

FROM STATUTES TO STORIES

THE ROLE OF LITERATURE, MEDIA AND THE LAW IN SOUTH ASIA

Research Questions

- What is the relationship between media and the law in South Asian countries like India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka?
- Can media and literature influence the laws of a country, or can they only represent the present?
- How did historical events like Partition influence the Constitutions of countries like India?

Method

- Research literature that links legal cases to novels, poetry, and films from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, etc.
- Read or watch the original source. Form my own opinion.
- Read India's Constitution (including images and maps) and existing literature that demonstrates its connection to Partition.

By Mayada Abuhaleeqa
Mayada.abuhaleeqa@gmail.com

In collaboration with Professor Sabarish Suresh and Professor Adeel Hussain who supervised this project

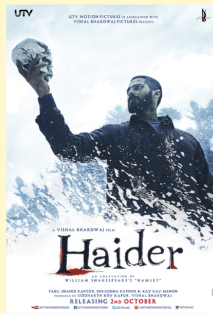
Case Studies

The securitized lawscape: the spatio-legality of Vishal Bhardwaj's *Haider* (2014)

By Dhiraj Nainani

An adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* set during the armed insurgency of 1990's Kashmir. Exploring the **Armed Forces Special Powers Act** of 1990 (AFSPA), which allows the armed forces to be present but has been used to justify heightened surveillance, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions, and extrajudicial killings.

Exploring the spatio-legal "**lawscape**" of Jammu and Kashmir. Focuses on the conjoined identities of Dr Hilal Meer (King Hamlet) and Roohdaar (Ghost) to examine disappeared bodies, dislocated spaces, and disconnected statehood.



(IMBD)

Hauntological Justice in Shehan Karunatilaka's *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*

By Dharshani Lakmal Jayasinghe

The article explores Jacques Derrida's concept of "hauntology" and applies it to a novel highlighting the victims of **Sri Lanka's civil war**. The author argues that the novel demonstrates "**hauntological justice**" by using the spectral to trigger **collective memory** of past injustices. The article ultimately argues for a form of justice when traditional law fails, encouraging the living to engage with their past and the dead.

The Trauma of the Indian Constitution: Partition and Repetition

By Sabarish Suresh

This book explores how the Constitution of India, and therefore decisions made by the judiciary, are not as **secular** as often portrayed. Despite **Partition** never being explicitly mentioned in India's Constitution, the book applies concepts of **psychoanalysis and trauma** to Partition to explain its continued significance to the law in India. Suresh also examines the **visual** aspects of the Constitution, including maps and images that are often overlooked and negated as merely aesthetic additions despite demonstrating repression.



Discussion & Conclusion

- Media and literature can serve as both a critique and an inspiration to laws.
- Partition's effects, ingrained in the spirit of India's Constitution (through both words and images), still influence the law and legal cases within India and Pakistan today.
- It is important to recognize how literature and media can offer alternative but equally significant methods of criticism and reform of laws in South Asia.