan and Adam Khan was heartbroken. As it is clear:

*Adam Khan and DurKhanai:*

"[But meanwhile] the wedding of DurKhanai [to Payu] had been quickly arranged and all her things were matched together with much taste. The marriage was completed with great elegance and style, and then the people returned home. Then Payu took DurKhanai from her house and she was seated in the dark, black house of sorrow" (p. 158).

It is clear that marriage was a kind of hurdle between the two lovers and it was also the only way to unite these two lovers. As DurKhanai was married to Payu, therefore, she could not marry Adam Khan because it is forbidden in their religion and culture. This was the main reason of Adam Khan's distress. As evident: "[Learning of the marriage, Adam Khan runs off to the wilderness and then returns to his father's house] (p. 163).

Similarly, the concept of marriage is also central in western culture. The first thing Romeo did after falling in love with Juliet was to ask her to marry him. She gave her consent as it was the only way she could be united with her lover. As it is obvious from the following dialogues:

*Romeo and Juliet:*

Juliet (to Romeo): "Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.  
If that thy bent of love be honorable,  
Thy purpose marriage, send me a word tomorrow  
By one that I'll procure to come to thee  
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite,  
And all my fortunes at thy foot I will lay  
And follow thee my lord throughout the world."

(Act 2, Scene 2, Page 5)

Thus, this marriage also restricts Juliet to marry Paris, because her religion and culture do not allow this. Both the cultures have a similar notion about marriage. It shows that every culture and religion may have common values and norms but their appearances may differ. In addition, it can be seen in both the stories that one institution of the society (marriage) hampers the fulfillment of fundamental right (right to choose a spouse of one's own choice).

#### 4) Eastern and Western Ideology of Love on the Same Track

Two cultures go parallel in the society, when their ideals resemble each other. *Romeo and Juliet* and *Adam Khan and Durkhanai* depict the same theme; love. Allan (2001) also focuses on the meaning of text. The meaning provides a context too beside it; this context represents the idea being described through different technicalities: through characters, setting, the kind of audience and the storyline. Apart from linguistic and cultural level, these two texts also relate to each other on thematic level. Love is the central theme of both the stories. Particularly, Love at first sight is the cause of most of the proceeding events in the stories. Despite the cultural difference, the universality of human emotions, passions, and feeling remains the same. These affect people of different cultures in a similar way. When Adam Khan's sight fell upon Durkhanai's eyes, "the rebab's gentle voice joins with it too" and her "grief-stricken heart is happy" (p. 77).

A somewhat similar reaction is given by Juliet as she fell in love with Romeo in their first encounter. For instance:

*Romeo and Juliet:*

Juliet: (*aside*) My only love sprung from my only hate!  
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!  
Prodigious birth of love it is to me,  
That I must love a loathed enemy."

(Act 1, Scene 5, Page 7)

It can be seen that the protagonists of both the stories are alike in receiving this sudden and unexpected blow of love. Likewise, Romeo after seeing his beloved uttered some words, which shows how his beloved seems so beautiful to him that it would be hard to forget her. Romeo (watching Juliet): "oh, she doth teaches to burn bright! It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night (Act 1, Scene 5).

### 5) Death of the Protagonists

As both stories are romantic tragedies, they have the same tragic end. According to the concept of Tragedy, by Aristotle, in his book *The Poetics*, a tragic end must do the catharsis of the audience which is the purification and purgation of emotions. Usually, laymen and some of the critics forbade themselves to call *Romeo and Juliet* a tragic story. Reasonably, they regard death in social service or military service or any place where one sacrifice one's life for the good of humanity, which unfortunately, is a weak idea in itself (Holmer, 2005). Each story ends with the death of both the lovers. In each of them, the hero dies first leaving the heroine in despair and soon joins their respective beloveds. For instance:

*Adam Khan and DurKhanai:*

"He took to his bed, ill with fever, and his tongue called for his darling constantly, "Tell her how ill I am, wake her, get her up from the sleep of ignorance! If only she'd come, I am about to breathe my last! My soul's just is waiting for the sight of her." Still pleading, he gave up his soul for his beloved and Azrael took him to the sky."

6) (262)

*Romeo and Juliet:*

The dashing rocks thy seasick, weary bark.

Here's to my love! (*drinks the poison*) O true apothecary,

Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

**ROMEO** dies

(Act 5, Scene 3, Page 5)

7)

Thus, the consequences following the death of the heroes are the same in both the stories. As it is clear from the following scenes:

*Adam Khan and DurKhanai:*

"When DurKhanai learned of this rumor (Adam Khan's death), she instantly fell face down on her bed. [She cried], "Lord, make me Adam Khan's companion, don't burn me alive in red fire anymore." Lifeless at that moment she gave up her soul" (p. 272).

*Romeo and Juliet:*

Juliet: O happy dagger,

This is thy sheath. There rust and let me die.

(*stabs herself with ROMEO's dagger and dies*)

(Act 5, Scene 3, Page 8)

As both the lovers did not meet while they were alive, they were together after they died. Romeo and Juliet buried in the same grave while DurKhanai, too, is strongly believed to be buried in the same grave as Adam

Khan. Holmer (2005) pointed out that the greatest tragedy, if there is after that of Oedipus Rex's, it is that of *Romeo and Juliet's*.

### 1. Cultural Level

Despite the similarities between western and eastern cultures, they are different on many grounds. Western culture does not have a Purdah custom while eastern/Pukhtun culture is known for it. Papanek (1973) described the two different worlds that exist within the small global village: the east and the west. They have their own system of living wherein their life and basic necessities of life are well-served and protected. By far, these cultures are creating most of the conflicts in their misunderstanding of each other's traditions. It is evident in both the stories while comparing them with each other on cultural grounds. In Pukhtun culture females are not supposed to come in front of the males who are not in a culturally and religiously legal relationship. As it is evident:

*Adam Khan and DurKhanai:*

"Thus Adam sang badalas and DurKhanai was listening inside in a corner" (p. 69).

On the contrary, in western culture, there are no restrictions upon meeting or seeing a stranger of opposite sex. For instance:

*Romeo and Juliet:*

Benvolio (to Romeo): At this ancient feast of Capulet's

Supps the fair Rosaline whom thou loves

With all the admired beauties of Verona.

(Act 1, Scene 2, Page 4)

Thus, Western culture is liberal; Pukhtun is not.

Similarly, the music also differs in both the stories. In Adam Khan and DurKhanai, traditional songs and instruments like Badalas and Rebab are mentioned a few times in the story. These are the representations of Pukhtun Culture. On the other hand, Western culture is represented by their traditional dance in the Ball and their soft music of violin. It is evident from Romeo and Juliet where they are gathered at the Ball where everyone dances with the music of violin.

### 2. Conflict

A tragedy or any other story requires a conflict to complete the plot. In both of these stories, there is a conflict; however, both differ in nature. The nature of hurdle, which prevents Adam Khan to unite with his beloved, is her marriage to Payu Khan. As she became Payu Khan's wife, DurKhanai was not allowed to marry or even think about some other man that resulted in Adam Khan's distress. Unlike Romeo's father, Adam Khan's father wanted his son to be happy and he was willing to do everything to gain his love for him. Payu Khan appears as a villain in the story who does not let the two lovers meet. For instance:

*Adam Khan and DurKhanai:*

"One day DurKhanai had been waiting for Adam Khan and suddenly Payu came peering down on her. Payu had been suspicious of the yogis and he instantly took precautions of his own. Payu drove away the yogis, the maidaan was emptied, and DurKhanai's sorrow returned to what it was before" (p. 157).

(225)

On the other hand, a feud between two families of Capulet and Montague was the main reason of the tragic end death of Romeo and Juliet. They were supposed to be enemies, like their ancestors; instead, they fell in love with each other. As it is evident from the following dialogues:

*Romeo and Juliet:*

Romeo: (*aside*) Is she a Capulet?

O dear account! My life is my foe's debt

(Act 1, Scene 5, Page 6)

Juliet: *(aside)* My only love sprung from my only hate!

Too early seen unknown, and known too late!

Prodigious birth of love it is to me,

That I must love a loathed enemy.

(Act 1, Scene 5, Page 7)

### Causes of Death

Both the stories end with the same thing: Death. Though the causes of the incident are different in both the stories, Adam Khan and Durkhanai died of grief and heartbreaks. They wanted their miserable lives to end and God had made that possible for them, while Romeo and Juliet ended their lives with their own hands. They wrote their own fate and put an end to their miserable lives.

## V. CONCLUSION

Succinctly, the similitudes and the distinctions between the two literary texts, that is, *Adam Khan and Durkhanai* and *Romeo and Juliet*, highlight the importance of comparative literature. The former, an eastern Pukhtun folktale is similar to the latter on linguistic ground wherein the emphasis is put upon the phonology of English and Pukhto; social level and onomastic ground. The study explored the ideological backgrounds of both the stories too. They (the stories) differed from each other on the basis of norms, customs and cultures, and their stern application in the society. Besides, the creation of conflict in the story and its reasons are far different from each other; a family feud in east is far distinct than its counterpart, west. Furthermore, the concept of intertextuality and methods of comparative literature were well utilized during the study, signifying the significance of the mentioned technique in literature.

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