

CULTURAL ECHOES: EXPLORING PASHTUNWALI RESONANCE IN LORCA'S *BLOOD WEDDING*

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes Federico García Lorca's Blood Wedding (1932) through the lens of Pashtunwali, the traditional code of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Focusing on three principles Nang (honor), Badal (revenge), and Ghairat (dignity) the study compares the presence of these codes in Lorca's Spanish tragedy with their role in Pashtun society. This is a qualitative study that uses Pashtunwali as a theoretical lens to analyze selected scenes from the play. The play is critically examined alongside real-life examples of Nang (honor), Badal (revenge), and Ghairat (dignity) present in our society. Findings reveal both similarities and differences: honor is shared, revenge is ritualized, and dignity is linked with stoicism. However, while Pashtunwali presents these values as cultural law, Lorca critiques them as destructive and tragic, giving the Bride a voice of resistance often absent in real honor-based systems.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality, loyalty, honor, and dignity and above all, revenge are the most accepted values in the Pashtun society (Maliha Zulfacar, 1999). Past experiences have seen these principles determine the social norms, cultural practices, and the behavior of the Pashtun people. The play *Blood Wedding* (1932) by Federico Garccia Lorca is a masterpiece of the twentieth century Spanish literature that discusses such universal aspects of the play as love, honor, and revenge in the rural Spanish environment.

Though the work by Lorca is not directly about the Pashtun culture or the Pashtunwali, the central ideas of the work appeal to most of the codes present in the Pashtunwali. A more critical look at the play will show that there are serious thematic overlaps between the play and fundamental values of Pashtun such as loyalty, revenge, honor, and dignity. The Pashtun traditional code of conduct known as Pashtunwali has stress on such principles as self-respect, independence, justice, hospitality, forgiveness, love, honor (Nang), revenge (Badal), and dignity (ghairat). Three of these values honors, revenge, and dignity will be analyzed in reference to *Blood Wedding* by Lorca, in relation to this research.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

This paper will attempt to find out how the concept of revenge, honor, and dignity is portrayed in the Pashtun culture and in *Blood Wedding* of Lorca. Although being based on various cultural backgrounds, both Pashtunwali and the play by Lorca deal with the devastating nature of these values when pushed to their limits. The study points out how the tragedy by Lorca is similar to the tensions in the Pashtun culture, and thus provides a cross-cultural insight about honor, vengeance, and pride.

1.2: Research Question

Q 1) How do the themes of honor , revenge , and dignity , in Federico Garcia Lorca's *Blood Wedding* differ from or align with the Pashtunwali code's emphasis on honor(Nang) ,revenge(Badal), and dignity(ghairat)?

Q2) How do these values shape the characters motivation and devastating consequences in Federico Garcia Lorca's *Blood Wedding* ?

1.3: Research objectives

1) To analyze the honor ,revenge,and dignity in Federico Garcia Lorca's *Blood Wedding* and their alignment with the pashtunwali codes emphasis on Nang, Badal, and ghairat.

2) To examine how these values shapes the characters motivations and action in the play , leading to devastating consequences.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will serve to encourage the acceptance and respect of cultural values among people of various societies. The research paper has provided an addition to the general literature on cross-cultural literary studies by dwelling upon the issues of honor, revenge, and dignity within the context of the Pashtunwali, as well as *Blood Wedding*. It draws the lines of similarities and differences between the two traditions inviting the dialogue and collaboration across the cultural borders. Besides, the results of this study can serve as an input to the policies and practice in the areas of cultural diversity, conflict resolution, and social cohesion.

1.5 Delimitation

Despite the fact that *Blood Wedding* includes several themes, this study will be narrowed down to the discussion of three main themes, namely: honor, revenge, and dignity. Equally, though Pashtunwali has nine tenets, which include self-respect, independence, justice, hospitality, forgiveness, love, honor, revenge, and dignity (ghairat), this research will only be limited to honor (Nang), revenge (Badal) and dignity (ghairat). Other theoretical views like feminism, psychoanalysis, racial theory are not discussed in the research. Rather, it uses Pashtunwali (Bewson, 2014) as an analysis criterion of the main conflicts of the play.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is founded on earlier comprehensive research undertaken by scholars analyzing Federico Garcia Lorca's *Blood Wedding* from different critical viewpoints, and offers context for this project.

Honor, revenge and dignity are key values in many societies that are characterized by elders and regarded as elements of the group and individual identity. Such values do not only construct individual behavior but also have their impact on the decisions about family, social roles and justice. When given prominence in culture, reputation and pride are deeply bound to social status and even a slight insult or act of betrayal may require severe consequences. Honor and dignity are frequently the ones used as a gauge of respect, and revenge can be considered as a need to strike a balance or to gain a status back. The fact is that, despite the cultural specificity of such values, they may cause internal contradiction of morals and external violence in case a person has to give preferences to multiple mutually exclusive options personal desire and communal responsibility. The conflict is love to love or be loyal and fit into the society theme, and this is a reoccurring theme in most societies across the globe.

These are the same values: honor, revenge, and dignity that appear to be the emotional and moral backbone of Federico Garcia Lorca *Blood Wedding*(1932). Set in a rural Spanish community in which the rules and reputation prevail, the play gives the characters that are caught between their feelings and social rules around them. The cultural pressure influences the behavior of the Bridegroom who needs to uphold the name of his family, the Mother whose experience of violence and bitterness is displayed, and Leonardo who recklessly pursues his forbidden love. *Blood Wedding* is further depicted as a tragedy not because of the decisions of each subject but because of the stronger force of values that emphasize honor and dignity even in spite of personal happiness. The play has its characters and conflicts, which show that even the traditional values can become a source of identity and destruction at the same time when it reaches the extremes.

The Pashtunwali governs the moral and everyday activity of the people of Pashtun in Afghanistan and Pakistan, these people follow a traditional socio-cultural code assigned to them. It also can be regarded as an unwritten constitution with the values or ethic in the central position; Nang (honor), Badal (revenge), Ghairat (dignity) and these ethics impact on the foundation of the community, as well as the identity of the individual (Maliha Zulfacar, 1999; Zafar R Siddiqui, 2013). These values are interrelated and they operate in a system of justice, social hierarchy and individual responsibility. Honor (Nang) is deemed to be the basis of reputation and the reverse (Badal) is a mechanism in society to make the person who has lost these things of honor which need redress or in other instances, redress of wrongdoing. Dignity (Ghairat), on the other hand, can be defined as the strength of a person, self-respect and integrity of the individual to keep his/her position in society when the situation seems to be beyond control.

These principles are rather attuned with the ethic world of the *Blood Wedding*(1932) by Federico Garcia Lorca. The play reflects much of the traditional honor cultures, although it was written in the early 20th century Spanish environment. The tendency of the Mother to guard the heritage of her family and seek revenge due to her numerous unmet demands can be construed as Pashtun notion of Nang. The intentions of the Bridegroom to revenge on the act of betrayal are consistent with the concept of Badal whereas the careless deeds of Leonardo who was pride and passionate sort of a person mark the internal struggle of preserving Ghairat. Cultural code such as Pashtunwali provides a potent viewpoint through which the limitations of inflexible honor systems can lead to individual and cultural disaster, as BL Benson (2014) observes. Using this framework to discuss *Blood Wedding* can help understand the role of traditional values in shaping such different concepts as human agency and destiny.

Eva Touster,(1964) in her critical essay of the play *Blood Wedding*(1932) brings to the fore the issue of thematic and structural intricacy in the play of the Lorca via a curious mix of lyrical, symbolic and dramatic. Beyond this facile treatment of tightness or loosening, it is quite within an easy reach to cite the structural complexities in *Blood Wedding* that is critical to the theme of repressed sexuality. She looks into how the technicality of the *Blood Wedding* is to mix Spanish folk and classic form to form a composition that is both cultured and culturally prescribed. Major queries of the musical form of the play, thematic meaning of repetitive lyrics and images, the influence of the stage effects in dramatizing the play are major questions raised by Touster on analysis.

She does not risk to draw definitive conclusions, however, she investigates the role of these factors in the coloring of the play with a sense of the emotionality and symbolic/archetypal nature of the works, especially, that of sacrifice, fate, and nature which she puts forward as prevailing here. Her interpretation thus incorporates a thematic and stylistic element into the interpretation of Lorca tragedy that enables the contemporary readers to interpret the play *Blood Wedding* as a poetic expression having both a literal and symbolic significance.

Rehana Kousar and Nida Sarfraz, (2014) research workers, analyze the *Blood Wedding* (1932) by Federico Garcia Lorca from feminist perspective, using four levels of feminist interpretation elements: biological, linguistic, socio-cultural, and psychoanalytical introduced by Elaine Showalter. In their paper, they contend that the treatment of women in Lorca exhibits a patriarchal system, in which the female protagonists are devoid of their agency, are nameless and play subservient roles in the Spanish society. The language, imagery and the social expectations of the play, as the authors indicate, uphold the stereotypes of gendered stereotypes, as women are defined as something beautiful but with no autonomy or voice. Holding the psyche, representation and silencing of women to task, the article makes an inference that *Blood wedding* can be used as a critical text when it comes to feminist discourse given the underlying recognition with regards to degree of inertness of the meanings that exist in the story as well as a cultural context in which the book is being set. This paper is of great contribution to the feminist view of the play as it strips bare the male dominance of women in the tragic world created by Lorca both in form and meaning.

Walker Lindsay C., (2013) looks at *Blood Wedding* (1932) in terms of scenographic and performance design in a comparison with its operatic adaptation, *Vernasz* by Sandor Szokolay. The paper discusses the manner in which the design process, through the conception of scenery and costume, is informed when used in the two forms of art; theatre and opera. Taking the play of *Blood Wedding* and *Vernasz* as the case studies, Lindsay prepares hypothetical performances of the Shaw Festival, the Court House Theatre, and the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts respectively. This analysis shows that although the scenographic decisions are conditioned by the medium-specific and space-related need of opera compared to theatre, the essence of the design process will be the same. The research is an addition to the field of *Blood Wedding* studies with a new visual and technical aspect of the play, flexibility of its text in relation to performative forms, and the role of aesthetic interpretation and spaces in the staging and perception of this play.

M. Afzal Faheem and Mubeen Shabbir (2023) structure analysis of *Blood Wedding* (1932) in view of that poem as a modern myth with many signs of symbols and rituals. Following the premise of a structuralist anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, the authors point to a densely intertwined network of binary dichotomies, which the playwright uses to create the ideological scaffolding of the play, namely: masculinity and femininity, instinct and repression, and life and death. The nine central symbols such as moon, horse, knives, forest, and beggar woman are analyzed as mythemes, who reflect the signifiers of culture that remind us of archaic images of sacrifice and totemic beliefs, thereby, transforming the story into a ritualized argument of the fate and memory of ancestors. The study asserts that the representation of nonhuman and symbolic characters by Lorca

breaks the barrier of realism and aligns the play as a myth machine that informs us of the underlying primordial construction of topics such as the ideas of honor, marriage, and family responsibility. In this reading, a highly symbolic and anthropological dimension is added to any critique of *Blood Wedding*, placing the play as part of an abiding pattern in culture and mythical narration.

Myrna Julia Castro Rios, (2005) researches what the chorus is and what it symbolizes in a script called *Blood Wedding* (1932) by Federico Garcia Lorca, in which she places the role of a chorus throughout the Greek tragedy tradition. Using the biographical background of Lorca, his poetic sensibility, and the Andalusian culture, Castro displays the way in which the playwright re-contextualizes the classical chorus not just as a source of narration, but also as a channel of symbols and themes. The paper outlines her directorial approach, including how the analysis of the script is turned into stage practice, yet offers commentary on how music, flamenco rhythm, and poetic metaphor have been utilised by Lorca to render chorus as an added dimension in reinforcing the play themes of love, death and social expectation. By relying on the parallels to Greek mythological frameworks, Castro deduces that the chorus should bring together the folk heritage of Lorca and the trends of the modern aesthetic elements providing the audience with an atemporal perception of the tragedy. The present thesis will therefore add performative and classical aspect in regard to the study of the play, *Blood wedding* because the chorus sets apart, or unites, as a multidimensional narrative force bringing out cultural convention and emotional response.

So far, the literature review has discussed *Blood Wedding* based on various aspects such as feminist point of view, structuralist point of view, thematic meaning, design of the stage and classical staging. Other scholars such as Eva Touster have directed their attention to the symbolic and lyric form of the play. The importance of women and the patriarchy rule has been mentioned by Rehana Kousar and Nida Sarfraz. Walker Lindsey has discussed the process by which the play has been altered to fit in various stages of performance such as the theatre and opera. Mubeen Shabbir and M. Afzal Faheem have examined the story with the help of structuralist theory in terms of it being a myth of modern times. By correlating the chorus with Greek tragedy and with the cultural background of Lorca, Myrna Castro has underscored the role of chorus. All these works present different contributions to our perception about *Blood Wedding*.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these lively and colorful interpretations, the following significant area has not been covered yet. All these works analyze the play without referring to the culture of Pashtunwali. Pashtunwali refers to a culture of code of conduct followed by most of the Pashtun societies in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is ridden on concepts of honor, revenge, and dignity. These are not only social but also heavily emotionally-oriented values that each person adheres to in their conduct and to which the society corresponds. The *Blood Wedding* by Lorca displays the same principles, especially the attitudes of the characters towards the betrayal and family heritage and pride. This study will address that gap by providing a cultural context of the world in *Blood Wedding* against the moral code of Pashtunwali and establishing a new perspective through which I could get a better sense of the meaning behind the honor and identity in the play.

To sum up, the current research on *Blood Wedding* indicates that there is a vast collection of critical approaches focusing on its astronomical, structural, symbolic, feminist, and performative aspects. Critics have looked at the lyrics in the play, gender relations, symbolism of mythology, staging, and classical elements and all have brought significant information to the interpretation of the greatly layered story that Lorca wrote. Nevertheless, with such vast scholarship, there seems to be an obvious missing information on the cultural interpretation of the play using non-Western models like the Pashtunwali. Coming up with the traditional Pashtun code of honor as a comparative lens, the given study would extrapolate the critical discourse and point to the universal applicability of honor, revenge, and dignity as dramatic forces that are devoid of geographic or cultural limitations. The research is not only one that fills a theoretical gap; it is also a cultural lens on a timeless tragedy created by Lorca.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative, comparative literary mode of research. The point is not to compare variables, but to decipher honor, revenge, and dignity in *Blood Wedding* by Federico Garcia Lorca (1932) and contrast them to the Pashtunwali code of Nang, Badal, and Ghairat. The comparative aspect emphasizes the similarity in values functioning in two situations; rural Spain and Pashtun society.

Federico García Lorca's play *Blood Wedding* (1932) is the primary data used in this study while the study also utilizes the secondary sources, which consist of the scholarly reviews of *Blood Wedding* in terms of its symbolism, themes, and dramatic structure. Moreover, theoretical grounding will be based on anthropological and sociological studies on Pashtunwali, i.e., Maliha Zulfacar (1999), Ahmed (1980), Zafar R Siddiqui (2013), and Bewson (2014). Cultural case studies on the past about the Pashtun society have also been included in order to show how these values of Nang (honor), Badal (revenge), and Ghairat (dignity) can be applied in practice. Such a blend of a literary analysis and a cultural research work is both a guarantee of a textual richness of the work and a solid cultural background of the study.

The way of analysis is close reading of texts with the help of comparative cultural analysis. The major scenes in *Blood Wedding* are viewed within the context of Pashtunwali. Through this, the paper identifies how the cultural codes determine human behavior and cause tragic outcomes.

4. DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS

In a number of traditional communities, people do not enter the world into freedom, but they enter into expectancy. The individual identity is constructed way before it is possible to exercise personal decisions- family reputation, gender roles, communal values and historical legacy. Individual is in most of such settings many times subordinate to the societal code of conduct and this poses a serious conflictual situation at the inside. People are also, as Althusser (1971) supposes, interpellated into roles, which are not ones that individuals themselves decide on, but the result of social designation, which results in a discrepancy between desire and what people are to become. Such tensions are most evident when the cultural codes clash with the wish of the individual, in cases of love, marriage, revenge and honor.

This was a cultural contradiction dramatized with heart rending clarity in *Blood Wedding* (1932). The characters in the play are not just people, but they represent the

greater forces that play a role in determining society in the rural side of Spain. The Bridegroom is the symbol of family responsibility and social order. The Bride is an expression of the agonizing conflict between self will and social norms. Leonardo in his passion is a man of revolt, a symbol of revolt--and even his revolt issues not in victory. The preoccupation of the Mother with the differences between generations and blood vengeance serves additionally to outline how the tradition may live longer than the argument itself. These characters demonstrate the ability of traditionally inherited values of cultures to subdue human free will and create violence, a theme that is dominant in most of the real world societies also.

To seek the moral sense of such breakdown, a study has been embraced on Pashtunwali, which is the code of Pashtun people of Afghanistan and Pakistan. In Pashtunwali, an action toward a correct ethical living rests on nang (honor), badal (revenge), and ghairat (dignity); they all are regarded as the tribal constitution (Maliha Zulfacar, 1999, Zafar R Siddiqui, 2013). It is not only a mere cultural tradition but also a way of thinking where one is considered worth enough in society because of his honor, where the feeling that one seeks revenge is a form of restoring the balance, and where status is ensured by dignity. Even love, when it contravenes even one of these values, is not considered romantic, but dangerous or unworthy. According to the arguments of Ahmed (1980), personal emotions in the Pashtun society come second at all times behind the communal codes of behaviour, and the breach is not seen as a threat to mental health collectively.

Blood Wedding (1932) may be construed as a story that is highly related to Pashtunwali-like systems through this framework. The rural Spain of Lorca is not in many ways different to a tribal part of South Asia where custom may be so cumbersome that it is fatal. The choice of the Bride to escape with Leonardo and the ensuing violence and the inability of the Mother to forgive each person have all the signs of the cultural logic of Pashtunwali. Both characters deny their own desires and in both situations justice is not supported by the law but convention, reputation, and emotional, pending. It is through this lens that we can see *Blood Wedding* not only as a Spanish play, but as a play that has something to say broadly to other think cultures as well.

Honor (Nang)

In both of *Blood Wedding* (1932) and Pashtunwali, honor or Nang emerges a pillar of central morals. In such traditional cultures, the value of an individual is not taken merely based on individual accomplishments, feelings, or sentiments but by the means of fitting in with inherent parameters of conduct. Such codes are compulsory in terms of loyalty to family, gender norms and other traditions of the society. In Lorca rural Spanish context, as well as in most Pashtun societies, honor turns out to be a show. It is connected to reputation, family name and community judgment. According to Maliha Zulfacar (1999), honor is a shared legacy among the Pashtuns and is jealously safeguarded by the men and the women as an identity and a way of maintaining their social survival. In the same measure, the characters portrayed by Lorca cannot afford to like freely in love or be happy without putting into consideration the family dignity and social respect.

A beautiful man... goes to his vineyards... and that man doesn't come back. Or if he does, it's to put a palm-leaf on him... to stop him swelling. (Lorca, 1932. p. 33–34)

This is said by the Mother when she remembers how her husband and son were killed violently. Superficially it is an aspersion, but it is really another powerful instruction on the culture: In her world, the price of honor is death. The visit to the vineyard, that is, an area that is associated with tranquility and development, culminates not with life, but with bloodshed. The coming of a body of a man with a palm leaf implies the rite of passage of a violent destiny, where death is not discussed, but internalized in the rhythm of the tradition.

Pashtunwali also has the same conception through the ethic of nang, or honor which must be best at all costs including death. According to Maliha Zulfacar (1999), when family or land are defended, anyone who sacrifices his/her life in Pashtun society will be remembered, and death is valorized instead of denigrating loss. This attitude is reflected in the resignation of the Mother who will not be surprised with such incidence. She does not protest against the violence--she swallows it as the price of dignity.

Lorca applies this line to the passion that women are supposed to carry in honor-based societies. Much as Pashtun mothers that need to show grief but at the same time keep the family honor together, Lorca Mother experiences a conflict between her emotional loss and the dictum within the society to glorify the dead. In such a manner, *Blood Wedding* criticizes the destructive appealing outcome to the honor killings and displays how cultural norms tend to rationalize bloodshed, oppressing individuals who are adversely affected by its outcomes the most.

A weak, delicate woman who throws away a crown of orange-blossom to look for another's bed! (*Blood Wedding*, Act II, Scene 2, p. 67)

The Mother-in-law sarcastically says this to criticise the Bride that runs away to stay with Leonardo to end her arranged marriage. The crown of orange blossom, a symbol typically used as a representation of bridal purity and family pride is here used as a symbol of betrayal. The movement of leaving a lawful husband to another man is viewed as a failure to the individual as well as an embarrassment to both the families.

This can be associated with the demands of Pashtunwali where the sexual behavioral acts of a woman are tightly connected to the family honor. According to Zafar R. Siddiqui (2013), the role of woman in the culture of Pashtuns is strongly regulated in Pashtun society and any real or supposed departure in any aspect, especially regarding marriage or love, is usually considered as a social crime. In these situations, loss of honor is thought to extend outside the person into the whole household because it is the form of attack. This judgmental line, through which Lorca attacks the moral strictness, according to which women have to be put in certain frames and become appreciated only because they are obedient and provide sexual purity, not because of their personal preferences and the desires of the souls.

I'm pure, as pure as a new-born child... Light the fire! We'll put our hands in it—you for your son, me for my body. (*Blood Wedding*, Act III, Scene 2, pp. 90–91)

This is what the Bride says following the demise of Leonardo and the Bridegroom. She even begs the Mother to do justice to her as she is innocent and is ready to be punished. Her statement of innocence is more than defensive; it serves a woman as an impossible pressure to be morally acceptable even in those situations of emotional destruction. The thought of laying their hands in the fire turns to be a metaphorical carrying out of each other in the name of honor.

Such expectations are equally accorded to women in the Pashtunwali, with the well being of the family depending a great deal on their conduct and decisions. Where women are meant to enjoy love or independence, they must explain their actions within strict parameters of morality. This scene helps Lorca to demonstrate the psychological price that honor culture costs women. Bride calling fire symbolic of purification and pain, can be considered as plea of justice as well as highly characteristic of the depths of cultural guilt which is ingrained in the societies where gender confusion of womanhood and honor is entrenched.

There is an example from real life where a young Pashtun woman Samia Sarwar, a member of a leading Peshawar family, was killed in Lahore in the office of human rights advocates Asma Jahangir and Hina Jilani, in April 1999. She had requested her cousin-husband to divorce her, and remarry, which her family believed was an unacceptable behaviour that disgraced them. Her parents ordered her to be executed in order to keep the family honor. The case turned out to be one of the most notorious instances of honor killing in Pakistan to demonstrate how the concepts of honor (nang) prevail over personal liberty. (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

4.2. Revenge (Badal)

Blood Wedding (1932) offers a portrayal of revenge as a social norm and a tradition as opposed to an outpouring of emotion. It is not just that characters are deciding on vengeance since they are doing it as part of their duty that keeps their family honor. This is reflective of Badal in the Pashtunwali where the system of revenge is institutionalized as justice and retribution. Zulfacar (1999) claims that Badal cannot be regarded as a crime or a failure of moral character, and can merely be interpreted as an obligation in response to insult, treason or injury so that the equilibrium is reestablished with the community. Lorca uses the trope of dramatizing the manner in which such codes of revenge further individuals to becoming involved in chains of violence even as they yearn to live in peace or forgiveness.

I'll dig them up with my nails and smash them to bits against the wall!
(*Blood Wedding*, Act I, Scene 1, p. 34)

In this case, the Mother shows her anger to those who killed her husband and son. The visuals are bloody and vicious, but her emotional eruption is positioned not as a particular sense of anger and frustration but rather a call to vengeance that is justified by honor. The fact that she wants to profane the graves of the enemies indicates that the resentments are so deep and longstanding it cannot be overcome by time or space. To her, justice is not legalistic, it is personal and hereditary.

Among Pashtuns such sentiments are reflected through the institution of Badal in Pashtunwali. Siddiqui (2013) pointed out that a Pashtun family member victimized by another person, particularly with violence or infidelity, makes it the responsibility of the rest of the family to bring revenge on the offense, even till the third generation. As much as this expectation allows the family to maintain its status in the society, it also leaves the community in a state of hostility between different generations. The emotional burden that the codes put on people, especially on the survivors of the loss, who are expected to extend the chain of revenge, is demonstrated in the depiction of the Mother by Lorca.

The hour of blood has come again. Two sides. You on yours, me on mine. (*Blood Wedding*, Act II, Scene 2, p. 72)

This strong verse makes Mother announce that the vengeance is back, and the approaching battle is a moral segregation between two camps. The expression hour of blood implies that the bloodshed is non-random, but planned, ritual, and even destined. She resorts to the split and readies herself spiritually to loss and damages that will ensue. This aspect of ritualization of revenge is extremely similar to Badal in Pashtunwali. According to Zulfacar (1999), in Pashtun society, vengeance is usually not unplanned but well calculated and righteous according to the tribal code. This is not only about revenge, but saving face, harmony and societal harmony. Lorca shows this attitude as noble and pitiful. It is clear how revenge takes scenery, the room of dialogue, love, or reconciliation due to the way the Mother separates the world into two sides.

With a knife, a small knife... Two men killed each other for love. (*Blood Wedding*, Act III, Scene 2, p. 93)

This quip is uttered by the Chorus who is an added voice that remarks on the last tragedy. In a creepy simplicity it encapsulates the whole conflict. The redundancy and repetition of the word, knife, highlights the object in vengeance and the metaphor that a small object may mean big implication. The fact that killing was done because it was done out of love makes it more ironical and sad. What started off as a romantic warfare, saw the event of ritualistic deaths and the only practical form of revenge was the ultimate form of justice.

People do not use knives or guns in honor-based retaliation figuratively because they leave their marker in Pashtunwali. According to Siddiqui (2013), the Pashtun men have had weapons as part of culture, and other cultures perceive taking life as an honor and expected to be taken in cases of betrayal. The poetic language as used by Lorca does not romanticise this fact rather, it makes it clear that the characters are left with very little flexibility in their choices when cultures promote vengeance instead of healing.

There is an example from real life where a bloody dispute between the Achakzai and Kakar Pashtun tribes erupted in July 2025 in Qila Abdullah, Balochistan. The feud was based on historical land conflicts and grievances of the locals and got worse as armed groups fired heavy shots against each other. Tribal elders and security forces were forced to impose a ceasefire and at least five people were killed and seven others injured before the security forces could intervene. This episode draws attention to a long-standing Pashtun practice of badal (revenge), in which intergenerational tribal retaliation can take place. (Arab News 21 July, 2025)

4.3. Dignity (Ghairat)

Dignity or Ghairat as it is called in Pashtun tradition shows the inner force and moral values of a person and self-respect in the society. It is tightly bound to honor, but more of a personal and emotional perimeter than a level of external reputation. Ghairat can even be the inner motivational force that always pushes individuals to maintain their pride whether in silence or suffering as explained by Zulfacar (1999). In the play *Blood Wedding* (1932), dignity in its most concealed battle-field, according to Federico Garcia Lorca, is where characters battle with their wants, suffering and shame to keep their face as it is supposed to be by society. The dignity is a concept not only depicted by revenge or the killings in honor but also through the avoidance to cry or the denial of love or the

dare not renounce tradition. As we shall see in the next lines, the dignity one is often proud of, may very well turn into something that makes one suffocated emotionally.

Pride will get you nowhere! To keep quiet and burn is the greatest punishment.
(*Blood Wedding*, Act II, Scene 1, p. 56)

In this line, Leonardo questions the cultural demand that one should make minimum expression of passion and abide. He is a man who encumbers the heavy emotional burdens, which he has to conceal due to the local limitations of society. His words indicate that the repression of desire as an act of dignity may result in destruction of oneself. The concept of the silent burning is the image of emotional torture that reflects the plights of those people who exist under strict moral standards.

This is what is called emotional silence as stated in Pashtun societies this is discouraged because it is viewed as a trait of weakness to express oneself that has a romantic or emotional vulnerability. Both researchers, Zulfacar (1999) and Siddiqui (2013), emphasize that men, especially, are under the pressure to exhibit stoic attitude in order to uphold their Ghairat. Lorca condemns this requirement by indicating the private price of this emotional self-censoring. Leonardo becomes the figure of suffocated dignity, who burns in his inside where the society wants him to smile to the outside.

I've left a good man... wearing my bride's crown. The punishment will fall on you. (*Blood Wedding*, Act III, Scene 1, p. 82)

The Bride, who ran away with Leonardo, accepts that she has fallen a betrayer of a man who did nothing bad. Through her wordings, it is evident that she does not make her unaware of the social consequences. She is humiliated and guilty and yet she keeps her cool. She does not shed tears and makes no excuses because she says that punishment is on its way. Her placid voice conveys a noble urge of acceptance of society judgment.

This act can be likened to that of Ghairat in Pashtunwali where an individual particularly a woman is expected to take the shame or the punishment in silence to save whatever is left of her family. According to Siddiqui (2013), women who break some traditional lines are also silent because judgment is taken upon them in order to save other people. That is what Lorca Bride does, she does not plead guilty nor does she excuse her behavior. Rather than that, she is defiant, in silence, preserving her dignity despite her guilt.

Blessed be the wheat, for my sons lie beneath it. Blessed be God, for He lays us side by side to rest. (*Blood Wedding*, Act III, Scene 2, p. 91)

These last lines are uttered by the Mother having already lost her son plus Leonardo as well. She does not cry out with anger rather she prays in silence. Her nobility is seen in the fact that she does not fall into sorrow. She transforms the deaths of her sons into some sort of a holy sacrifice, putting the ominous twist on their destiny being discussed as a kind of the will of God. The sight of covered dead with wheat symbolically links the realm of nature with grief and how much standard of dignity is intertwined with cultural recollection and performance.

Dignity in Pashtunwali is an honorable strength to stick it out in a time of trouble, which elders and women particularly do in times of hardship. To state it in the words used by Zulfacar (1999), mothers are supposed to be the bearers of dignity who must keep cool under pressure in spite of their families and loved ones being ripped asunder by violence. The Mother in the play of Lorca is the one who plays this role. Her quiet, poetic tribute of farewell speaks of such great sorrow without ever betraying the cultural norm of strength

and pride. However, Lorca raises the question in the mind of the reader that it is noble or tragic that this stoicism inhibits a healing power of expressing ourselves in an honest emotion.

There is an example from real life where on August 2023, in the Khyber tribal region Jamrud, Pakistani police passed a traditional Pashtun rite of sanctuary and reconciliation even of foreign tourists called *nanawataia* form of sanctuary and reconciliation. When a Russian man and a Kazakh woman were upset because of invalid travel documents and so-called ill treatment, the police tried to fix the situation by conducting the ritual. They asked the tourists to have a meal with them, sacrificed a sheep, gave them local music and gave to the female tourist a traditional shawl. This considerate act, loaded with the Pashtunwali ethos, was a dignified means of regaining the trust and hospitality that do not violate the dignity of the tourists, as well as a long-held cultural code. (AJJ News 30 Aug, 2023)

4.4. Similarities between *Blood Wedding* and Pashtunwali

The code of morals in the play of *Blood Wedding* (1932) strongly resembles the ethics of the Pashtunwali, especially focusing on the honor (nang), revenge (badal), and dignity (ghairat). Although the two societies shown in these two places i.e. rural Spain and the tribal Pashtun areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan, engage in radically different geographies, the worldview involved in both places is governed by strict communitarian norms that profoundly affect individual choices, especially when it comes to love, marriage and community obligation.

Both in *Blood Wedding* (1932) and in the Pashtunwali culture, honor is no longer an individual but a very collective aspect. This betrayal that the Bride commits against the Bridegroom is not only seen as a personal issue but a disgrace to the family as a whole. This can be compared to the Pashtun interpretation of nang wherein one instance of perceived immorality in a woman can put stains on the reputation of a whole lineage (Maliha Zulfacar, 1999). This traditional cultural value is present in the fact that the Mother is obsessed with the name and blood of her family in *Blood Wedding*.

In the same way revenge (badal) is also ritualised in both cases. The quest of the Bridegroom to kill Leonardo in *Blood Wedding* is not only emotional, but also cultural; he is supposed to give his family honor using blood. According to Siddiqui (2013), centuries prior to the western influences, badal is far more than a legitimate reaction towards a harm or affront in Pashtunwali and is often inherited between generations and is crucial to achieving social equality. This tribal demand is also mirrored in Lorca when he makes the nature of revenge inevitable, as he writes:

The hour of blood has come again (Act II, p. 72).

There is also the overlap of the meaning of dignity (ghairat). Psychological reserve, not showing pain and suffering, as well as stoicism, are the virtuous features in both cultures, particularly of women and older people. The subdued manner in which the Bride accepts the punishment and the Mother carries her mourning again point to some Pashtun kind of morality of their keeping appearances. Zulfacar (1999) asserts that ghairat makes people endure in silence to maintain moral power and status in the society.

5. CONCLUSION

This study explored the cultural tradition of *Blood Wedding* (1932) by Federico Garcia Lorca in the context of Pashtunwali, which deals with honor (nang), revenge (badal), and

dignity (ghairat). This comparison has shown that the rural Spanish community in the play has numerous similarities with the tribal culture of the Pashtuns.

Honor (Nang): In either of the two contexts, honor is not an individual thing but a shared one. The Bride is not only entitled to elope but disgrace to her family and community, just like the Pashtun society associates the actions of women directly with the reputation of the family.

Revenge (Badal): Revenge in both the contexts is a moral duty rather than a matter of choice. The characters of Lorca have cultural obligation to take revenge, whereas in Pashtun society, badal tends to go beyond generations and perpetuate the cycles of violence.

Dignity (Ghairat): Stoicism, silence and restraint are both part of dignity that both cultures value. The Bride and the Mother are a symbol of perseverance without falling; so are Pashtun mothers and elders in crisis.

Some real-life examples, such as the honor killing of Samia Sarwar (1999), the Achakzai tribe-Kakar conflict (2025) and the Nanawatai ritual in Khyber (2023) all confirm the applicability of these cultural codes and demonstrate that these values still influence lives outside of literature.

The comparative study of *Blood Wedding* and Pashtunwali reveals that both cultures have a basis in honor-based systems where nang (Honor), badal (Revenge), and ghairat (Dignity) rule over the personal lives and decision making. These values are not a personal issue in either Lorca rural Spain or in the Pashtun tribal society but are societal duties that determine reputation, justice and identity.

In *Blood Wedding*, the Bride, the effort to pursue what she wants personally, leads to violence since in the society her value is pegged on family honor. This resembles the Pashtun belief that the decisions of women tend to influence the honor of a whole household, as seen in situations such as Samia Sarwar (1999) in which family privileges were given precedence over individualism. In a like manner, the case of the Bridegroom chasing Leonardo reveals the way revenge is an obligation, similar to the Pashtun cycles of badal, including the Achakzai-Kakar tribal feud (2025) which claimed the lives of several individuals.

In a word, *Blood Wedding* (1932) as perceived through the prism of Pashtunwali proves that cultural codes of honor can be universal and destructive at the same time. They maintain identity and social order which is in most cases at the cost of love, personal freedom and compassion. The play teaches about the harm of being too strict in following the rules when Pashtunwali demonstrates that even in the circumstances of strict traditions, forgiveness and restoration of dignity may be possible.

Pashtunwali or other cultural codes can also be studied by future researchers in order to find more connections in Lorca, other plays, such as *Yerma* and *The House of Bernarda Alba*. The contribution of women to honor cultures should be researched more. In *Blood Wedding* the Bride is a talking woman, whereas in Pashtun society women are generally muzzled. A comparison between the two can prove helpful.

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