

莎士比亞《哈姆雷特》與元雜劇《趙氏孤兒》

中復仇行動之比較研究

To Revenge Or Not To Revenge: A Comparative Study  
on the Revenge in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the  
Chinese Yuan Dynasty Drama *The Orphan of Zhao*

by

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研究生 \_\_\_\_\_詹前臻\_\_\_\_\_ 所撰之論文：

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經本委員會審查，符合碩士學位論文標準。

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*This dissertation is humbly dedicated to my teachers and beloved parents.*

Two royal princes both alike in dignity, in the courts of Demark and China, where they lay their scenes: From the loss of the murdered fathers break to the goals of revenge, whereas a prince acts mad, one physician hides the orphan unseen. A pair of delays in schemes aim to the villains' lives. Hamlet's misused theology overthrows, doth with his death bury his mind in strife. The burdened days of the sacrifice-marked waiting helps the child-keeper stirs the Orphan of Zhao's rage. Which but the subjectivities of the two princes are removed, is now the discussed topic in this thesis, the which if you with your rich knowledge scan, what here shall miss, I humbly shall strive to mend.

## Abstract

In Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*, the Prince of Denmark not only loses his father, but also his relationships with others whom he used to rely on to establish his identity. Rather than trying to become the substitute of his father, who is the object of Gertrude's desire in the viewpoint of Jacques Lacan and his previous Freudian scholars', Hamlet strives to fulfill his father's desire to revenge.

The theme of the lost father is also seen in Chinese Yuan Dynasty Play *The Orphan of Zhao*. Having lost his biological father, the orphan of Zhao also loses his identity as the firstborn descendant of the Zhao's clan. The killer of his biological father and family members later becomes his father in honour. The grown orphan has to figure out which of his three fathers (the biological father, the adoptive father and the godfather) he should pay his filial piety to and whether he should revenge for his biological father.

The revenges in the two plays have their meanings for the two avengers to restore their subjectivity, and contain the cultural and religious significance. This thesis discusses the religious and psychological factors that lead to the different consequences of the two plays based on the notion of 'revenge'.

Key Words: Revenge; Subjectivity; Lacan; *Hamlet*; *The Orphan of Zhao*

## 摘要

莎士比亞的著名悲劇《哈姆雷特》，描述丹麥王子哈姆雷特經由鬼魂之詞，得知生父遭其叔父殺害後，經由一系列舉動，計畫報殺父之仇。他的目標，與他的父親(的鬼魂)所渴望的相同；鬼魂與哈姆雷特都渴望復仇。在賈克·拉康(Jacques Lacan)的主體理論中，個體的主體性建立於他者的慾望。與拉康理論中帶有佛洛伊德色彩的解釋不同，哈姆雷特並沒有因戀母，想成為母親慾望對象(也就是他的父親)的替代者；而是遵守父親的法律，殫精竭慮地想實現他父親所渴望的復仇。

另一方面，中國元雜劇名作《趙氏孤兒大報讎》，同樣以父親被殺，兒子為父報仇為主題。東方的復仇劇與西方大有不同：趙氏孤兒在生父被殺後，由養父養育成人，在其養父的計畫下，又認殺害生父的仇人為義父。孤兒必須在三個父親(生父、養父、義父)中間選擇歸屬。做為趙家後代，孤兒在宗法制度與儒家社會中，必須義無反顧為父報仇。趙氏孤兒的主體性同樣建立於他與父親間的關係之上。

父親被殺，意味著個體的主體性遭到迫害；二位主角必須在他們身邊的父子關係中做出選擇，並藉由復仇重建他們的主體性。本論文將以拉康的理論分析二位失去父親的兒子的主體性，並探究兩齣戲劇中，不同的傳統宗教與文化背景對復仇行動的影響。

關鍵詞：復仇；主體性；拉康；哈姆雷特；趙氏孤兒

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## Chapter One: Introduction

### I. Plots of the Two Plays Analyzed

William Shakespeare creates one of the most mysterious and complicated literary characters in his play *Hamlet*. As the tragedy begins, the Prince of Denmark has newly returned from Wittenberg University to attend his father's funeral and the wedding of his mother and uncle, who, by marrying the Queen of Denmark, becomes the new king and Hamlet's stepfather. Hamlet doubts his father has died of a murder. This presumption is later on proven by his father's ghost. To Hamlet, as his father dies, Denmark is out of its joint.

To revenge for his father, Hamlet decides to first prove Claudius guilty. Hamlet presents a play in the court and evokes the king's and the queen's uneasiness by the plot of the play. It is a perfect opportunity for Hamlet to kill his uncle from behind when Claudius falls to his knees to pray, not aware of another person present in the chapel. A theological paradox catches Hamlet when he is ready to take the action. Other than killing Claudius, Hamlet puts down his sword. He wants Claudius's soul to be damned in Hell more than being physically killed. However, in the queen's chamber, Hamlet draws his sword again and kills the man hiding behind the curtain for he believes the man to be Claudius, but who turns out to be Polonius. The prime

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minister hides in the curtain after instructing the queen to question Hamlet for what he has done to “offend his father (Act 3, scene 4, 8-10)”.

Feeling himself threatened by Hamlet, Claudius sends the prince to England, hoping the King of England will help to kill Hamlet after reading the letter he has written.

Claudius’s scheme fails. Hamlet discovers the letter Claudius writes to the King of England, and comes up with another scheme to make the English king kill Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet returns to Denmark, aiming to kill Claudius to and revenge. On the other hand, Laertes, son of Polonius, is in a rage to revenge for his father as well. Claudius, thus, let the two young men have a duel. Claudius plans to kill Hamlet either by the poison on Laertes’s sword or a cup of laced drink. Nevertheless, Hamlet kills Claudius after he is stabbed by Laertes. The Prince of Denmark eventually takes his father’s murderer’s life at the price of the queen’s and his own deaths.

In the royal court of ancient China, there is another revenge being planned. There are two editions for the Yuan Dynasty Play *The Orphan of Zhao*. The plot of the first four acts in the Ming Dynasty edition of the play is same as the Yuan Dynasty Block Print edition. Tu-An Gu(屠岸賈), a highly ranked martial general feigned the order of Duke Ling(晉靈公) of Jin Country, commanding to massacre the House of Zhao,

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since Tu-An Gu considers Zhao Tun(趙盾) to be his political enemy.

Zhao Tun's son, Zhao Shuo(趙碩), has married Duke Lings' sister. When the order of massacre is executed, Princess Zhuang Ji(莊姬), pregnant, is sent back to the royal palace. Tu-An Gu has the princess under surveillance. If she gives birth to a boy, Tu-An Gu will kill the infant lest the son of the Zhaos should grow up and come to revenge.

The princess gives birth to a boy, who is the only descendant of the Zhao's clan. Adding to revenge for his father and grandfather, this child will have the obligation to lengthen the breed of the Zhaos and worship the family ancestors when he becomes an adult. When Princess Zhuang Ji is desperate for a solution to keep her son alive, Cheng Ying(程嬰), a physician serving the Zhaos comes into the palace to "look after the Princess for she has gone through the labour (Ji, 1478)." The physician also hopes to help his master's family, and yet he worries about if Tu-An Gu will kill the whole Cheng family once finding out Cheng Ying has helped the Zhaos. To force Cheng Ying to take her son out of the palace, Princess Zhuang Ji hangs herself. Cheng Ying has no choice but to steal the orphan of Zhao out of the palace.

When Cheng Ying escapes, Han Jue(韓厥) the martial general guarding the palace gate, decides to act against his master Tu-An Gu's will to let Cheng Ying take the orphan of Zhao away. Han Jue also commits suicide to make sure he would not leak

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the fact that Cheng Ying has escaped with the orphan under Tu-An Gu's torture. Discovering that his subordinate has died at the palace gate and the orphan disappeared, Tu-An Gu commands to kill all the infants in the Jin Country if the thief of the orphan does not present the child to him within three days.

Cheng Ying, along with the orphan, hides in his friend's home. Gong-Sun Chujiu(公孫杵臼), the seventy-year-old retired minister and friend of Zhao Tun, also wishes the orphan will be able to revenge for his family when he is grown. Cheng Ying comes up with a plan to save the only offspring of the Zhaos. He tells Tu-An Gu that Gong-Sun Chujiu is the one who takes the orphan away. The "orphan" Cheng Ying presents to Tu-An Gu is, in fact, his own son. Gong-Sun Chujiu, acting furiously seeing Cheng Ying betray their friendship, dashes himself against the pillar and dies after being tortured by Tu-An Gu. Such scenes convince Tu-An Gu that Cheng Ying has turned to paying loyalty to him. Sacrificing his own son, Cheng Ying saves the orphan of Zhao's life as well as the lives of other infants in the country. To appreciate Cheng Ying, Tu-An Gu takes Cheng Ying's son (who is actually the son of the Zhaos) to be his son in honour(義子)<sup>1</sup>, and gives the child a name Tu Cheng(屠成).

Twenty years later, Cheng Bo(程勃) has grown up to be a fine young man. He

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<sup>1</sup> The father in honour(義父) and son in honour(義子), not obtaining the religious purpose like that in the relationship between a godfather and a godson, binds their connection due to their shared aim or the similar thoughts toward certain matters. One can also have his biological son to respect a righteous man to be his father in honour. A father in honour has the paternal power close to the biological father to his son in honour.

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studies literature with his father Cheng Ying and learns martial arts from his father in honour(義父) Tu-An Gu. The time for vengeance has come. To make the child understand his true family history, Cheng Ying has “Cheng Bo” see a colour paint of the sad story that occurred twenty years ago. Once learning that he is the orphan of Zhao, “Cheng Bo” immediately decides to revenge.

The Yuan Dynasty Block Print edition of the play, containing four acts, ends at the moment the orphan claims his determination to revenge. The Ming Dynasty edition, on the other hand, has the fifth act. In the fifth act, the orphan, bearing his real name Zhao Wu(趙武), kills Tu-An Gu to avenge for the injustice he has done to the Zhaos. Zhao Wu also tells Cheng Ying, his adoptive father(養父), that he will still take good care of Cheng Ying as his biological father(生父) to respectfully repay Cheng Ying’s great mercy.

The two tragedies are similar in the theme of revenge. Zhao Wu succeeds in avenging for his family, while Hamlet does not really achieve his goal. The two different endings are much to do with social and cultural difference. Earlier studies on Hamlet’s psychological state have mainly focused on the Ghost’s reliability, Hamlet’s strange delay, Oedipus complex, misogyny, and the debate whether he is truly mad or not. On the other hand, the ones on *The Orphan of Zhao* mostly place emphasis on the drama’s differences from the historical event, and its expression of people’s anguish

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in Yuan Dynasty. Applying a psychological analysis method, I would like to explore and look into the essential factors that lead to the success and failure, specifically, of the Eastern and Western revenge in this thesis.

In Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*, the Prince of Denmark not only loses his father, but also the relations with others that he used to rely on to establish his subjectivity. Hamlet is in search of the missed certainty about *what* he is. What would become of him now that the old King Hamlet is dead? Is the ghost of the old Hamlet a real ghost, or like the young Hamlet questions, a devil in the form of his father? Hamlet, at first, accepts the Ghost as his father's spirit, yet soon the doubts arise (Greenblatt, *Norton*, 1662). All the questions above would aggregate into one of an important topic about *Hamlet*: the protagonist's delay in revenge.

Similar to Shakespeare's remaking of the old Danish tale *Amleth*, Ji Jun-Xiang (紀君祥), who is generally believed to be the author of *The Orphan of Zhao*, takes recourse from a real historical event recorded in various documents including *Chun Qiu* (春秋 *The History of the Spring Autumn States*), *Zuo Zhuan* (左傳, the detailed extension of *Chun Qiu*) and *Shi Ji* (史記, *The Records of the Grand Historian*, an important historic chronicle written in the Han Dynasty, recording the history from the Yellow Emperor's time to the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (漢武帝). In addition to the theme of filial piety, Ji Junxiang presents a tragic story resulted not

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from the characters' tragic flaw, but from the "honourable death" chosen by an absolute free will (Yao, 27), which is the embodiment of the long-time education of the Confucianism (26). Other than his confidants' life sacrifice, what makes Cheng Ying show the loyalty nearly equal to blind devotion to the Zhaos? How is it possible for the orphan of Zhao to forget Tu-An Gu's kindness and kill him immediately after hearing the story of the Zhao family? Philosophical thoughts in ancient China are well demonstrated in the drama and are highly related to the orphan's revenge.

One thing is substantially different between the two avengers. Hamlet carries out the whole process in his revenge: from the planning to the moment when he draws the sword, he almost does everything on his own. Zhao Wu, in contrast, only takes the action killing Tu-An Gu. In *The Orphan of Zhao*, Cheng Ying is the one who plans the revenge and waits for twenty years to take action. This difference leads to another research question: why must there be the delay? The answer to this question will be discussed in the chapter dealing with philosophical backgrounds in the two plays.

## **II. Methodology: The Application of the Lacanian Reading**

According to Jacques Lacan, "the phallus" has a critical function during the process a subject (an individual) establishes his subjectivity (Du Shengfong, 138). The phallus is the signifier of the father's law and order to a child. Though the phallus is usually



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related to the object of the desire of the Mother, in *Hamlet* and *The Orphan of Zhao*, the phalluses are more directly the signifier of Hamlet's and the orphan's fathers and are less linked to their mothers. One should carefully note that there is no clear textual clue about how Hamlet has interacted with his mother in his childhood and if their early relationship would lead to Oedipal complex in Hamlet's mind. In *The Orphan of Zhao*, the orphan's mother has been absent in his entire life for she has chosen to kill herself to protect the orphan in the first episode of the play.

The phalluses in these two plays are signified by Hamlet and the orphan's kinships with their fathers. The kinships in both tragedies play a large part in the meaning of the revenge. Claudius, Hamlet's biological uncle, takes Gertrude to be his wife and announces Hamlet to be his son (Act 1, Scene 2). Thus, Hamlet's revenge is aimed toward his uncle *as well as* his stepfather.

In *The Orphan of Zhao*, Zhao Wu loses his biological father, Zhao Shuo, and gains two alternate paternal figures. Though the name Cheng Bo is an alias to protect his true identity, sharing the same surname with Cheng Ying is the symbol of legal kinship between the adoptive father and son, not to mention that Cheng Ying has viewed Zhao Wu as his real son, calling him "the child of mine" (Ji, 1490). Tu-An Gu, having no heir of his own, also gives Cheng Bo a name Tu Cheng (1490) and grants

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the child the inheritance of his fortune and lordship when Cheng Ying allows “Cheng Bo” to be his son in honour, and has constructed a good relationship with the child.

Being either Cheng Bo or Tu Cheng, the orphan must eventually return to the identity that he is the only offspring of the slaughtered House of Zhao. Learning the family history from his adoptive father is the moment for Zhao Wu to find out his true identity. Cheng Ying’s skillful language in telling the story about what had happened twenty years ago forms the psychological transformation within Zhao Wu. The theory of subjectivity proposed by Jacques Lacan helps to explain why Zhao Wu is able to ignore Tu-An Gu’s kindness and puts the revenge as his top priority. I will clarify why the kinship between Zhao Wu and the biological father he has never known about is more important than his kinship with the father in honour who has been a protector and teacher in all his life.

In both *Hamlet* and *The Orphan of Zhao*, the desire of the Other around the two avengers are their fathers’ desire to revenge. In their cases, the desire of the Other is also the phallus. It is the desire of the Other that the subject must recognise (Lacan, *Écrit*, 288) in order to build a complete subjectivity in his *ego*. To Hamlet, identifying himself with his late father is the reason why he chooses to revenge. To the orphan of Zhao, although revenge for his biological family is an expected duty for him, the

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kinship he identifies himself with also affects his ideology of which father he shall pay filial piety to.

### **III. Review of Previous Literature of the Two Plays**

Jacques Lacan says the tragedy of Hamlet is the tragedy of desire, and develops a complete psychoanalysis on the Prince in his *Desire and The Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet*. The Prince's delay in revenge actions has been a grand mystery in the play, and is much discussed. Some believe it is because Hamlet is genuinely mad. His grief is not an influential principle of action (Smith, 82). Some say that Hamlet lacks "the strength which makes a hero". Some others even directly say that he does not have a definite plan to carry out his revenge except for feigning madness (Conrad, 682). The Lacanian scholars believe that "Hamlet is trapped in the alienated webs of the capitalized Other Who (Calderón, 25)".

Scholars also concern about the contradiction between Christianity and Humanism in *Hamlet*. Eleanor Prosser, in her book *Hamlet and Revenge*, uses several chapters to clarify the identity of the Ghost. Paul Cantor takes a rather mild attitude to treat this issue. Hamlet's Christianity opens a window on eternity for him, yet it is a window he cannot be certain what it will be like (Cantor, 41).

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As for the Eastern play, the earlier Chinese and Sinology researchers tend to compare the history and the drama in *The Orphan of Zhao* (Li Jixiang, 213-228), discussing how Ji Junxiang's talent makes the story a symbolic masterpiece of Yuan Dynasty drama. Wang Kuowei contributes the first critical comment to the play, saying that *The Orphan of Zhao* is a great tragedy based on the character's courage choices (Wang Kuowei, 124), but he does not reach deeper to the critical analysis due to the fact that during Wang Kuo-Wei (王國維)'s time, the analysis in drama was not yet a mainstream branch of learning.

One would also notice that the texts of *The Orphan of Zhao* recorded in Zang Jinshu's (臧晉叔) edition of *Anthology of Yuan Dynasty Plays* (元曲選) in the Ming Dynasty and the one in *The Thirty Yuan Dynasty Play Scripts* (元刊雜劇三十種) of Yuan Dynasty block printed edition are different. Zang's edition of the play consists of five acts, while the Yuan Dynasty block printed edition contains only four. Lacking the plot that Zhao Wu kills Tu-An Gu, the Yuan Dynasty block printed edition of *The Orphan of Zhao* is believed to be Ji Junxiang's original writing, which has not yet been revised by Zang Jin-Shu or any other editors in Ming Dynasty (Zheng, 320). The fifth act in the Ming Dynasty edition describes Zhao Wu arresting and killing Tu-An Gu, and telling Cheng Ying that he would serve Cheng Ying like his biological father

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(Ji, 1498). The function of the fifth episode will be included in the research about the filial piety and the patriarchal religion in the thesis.

The Japanese Sinologist Masaru Aoki thinks the fifth act of *The Orphan of Zhao*, which appears only in the Ming Dynasty edition of the play, which is commonly believed to be arranged and edited by Zang Jinshu, is a failure of theatrical aesthetic (Aoki, 398). The Yuan Dynasty edition, the play ends at a tragic moment when the orphan learns his family history while he takes part in his godfather's plan to revolt against the Duke Ling, and thus decides to revenge without letting the audience know if the orphan succeeds in revenge or not. The contradiction among filial piety, loyalty and righteousness in the Yuan Dynasty edition is the primary tragic conflict (Zhang, 78). In the Ming Dynasty edition, planning to help his godfather spread moral teachings and conquer lands for the Jin country, the orphan does not have the conflict between loyalty and filial piety to his parents and life protector. The problem the orphan has is the choice of kinship, which will be discussed in the coming chapters.

#### **IV. Thesis Statement**

Previous studies treat the two plays separately instead of comparing them. Even in comparison, the studies majorly analyze how and why the villains are to be revenged from the text reading. The two editions of *The Orphan of Zhao* also indicate some

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subtle cultural information worthy of study. To the best of my knowledge, none of the previous scholars applies the Lacanian theory in the study of *The Orphan of Zhao*.

After going through the review of the two plays, I have decided to analyse both the with Lacan's theory of subjectivity. By the study of the Eastern and Western philosophical backgrounds in the times the stories take places, I will discuss the different culture that shapes the idea of the revenge in the Eastern and Western plays.

In this thesis, I argue that Hamlet hesitates while the orphan of Zhao rushes to revenge because of their different social and religious upbringings, and the construction of their subjectivity under the influence of their different cultural background.

## Chapter Two: The Philosophical Background in the Two Plays

The tragedies *Hamlet* and *The Orphan of Zhao* are both about the characters' "ethical decisions occur in climax (Geckle, 101)". The actions of revenge are intentionally delayed in the two plays. Hamlet decides not to kill Claudius while he is praying, for killing a praying person would not damn his guilty soul (Act 3, Scene 3); whereas Cheng Ying, the strategy mastermind in *The Orphan of Zhao*, delays the killing of the villain not out of any theological reason, but for the fact that it would be the orphan of Zhao's duty to end Tu-An Gu's life to revenge for his family.

Different philosophical backgrounds of the playwrights decide the characters' choices. In Shakespeare's time, Humanism, passed down from Francesco Petrarca and had been consummated by philosophers, scholars and literati for three hundred years, has offered Europeans the thinking to doubt God and fate. On the other hand, Confucianism has been the dominant philosophy in China ever since the Han Dynasty. Before Confucius, the patriarchal religion had served as the theological dogmas and the base of common morality in the ancient Chinese society. Practiced along with the patriarchal religion, Confucianism has become the unassailable pious doctrine to the Chinese people ever since.

This chapter will study of the causes of Hamlet's and Cheng Ying's delays based on the Humanism and Confucianism, respectively.

## **I. Hamlet as a Humanist Prince**

### **A. The Humanist Traits in the Prince**

As the play begins, Prince Hamlet has newly returned from Wittenberg University to attend his father's funeral and his mother's wedding. Studying at the German university, which has bred the theology and philosophy pioneers such as Martin Luther and Erasmus, Hamlet has acquired academic traits which distinguish him from his Danish fellowmen. He disdains carousing (Act 1, Scene 4) as what Erasmus's model ruler would do (Pollnitz, 133). Studying abroad instead of receiving advanced education in his homeland also gains Hamlet a scholar friend, Horatio. Claiming himself to be "more a Roman than a Dane (Act 5, Scene 2)," Horatio's stoic philosophy echoes Hamlet's self debate, "Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer.....or to take arms against a sea of troubles (Act 3, Scene 1)." Both studying at Wittenberg University, from where the Reformation begins its tide wave and develops the Humanism (Evans, *Crisis*), Hamlet and Horatio bind a friendship between two scholars, but not the relationship between a prince and his courtier. Hamlet consults Horatio whenever he doubts what is right (Engle, 259). This kind of interaction is what Erasmus proposes to be contained in a prince's education (Pollnitz, 133): a prince should befriend with scholars and take the moral indications of his studies more seriously than his scholar friends.



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However, Hamlet begins his official participation of court life, which requires more tactics than pure moral standards, with a decision that makes him practice the skills a simple scholar would not possess. His new lessons, as he tells Horatio, will be courtly arts of simulation and madness. Soon after encountering the Ghost, Hamlet makes a plan to play mad (Act 1, Scene 5) and almost succeeds in fooling other residents in the court had he not released his anger against Gertrude so frequently. Hamlet's intelligence is exhibited in directing the *Mousetrap* play (Act 2, Scene 2), in which he is able to come up with at least twelve lines that would evoke Gertrude's and Claudius's uneasiness within one night (Act 2, Scene 2; Act 3, Scene 2). Why would a person talented as Hamlet pause and quit his nearly- done revenge in the praying scene?

Questioning if he, by killing his praying foe in the chapel, would eventually send Claudius to Heaven instead of damnation is, in the essence, Hamlet's uncertainty of Christianity and the regulation of the world. Up to the Elizabethan era in England, Humanism had developed along with the Reformation. "God" in Humanism is allowed to be questioned. It is not that the God is no longer almighty, but, to the Humanists, "God" turns out to be a term worthy of concerning about one's position before God, and whether one should always obey without doubt (Dillenberger, 82, 83).

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Hamlet doubts not the reliability of God, but the whole Christian regulation. He emphasizes the capability and mortality of men. Learning from the teaching of Erasmus, college students in the Protestant areas like Germany and Denmark would read the Holy Writ not as an ancient piece of work but as a work “addressed to the readers to further the dogmatic purposes.....to support Protestant theological systems (Hamilton, 113).”

Hamlet’s delay results from his uncertainty about the core of Christianity, not the dogmatic differences between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics. From the scene Gertrude’s chamber in which he draws his sword and kill Polonius, whom he believes to be Claudius, we see that Hamlet is not a person lack of courage, yet there are times that his wish for vengeance covers what he really wants. Hamlet’s delay of killing at that hinge in the praying scene is out of his eagerness to have Claudius’s soul condemned. Being, presumably, a Protestant, Hamlet, however, applies the Catholic way of thinking when he is ready to kill: only the Catholics believe the state of soul at the moment that one dies would determine whether the person goes to Heaven or Hell (Evans, *Crisis*). Killing a man when he is praying, on the other hand, is never a good choice to take revenge whether in a Protestant’s or Catholic’s perspective. Again, Hamlet ignores the arguments between the two churches and excogitates which of his revenge choices is more important: to take Claudius’s life,

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which is a visible and temporary satisfaction of his goal, or to have his unpardoned soul eternally damned in the Purgatory. He questions if it is righteous to kill a man, though a murderer, in his praying.

Would it not cause double injustice to kill the murderer begging for God's pardon and send the vile soul to Heaven? Hamlet's doubt in this Christian paradox stays his hand. Holding on to the wish to put Claudius's soul into Hell, Hamlet carries on his avenger's role as a "waiting role" (Gardner, 221). The "mad in craft" disguise is still in practice, and the Prince keeps on seeking a "more horrid hent" to fulfil his wish.

## **B. Hamlet's Interpretation of the Ghost**

*"Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
Be they intents wicked or charitable,  
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape  
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father; royal Dane, O! (Act 1, Scene 4, 40-45)"*

These are the first lines Prince Hamlet speaks to the Ghost as they encounter. Hamlet, like his companions and the audience in the theatre, suspects if the Ghost in the shape of his late King father is a real suffering spirit or a devil who comes to earth to fool humans. Some believe that Hamlet's doubt of the Ghost's true identity causes his delay in revenge (Rea, 227-228). In the aspect of the Ghost's reliability, Hamlet's suspicion is related to his rumination about Protestant and Catholic dogmas.

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The Catholics believe in the Purgatory ghosts (Prosser, 100). According to the supposed Ghost of King Hmalet, in the nights he may walk around the earth, yet in the daytime he is “confin’d to fast in fires” and “sulphurous and tormenting fire” must render him up (Act 1, Scene 5). Up to the end of Act 1, the Ghost seems to fit what makes a Catholic Purgatory ghost: unpardoned from his not-yet-repented sins and has to suffer in the hellish fires. A confusing issue in the beginning of Act 1 is that Hamlet and his companions, at first, consider only where the Ghost may come from. In the Protestant view, ghosts would come from either Heaven or Hell; whereas the Ghost describes himself in particular Catholic purgatoric terms (Evans, *Crisis*).

With these uncertainties, nonetheless, the Ghost’s testimony about the late King’s murder matches Claudius’s prayers later in the play. Horatio, the scholar in Prince Hamlet’s companions, addresses the Ghost in both Protestant and Catholic ways by charging it to speak (Act 1, Scene 1), for, according to Eleanor Prosser, a ghost could not speak until it is spoken to. A false spirit may speak before the living humans speak (Prosser, 119). The Ghost’s answer to Horatio’s charge is stopped by the “cock’s crow”, which is a common symbol of the Christ’s voice (122), and fled “like a guilty thing upon a fearful summons.” In the conversation with Prince Hamlet, on the contrary, the Ghost behaves exactly like the wronged king and a suffering spirit. Being spoken to by Hamlet, the Ghost reveals the details of the Old King’s murder

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and merely says his hour to leave has approached and asks the Prince to revenge instead of fleeing in fear (Act 1, Scene 5).

Unlike Horatio, who divides the afterworld into only Heaven and Hell as an informed Protestant would do, Hamlet refers to St. Patrick, “the keeper of Purgatory,” and believes the Ghost is his father’s trapped spirit, for his sudden death has not allowed him a chance to repent. Regardless of his own Protestant background, Hamlet speaks of the Ghost with Catholic belief and, after learning the story of his father’s strange, sudden death, does not consider the probability that the Ghost may be just a demon in disguise.

To Hamlet, the Ghost is neither Catholic nor Protestant, but simply his “Hyperion like” father’s restless soul in need of help. The Ghost in his father’s shape is the symbol of his role model extinguished too soon. The Ghost is neither a Catholic ghost nor a pagan demon. In Hamlet’s viewpoint, the Ghost is his late father’s spirit. All the Catholic traits on a Ghost in a play full of Protestants is, as Stephen Greenblatt says, Shakspeare’s spectacular theatrical writing, but not a theological conflict. It is an “apparition as performance, not as truth (Greenblatt, 256).” To understand the Ghost’s function in Hamlet, one cannot simply analyse it with religious explanation, for

*“Only once we have come to recognize the influence of the competing strands of Christianity on theatrical presentation in this period will we understand how religion was assimilated into ostensibly secular drama of early modern England”* (Groves,188)

### C. The Delay

In Renaissance England, Humanism became the dominant philosophy. Writers turned their attention from praising God's work to the concern of man's existence. William Shakespeare, like many of his contemporaries, used tragedies to present the historical cycle made only by human beings but not God, such as his *Richard II* and *Henry IV* quadruple and the *Henry VI* and *Richard III* quadruple (Carroll, 253). In his tragedies, the characters' actions are affected by their own will and emotions, not the fate designed by God. The traces of Humanism in *Hamlet* are seen in the Prince's dialogue with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern,

“.....*What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world. The paragon of animals.* (Act 2, Scene 2, 303-306).”

Man, in Hamlet's view, is a piece of work with infinite faculty, but not a humble creation of God. Drifting away from fatalism, Hamlet's doubt about life and his hesitant action taking reflect a humanist's question of Christianity with moral and psychological insights (Carroll, 255).

Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, delays his action out of his doubt of nearly everything. His delay is considered as the ethical tensions that existed in sixteenth century Humanism (Pollnizt, 132). He debates with himself about life and death, whether to suffer misery on earth (Christianity) or to commit self-slaughter (what the

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Romans consider to be noble). His doubt in Christianity can be seen in his worry if Claudius will be sent to the Heaven if he kills Claudius when he is praying. The pivotal delay in the praying scene (Act 3, Scene 3) is Hamlet's "logic division (Pollnitz, 135)." As the Prince of the country and the son of the beloved late King, Hamlet's mission, whether politically or patriarchally, is to quickly end the usurper's life and claim back the throne of Denmark. However, instead of being a prince, Hamlet, at that moment, chooses to be a philosophy scholar and doubt if killing Claudius at his praying is "hire and salary, not revenge (Act 3, Scene 3)." In the last act of the play, Hamlet finally manages to kill his uncle in his ideal circumstance even though at the price of his own life. What Hamlet has been doing throughout the play, adding to questioning life and Christianity, is trying all he is able to do to satisfy his desire affected by his father: revenge, and restore the order in the Danish court.

## II. Confucianism and Patriarchal Religion in Ancient China

### A. The Confucian Gentleman

The *Confucian Analects* says, "The master taught his disciples how to cultivate themselves, how to behave, how to be conscientious and how to be faithful 子以四教，文、行、忠、信 (Chen Shihchuang, 73)." These four dogmas are the primary characteristics required for a Confucian gentleman, and are seen frequently in *The Orphan of Zhao*.

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Cheng Ying's motivation to help the Zhao's family is that he used to be, unlike other subordinates to the Zhaos, "used well by Zhao Shuo, the Princess's husband (Ji, 1478)." Princess Zhuang Ji, the sister of the Duke Ling of Jin, is married to Zhao Shuo. She gives birth to the Zhao's only son in the first act of the play. By this time Tu-An Gu has fabricated the Duke's order to kill the whole House of Zhao and to have the Princess locked in her palace. Being a careful person, Cheng Ying observes the situation in the royal court, which is already fully controlled by Tu-An Gu, and concludes that it is almost impossible to rescue the newborn orphan. Naturally, he hesitates, for he fears Tu-An Gu would slaughter his own family once Tu-An Gu finds out he has helped to take the orphan of Zhao away. Knowing that the physician obtains a heart loyal to her husband's family and having been desperate in finding a trustworthy person to save her son, Princess Zhuang Ji chooses to hang herself after begging Cheng Ying to take care of her son (1478). By the suicide, the Princess guarantees that she will not tell Tu-An Gu where the orphan has been and forces Cheng Ying to take the orphan out of the palace and hide from Tu-An Gu's hunt.

Cheng Ying comes onto the stage telling the audience that he wants to help the Zhaos out of the gratitude towards Zhao Shuo. His declaration, before witnessing the Princess's suicide, is the commonly seen loyalty in a subordinate. Cheng Ying's loyal action transformed into the disquiet for other infants in the Jin country after he heard



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that Tu-An Gu had commended to kill all the infants lest the missing orphan of Zhao should be alive. The conversation between Confucius and Yen Yüan(顏淵) provides the moral code: “Doing good must begin with oneself 為仁由己 (Chen Shihchuang,, 121).” The physician grieves for the death of his biological son, yet he believes that is the right thing to do. Cheng Ying’s loyalty for his master is well combined with the compassionate sympathy for other infants in the country. His kindness springs from his heart, and exhibits Confucian benevolence.

### **B. Patriarchal Religion and the Filial Piety**

One of Confucius’s great disciples, Tseng- Tzu(曾子) said, “Only when a prince conducts the burial of his parents in accordance with the rites and only when he takes care of his remote relatives, the people, following his suit, will restore their good virtues 慎終追遠，民德歸厚矣 (Chen Shihchuang, 5).” The “remote relatives”, in a very strict sense, includes one’s long gone ancestors who are to be worshiped in the family temples. This kind of teaching associates earthly moral piety with the ancient clan religion and has been the leading Confucian doctrine. Ever since the Zhou Dynasty (the 11<sup>st</sup> Century B.C.- 770 B.C.), ancestor worshiping has turned from a man’s primitive fear to a religious regulation every family has to practice in accordance with the rules the Duke of Zhou(周公) has concluded from his research on the classics related to filial piety and morality: “When one speaks of Gods (including

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ancestors' spirits), one is referring to filial piety 言神必即孝 (Chen Xiyong, 95).”

This teaching has never been doubt or challenged for thousands of years, particularly after blending with Buddhism after the Han Dynasty in 67 A.D. Ancestor worship can be discovered in every Chinese literature work about family relationship, including *The Orphan of Zhao*. What Cheng Ying teaches the orphan in the twenty years of intended delay certainly include all the Confucian doctrine and will influence the orphan's decision when as he becomes an adult.

As the fourth act of *The Orphan of Zhao* begins, Cheng Ying tells the audience, “.....that child of mine [the orphan] has been twenty years old. He is officially called Cheng Bo. He learns martial arts with Tu-An Gu, and learns literature with me. He is very intelligent (Ji, 1490).” Before the orphan grows strong enough to draw the sword towards the villain, Cheng Ying, as the orphan's educator, would also need time to plant the knowledge every father would teach his son into the orphan's mind: the self-cultivation through learning literature classics, the filial piety, the loyalty and honour, and the faith he should have with his friends.

To Cheng Bo, the reaction after hearing the story of his true family is, at first, the outcome of the self- cultivation following his father's literacy education. Once knowing he himself is actually the orphan of Zhao, the young man, in shock and rage, decides to kill Tu-An Gu, who, to him, has turned from a father in honour into an

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archenemy, and avenge for his biological family (Ji, 1495) not merely because of his personal emotion, but of what is expected for a son to fulfil.

The reason why it must be the orphan of Zhao to kill Tu-An Gu is due to the ancient Chinese patriarchal system which has been constructed since the Zhou Dynasty (the 11<sup>st</sup> Century B.C- 256 B.C), and has since dominated the Chinese people's way of thinking.

Before Confucianism became the dominant philosophy in China, people used to rely on to the primitive patriarchal religion to keep in the society good order. The Chinese patriarchal rules are developed from the patrilineal clans early in the Yin and Shang era (approximately 1600 B.C- 1046 B.C) (Chen, Xiyong, 88). For a clan to continue its bloodline, a son has to be born to the clan lord's by his legal wife. In the Zhao family's case, the orphan is born by Princess Zhong Ji, the legal wife of Zhao Shuo, the current clan lord of the Zhaos. The son born by the clan's lord's legal wife is not only allowed to participate in political activities, but is also obliged to worship the clan's ancestors on the behalf of the whole family once he becomes the clan's lord after his father dies(90).

Though worshipping family ancestors is the most important part in patriarchal religion, the theological side of the religion gradually declined as time went by. In the Spring and Autumn era, humans' primordial fear for the supernatural spirits faded,

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and was substituted by the idea that human beings shall be respectful to the spiritual dimensions yet not to be superstitious about godly and ghostly spirits. The essence of the patriarchal religion became the earthly moral obligation: the filial piety. A son must fulfil his filial piety to his parents and other family elders for it is the basic morality one should follow. Confucius, later on, combines the primitive religion with his teaching of the rites and other moral codes (Wei, 70, 73) by proposing the paramount importance of filial piety. An “unfilial” person would not be a benevolent Confucian gentleman. There are many duties for a son to fulfil his filial piety, including revenge for the killing of his parents (Liu, 230).

### **C. The Delay**

The reason for Cheng Ying’s delay is simple: he has to wait for the orphan of Zhao to grow up. It takes twenty years for an infant to become a young man possessing both Confucian education and martial strength.

Though Cheng Ying is a loyal subordinate of the Zhao family, he is not one of the Zhao’s kin. The orphan, on the other hand, though later on would bear the surnames of two other paternal figures, is, and always will be, the son of the Zhao’s clan because of the blood flowing in his veins. Cheng Ying does not fill the orphan’s mind with blind hatred; neither. To ensure the orphan’s determination to take the action of

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revenge when he grows up, Cheng Ying needs time to teach the child philosophical and religious perspectives a good Confucian gentleman should have.

*The Rites of Zhou* (*Zhou Li*, 周禮, an official classic about rites and ceremonies written approximately in the Spring and Autumn era) has stated clear that a young man should acquire the “Six Arts”, which are etiquette, music, archery, chariot, literacy, and mathematics. During twenty years of growing, the orphan, temporarily using the alias Cheng Bo, has been learning everything a young man needs to participate in the Confucian world. Cheng Ying has taught Cheng Bo something essential that stirs him to take the action to revenge for his biological family and return to the identity as Zhao Wu after learning the history of the slaughtered house of Zhao. Even though Tu-An Gu has been his godfather, the orphan of Zhao must kill Tu-An Gu in order to fulfil the filial piety to his biological parents.

In the fourth act of the play, the youthful, vigorous Cheng Bo comes into the audience’s sights, planning to help his godfather Tu-An Gu, who still remains the powerful marshal wearing the mask of righteousness, to conquer other countries and spread the teaching of “loving father and dutiful son” to the foreign areas (Ji, 1491). Full of ambition to do good to the society, Cheng Bo finds his father sitting in silent tears in his study. Cheng Ying has finished the illustration about the Zhaos’ story. He shows Cheng Bo the illustration of a villain persecuting people, including making a

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woman hang herself in desperation and harshly beating an elderly man. Seeing these scenes would normally anger a person with conscience. Cheng Bo, in heart-filling fury, says, “Were these victims my family, I would not be a noble man if I did not kill this villain (1492).”

Cheng Ying, hearing his dear child declare the sympathy for the victims in the pictures, immediately tells Cheng Bo the detailed history of how the Zhao family were massacred by Tu-An Gu and how the only living child of the family was rescued by a physician serving the Zhaos with the assistance of two other people. Cheng Bo, having learnt a martial general has died for an infant, respectfully praises, “He is a great man (1494).”

Before Cheng Ying’s final revelation of Cheng Bo’s true identity, the young man has shown his compassion for others and the admiration in righteousness. Cheng Ying has not only taught the meaning of benevolence well to the orphan, but has also put the Confucian ethic, “Submitting oneself to conscientiousness, dedicating oneself to sincerity, and reforming oneself according to righteousness amount to one’s moral endeavour 主忠信，徙義，崇德也(Chen Shihchuan, 125)” in the orphan’s mind. Cheng Bo’s pity for the victims in the story and the anger towards the villain has been aroused. Cheng Ying seizes the moment to reveal Cheng Bo’s true identity. The young man’s wish to punish the evildoer turns into a must-do.

### III. Chapter Conclusion

Hamlet, the strategy maker and the executor in his revenge, decides to delay his action not because he is lack of a clear plan or is afraid of killing. Opposite from being amazed, Hamlet wishes distinctly not only to take Claudius's life, but also to have his soul damned to Hell. He quits the idea to kill Claudius in the chapel out of the doubt if he would, instead of putting Claudius to Hell, send him to Heaven. To the self- deprecating Prince, it is definitely unfair that the remorseless villain is in Heaven while his Jove- like father's soul is suffering in purgatory. Holding on to the goal to revenge "the foul, unnatural murder", Hamlet delays his vengeance to wait for the moment to strike Claudius in acts without the relish of salvation.

In the court of Jin country, similarly aiming to revenge, after twenty years of waiting; the plan mastermind and the protector of the orphan of Zhao gives the young Prince the mission to kill his once respected godfather. Though in today's perspective, the orphan would put himself in a paradox in his practice of filial piety, however, as he returns to his true identity as a member of the Zhao family, the orphan must break through the dilemma choosing between his godfather and the biological father he has had never known, and fulfil his duty in a patriarchal society: what his adoptive father desires him to do, is also a unchallengeable Lacanian phallus in a patrilineal clan community.

### Chapter Three. The Kinship

Hamlet begins his participation in the play with the well known line, “A little more than kin, and less than kind (Act 1, Scene 2),” indicating the contradictory relationship between him and Claudius, the usurper to his father’s throne and bed, and the possible murderer of Old Hamlet. With his high status, Claudius twice calls Hamlet “our son”. It seems reasonable that the new King of Denmark is the Prince’s uncle since they belong to the same royal family breed. Is Hamlet’s disapproval of Claudius simply originated from his respect and mourning for his father, or is it related to his right to inherit the throne? In what way does Claudius break the kinship and lead to Hamlet’s revenge? The Prince of Denmark obviously does not approve of his relationship with his stepfather, who is a vile opposition of his admired yet, now, lacking father.

On the other hand, in *The Orphan of Zhao*, Cheng Ying becomes Zhao Wu’s adoptive father and allows Tu-An Gu to be the orphan’s father in honour as a part of the revenge plan (Ji, 1490). The father and son in honour, to the Chinese people, is another kind of legal patriarchal relationship. By recognizing the orphan (as he is currently using the name of Cheng Ying’s own son) to be his son in honour, Tu-An Gu makes sure that there would be a descendant to worship the Tu-Ans and inherit his lordship. In Cheng Ying’s plan, Zhao Wu’s mission is to kill his father in honour,



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with whom he shares an intimate relationship (1494). Paradoxically, this arrangement will make Zhao Wu act against the traditional ethics of filial piety in China. Why Cheng Ying would have his adoptive son commit such a seemingly un-filial action is related to the patriarchal religion and moral rules in China.

According to Jacques Lacan's theory of subjectivity, after finishing the mirror stage, the process of a child's subjectivity establishment enters from the Imaginary to the Symbolic (Du Shengfeng, 128-131). During this period a child would continue the construction of his ego by carrying out the signified values he learns from the signifiers in the language (Glowinski, 198). In his explanation of the three stages of the Oedipal complex, Lacan introduces the idea of "the phallus". Unlike Freud, Lacan conceives the phallus not as a simple sexual organ, but as the signifier of one's completeness and self-realisation (Calderón, 27). On one hand, the phallus is the object of the mother's desire. On the other hand, it is, as a signifier, the paternal metaphor.

The phallus signifies the power of the father ("le loi du père") that a child must take as a role model in the third stage of the Oedipal Complex and thus separates himself from the imagined attachment with his mother and ensure his independent subjectivity (Du Shengfeng, 143). In other words, as Lacan puts it, "it is this desire of the Other as such the subject must recognise (Lacan, *Écrit*, 288)" so that the child would be able to

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alienate himself from the Oedipus Complex and construct his complete subjectivity. “Name-Of-Father” has the similar function as the phallus. A father can be absent in a family, and yet his name is still the paternal metaphor for the child to obey and imitate (Du Shengfeng, 142). When one applies Lacan’s theory to the kinship reading in the study of *Hamlet* and *The Orphan of Zhao*, one would find that the phallus functions as the object of the mother’s desire, and the desire of the paternal Other.

The “Other” plays an essential role in the Lacanian theory of subjectivity. Before the discussion of the phallus, one shall define the meaning of the “Other.” In Lacan’s map, the other with the small o means the ego, and the *Other* with the capital means, contrarily, the none-ego persons. In the function of speech, one is concerned with the *Other* (Lacan, *Seminar, Book II*, 236). The reason why the Other is highly related to the study of Hamlet is that it is related to the desire. One desires things that one does not possess: things the none-ego persons possess. The fulfilment of one’s desire relies on the Other. Lacan concludes this theory by stating, “A person’s desire is the desire of the Other (Lacan, *Language*, 168).” In Hamlet’s case, it is the desire of his glorious father that the Prince wishes to realise. In Zhao Wu’s case, being a respectful filial descendant, as his adoptive father is and wants him to be, is far more important than anything else. Lacan transfers the phallus from the indication of sexual organ to the signifier of a father. The phallus, on Lacanian concept, symbolizes not only the

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father's sexual strength, but also the powerful image containing rules and orders that a child (or, in another word, the subject) would take as the model to imitate. If the desire of the mother is the phallus, the child would wish to be the phallus to satisfy that desire (Lacan, *Écrits*, 289).

The mother characters in the two plays have their influences on the two avengers, yet their desires take rather minor parts in the plays. The phalluses in the two plays are not merely the objects of the mothers' desires, but the signifiers of the fathers *and* their desires.

Hamlet's and Claudius once were kins—uncle and nephew—but now, though the new king twice declares the prince his son, Prince Hamlet does not agree with this declaration. Hamlet divides his father and uncle into a binary opposition and denies his kinship with Claudius both in the familial and political perspectives. Hamlet's father, now in the shape of the Ghost, that is to say, physically dead and absent, still has the phallic effect on him, which furthers Hamlet's "prophetic soul" and converts Hamlet's conviction that Claudius murdered his father into the aim to revenge.

Different from Hamlet, who hesitates and delays his action of revenge until the very last act of the play, the orphan of Zhao takes immediate action once hearing his real family history. He does not seem to have the opportunity to turn down his adoptive father's request to kill his father in honour. The ancient rules that influence

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the orphan's choice among his three kinships are to be discussed. Which father-son kinship does Zhao Wu identify himself with? Along with the Lacanian reading, I will make efforts to find a clear definition about the term "filial piety" in classics such as *Confucian Analects* (*Lun Yü*, 論語) and *The Classic of Rites* (*Li Ji*, 禮記).

In this chapter, I will analyse the mother issues in the two plays and how the phallus affects Hamlet and the orphan of Zhao and motivates them to revenge.

## **I. Mother Issues**

### **A. Gertrude's Relationship with Hamlet**

Carolyn Heilbrun, in her article *The Character of Hamlet's Mother*, argues that Gertrude, the royal jointress of Denmark, has her second marriage soon after her first husband's death by the affection of her sexual desire and Claudius's "witchcraft of his wit (Heilbrun, 202)". Such frailty leads to Prince Hamlet's abjection against Gertrude as his mother. The discussion on the Queen's sexual desire is majorly related to the debate of Hamlet's Oedipal Complex.

Freudian scholars like Ernest Jones are convinced that Hamlet's Oedipal complex causes his wish to kill Claudius, for he occupies the place Hamlet wants to take from his father. Nevertheless, there is no textual clue indicating how Hamlet and Gertrude have interacted when he was around the age from three to five, during when the

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complex would occur in a child's psychological state (Du Shengfeng, 92, 134). If we follow this speculation, the change of Gertrude's object of desire, thus, would not be the stimulation for Hamlet to kill Claudius and take over his place. Even if Claudius's (real) phallus is always somewhere in the picture (Lacan, *Desire*, 50), the phallus Hamlet relates himself with is the one of the old King Hamlet's. Witnessing the castration of the Old King, Prince Hamlet loses not only his father, but also his recognised father-son kinship he has depended on to construct his subjectivity. The Oedipus complex goes into its decline "insofar as the subject must mourn for the phallus (Lacan, *Desire*,46)". Hamlet, as a subject, would need to restore the father's phallus, which is the symbol of law and order both in his family and country.

Gertrude's function in the play, or, rather, her relationship with Hamlet, has been a much discussed mystery. The queen may have quickly married again to satisfy her sexual desire in her middle age, yet it would not prevent her from being a mother who wishes good for her son. She sends for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in order to restore her relation with Hamlet and show her good will towards him (Doubt, 56). In the aspect of national affairs, Gertrude is the "imperial jointress to this warlike state (Act 1, Scene 2)," and remains so in her second marriage with the new king. She asks Hamlet to "look like a friend on Denmark [Claudius]," due to the threat of potential wars that Denmark is facing. This "warlike state" needs befriending and joint (Doubt,

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56), while Prince Hamlet strongly believes Denmark is out of its joint. Gertrude, in addition to having the possible passion for her new husband, asks her son to show kindness to the new king for the sake of Denmark's welfare, which the prince somehow seems to neglect since the sudden death of his father, the ideal monarch in his mind. In the meantime, Hamlet alienates himself from Gertrude, with whom he no longer desires to identify as mother and son.

Strangely, Hamlet does not think of the likelihood that his mother re-marries quickly out of political reasons, neither does Shakespeare provide clearer clues with which one can study Gertrude. Hamlet, despite his rude and severe chiding towards Gertrude, does not reject their mother-son relationship in the end. When Hamlet eventually strikes Claudius at the end of the play, he calls Gertrude "my mother" but not "the Queen" (Act 5, Scene 2). Treating Hamlet's presumption that Gertrude is "the power behind the withering of Denmark" (Wallenfel, 98) with Lacanian psychoanalysis, one would see that the change of the object of the Queen's desire. The changing of the object of Gertrude's desire is, firstly, an offensive damage to the old Hamlet's symbol as a father, and, thus, the threat to the young Hamlet's subjectivity. Secondly, even if Gertrude marries Claudius for the sake of Denmark's peace, such a marriage breaks the law and order that the old Hamlet has set for Denmark and the intended heir to his throne. Although Prince Hamlet eventually recognises his

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relationship with his mother and rebuilds a part of his subjectivity, the phallus of the Old Hamlet is still castrated and the young Hamlet will have to restore it.

### **B. The Absence of Zhao Wu's Mother**

The Chinese patrilineal philosophy puts emphasis on the father and lowers the importance of the female family members, and the maternal kinship has usually been less mentioned than the paternal one (Ye Guanghui, 65-66). However, it is still a son's obligation to perform filial piety to his mother, whether in the family living room or on her funeral, or in the clan's temple.

When applying Lacan's theory to the study of *The Orphan of Zhao*, one notes that the orphan does not know his biological mother in his life until Cheng Ying reveals the fact that his mother was the Princess of Jin. He was taken away from the court in infantry and grew up in the Cheng family. The "biological mother" he knows is Cheng Ying's wife, who has never been spoken of or made her appearance whether in the Yuan Dynasty or the Ming dynasty edition of the play. The figure "biological mother" is entirely absent in *The Orphan of Zhao*. The desire of the Other the orphan can realise, thus, is the desire of his paternal Other.

Though her name is included in the Zhao's clan after she marries Zhao Shuo, Zhuang Ji keeps her royal title as the sister of Duke Ling. Tu-An Gu does not kill the

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Princess when he orders the Zhao clan slaughtered. Princess Zhuang Ji's suicide may be unbelievable from the viewpoint of a mother's protective nature for her child. However, the suicide forces Cheng Ying' to take the orphan out of the palace controlled by Tu-An Gu (Ji, 1478), which is the only and the best protection she can provide for her son. Following the fundamental concept of filial piety, a child shall repay the mother's benignancy for giving the child his life (Liu, 213). The orphan's way to repay his mother is to revenge for her by killing Tu-An Gu, the person who forced her to commit suicide.

## **II. The Father Characters: a Lacanian Reading**

### **A. Hamlet's Model (Father) and Foe (Uncle/Stepfather)**

"To be or not to be, that is a question (Act 3, Scene 1)." This question on whether to be or not, in Jaques Lacan's view, becomes, "to be or not to be the object of mother's desire in order to clarify what it is to say *I* (Lacan, *Seminar, Book I*, 166)." Before being tempted to Claudius's bed, the Queen's object of desire was the late King Hamlet. Horatio describes the Old Hamlet as a "valiant (Act 1, Scene1)", "goodly (Act 1, Scene 2)" king, who won the land of Norway via wars. To Prince Hamlet, his father was "so excellent a king", in comparison with his uncle. The difference between the Old Hamlet and Claudius is the difference between Hyperion and a satyr



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(Act 1, Scene 2). It is, thus, not curious that Hamlet angrily wonders why his mother would change her husband, the object of her desire, within two months. Before hearing of Claudius's crime, Hamlet has denied the kinship offered by this "vice of the kings (Act 3, Scene 4)" by challenging Claudius's declaration in feist in the beginning of the play. As Hamlet reckons, Gertrude would rather stay being the queen than being the wife of his father.

As a humanist prince, Hamlet regards Christianity as a universal doctrine which prevents people from evil doings, but not as the dominant dogma of his life. The Ghost in the late king's shape is not merely a spirit from Purgatory, but the wronged spirit of Hamlet's father, whose deeds when he was alive have set a role model to the prince. Hamlet thinks all the good traits of his father and compares his father and uncle. He also compares himself to his father in a rather self-abasing way, saying, "I shall not look upon his like again (Act 1, Scene 2)," Hamlet thinks himself to be a "pigeon liver'd" coward and a tardy son (Act 3, Scene 4).

According to Lacan, if the mother's desired object is the phallus, the child, during the Oedipal stage, would wish himself to be the phallus in order to satisfy that desire (Lacan, *Écrit*, 289). The old Hamlet, who once was the object of Gertrude's desire, signifies the ideal of a strong, wise, loving father and husband in the family. In the realm of the states, the old Hamlet's role model as a warlike, protective monarch is

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another strong contrast against Claudius, who, to Hamlet, is a “cut-purse of the empire (Act 3, Scene 4).”

By observing the comparison Hamlet makes between his father and uncle/stepfather, one can see the binary of Hamlet’s biological father and uncle/stepfather. In addition to being the incestuous man and the thief of the country, Claudius is also the villain who destroys the phallus that Hamlet intends to imitate.

Hamlet’s condition can be explained in Lacan’s theory:

*“What is it that the subject is deprived of? The phallus; and it is from the phallus that the object gets its function in the fantasy, and from the phallus that desire is constituted with the fantasy as its reference. The object of the fantasy, image and pathos, is that other element that takes the place of what the subject is symbolically deprived of.....”* (Lacan, *Desire*, 15)

Lacan is convinced that Hamlet’s eagerness for vengeance lies in the field of Gertrude’s ambiguous desire (that is, changing from loving a Hyperion to sleeping with a satyr), for which Hamlet is too much in the mother (15). Lacan also states that Hamlet is “in a certain position of dependence upon the signifier (11).” Now that Gertrude’s desire is in a person opposite from all the kingly characteristics, the lack of Hamlet’s (F)Other is in dire need of restoration. The lack of the Other the young Hamlet wants to fill in is the lack of the phallus his father has created for him. The Ghost wearing full armour is the symbol of his father’s strength in prime, which the Prince, as the child, obeys and imitates. Hamlet’s aim of revenge is linked to what this apparition of his phallus desires, which happens to be revenge; too.

## B. Zhao Wu's Three Fathers

Without a mother character to establish what Lacan calls “the desire of the (M)Other (Rabaté, 61),” the Lacanian reading of *The Orphan of Zhao* can only focus on the analysis of the orphan's phalluses, which represent his three fathers. The phallus, as a signifier, means that it is in the place of the Other that the subject has access to (Lacan, *Écrit*, 288). The orphan of Zhao is in the progress of establishing his *ego* in the sense of subjectivity. With which phallus he recognizes would determine his identity in the three kinships he has, and, thus, decide the orphan's subjectivity in a community which stresses the importance of filial piety and social ethics.

After his biological father dies under political persecution, the orphan gains an adoptive father (Cheng Ying) and a father in honour (Tu-An Gu). Not knowing his true family, the orphan, given the name Cheng Bo, believes Cheng Ying is his real father. As the father in honour of Cheng Bo, Tu-An Gu gives the child another name, Tu Cheng, and grants him the future fortune and lordship when he reaches adulthood (Ji, 1490). However, the the surname “Tu” is not Tu-An Gu's real surname. Each of the orphan's three names has its specific meaning. The name Zhao Wu(趙武) indicates that this orphan will eventually grow up to be a person with martial strengths to kill the family foe to revenge. The given name Bo(勃) means one will heartily strive to achieve his goal. Tu Cheng(屠成), on the other hand, is not a full name.

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Lacking the second syllable “An”, Tu Cheng, though being Tu-An Gu’s son in honour, is still not a recognized member in the Tu-An family. Furthermore, the name Tu Cheng, in Chinese language, pronounces precisely same as “slaughtering the whole city(屠城).” Now that his father in honour did actually slaughter his whole biological family, “Tu Cheng”, returning to be Zhao Wu, has his reason to kill Tu-An Gu.

Learning martial arts with his marshal father in honour, Cheng Bo sees the role model of a warrior in Tu-An Gu. Receiving literate education from Cheng Ying, Cheng Bo learns the required knowledge, including the strict rules of patriarchal religion, for a young man to take part in the society. The knowledge will turn the name Zhao Shuo from a remote symbol to the lacking subjectivity the orphan must rebuild once hearing of his real name and family history.

The original patriarchal religion does not entirely consist of theology. The building stone of patriarchal religion is the consanguinity between father and son (Liu, 165). The significance of this religion lies in lengthening the clan’s blood and making sure there are progenies to look after the family elderly and worship the ancestors. Confucius takes a further step by combining this religion with his idea about the ethics. He converts the filial piety from mere religious rites to the earthly moral responsibility (Wei, 77). The meaning of this cultural change is that, in order to become a proper gentleman, a person shall practice filial piety and value it above all

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other moral doctrine. This concept is explained in *XiaoJing, The Classic of Piety* “The filial piety is the root of morality (夫孝，德之本也)(*The Classic of Piety 孝經*, 2).”

Being obedient to one’s father is the basic way to realise filial piety. In the case of *The Orphan of Zhao*, Cheng Bo has to practice the martial arts with his father in honour, and study the Confucian classics with his adoptive father. The phalluses of military strength and Confucian knowledge surround the orphan until he turns twenty. Though it is commonly understood that the child wishes to be like the phallus because he wants to satisfy the desire of his mother (Lacan, *Écrit*, 289), to the orphan, by now still names Cheng Bo, his wish to become the phallus results not from the desire of his absent mother, but from the concept that he has to be the gentleman his adoptive father wants him to become in order to fulfil his filial piety. Although different from Lacan’s original theory, the orphan is satisfying the desire of his Father.

Calling the orphan “the child of mine (Ji, 1490),” Cheng Ying has been in a typical “loving father and dutiful son (1491)” relationship with the orphan. Out of natural respect and love a son has for his father, Cheng Bo, seeing Cheng Ying sitting in tears, wishes to punish the person that puts his father in such grief (1491). Filial piety is not the only working force in this very scene. Believing Cheng Ying to be his father, the orphan witnesses the injury of the signifier of the Confucian gentleman and wants to treat this injury by punishing the injurer. Soon after this, Cheng Bo finds out his

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true identity, the story of his biological family, and those who have sacrificed their lives to rescue him. The injurer of his two patrilineal relationships is exactly Tu-An Gu, his father in honour, who turns out to be the man that puts his biological father to death and makes his adoptive father forfeit his own son in substitution for the orphan.

Unlike Cheng Ying and Tu-An Gu, who have been in the orphan's life for almost the whole time, Zhao Shuo, the orphan's biological father, had died before he was born. Yet the name of this father has its power to command the orphan's action. From Zhao Shuo's dying words, "Such a shame that my loyalty for the country is dissembled by the vermin in court (Ji, 1477)," it is easy to see the antithesis between the Zhaos and Tu-An Gu. The familial definition of the revenge for Zhao Wu is to rejoin the Zhao's clan and keep on the family bloodline. Zhao Shuo's phallus to his son, from the perspective of paternal metaphor, is another optimal Confucian gentleman harmed by the evil-doer Tu-An Gu.

### **III. Self- Realisation and Identity Transformation: Identity Lost and Found**

#### **A. Hamlet's "Failed" Revenge**

A.C. Bradley states that Hamlet's inaction of revenge is due to his melancholy and "thinking too precisely on the event," which makes him powerless in "his petty sphere of action, and powerless from the divinity of his thought (Bradley, 31)". T.S. Eliot

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argues that Hamlet's delay is caused solely by the difficulty of assassinating a monarch surrounded by guards (Eliot, 54).

In this regard, I agree with the theological, or, rather, philosophical reason that explains why Hamlet does not grasp the chance to kill Claudius in the praying scene: Hamlet wants to see Claudius's soul damned. It is not that Hamlet is taking God's role as an avenger (Hughes, 400), but that the prince, knowing his father's soul is suffering from the sulphurous fire, would not let Claudius's soul conveniently ascend to Heaven simply because he dies praying. As discussed in the previous chapter, Hamlet delays the action and wait for a better moment to kill Claudius because of his religious conviction. When it comes to earthly problems, however, such a delay would lead to trouble. As the Prince of Denmark and possible future leader of the country, Hamlet is obliged to create benefits for Denmark.

Politically, Hamlet could have become the new King of Denmark once his father dies. The old Hamlet, however, as one sees in Act 1, Scene 4, may have been murdered by his own brother. Claudius takes over the country no later than the death of the previous king and does not wait for the young Hamlet to return from Wittenberg. Though declaring the young Hamlet to be his heir, Claudius has violated, as one may presume, the old King's will and Hamlet's right to inherit the throne.

On the other hand, being once also the prince of Denmark, Claudius had his right of

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succession to the throne. Now that there are two princes of the country, equal in state and power, against each other, Denmark is in an unstable situation. Fortinbras (representing Norway) desires to take back the territory the old Hamlet has conquered, while the new King of Denmark, Claudius, seems to think he could solve this crisis by a mere diplomatic letter (Act 1, Scene 2).

In *Hamlet*, however, as discussed previously, one cannot be sure if Hamlet has the Oedipal affection towards his mother. Rather than strive to kill the father and become the substitute phallus, Hamlet cares more about fulfilling the desire of his paternal Other. The Prince heartily respects his late father, needless to say that even if in a political sense, as the heir of the King, the Prince would have to obey his father's orders.

Hamlet's revenge is not only for his father's death, or the satisfaction of his father's desire, or even for his own purpose, but also for the fortune of Denmark. His violated subjectivity relates closely to the old Hamlet (Du Cheng, 253). Because father and son share the same name, the Old Hamlet's phallus is also literally the name of the father (le nom-du-père), the patriarchal signifier which has the absolute power to the son (Du Shengfeng, 142). Being the son of a king like "Jove himself", Hamlet feels himself severely betrayed by his mother's second marriage with a man whose appearance and behaviour, Hamlet considers, are "the opposite of Mars". Claudius



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turns out to be the antipode of his brother in the aspect of ruling a country as well. He wishes to make peace between Denmark and its neighbour countries by merely writing a few letters. By such actions, Claudius has betrayed the duty of the monarch to protect the country which is now threatened (Tkacz, 23). The lack of the late old Hamlet and the importance of a powerful monarch capable of protecting the Danish citizens have inordinately increased in such danger.

Although the old Hamlet has been physically absent in the Danish royal family and the Ghost only appears twice in front of the young Hamlet, the Name-of-Father has its influence on Hamlet's decisions. Denmark, ruled by the last "Hamlet the Dane", used to be the Arcady of Humanism. The old Hamlet is the personification of Humanism to the young one (Xu Wen, 74). He brought victories from wars and was the role model of a loving husband and father. Denmark has the ruling power over its neighbouring countries and was in the harmony joint under the monarchy of the Old Hamlet. Thinking everyone, including himself and his uncle/stepfather, to be inferior to his father, Hamlet's anxiety over whether he is able to satisfy his father's desire and set right the time out of joint (Act 1, Scene 5) is exhibited in his tarry towards himself. Wishing to alienate himself from Claudius's kind, Hamlet's recognition with his father delays his action of revenge but strengthens his aim to imitate and to be the Dane as his role model was.

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In his feigned madness, Hamlet continues with his intentional mockery to Gertrude and Claudius and eventually makes Claudius determine to send him to England after the *Mousetrap* play. While Claudius still thinks he can stop a potential war with Norway, and asks favour of the King of England to kill the young Hamlet with letters, Hamlet has learnt better to conceal his plan and alter the life-threatening danger by the means he once looked down upon. By writing a new commission and sealing it with the signet of his father, the rightful King of Denmark, Hamlet protects himself from being killed on seeing the King of England. Once he stops from feigning madness, Hamlet, returning to Denmark, refrains from reasoning with himself about to kill or not to kill Claudius. He aims straight for his villain's life. His mission is to fix the mess in his country and his hope for the throne.

The factors contained in Hamlet's revenge appear seriatim as the play rolls into Act 5, Scene 1. In Act 1, the main cause for the revenge lies in Hamlet's desire to satisfy his father's desire. Seeking for opportunities to damn Claudius's soul is Hamlet's effort trying to fill in the lack of his father with "imaginary reconstructions" (Muller, 156), for we are unable to see, even if Hamlet does kill Claudius in the church, if Claudius's soul would be truly sent to Heaven or chained to Hell.

Setting right the time out of joint, contrarily, is an observable quest. Asking Horatio, ".....is't not perfect conscience to quit him [Claudius] with this arm? And is't not to

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be damned to let this canker of our nature come in further evil (Act 5, Scene 2)?”

Hamlet is prepared to transform the term “Hamlet the Dane” from the signifier of his role model into the signified trait of his own. He is ready to alienate himself from both the imagined Oedipal attachment with his mother and his unrecognized kinship with Claudius.

Despite Hamlet’s eventual determination, Denmark, sustaining the royal family’s inner riot and facing the coming attack from the Norwegian Prince Fortinbras, is falling apart (Tkacz, 29). Claudius clings on to his power and his queen; his eagerness to end Hamlet’s life does not fade with one failure. In the final duel, Hamlet, seeing Gertrude’s death and discovering Claudius and Laertes’s plot to poison him either with a drink or the blade of Laertes’s sword, seizes the opportunity to stab Claudius as he promised himself before, to kill the villain at “the moment that has no relish of salvation.” The prince and heir of the late king is also fatally injured by the poisoned sword. Having no more Danish royalty to succeed the Danish throne, Hamlet’s only choice of a princely heir is Fortinbras, who, retreating from Poland with victory, gives the war-like volley as he passes by Denmark (Act 5, Scene 2). Hamlet declares: “I do prophesy the election lights on Fortinbras: he has my dying voice,” as he executes his political responsibility for the first as well as the last time. At this point, the prince transforms himself into “Hamlet the Dane”, the term he once recognised to be his

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father, and almost completes his imitation of the phallus he, as the child of his father, identifies himself with (Muller, 150).

Before his death, Prince Hamlet finishes his missions to revenge for his father's murder and to fix the lack of the kinship he identifies himself with by killing Claudius. Though he manages to satisfy his father's desire and becomes nearly like the original object of his mother's desire, Hamlet does not mend the destroyed joint in Denmark. As the last member of the Danish royal family, Hamlet gives his country to the hand of Norway, and fails to imitate his father in monarchy to prove himself the "most royally" king like the old Hamlet had been. As a son of a father, Hamlet has fulfilled his task to revenge. As the son of the king, on the other hand, the Prince of Denmark fails in his quest to restore the country in the last step.

### **B. Zhao Wu's Moral Responsibility**

The Name of the Father is an issue more curious in *The Orphan of Zhao* than in Hamlet. Each of Zhao Wu's three fathers gives the orphan his own family name, whereas the orphan must return to the identity of the son whose father has been long gone. The surname Zhao, to the orphan, is the signifier of the Other as the locus of the law (Lacan, *Écrit*, 221). In this case, the law is both the phallus of Zhao Shuo as a

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wronged yet loyal, noble person, and the partilineal law a firstborn son must not disobey.

The Yuan Dynasty edition of *The Orphan of Zhao* containing four acts ends at the moment the orphan hears Cheng Ying telling the Zhao family's story and declares he would revenge for them, telling the audience the details of his revenge plan (Luo, 79). In the Ming Dynasty edition of the play, the fifth act presents quick process of Zhao Wu's revenge action. Some scholars believe that the fifth act is completely written by its editor Zang, Jin-Shu (Xu Fuming, 70) and this addition destroys the tragic aesthetic of the play. In my view, the fifth act is not entirely unnecessary when we consider the meaning of fulfilling a son's duty. Being the required executor of the revenge for the Zhao family, Zhao Wu's task is to arrest and kill Tu-An Gu. The knowledge Zhao Wu has learnt from his adoptive father, especially the rules of the patriarchal religion, would not leave him any time to debate with himself whether to kill or not to kill Tu-An Gu, no matter how much he, as a child, respects his father in honour and identifies himself with this valiant warrior.

There are, indeed, people who courageously sacrifice themselves to save the orphan. These people, on the other hand, are not the ones to revenge for the Zhao family, for to revenge is a junior family member's filial piety (Xu Wen, 73). As previously mentioned, filial piety is both a religious rite and the starting point of all the earthly

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ethics. The name Zhao Shuo is a father's name signifying a family in which all the members except the orphan have been killed by Tu-An Gu. The name Cheng Ying is another father's name who has sacrificed his biological son in exchange for the orphan's life. He has raised the orphan like the child of his own. Along with the Zhaos' animosity against Tu-An Gu, Cheng Ying has a personal enmity against him as well. Therefore, identifying himself also with his adoptive father's phallus as a Confucian gentleman, the resolution for Zhao Wu's dilemma is harsh but clear. As the teaching goes, "A son will not make a proper son if he does not revenge for his father (子不復仇，非子也) (*Benevolent Government* 春秋繁露·王道, 183)," Zhao Wu must kill Tu-An Gu because he has violated Zhao Wu's two other father-son kinships.

Killing Tu-An Gu and revenge for the Zhao family has three layers of meaning to Zhao Wu: the first layer is the religious fulfilment that ensures at least one offspring to worship the Zhao ancestors. Second, killing the villain not only realises the shared desire of Zhao Wu's biological and adoptive fathers, but also restores the lack of his biological father, who remains physically absent, yet is still a symbol more influential than his godfather. Third, it means that Zhao Wu can revenge for his adoptive father's loss twenty years ago and requites Cheng Ying's labour of upbringing for him, which is another highly expected action for a dutiful child in the Confucian community. To conclude this in a Lacanian discourse is to say, the subject (Zhao Wu) symbolically

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identifying himself (by revenging) with the imaginary (the biological parents he has never known), he in some way (by killing Tu-An Gu) satisfies [réalise] the desire of both his biological parents and adoptive father (Lacan, *The Seminar, Book II*, 238).

Although Tu-An Gu is the villain who destroys Zhao Wu's kinships, the marshal also conquers lands for the Jin country. Does the revenge mean that Zhao Wu would put himself in the situation of fulfilling his filial piety while losing his loyalty as a Jin citizen? Does the killing mean that Zhao Wu does injustice to the country for the sake of his personal justice? The answer is no.

The fourth act of the play starts with Tu-An Gu planning to make use of Cheng Bo's youthful strength to slay Duke Ling of Jin and take over the entire ruling power (Ji, 1496). After this coup d'état, he would then give Cheng Bo the lordship he has promised. Though a person's maternal clan is rather undervalued in a patrilineal society, Zhao Wu's biological mother is the sister of the Duke Ling. Having broken the faith with his colleagues, Tu-An Gu has now betrayed master and violated the subjective piety for his country, as XiaoJing states, ".....Never speak of unlawful words. Never do unlawful deeds..... These are the piety of a courtly official (是故非法不言，非道不行.....蓋卿大夫之孝也。)" (*The Classic of Piety 孝經*, 18)"

Tu-An Gu's scheme to utilize Cheng Bo to satisfy his desire for the throne is opposite from what Cheng Bo wants to do for his martial role model. Now, as the

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orphan regains his identity as the Zhao descendant and the Princess's son, Tu-An Gu's disloyalty threatens Zhao Wu's last, but not the least identity due to the beliefs in the patriarchal religion and the Confucian teaching of filial piety.

In the fifth act, Duke Ling is replaced by Duke Dao(晉悼公), who worries that Tu-An Gu may rebel any time because he has gained too much power. After listening to "Cheng Bo's" report of his true identity and of Tu-An Gu's scheme, the Duke commands him to arrest Tu- An Gu (Ji, 1496). Knowing his sad family history and having the approval from the Duke, with whom he shares a kinship in maternal consanguinity, Zhao Wu is charged with the right to kill Tu-An Gu. The meaning of Zhao Wu's revenge extends from his obligation to rebuild his patrilineal clan to his duty to protect the royal house, which happens to be his matrilineal clan. By killing the villain, the grown orphan of Zhao realises the most crucial moral meaning of filial piety: to requite his biological parents' grace to give him his life and to repay his adoptive father's great benevolence to rescue, protect, raise and educate him (Liu, 213). Taking the action of the revenge, Zhao Wu accomplishes what is expected of him: showing a dutiful son's piety and the citizen's loyalty for the country.



#### IV. Chapter Conclusion

The failure of Hamlet's revenge does not lie in his failure to have a precise plan or the delay in order to find a public proof of Claudius's crime (Conrad, 682), or even the failure to kill Claudius. Hamlet does eventually kill Claudius and give him no time to repent. However, delaying the action until the last minutes in his life for a metaphysical doubt if killing a praying man will send his guilty soul to Heaven leads to Hamlet's failure to repair the disjoint in Denmark, which, with the lack of a proper king, is in the state of earthly emergency. Though Hamlet becomes "the Dane" after Claudius's death, he is unable to finish the last step in his identity transformation, that is, to imitate and practise the governing of the excellent King he identifies himself with.

Whereas Hamlet hesitates whether to revenge or not, the orphan of Zhao quickness in action is continuously emphasized in this chapter's discussion. Such rush in action is tightly linked to the unchanged philosophy that establishes the Chinese patriarchal system, the core definition of filial piety, "Don't do things contrary to the prescriptions of propriety (Chen, *Analects*, 13)."<sup>2</sup> If Zhao Wu denies Cheng Ying's order to execute the final action in the revenge, he, as a well raised adoptive son, will

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<sup>2</sup> "Meng I Tzu asked about filial piety and the Master replied 'Don't do things contrary to the prescriptions of propriety' (孟懿子問孝，子曰：「無違」)" Book II, *The Confucian Analects* 論語·為政第二

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firstly violate the essence of the filial piety: repaying the father's whether biological or adoptive, labour of upbringing for the child (Liu,213).

According to the patriarchal system, the elderly to whom a child pays filial piety plays the role rather like a figure a child must respect because of his seniority than a beloved older family member (Ye Guanghui, 73). This, nonetheless, does not mean that there is no room for human nature to involve in the patriarchal system. Cheng Ying, sitting in tears in his study, twice bids his adoptive son to go and have his meal when Zhao Wu wonders the reason why his father is weeping and yells his wish to punish the person who bullies his gentle godfather (Ji, 1491). The relatively soft scene arranged in the middle of a tense revenge play indicates the love-beloved relationship between this pair of adoptive father and son. It is true that being the only offspring of the Zhao's clan, Zhao We must fulfil his obligation otherwise he would be a disrespectful person for not revenging for his family. The kinships with the Zhao family, to the orphan, is the kinship he must recognises himself with, for it were Zhao Shuo and Princess Zhuang Ji who have given him his life. Other than requiting his biological parents' grace, it is crucial for a person to find his family origin and re-join it so that his subjectivity, in both Lacanian and Confucian senses, would be completed.

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Before Cheng Ying's upbringing, the person who gives Zhao Wu his life is biological father, Zhao Shuo. Tu-An Gu kills the man originates Zhao Wu's life, his crime lifts from the normal violation to the kinship in the Zhao's clan to the worst situation that the orphan of Zhao cannot share the same sky with him (父之仇，弗與共戴天)(*曲禮 Ceremonial Rites*, 98). Revenging for parents has never been a choice. It is the way for a child of the parent(s) murdered to mourn for his loss and the demonstration of filial piety based on the logic that one should, at any rate, repay his parent(s)'s grace (Liu, 233).

Zhao Wu's mourning for his biological parents mainly follows Cheng Ying's mourning for the sad story that occurred twenty years ago. Knowing it was his father in honour who caused the death of his parents is the moment for the orphan to decide his identity though as a matter of fact, he does not really have a choice.

As the son of a loving adoptive father, on the other hand, before requiting the grace of the biological parents he has never known and realising his job as the current master of the Zhao's clan, Zhao Wu's action of revenge is to pay his filial piety to his beloved adoptive father he identifies with by satisfying what Cheng Ying desires. The adoptive son of the physician, who has sacrificed his own son in exchange for the orphan's life, has to avenge for Cheng Ying's loss of his biological son, so that he fulfils the filial obligation as the Cheng family's son shall do. A Confucian teaching

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says, “For a son to pay filial piety, he must fully respect his parents, serve them properly to ensure their happiness (孝子之事親也，居則致其敬，養則致其樂) (*The Classic of Piety*, 53)”<sup>3</sup> Only when Zhao Wu realises these tasks will he re-construct his subjectivity.

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<sup>3</sup> “The filial piety is to create benefit for one’s parents (孝，利親也)” *The Canons and Their Explanations*, Mo Tzu, 墨子·經上第四十

## Chapter Four. Conclusion

### I. The True Meaning of Revenge

Lacan asks, “What is the connection between mourning and the constitution of the object in desire (Lacan, *Desire*, 36)?” The subject’s mourning for the phallus is a step towards the completing of his subjectivity. In *Hamlet* and *The Orphan of Zhao*, Prince Hamlet and Zhao Wu mourn for the castrated father. By their revenges based on the mourning, they go through a process of identity transformation and rebuild their subjectivity. Something different between the two plays, nevertheless, leads Hamlet and Zhao Wu’s revenge to different consequences.

Prince Hamlet manages to revenge for his father at the price of the deaths of almost everyone in the Danish court, including himself. Though Lacan’s analysis of Hamlet lies in the liaison between Hamlet and Gertrude and not in his relationship with Claudius (Calderón, 30), the kinship between Hamlet and Claudius is the influential factor in Hamlet’s revenge. It is Hamlet’s choice of kinship and the delay on the basis of his conviction that putting the murderer’s soul to Hell is more important than simply killing him that leads to the consequence of numerous deaths at the end of the play.

In the theatrical perspective, Stephen Greenblatt believes that the Ghost is a technique within a breathtaking performance during Shakespeare’s time (Greenblatt,

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236, 256). The Ghost's description about the elements in the Purgatory fits the classical medieval imagination; however, in Shakespeare's time, the Christian belief has declined due to the evolution of Humanism and the change of the society (Battenhouse, 192). Firmly rejecting the new kinship offered by Claudius, Hamlet, regardless of the possibility that it might be a devil in disguise, accepts the Ghost to be his father's suffering spirit and takes the Ghost's words as the testimony to Claudius's crime. This Ghost is from the underworld "that would convulse the comprehension of a Renaissance Humanist" (192).

However, the Prince's decision to have vengeance after seeing his father's Ghost does not actually help him sort out his priorities in the whole revenge plan. Hamlet, being a person of quick wit and plan-making, delays his most important mission for four months not because of the uncertainty of the Ghost's reliability or if he has the right to succeed the Danish throne, but because of his question about the already questioned Christian theology ever since the Renaissance Humanism encompassed western Europe.

Shakespearean scholars have been preoccupied with the question of Shakespeare's religious identity. The religious paradox in *Hamlet* enhances the mystery whether Shakespeare is a Catholic, Protestant or "an agnostic of things religious" (Jackson, 4), or he merely takes religion as a theatrical technique.

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The humanist Hamlet accepts a Ghost with Catholic traits as the spirit of his father, and condemns other people, particularly his mother, for not mourning for the Old Hamlet. The castration of the late King's phallus castrates the Prince's subjectivity, and Hamlet's revenge aims to rebuild it by killing Claudius and sending the guilty soul to Hell.

Though Lacan argues that Hamlet does not know what he wants (Lacan, *Desire*, 26), Lacan proclaims that all the actions Hamlet takes are to realise the object of the desire of the Other: not only does the Prince want to revenge for his father. The Ghost of his father also clearly demands Hamlet to avenge for him. I argue that despite the feigned madness and the delay in killing Claudius, the Prince of Denmark knows precisely what he wants: in addition to taking Claudius's life, Hamlet wants to condemn Claudius's soul, making him suffer eternally as Old Hamlet's unpardoned spirit does. Denying his kinship with Claudius, Hamlet mingles his own desire with his father's. The major purpose in the vengeance, in the theological aspect is to put the villain's soul in the sulphurous fire (no matter it belongs to Catholic or any other church), in the earthly aspect, is to consolidate the endangered nation, and to Hamlet as a royal heir to the Danish throne and a subject, to re-construct his subjectivity by following the rules and the order of his father and transforming himself to be the second "Hamlet the Dane."

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Whereas the Prince of Denmark fails to restore his subjectivity, the orphan of Zhao not only succeeds in avenging for his family, but also finds his true identity. The orphan's action to execute the revenge in the fifth act of the Ming Dynasty edition does not leave room for the audience to wonder if he succeeds in avenging for the Zhaos and truly identifies himself as Zhao Wu as the Yuan Dynasty edition does. Considering the importance of filial piety in the Chinese society, I argue the fifth act is not a failure of art, but a demonstration of the orphan's completion of his ego. Being told that Tu-An Gu is the murderer of his biological family, the orphan chooses to accept the kinship of the Zhao's clan out of the moral concept and the knowledge about the patriarchal religion he has been taught (Wei, 37). By killing Tu-An Gu, Zhao Wu eliminates the fact that he takes the family enemy to be his father figure (Ji, 1496). Twenty years ago, Cheng Ying feigned loyalty to Tu-An Gu to convince him that the orphan of Zhao had died. As the orphan grows up, he must disconnect his relation with Tu-An Gu, so that he could rejoin the Zhaos without the blot of being an evildoer's son in honour. He follows his biological parents' dying wish and his adoptive father's command to arrest and kill Tu-An Gu, thus accomplishing the revenge and, protecting the new Duke from being overthrown. Such action is the realisation of the fact that loyalty is contained within piety (Zeng, 224).



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Even if the upbringing of the child has been aiming for the purpose to revenge, Cheng Ying does not fill the orphan's head with hatred, but raise him in a proper way. Lacan believes that relations between humans are established before one gets his consciousness (Lacan, *Seminar*, Book II, 224). In the final scene that in *The Orphan of Zhao*, Zhao Wu tells Cheng Ying that he will attend to his old adoptive father and worship the Cheng family's ancestors to requite Cheng Ying's mercy (Ji, 1497, 1498). It is the tight emotional connection in their father-son relationship that enables Zhao Wu so filial to his adoptive to his adoptive father. By revenging the villain and requiting his parents and adoptive father's mercy, Zhao Wu completes his subjectivity as the righteous young Confucian gentleman: the filial, dutiful son of his life protector and the only descendant of a large, loyal, wronged family.

## II. The Similarity and Difference Between *Hamlet* and *The Orphan of Zhao*

Hamlet, the prince of Denmark, spends his time reasoning with himself, hesitating, and letting go of the chance to kill his uncle, whom he is convinced to be his father's murderer. Hamlet's dilemma, which becomes the cause of his tragedy, comes from a world full of uncertainty (Mack, 243) around him.

When the play begins, Prince Hamlet is mourning for the loss of his father (who later on re-appears as the Ghost) and other people, particularly his mother's seeming lack of mourn. So soon Gertrude changes the object of her desire, and yet so few clues

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in her lines could show us whether she is truly tempted by the satyr or is forced to marry the thief of the country and pretend to forget the memories she has had with the Hyperion. Hamlet personally condemns Gertrude to be the representation of frailty and discards their mother-child relationship by denying the kinship with his uncle/stepfather since Gertrude has become Claudius's wife. Alienating himself from the Queen, the only familial figure left for Hamlet to depend upon now is the Ghost that looks like his late father. Hamlet allows the "shape", though for some minutes he suspects it is "questionable", to influence him (Planinc, 46). Saying the Ghost is "honest", Hamlet allows this image to be the symbol of his father and decides to start the revenge under the affection of the Ghost's words. The Ghost of the Old Hamlet is both the symbol of young Hamlet's father and the monarch role model for the Prince. Depending on this signifier, Hamlet aims to make Claudius's crime a verified guilt instead of his mere prophetic instinct. With the stimulation of the *Mousetrap* play, Hamlet succeeds. Recognizing himself with the kinship between the Prince and the "excellent King", Hamlet ensures his difference from Claudius and his kind. To further this purpose in his revenge, the Prince of Denmark would have to become the Dane, and, again, Hamlet succeeds.

In the Chinese Yuan Dynasty Play, *The Orphan of Zhao*, there is also a task of vengeance. Zhao Wu, the orphan of Zhao, kills Tu-An Gu, his father in honour right

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after hearing the history of the slaughtered House of Zhao told by Cheng Ying, his adoptive father, without doubting the storyteller's reliability or hesitating about killing Tu-An Gu. Simply explaining Zhao Wu's action with Chinese filial piety is far from enough. Even if a father's words are not likely to be deceptive to his son, why Zhao Wu would instantly accept the story that topples his world without any suspicion is an issue worthy of careful study as presented in this thesis.

The name of the father has a relation with the subject who is about to participate the outside world (Wang Kuofeng, 170). Both Prince Hamlet and the orphan of Zhao deny one of the kinships they have and recognise themselves with the kinships with his biological fathers. Such similarity of choices, however, leads to the different ends of the two avengers.

Choosing to revenge according to the words of his father's spirit, Hamlet's doubt about the conventional faith delays his action in Claudius's chapel. His question "to be or not to be" is demonstrated in the concern about Claudius's eternal to be (Lacan, *Séminaire*, 28). To Hamlet, damning Claudius's soul is the primary mission in his revenge, or at least Hamlet takes it as the priority before he is sent to England and discover Claudius's letter in the ship. Although declaring himself as "the Dane", Hamlet's delay due to the theological uncertainty forbids him from seeking another opportunity to kill Claudius until his duel with Laertes. Successful in killing his uncle

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at the moment with no chance for religious salvation, though, Hamlet fails to complete the last step of identity transformation. Instead of ruling the country like the previous, rightful Dane, Hamlet yields Denmark to Norway.

Whereas Hamlet fails in his earthly identity transformation, the orphan of Zhao fulfils his mission to revenge for his family and transforms himself from the child accepting the kinship with his enemy to the model of filial piety. The Ming Dynasty edition of the play containing five episodes follows the traditional literature structure with a tragic beginning and a pleasant ending (Zhang, 75), and yet this the edition which presents the truth that the orphan must revenge for his biological family due to the unchallengeable moral dogma in China. In both religious and earthly sense, loyalty and piety are the centre of one's moral behaviour. Zhao Wu's revenge satisfies the desire of the Others, and also correspond with the goal of filial piety: to please the parents with the benefits.

Both having a murdered yet influential father, and both bearing the name of the father, the two avengers take the actions in order to satisfy the desires of their paternal Others. Nevertheless, differences in cultural background determine dissimilar endings in the Eastern and Western plays. Both princely born and affected by the phalluses signifying different kinships, Hamlet, though successfully kills Claudius, and fails to fulfil his responsibility to protect his country as his father used to do, while Zhao Wu,

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with the assistance of his adoptive father and other confidants, manages to kill Tu-An Gu, realising his piety for family and country at the same time. In the realm of restoring the damaged subjectivity, both avengers have completed the quest. In the perspective of identity transformation, however, while Zhao Wu succeeds in eliminating his identity as Tu Cheng, the son in honour of his family foe, and fulfils his obligation, Hamlet stops his transformation to be the monarch and brings Denmark back to its joint in the very last step of his revenge.

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