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Shakespeare and Adaptation in the Seventeenth Century: *Pandosto* and *The Winter's Tale*

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The growing importance of Shakespearean adaptations all over the world today often induces us to overlook the recurrence of adaptations as a phenomenon during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods and the extent to which Shakespeare himself adapted from his contemporaries, cutting across genres and languages. This paper looks at *The Winter's Tale* (1611) and its adaptation of Robert Greene's romance *Pandosto or The Triumph of Time* (1588). Adaptation, as Linda Hutcheon says, "is a form of intertextuality; we experience adaptations as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation"¹. Knowledge of the prior text always makes its presence felt as if the latter is "shadowing the one they are experiencing directly."² Since Greene's romance was a very popular one, a sizable section of Shakespeare's audience would very likely have known it, and John Fletcher, who became the leading playwright of the King's Men after Shakespeare, would expectedly have assumed his audience's knowledge of *The Winter's Tale*, which was enacted a decade before. Reading them together enables us as Louis A. Montrose says "to reconstruct an intertextual field of representations, resonances, and pressures that constitutes an ideological matrix."³

Situating the adapted texts in the context of economic mobility in the seventeenth century, this paper seeks to examine the ideologies of the works, especially with reference to the construction of identity and the concept and signification of credit, which recurs as a dominant motif in all three texts. An adaptation generally involves "an extensive



transposition of a particular work.” This ‘transcoding’ in *The Winter’s Tale* entails a shift of medium from narrative to drama, which inevitably involves adjustments of technique in characterization. But, it also includes an ideological change in the creation of self and reality, and I shall try to show how this conception self is closely and vitally associated to the medium of drama. Montrose argues that “the remarkably pervasive and sophisticated reflexivity of Shakespearean drama is not a symptom of aestheticism but the articulation of a dramatic conception of human life, rooted in the historical circumstances of personal life.”⁴ ‘Dramatic’ would imply an identity characteristic of drama, which gives rise to the consciousness that one’s career involves playing a set of roles.

Significantly, this ‘dramatic’ conception of identity had affinity with the notion of self which emerged in the seventeenth century with the increased circulation of money in the marketplace economy. As Jean-Christophe Agnew argues: “Conventional metaphors and tropes no longer seemed capable of expressing the labile qualities of money or the social relations that money mediated. The formless, qualityless, characterless nature of the money form became a recurrent motif in the prolonged rumination about self and society to which so much Renaissance and Reformation literature contributed.”⁵

There is a significant difference between the way Greene and Shakespeare shows the development of jealousy for their respective queens, in Pandosto and Leontes. Greene demonstrates the origin and gradual growth of jealousy in Pandosto by narrating how since his queen Bellaria and his friend Egistus spent time together during his absence in state matters, he began to entertain a melancholy passion, which “drove him into sundry and doubtful thoughts. First he called to mind the beauty of his wife Bellaria, the comeliness and bravery of his friend Egistus, thinking that love was above all laws, and therefore to be stayed with no laws.” “These and suchlike doubtful thoughts, a long time smothering in his stomach, began at last to kindle in his mind a secret mistrust, which increased by mistrust grew at last to be a jealousy that so tormented him as he could take no rest.”⁶ Greene takes care to preserve the requirements of verisimilitude in his narrative by rationalizing Pandosto’s jealousy against his friend and the period of time it takes for the jealousy to grow.



By contrast, in *The Winter's Tale*, the sudden onset of jealousy lacks even the semblance of verisimilitude: "I have tremor cordis on me. My heart dances, / But not for , not joy".⁷ The audience is not prepared for these lines for Leontes had before this pressed his childhood friend, Polixenes, the king of Bohemia, to stay longer in his own kingdom of Sicilia. It was Leontes himself who had urged Hermione, his "tongue-tied" queen to persuade Polixenes to stay. When she succeeds where he himself had failed, the sudden change occurs in Leontes. His anxiety induces him to read adultery in Polixenes's and Hermione's 'friendship. Through the maze of labile metaphors that Leontes creates in his effort to understand his wife's action and his own position, he seems to be awakening to new knowledge and undergoing the process of a cognitive re-discovery of the world.⁸ His changed perception of the world leads to the creation of a new self. From his conviction of Hermione's infidelity he progresses rapidly to his belief in his daughter's (yet to be born) bastardy, for it is nine months that Polixenes was at his court and Perdita's birth is due after these nine months.

Leontes's sudden, almost inexplicable conviction of his wife's infidelity and Perdita's bastardy problematizes the nature of subjectivity in *The Winter's Tale*. I would argue that Leontes's sudden change represents his anxiety, as the patriarchal head of the state, of polluting his lineage with bastardized descent. Lawrence Stone writes that in sixteenth- and seventeenth century- England, "the interests of, and loyalty to this lineage are paramount, and all other interests and loyalties are secondary. It was precisely this relation of the individual to his lineage which provided a man of the upper classes in a traditional society with his identity, without which he was a mere atom floating in a void of social space."⁹ By inviting the audience's astonishment at the suddenness of the jealousy, Shakespeare tries to draw attention to the fluidity of identity that Montrose's essay invokes. The sudden change in Leontes suggests the theatricality of the gesture and produces a sense that identity is constructed. And such a dramatic change can only be enacted on stage as opposed to being narrated as a process. Shakespeare transfers us to a different medium from Greene's romance with its own distinctive forms.



In his paranoia, Leontes abjures the very familial identity on which the perpetuation of his lineage depends. He suspects not only his wife but also his child Mamillius, whom he repeatedly scrutinizes to discover in him the copy of himself. Leontes treads through a maze of metaphors, which progressively denudes Mamillius's of humanity and ultimately of life, reducing him to animals, "bawcock" (derived from 'beau coq') (1.2.122), 'neat,' (with the associated significations of bullock or heifer) (1.2.126), "wanton Calfe" (1.2.127), and finally to a piece of meat "collop" (1.2.138). Simon Palfrey rightly points out that the reference to "Collop," suggests that "Mamillius is here distilled into a slice of meat as if cut from the master's joints."¹⁰ Leontes's re-discovery of the world results in a temporary re-creation of his own self and precipitates the crisis in the tragicomedy.

The pastoral interlude in both *Pandosto* and Shakespeare's play shows the love of the lost princess, daughter of the ill-treated queen, and the prince of the land she has been transported to and the son of Egistus / Polixenes.. While *Pandosto* recounts how Dorastus persuades Fawnia to accept him as a lover, the Bohemian scenes in *The Winter's Tale* presents Perdita and Florizel engaged in love-making in the eventful sheep-shearing scene, which has no parallel in *Pandosto*.

Unlike *Pandosto*, which narrates how Dorastus tries to suppress his love for Fawnia as dishonorable to him, Shakespeare's play shows Florizel ready to forego the Bohemian kingdom for the beautiful shepherdess. By contrast, Dorastus's ruminations in *Pandosto* when he feels himself succumbing to Fawnia's charms shows his consciousness of her unequal status as a shepherdess and repeated undervaluation of her:

Fawnia was a shepherd, one not worthy to be looked at of a prince, much less to be loved of such a potentate; thinking what a *discredit* it were to himself and what a grief it would be to his father; blaming Fortune and accusing his own folly that should be so 'fond' as but once to cast a glance at such a country *slut*. (426)



Polixenes's undervaluation of Perdita at the sheep-shearing festival might recall Dorastus's misgivings regarding Fawnia. Shakespeare's use of his source, however, highlights Florizel's difference from his counterpart. Florizel declares that gods had forsaken their divinity for beauty and virtue inferior to Perdita's: "Their transformations / Were never for a piece of beauty rarer, / Nor in a way so chaste" (4.4.31-33).

Florizel's act of keeping faith to Hermione's daughter is the counterpart of Leontes's act of breaking faith to his wedded wife by unwarranted distrust. It compensates for Leontes's distrust. I argue that it is Florizel who redeems the play from moving on to a tragedy, as a result of Leontes's misdoing. Florizel atones for Leontes's distrust by his refusal to break faith with "his fair beloved" for all that the "close earth wombs, or the profound seas hides" (4.4.495) much less for 'Bohemia' and its 'pomp' (4.4.493). By valuing Perdita above his kingdom and indeed the world, he makes amends for Leontes's undervaluation of Hermione and Polixenes's undervaluation of Perdita and restores the correct sense of proportion in the play.

Florizel is even prepared to forego his lineage in order to marry Perdita: "From my *succession wipe me, father; I / Am heir to my affection*" (4.4.485-486). By becoming an 'heir to his affection,' he desires to create himself anew, and become a different personality. By leaving Bohemia with his beloved on an unknown journey he loses his origin and becomes one in status with the infant Perdita, who had appeared in Bohemia sixteen years back, reputedly as a bastard child and been adopted by the shepherd. Unknown to her, she had lost her heritage on being sent away from Sicilia to Bohemia. By contrast, Florizel makes the conscious choice of erasing his ancestry to become her equal in descent; in the process, he restores Perdita's inheritance. More importantly, his act almost of re-creating himself, by cutting himself off from his lineage, suggests a complete break with the traditional sense of identity, as Stone had enumerated. In a play which shows identity as constructed rather than ascribed by birth, Florizel's words seem to challenge the norm of identity-formation.



The examination of subjectivity in *The Winter's Tale* suggests that economic practices and mobility in the seventeenth century create socio-economically constituted, fluid, sometimes disjunctive, and relational, identities, which often involve playing roles. This awareness among characters of role-playing, of fashioning identities, and discovering oneself, which reflects both the volatility of the economic situation and the labile shape-shifting of a new subgenre that is finding its appropriate form through experiments. The idea of fashioning one's identity undermines the notion of integral selves. Stephen Greenblatt points out that "in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process."¹¹

Although throughout the play, we find the reiteration of the idea that Perdita has qualities which befit a princess, it is Perdita herself who impresses on us that she is playing a role in the sheep-shearing scene. Her repeated use of the word 'play' ("methinks I play as I have seen them do / In Whitsun pastorals" 4.4.133-34; "I see the play so lies / That I must bear a part" 4.4.659-60) suggests her awareness that she is only playing various roles as circumstances direct. No sooner does she finish playing the role of Flora at the country festival than she is called upon to perform another role, that of a Libyan princess and Florizel's wife. As we see her changing from one dress to another, and comporting herself as her role requires, we get a glimpse of the 'dramatistic' form of identity, discussed by Montrose.

Dress and role are invariably connected. Florizel declares that her "unusual weeds" endow her with a new personality. As the audience sees her changing roles and dress, they would almost certainly have been reminded of the boy actor who was at best a liveried servant of the king, playing the role of a princess who thinks herself a shepherdess. It seems to me that when Perdita declares "Sure this robe of mine / Does change my disposition" (4.4.134-35), the audience would not only have thought of Perdita's role as Flora enabling her to play the princess (which she is) better but also of the male actor playing the role of a princess, in 'unusual weeds,' which did change not only his 'station,' but temporarily his



‘disposition,’ to enable him to do justice to his role. In a clear departure from Greene’s narrative, the enactment of the sheep-shearing scene on stage visually demonstrates the multiplicity of roles that the play engages and acting involves and a re-creation of the process of constructing selves.

It is not Perdita alone who displays this sense of role-playing in *The Winter’s Tale*. Autolycus’s variable and shifting identity – as dismissed servant, peddler, vagrant, pickpocket, odd-jobs man -- emphatically suggests that identity is only provisional. Although some critics have argued for Autolycus’s fictive and playworld status, we may not forget that his plight indicates a rootlessness that is the product precisely of his economic situation. It is paradoxical that economic practices like sheep-farming in the sixteenth-and seventeenth-centuries gave rise, on the one hand, to the upwardly mobile and successful entrepreneurs and, on the other, to evicted and landless laborers like Autolycus. Patricia Fumerton shows how the wandering laborer’s variety of roles was contingent on his ‘unsettled’ status: “Tramping the streets of London (within or without the walls), speculating in a range of affective, social, and economic roles, and thus continually remaking the spaces he or she inhabited, the dispossessed made of the city itself, in de Certeau’s words, ‘an immense social experience of lacking space.’”¹²

In the countryside, if not in London, the homeless and jobless Autolycus experimented with a number of passing roles, displaying the culture of enforced mobility. His soliloquy after Camillo has made him exchange his clothes with Florizel suggests how the jobless laborer must ‘smell’ (4.4.676) business and fashion himself appropriately to seize any opportunity that arises: “What an exchange had this been without boot / What a boot is here with this exchange” (4.4.678-680). We may view Autolycus’s career as a series of ‘exchanges,’ necessitating improvisation at every step for profit and survival: “We may do anything extempore” (4.4.681). Autolycus’s extemporaneous existence is associated with his status of living ‘from hand to mouth.’ Significantly, there is no room for an Autolycus-like



role in *Pandosto*. The invention of Autolycus itself points to Shakespeare's dual engagement with the contemporary economic situation and the construction of contingent identity.

A very important departure from Greene is the 'resurrection' of Hermione in the final scene of *The Winter's Tale*. Pandosto's queen really dies on hearing of her son's death as Hermione faints. While Greene shows Pandosto, despite his exaggerated repentance for killing his queen, taking a hundred and eighty degrees turn and falling in love with his own daughter, *The Winter's Tale* allows us to credit Leontes's expiation of his sin. Although the act of continual expiation remains in the background, we witness the redemptive capacity of his atonement in the resurrection of Hermione. The play's tragicomic affinity with Euripides's plays like *Alcestis* is foregrounded as Hermione virtually comes to life before the audience and walks out as a living being, shedding her status as a statue.

As a tragicomedy which initially seemed destined for a tragic conclusion, *The Winter's Tale* almost miraculously averts its fate. Its source ends with Pandosto's suicide and remains a tragic romance. It is by awakening 'faith' in magic and miracles and a 'willing suspension of disbelief' that the on-stage and off-stage audience can credit the tragicomic transformation they witness in the theater. When Paulina is about to 'redeem' Hermione from her supposed death, she asks the unbelievers to leave the chapel or to prepare themselves for "more amazement" (5.3.87). The actual effect of the performance suggests the staging of a magical phenomenon. Like a magician Paulina addresses Hermione: "be stone no more; approach; / Strike all that look upon with *marvel*" (5.2.99-100; emphasis added). Religious associations are evoked by the use of words like 'holy,' 'faith' (5.3.95) and 'redeems' (5.3.103). The spectacle itself evokes associations of the resurrection. The realistic and the magical cohere in the tragicomic transformation that takes place in the play. The 'awakening' of the dead Hermione can only be performed, scarcely narrated, credibly. The stage representation of Greene's narrative enables the departure from the latter become credible as well as marketable. As I have tried to show, Shakespeare's dramatic reproduction of Greene's pastoral romance creates a sense of identity as fluid, shifting, and provisional. This



construction of subjectivity closely engages with the economic changes of the time and with the nature of drama, which is the medium of the adaptation.

Notes

1. Linda Hutcheon with Siobhan O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*. Routledge, 2006, pp 8.
2. ---pp 6.
3. Louis A. Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and The Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* Chicago UP, 1996, pp 31.
4. See also Montrose, "The Purpose of Playing: Reflections on a Shakespearean Anthropology," *Helios* 7, 1980, pp 53.
5. Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750*. Cambridge UP, 1986, pp 9.
6. Robert Greene, *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time in The Winter's Tale*, ed. John Pitcher Methuen, 2010. pp 408. All quotations from *Pandosto* are from this edition and further references are cited in the text.
7. William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. Pitcher. 1.2.110-111. All quotations from the play are from this edition and further references are cited in the text.
8. See Arthur Kinney's argument for viewing Leontes in cognitive terms. He describes Leontes as one who "depends largely on his own sight, -- on what he sees, on what he thinks he sees, and on what he recalls in his 'mind's eye.'" See Kinney, "Re-cognizing Leontes," *Shakespeare Survey*, 63, 2010, pp 326-337.
9. Lawrence Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*. Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1977, pp 29.
10. Simon Palfrey, *Late Shakespeare: A New World of Words*, Clarendon P, 1997, pp 103.
11. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From Thomas More to William Shakespeare*. Chicago UP, 1980, pp 2.
12. Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England*. U of Chicago P, 2006, pp 55.



A Critical Appraisal Of *Hamlet* With *The Bhagvad Geeta*

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Abstract - Among the innumerable spiritual treatises, “*Srimad Bhagavad Geeta*” (commonly known as the “Holy Geeta” or simply the “Geeta”) occupies a distinct status in Indian society. The “*Geeta*” is the single Indian “dharmagrantha” (religious scripture), which has the largest number of scholarly explications in English and the Indian languages. In religious meetings or congregations the “*Geeta*” is the most frequently discussed document. In view of this, I believe that no Indian interpretation would be complete without any reference to the “*Bhagavad Geeta*”. The “*Geeta*” would interpret the clash between Hamlet and Claudius as not merely one of personal enmity but as a conflict between two ideologies as the Pandavas and the Kauravas. While Hamlet stands for moral purity and justice Claudius stands for covetousness and moral corruption and it is Hamlet’s duty as a “Kshatriya” (one belonging to the ruling and warrior class) to oppose evil and fight for a just cause. Like the Pandava prince, Arjuna, Hamlet faces a similar dilemma, although in a different context, culture and situation. All creatures come under Nature and it is the very nature of Nature that it always employs its creatures to perform action, whatever it may be, appropriate or inappropriate, virtuous or vicious. Therefore, a man unwilling to perform physical action will at times be forced by Nature to act. Arjuna’s unwillingness to fight on the battlefield is considered by Krishna as an infatuation, not the right sort of judgement (*Geeta* ii: 2). Because Nature will compel him to do this action, it is better that he fights willingly, irrespective of success or failure, victory or defeat (*Geeta* ii: 47). So like Arjuna the *Geeta* would advise Hamlet to



fight vigorously with the right attitude of mind, as running away from the duty enjoined on him would only lead him to moral dissipation.

Key Terms – Padavas, Kauravas, enmity, dilemma, moral dissipation.

Among the innumerable spiritual treatises, *Srimad Bhagavad Geeta* occupies a distinct status in Indian society. A philosophic handbook of practical living, the *Bhagavad Geeta* comprises eighteen chapters (from the 25th to the 42nd) of the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*. The two legendary epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* hold a special position in the heart of an average Indian. While a very small percentage of Indians may have a thorough knowledge of these two epics in their entirety, the general population is undoubtedly well acquainted with the basic outline of the stories, the various plots and subplots, and the morality and ethics they purport. Falling within the fold of the *Mahabharata*, *Srimad Bhagavad Geeta* finds direct access into the mind of an average Indian. The *Bhagavad Geeta* is a living symbol of edification continuing to survive through the ages. It contains an understandable metaphysical concept of God, backed by an iconic presentation. And what endears it more to Indians is the perenniality of the *Geeta* philosophy combined with its clarity of expression in expounding lofty ideals and unfolding core truths of life. The *Geeta* is the single Indian *dharmagrantha* (religious scripture), which has the largest number of scholarly explications in English and the Indian languages. In religious meetings or congregations the *Geeta* is the most frequently discussed document. In view of this, I believe that no Indian interpretation would be complete without any reference to the *Bhagavad Geeta*.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and India's *Bhagavad Geeta* are in essence works exploring the nature of crisis as experienced within their respective cultures. Through character interaction crisis is portrayed, dissected, and thoroughly resolved in a manner displaying the radical



orientation of the culture generating the text. Both Prince Hamlet and Arjuna, the prince whose dialogue with Krishna structures the *Geeta*, suffer from indecisiveness in the midst of a call to action. They have within them the best and worst of their cultures- they are noble and flawed- but only Arjuna has access to the original vision from which culture itself is generated, and is thus able to extricate himself fully from his (and our) dilemma.

The dramatic grip that Hamlet has on western audiences has remained tense through the centuries since Elizabethan England. With countless stagings and a swamp of critical literature, few really seem able to, in his own words, "pluck out the heart of my mystery." (*Geeta* III, ii, 351). This mystery is born of the very nature of man in crisis. It is a question of what makes people do what they do. These somewhat murky waters clear upon examination of the nature of crisis, the standard human condition.

Hamlet and Arjuna's crises are strikingly similar, given the thousands of years and miles separating their inception. Both are princes who find themselves trapped in horrible circumstance whose only resolution demands the shedding of family blood. The Sanskrit word best describing the situation is dharma , loosely translated into English as "law" or "duty." It comes from the root "dhar", meaning to hold or hold together. "Dharmic" action is thus that which sustains the culture. This is not the culture of ephemeral trappings, but the groundwork through which man lives in the world.

At the outset of Hamlet the prince learns of his task. He must kill his uncle, King Claudius, who has just assumed the throne of Denmark upon the death of King Hamlet, Hamlet's beloved father. The dead king returns from the nether regions to inform his son that his death had not been naturally caused as had been supposed, but that he was poisoned through the ear while sleeping. The murderer was none other than Claudius, his brother upon whom the elective monarchy fell. Not only has the throne been usurped via fratricide, but the murderer soon after married the between a brother and sister-in-law was considered incestuous. Hamlet had already been melancholic due to this "o'er hasty marriage," celebrated so soon after his father's death that "the funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the



marriage tables" (*Geeta* I, ii, 180). Hamlet's dharma --his culturally determined course of action--is obvious. In case he is unsure, the ghastly apparition of his father is there to remind him: "If ever thou didst ever thy dear father love--revenge his foul and most unnatural murder" (*Geeta* I, v, 23). Hamlet is bound both by cultural duty to remove a murderer from the Danish throne and by family duty to be a son to a wronged father.

At the commencement of the battle, Arjuna, the invincible Pandava hero loses his composure and his heart is wrenched in personal anguish at the sight of his beloved friends, comrades and revered elders standing on both sides. When he wishes to lay down his weapons in the battlefield, Lord Krishna who is acting as his charioteer confers upon him the highest of knowledge, commanding him to rise to the call of his duty and to destroy 'adharma' or unrighteousness. This long spiritual discourse on life and conduct, called the Divine Song of the Lord, comprises the *Geeta* philosophy. The Kauravas, hundred in number, represent the innumerable ungodly forces of negative tendencies within man's bosom, and the Pandavas represent the divine impulses in him which are seemingly less in number. A similar set up can be observed in *Hamlet* where Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Osric etc. represent the evil forces and Hamlet and Horatio represent the nobler aspects of human nature. The *Geeta* would interpret the clash between Hamlet and Claudius as not merely one of personal enmity but as a conflict between two ideologies as the Pandavas and the Kauravas. While Hamlet stands for moral purity and justice Claudius stands for covetousness and moral corruption and it is Hamlet's duty as a *Kshatriya* (one belonging to the ruling and warrior class) to oppose evil and fight for a just cause. The *Geeta* declares "there is nothing higher for a *Kshatriya* than to fight a righteous war" (*Geeta* ii, 31).

Like the Pandava prince, Arjuna, Hamlet faces a similar dilemma, although in a different context, culture and situation. Though motivated by different forces, both are reluctant to shed blood owing to their inner sensibility. However, in the case of Arjuna, the motivation has a philosophical backing and the *Mahabharata* is an openly declared war of wider consequences. Hamlet's war is a private undeclared war. Arjuna, a warrior and a man



of action suddenly becomes unwilling to take up arms against his own kith and kin when he comes to a full realisation of the tragedies of a fratricidal war. A picture of dejection, Arjuna puts forth a series of pacifist arguments against the terrible consequences of war. He discusses about unnecessary bloodshed, the sin of killing one's own kinsmen, annihilation of cultural values, destruction of family units, moral decadence and the general evil that creeps into society—all of these resulting in a total chaos (*Geeta* v: 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 & 43). The resemblance between Hamlet and Arjuna is striking. Both are heroic men who are reluctant to kill other people. At the beginning of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Arjuna tells his chariot driver, the God Krishna:

Krishna, Krishna,
Now as I look on
These my kinsmen
Arrayed for battle,
My limbs are weakened,
My mouth is parching,
My body trembles,

I can stand no longer:
Krishna, I see such
Omens of evil!

Hamlet expresses the same feelings about being obligated to commit murder. At the end of Act I, Scene 5 he says to himself:

The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!



Later he even seems to be contemplating suicide rather than carrying out his promise to assassinate King Claudius. This is in his soliloquy beginning with:

To be or not to be: that is the question.

Both Arjuna and Hamlet are perplexed about their conflicting feelings of duty and humanitarianism up until the ends of the famous works in which they are featured. No doubt they would understand each other very well if they were able to meet. Both of them have bitter enemies, yet both can feel compassion for their enemies because they understand the good and evil that exists in all human beings, including themselves.

Arjuna's unwillingness to fight on the battlefield is considered by Krishna as an infatuation, not the right sort of judgement (*Geeta* ii, 2). Because Nature will compel him to do this action, it is better that he fights willingly, irrespective of success or failure, victory or defeat (*Geeta* ii, 47). So like Arjuna the *Geeta* would advise Hamlet to fight vigorously with the right attitude of mind, as running away from the duty enjoined on him would only lead him to moral dissipation. According to this Holy Scripture, life means activity. Inactivity leads neither to progress nor to regress, rather to stagnancy. It is therefore periods of activity that create man. Ancient philosophers classify activity into two kinds—constructive and destructive. Constructive activities that contribute towards the evolution of the individual are termed as *karma* and can be sub-divided into three main kinds; *nitya*—constant duties, *naimittika*—special duties on special occasions and *kamyas*--work purposeful and self-determined for winning a desirable result or reward.⁸ Destructive activities are totally condemned in the ancient scriptures, as they tend to degenerate the individual and are called *vi-karma*. Lord Krishna in the *Geeta* completely rejects “inactivity” or *a-karma* and says, “he who, sits restraining the organs of action is a man of deluded intellect or a hypocrite (*mithyacharya*)” (*Geeta* iii, 6). Like Arjuna, the *Geeta* is a call to Hamlet to resort to positive action or *karma* and cast away his gloom, which can only result in *a-karma* (inaction). The task assigned to both Arjuna and Hamlet falls under the specific category of *kamyas* i.e. work



purposeful and self-determined for winning a desirable result or reward. This is the highest kind of *karma*. Claudius' vile deeds, on the other hand as also his sycophants are obviously destructive activities or *vi-karma*.

The *Bhagavad Geeta* says that the absolute or ultimate Reality is pure consciousness and bliss in nature that is changeless and beyond transformation. In its pure form it is beyond time and space, but it also recreates itself as it were in a playful state (*lila*) and this it does by assuming Nature (*Geeta* xv: 12 13 &16). The absolute Reality is self-illuminating and as such it is knowledge itself. In its playful desire it intends to recreate itself. Similarly, in case of human beings any action depends upon his desire to perform this act. Again, his desire to perform this act depends upon his knowledge of the action. For example one cannot have a desire to write a book unless he has the knowledge of a book and of writing a book. Once he has this knowledge he might express the desire to write a book. So only the right knowledge can result in the right action. Knowledge can be of three types: the pure or good, the passionate and the dull. That knowledge by which one sees the one indestructible Reality in all beings, undivided in the divided, is known as *sattvic* or pure (*Geeta* xviii: 20). Though different living creatures have different forms the *sattvic* knowledge recognizes all of them as expressions of one and the same Truth, which is the essence in all of them.

Once on the battlefield Arjuna dwells on those with whom he must fight; instantaneously an "I" arises, attached to them by opposition in circumstance. The desire takes form as either attraction or aversion to the sense objects; in this case, Arjuna wishes to avoid fighting against people he is attached to. But he forgets how he is attached to them in the first place, how all things are unified through a common ground, and is thus unable to discriminate between correct and incorrect action, between dharma and adharma. A human immobilized by crisis resides in hell. Like Arjuna, Hamlet suffers from immobility; he cannot kill his uncle though he must. Unlike Arjuna, however, his personal crisis is never resolved



and reoccurs throughout the play. He thinks himself into and out of acting, and amazingly, sees the process as it happens.

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murdered,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
must (like a whore) unpack my heart with words
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
A scullion!
(II, ii, 591-5)

Hamlet's dark and muddled culture provides no method for obtaining the vision of Krishna. Still, it seems that he has gleaned some knowledge by the end of the play. The near-death encounter with the pirates along with the discovery of the king's execution order have jolted him. There are two indications of this. One is his apologetic attitude toward Laertes, first mentioned to Horatio:

But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself:
For by the image of my cause I see
The pomaiture of his.
(V,ii, 82-5)

Hamlet, in killing Leartes' father, has put him in the same position of having to avenge a murder. It takes all of Claudius' guile to prevent a rebellion led by him. Even Hamlet is sobered by the realization of the dire consequences of his activity. Even so, Hamlet's apology to Laertes carries a slight tone of affectionate condescension.



Was't Hamlet wronged Leartes? Never Hamlet.
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.
Who does it, then? His madness.
(V,ii, 234-8)

This is not the same elimination of agency that Krishna advocates in the Geeta. Hamlet merely bifurcates his being so that one will shoulder the blame for the other. Still, the Hamlet of the final scene has for the most part forsaken personal ambition and desire, and is able to act, albeit too late to alter the tragic outcome. This is how he responds to Horatio's misgivings about the fencing match:

Not a whit, we defy augry; there's a special
providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now,
'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it
be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all.
(V, ii, 218-21)

I have focussed on the Indian philosophy of action highlighting particularly the doctrines of the *Bhagavad Geeta*—a text that forms the very foundations of the philosophy of action. Taking a lesson from Krishna's voice that each and everyone should perform action suitable for his own social division, I study the character and actions of Hamlet most suitably as that of a *Kshatriya* (warrior class). In my interpretation, Hamlet is a *Kshatriya* hero, who is



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young, conscientious, generous and sensitive. He is determined to avenge the murder of his father and waits for a proper time and situation. Ultimately he is successful though at the cost of his own life. When Hamlet is read in the light of the philosophy of the Bhagavad Geeta it can be clearly understood that the hero rises to a level of a tragic hero and becomes a man of action when he decides to sever all egoistic desires which include his personal vengeance towards Claudius. The supernatural intervention and its advice can be likened to the advice offered to Arjuna by Krishna in the Geeta. In a similar manner Arjuna is asked to take part in the *Kurukshetra* war in an attitude of total detachment from his enemies as well as negative emotions. The initial inability of the heroes symbolizes the initial inability of men to cope with the new situations and the gradual adjustment with it. The literary works reflect the frigidity and rigidity of modern man towards his own endeavours and impediments, until he is soothed by the philosophical elixir.

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Hamlet: A Psychoanalytic Point of View

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Abstract: Freudian exploration of the unconscious altered the interpretation of *Hamlet*, Shakespeare's seminal work. What was intended by Shakespeare to be performed on stage took a significant turn when the fictional characters were introspected and inspected in a psychoanalyst's couch. This paper is an attempt to critically map the psychoanalytic approach to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as a psychopathic drama. The tangled nature of Hamlet's unconscious, his oedipal desire and the autobiographical recoiling of the impossibility of desire becomes the foundation for a psychoanalytic approach of *Hamlet*.

Key Words: Hamlet, Freud, Lacan, oedipal, desire, phallus, unconscious

In "Psychopathic Characters on the Stage," Freud historically presents the development of western drama suggesting a decession from Aristotelian emphasis on catharsis of emotions and tragedy as the stimulation of "terror and pity." To invoke pity and fear and effect catharsis of the emotions is "opening up sources of pleasure and enjoyment from within the sphere of life, just as wit and the comic do from within the sphere of the intellect, through the action of which many such sources had been inaccessible" (Freud, "Psychopathic" 144). The release effected by discharge and the sexual excitation that lift one's psychical state unlocks the different foundations of pleasure in our emotional life. The witness of performance evokes in the adult, the hope of being gratified and aspire to "occupy a central place in the stream of world events" (Freud, "Psychopathic" 144) and "to feel, to act, to mould the world in the light of his desire" (Freud, "Psychopathic" 145)—wanting to be a



hero. The conflict between the attentive impulse and repressed demands the audience to be a neurotic because pleasure is derived from the “revelation and recognition” of repressed impulses laying foundation to the psychopathological drama. Love, in psychopathological drama, is about repressed love that encompasses range of conflict situations and experiences. Moreover, psychological drama becomes psychopathological “when the suffering which we are to share and from which we are to derive pleasure is no longer a conflict between two almost equally conscious motivations, but one between conscious and repressed ones” (Freud, “Psychopathic” 146-7). The contingencies of pleasure are neurotic from the perspective of the audience because it is the audience who discharge the conscious identification of suppressed motivation by making “unacceptance.” Conversely, the non-neurotic positions the “unacceptance” through encouraging a willingness to replicate the act of repression. In the neurotic, the repression is deteriorating and unsteady necessitating an effort to identify through a struggle fabricating pleasure and resistance.

Hamlet, for Freud, is one of the finest instances of modern psychological drama, “where “within the soul of the hero himself that there takes place an anguished struggle between various impulses—a struggle which must end, not with the downfall of the hero, but with that of one of the contending impulses, in other words, with a renunciation” (Freud, “Psychopathic” 146). *Hamlet* explores the psyche of a common man, whose undertaking of a particular task makes him a neurotic. A man whose is embedded with impulse of the “repressed seeks to assert itself” (Freud, “Psychopathic” 147). *Hamlet* has three features: a) the hero is not intrinsically psychopathic but he becomes so in the course of his mission b) repression is universally embedded in all of us but the play breaks such repression because we could easily identify ourselves in the hero and “we are victims of the same conflict as is he; since ‘he who doesn’t lose his reason under certain provocations has no reason to lose’” (Freud, “Psychopathic” 147) c) the challenge of repression is to be conscious and identifiable in creating an intense emotional attachment to the characters. Consequently, the



emotional association overpowers rational judgement and resistance. As a result, the conflict in *Hamlet* is deeply veiled.

Any work of art, with its artistic excellence, is an enigma because it brings out the emotions of audience. Therefore, Freud approached literary creations heuristically and psychoanalytically to explore the psyche. Within in *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*, Freud finds the connection for a trajectory of the dynamics of mind. Freud's identification of "Hamlet's Oedipus complex" is said to be the finest contribution to Shakespearean scholarship and *Hamlet* "helped Freud formulate the conception of Oedipus complex which turned out to be the cornerstone of orthodox psychoanalysis" (Holland 165). Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* steered Freud's "self-analysis" (Holland 165). Freud locates the Oedipal relationship as a childhood experience, "the gripping power of *Oedipus Rex* and perhaps *Hamlet*" (Gay 100). The cathartic effect of oedipal desire is explained by Freud: "Every member of the audience was once a budding Oedipus in phantasy, and this dream-fulfilment played out in reality causes everyone to recoil in horror with the full measure of repression which separates his infantile from his present state" (Freud *Letters* n.pag.). Oedipal desire pushes the audience to dodge the present reality as an outcome of repression. To decipher this destiny, which inevitably lined with tragedy, the author influences the audience with a neurotic creation:

From understanding this tragedy of destiny it was only a step further to understanding a tragedy of character—*Hamlet*, which had been admired for three hundred years without its meaning being discovered or its author's motivated guessed. It could scarcely be a chance that this neurotic creation of the poet should have come to grief...over the Oedipus complex (Freud *Letters* n.p).

In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud explores the guilt consciousness in Hamlet, his incestuous desire towards his mother and his intention to dislodge his father. While Oedipus



explicitly carries out his desires, Hamlet keeps it repressed. The dramaturgy of *Hamlet* aids in bringing to fore the repressed desires of Hamlet closer to the audience by gratifying themselves artistically. The hero is troubled by a determined complex that is veiled within him, which in turn affects the audience clandestinely as the play is performed. Freud also identifies in Claudius, the murderer of Senior Hamlet, the protuberance of Hamlet's suppressed desires. By being the stepfather of Hamlet, Hamlet could guide his death wish against Claudius without repressing his desire to kill. Accordingly, Claudius becomes the ledge of the *id* which Hamlet explicitly chastised for his incestuous desire towards his mother and quenched his patricidal impulse. The conflicts within *Hamlet* are obscured for the audience to uncover. Oedipus becomes a deliberate tactical point for Freud to associate *Hamlet*:

What is it, then, that inhabits in fulfilling the task set him by his father's ghost?" "Hamlet is able to do anything—except take vengeance on the man who did away with his father and took his father's place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of his own childhood realized. Thus, the loathing which should drive one to revenge is replaced by self-reproaches, by scruples of conscience, which remind Hamlet that *he himself is literally no better than the sinner whom he is to punish*. Here I have translated into conscious terms what is bound to remain unconscious in Hamlet's mind. (*The Interpretation of Dreams* 265)

To censure Hamlet is to denounce oneself and one's intensely unconscious childhood desires. The question here is: What childhood desires relate to Hamlet's aspirations? What if the childhood desires are not realized? What unconscious motif of Hamlet's mind could be appropriated in an audience' childhood desires given the fact that *Hamlet* is a fictional character? Is there a tangible Hamlet or real childhood? "If there is an unconscious, it could not be the unconscious of Hamlet. It might be the unconscious of the author or the unconscious of the reader. But certainly, there is nothing to Hamlet except Hamlet of the



text” (Rieber 50). The possibility of Freudian interpretation, in spite of the association of the childhood unconscious, fashioned a kind of reality in tackling Hamlet. Goethe advocates that the cause for Hamlet’s indecision was his “reflective powers” that had been evolved as a stagnation of action. The indecisive action that emerges as a moral and physical failure is not of a person who is incapable but a person with reason that cannot perform his duty. Therefore, there might exist a “nonfactual motive and a nonfactual childhood” (Rieber 51) in Hamlet. The question: is there a Hamlet apart from Shakespearean text remains debatable. The personalities created by Shakespeare stand independent without being affected by Shakespeare. The interpretive motives and childhood experiences, however, can associate latently in the makers mind to form an organic creation.

The split consciousness allowed Freud to connect Hamlet’s wacky jaunts to dream life. Hamlet’s delay in killing Claudius is because he subconsciously recognizes with father’s murderer. Freud assumes that Hamlet might have considered killing his father out of his passion for mother. Hamlet is unaware of his inner conflict, his conscious mind is willing to avenge his father’s murderer but his unconscious mind prevents him from making a murder. Hamlet’s inner conflict, however, is not only directed towards Claudius but also to the other characters with whom he is in contact with. For instance, his rash and conflicting admonishments of Ophelia. Ophelia, Hamlet assumes, is at once pedantic and lustful. Hamlet says: “Get thee to a nunnery.” (3.1.121). Hamlet as a “self-acting agent” continuously attempts to recognize to put his intentions into action. Freud maintains a competitive spot where the son and the father aspiring for mother’s affection and daughter and mother aspiring for father’s affection. The demerit of attributing the author’s psychology into Hamlet is “of becoming reductive” (Berg 91). When Hamlet gets to know about father’s death, he is dejected and desperate. Such a moment is recognized by Freud as a Hamlet’s desire to murder Claudius which unconsciously pursues in an attempt to possess and dispossess himself. However, Hamlet is vulnerable:



Hamlet can do anything – except take revenge on the man who removed his father and took the latter’s place beside his mother, the man who shows him his own repressed infant wishes realized. The revulsion that should urge him to revenge is thus replaced by self-recrimination, but the scruples of conscience which accuse him of being, quite literally, no better than the sinner he has to punish. I have translated into conscious terms what is bound to remain unconscious in the hero’s psyche; if anyone wants to call Hamlet a hysteric, I can only acknowledge that it is an inference my interpretation admits. The sexual revulsion which Hamlet expressed in the dialogue with Ophelia is congruent with it. (Freud qtd. in Rabaté 28).

The text of *Hamlet* presents no reasons for the hesitation of Hamlet in fulfilling the task of revenge. The usurper of father’s throne and the one who took away his mother has to be avenged is what the ghost imposed on Hamlet. Murder of Hamlet’s father and sexual possession of Hamlet’s mother by Claudius incurs a punitive action. The hostility directed towards Claudius and the following repression is in the direction of oedipal construct that corresponds hatred towards his father. Whereas “retaining the notion of hostile wishes and the self-reproach attendant on their repression, Freud reconstrues them in such a way as to eliminate the fact of death. Thus Freud’s Hamlet suffers not from grief, but from an inability to cope with his incestuous impulses” (Sprengnether 24). The strangeness of Freudian reference to Hamlet about the instance of relinquishing points towards bad reliance. The readiness designates Hamlet’s awareness for death which is uncharacteristic of the oedipal desire:

the inborn desire to sexually possess the mother’s body has not been successfully repressed in Hamlet, and it is these desires that drive him to distraction—he lives in and through them unconsciously his entire life. The sexual desire for the mother—along with the attendant rage at the father, who stands between the son and the mother—surfaces in a tangled and confused



way in the form of what Freud calls Hamlet's "melancholia," his hysterical depression. (Zornado 41).

Freud presents Hamlet's melancholy as "a double emblem of grief and patricide" (Lupton and Reinhard 11). Hamlet's mourning is associated as a precipitated subject, object and other. Oedipus complex was understood by Freud as an influence of "melancholic sign of Saturn." Mourning, though fundamentally from a Freudian perspective is pathological, melancholia is deferred from being pathological. Mourning was assumed to be as "transference" of childhood experiences. Such experiences are open to interpretation as it recurs in its lesser form. Therefore, mourning is a stage of self-inspection. Moreover, mourning can also reappear as a "kind of failed revenge tragedy, in which "the idea of retribution" is inflicted on the self" (Lupton and Reinhard 13). The self-inflicted punishment transpires through recognition which re-shapes the son or daughter in the representation of the dying parent: "the mourner's mimetic symptoms constitute "mode of thinking"" (Lupton and Reinhard 13). Freud relates the love of the mother and jealousy of the father to *Oedipus* and *Hamlet*:

Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, has its roots in the same soil as *Oedipus Rex*. But the changed treatment of the same material reveals the whole difference in the mental life of these two widely separated epochs of civilization: the secular advance of repression in the emotional life of mankind. In the *Oedipus* the child's wishful phantasy that underlies it is brought into the open and realized as it would be in a dream. In *Hamlet* it remains repressed; and—just as it would be in a dream. In *Hamlet* it remains repressed; and—just as in the case of a neurosis—we only learn of its existence from its hibiting consequences" (Freud SE 4: 264).

From this perspective history transpires from the apparent and mythic demonstrations of a wish to be restrained and defaced narratives where the wishes remain unfulfilled. Freud thinks that he has "translated into conscious terms what was bound to remain unconscious in



Hamlet's mind" (SE 4: 265). To consider *Hamlet* in relation to *Oedipus* is a metaphorical act. *Hamlet*, with its metaphorical alteration, refers to a systemic sequent that substantiate the convincing archetypal meaning. The hermeneutic exploration might bring out a "dynamic appropriation" that the oedipal formation of unconscious desire is less effective in the scenes of mourning. *Hamlet's* mourning scenes puts off Aristotelian desistance and prohibit remissive oedipal interpretations. There is, as Lupton and Reinhard recognizes, a connection between mourning and autobiography in the oedipal desire: "...*Hamlet* was written immediately after the death of Shakespeare's father (in 1601), that is, under the immediate impact of his bereavement and, as we may well assume, while his childhood feelings about his father had been freshly revived. It is known, too, that Shakespeare's own son who died at an early age bore the name of 'Hamnet', which is identical with Hamlet" (SE 4: 265-6).

Hamlet, consequently, is a Shakespearean self-statement of bereavement than an explicit portrayal of oedipal desire. Shakespeare's naming of his hero Hamlet after his son Hamnet and himself as the dead father is an ambivalent recognition of the father-son constitution that rave against oedipal desire exposing the "melancholic self-reproach." The re-presentation of a self-analysis through Hamlet is not an apparent self-authenticating influence on the audience that connects the author. The self-authentication of autobiography is a metaphorical rupture that influence "interpreting subject, literary object, and authorial ground" (Lupton and Reinhard 17). Shakespeare's presentation of Hamlet is a stratified presentation that is identified with an anguished son who draped his murdered father:

Hamlet as an autobiographical mask and excludes it by denying Shakespeare's authorship and by ejecting the quotation into the interior exterior of the footnote. *Hamlet*, the tragedy around which mourning is theorized in psychoanalysis, itself becomes an object of textual displacement and mourning. Finally, pre-Oedipal mourning tends to disappear silently into and be restructured by the Oedipal triangle. This disappearance is repeated by Freud's subordination of *Hamlet* to *Oedipus Rex*, and, with regard to *Hamlet*,



by the institutionalization of the Oedipal reading, at the expense of the melancholic (Lupton and Reinhard 26).

Is Hamlet's unconscious deliberations about Claudius deciphered authentic? The oedipal declaration alters an evolution from the imaginary recognition of the phallus and the duplicity of interconnection with mother to the symbolic recognition with father's plural familial network. The familial relations corresponds to the uncertain negating the paternal and maternal figures. Freud maintains that to lose "object deprives the individual of the love necessary for growth and nurture" (Camden 169). Moreover, Freud views repression as a recoiling from the animosity that is directed from parents. Such antagonistic feelings would twirl "inward, producing feelings of guilt and unworthiness" (Camden 169).

Hamlet is a subject tangled in his own pathology because of the self-influential obscurities of oedipal desire. Hamlet is overwhelmed by disproportionate thoughts that fabricate definite retrenchment within a situational crisis. The desire could be deciphered as 'lack' that inspires the subject to aspire for 'more.' The significance of desire configures a "speaking subject" where the object is caused to desire in action inclining to the "phallus." Freudian psychoanalysis does not explicate phallus neither as fantasy nor a retentive effect. However, phallus is a signifier in the process of a much larger signification that is invincible. The oedipal desire corresponds to the mislaid mother and the intention of the child to associate closely with the lack in the mother. The signification of phallus, however, relates to the identification of the object that the mother is lacking. Whether the subject becomes an irreducible affect as in the case of Hamlet is dubious. Nevertheless, the relationality of the subject (Hamlet) and the intentionality of the object (Gertrude) reaches an imaginative moment as selected not as the "object of desire" but "object in desire" (Lacan, Desire 22-3). What Hamlet is deprived of is his life which phallus as signifier does not signify in the process of signification because of the occurrence of the estrangement in signification.



The subject that is disadvantaged is the signifier, a particular object within which the oedipal desire of a character becomes of an object of desire (as in the case of Hamlet). Hamlet is a cleft subject in relation to the object that causes his desire. The imaginative indicator of desire is progressed through the unattainable object of desire. The association between divided subject and the alienated object refers to a functional lack that is authored by fantasy. Hamlet, the subject is a cognominate of desire that aids the object towards the less obvious. Therefore, as Lacan observes, *Hamlet* becomes a tragedy of desire because a) Hamlet fails to act on time. He delays his action because of the desire for the other b) the phallic substitute in *Hamlet* is Ophelia. She is a lost object and attainable only through death c) the only way by which Hamlet is able to cope with repression is mourning the loss of his “phallic signifier,” Ophelia (See Lacan, “Desire”). The circumstances offers Hamlet with dependent desire for the object, (m)other and the phallic signifier, Ophelia. Hamlet’s intention to be attached with the (m)other is true and ideal because his father is dead and Claudius is a “degraded, despicable object.” Subsequently, Hamlet is speculating on what his mother’s desire could be. Such interrogative imagination prevents Hamlet to act by reverting his subjective intention to be caught within the desire of the other. It is for this precise reason, Hamlet “is constantly suspended in the time of Other, throughout the entire story until the very end” (Lacan, “Desire” 17).

Desire also becomes the subjective denial of action because the intention of the subject seeks an outside link whereby the language of the signifier is crippled. As a result, Hamlet finds himself in an indefinite desire that prevents him to escape from “too much” of the mother. While Hamlet is predominantly influenced by the desire for the (m)other, the subject demands a dependence on an undeviating attention from the audience. Hamlet’s mystery is Gertrude because of the omnipotence of the subject that relates back to the demand of the object. While Lacan consider it to be “moralistic,” Freud deems it to be an affect. Hamlet no longer has an ethical edge because of the incestuous desire that is exhibited to signify the phallus. However, the phallic signifier is stroked back through death, the tragedy of desire.



The importance of phallic signifier is enacted through the desire that is deprived of. When caught within the phallic object, desire and death, Hamlet could only murder Claudius. Claudius' death becomes a reprisal of Hamlet's death rather than concluding the revenge motif.

The failure of Hamlet is vivid: "Hamlet is clearly a failure—he cannot act on his desire, he can only perform the act he is obliged to perform when it is no longer her desire—and his success is to convince the audience that it is no failure at all, that we can still love him (Schneiderman 153-4). Hamlet's desires becomes conflicting of the other and unfathomable from the tangled nature of the (m)other. The fantasy of the oedipal desire intends to symbolically reconstitute the impossibility of phallus that carries an association with the unconscious. Ophelia, then, is not Hamlet's object of desire. Ophelia is an "imaginary phallus, as the cause of desire and the 'lure of being', giving Hamlet a delusion of being more than he is" (Muller 151). Therefore, Ophelia as a location of Hamlet's desire activates the "other of love." The *phallized partenaire* will develop into and represent a differential object of desire when Ophelia dies. Making Ophelia as his object *petit* involves a process: a) Hamlet undergoes an experiential aloofness or detachment because he was not able to directly involve her as an object of desire. Either he moves away from her or he pushes her aloof because he was not strong enough to exhibit his desire for her. Lacan points this aspect as an "estrangement" that is discernible in "the distance from the object that Hamlet takes in order to move on to whatever new and henceforth difficult identification, his vacillation in the presence of what has been until now the object of supreme exaltation" ("Desire" 21). Hamlet, thus, turns into a "depersonalized subject" who is "completely null and dissolved as a love object" (3.1.65) b) Hamlet exhibits his love for Ophelia through aggression towards the subject. The aggression towards Ophelia has made her into an object that is no more real but a symbolic for an "unconscious fantasy." In a typical Hamlet fashion, the love relation ends as a "horror of femininity." Thus, Ophelia is "the phallus, exteriorized and rejected by the subject as the very symbol of the rejection of his desire" (Lacan "Desire" 36) c) the



graveyard scene is a symbolic battle with the dead object which makes Hamlet a subject incompetent of desiring anything achievable. Accordingly, Hamlet desires make him an “obsessional neurotic” positioning him at the intersection of life and death.

Lacan observes that “the very structure at the basis of desire always lends a note of impossibility to the object of human desire” (“Desire” 36). It is within such impossibilities of desire Hamlet is tangled. In the impossibility of desire, the phallus cannot be purged because the urge is a nonentity. *Hamlet* signifies the mystification and abstruseness of human beings. It is incontrovertible that human beings are tangled in labyrinth of desires. The enigma that embeds Hamlet is the enigma of ours. The subjects that we are...is a lack and the lack generates the desire. Human beings are subjective, prorated and desiring, desiring that which does not exist, the phallus.

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Hamlet and Prospero as Philosopher Kings: A Utopian Fallacy

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Abstract Hamlet and Prospero are protagonists who are both philosophers and royalty and exude an aura of exceptional learning. Similarly in Book VI of *The Republic* Plato defines a philosopher firstly as its eponymous occupation, a wisdom-lover. It supports the idea that philosophers are the best rulers and Plato fashions the ship of state metaphor.. [A] true pilot must of necessity pay attention to the seasons, the heavens, the stars, the winds, and everything proper to the craft if he is really to rule a ship.” Interestingly in both the plays of Shakespeare, in terms of usurpation, a similarity can easily be drawn between Hamlet’s situation and Prospero’s. These plays reflect significant themes of authority and governance. Prospero, akin “to all princes whose depth of understanding accompanies or succeeds political failure” shares with Hamlet this ineffectuality. It is significant that Prospero notes that he prizes his books ‘above [his] dukedom.’ In one sense, he is emphasizing that the usurpation was a result not of his brother’s actions, but of his own inaction. However, he makes it clear that he had already chosen another path; “The government I cast upon my brother/ And to my state grew stranger, being transported /And rapt in secret studies...Me, poor man, my library/ Was dukedom large enough....”

The eponymous hero Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is a courtier, scholar, soldier who is adept with the sword, the word, and the lady, but lacks political ability, purpose, and strategy, qualities of governance requisite of a prince. Hamlet is seen as reluctant to enter the world of action: “he would rather be in Witten burg, with his books.” Prospero, on the other hand, after twelve years of imposed delay, is impatient for the day when he can finally erase the memory of his usurpation. Yet, it can be argued that his position too is imposed, he is reluctant to



enter the life of action and that he too like Hamlet “is a conscript in a war” who “has done things, as we all do in wars, he would rather not have.”

As the fundamental prerequisite to becoming a philosopher ruler in *The Republic* is to have knowledge of the forms, therefore knowing the truth. Armed with this truth, the philosopher rulers will always make the right decisions, and rule with total wisdom, justice and virtue. The Republic would be incorruptible, an absolute model of sensible world, perfection and justice. This is not however true in the context of the above mentioned plays, as the protagonists fail to live up to the platonic idealism and echo a utopian fallacy.

Key Words: Shakespeare, Plato, Philosopher king, Hamlet, Prospero, Utopian fallacy.

Plato writes in *The Republic* that society is created because the individual is not self-sufficient and no two individuals can ever be alike. These two important assumptions are the basis for Plato's ideal society, in which different individuals acquire an expertise in different skills. Plato proposed that philosophers are the ideal and perfect candidates to assume the responsibility of ruling the society, for he presumes only the philosophers have the potential to perceive and work toward the society's common good while avoiding influence from worldly desires in the process. But Plato's assumptions and proposals in this regard are not truly feasible and Shakespeare's plays *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* subvert the claim that philosophers should rule.

In *The Republic*, Plato argues that kings should become philosophers or that philosophers should become kings, as they possess a special level of knowledge, which is required to rule the Republic successfully. This paper will argue that Plato's argument for the philosopher kings' rule is neither persuasive nor realistic in theory as the characteristics of his ideal form of rule appear in stark contrast to Shakespeare's plays, *The Tempest* and *Hamlet* and reflect a utopian fallacy. To set out this argument, this paper will consider Plato's argument for the philosopher kings, as well as its limitations, and finally consider what characteristics of the philosopher kings' rule are not valid and seem unrealistic in terms of these two Shakespearean plays.



In Plato's work, *The Republic*, there is a systematic investigation of being, as *The Republic* itself is an attempt to answer a problem in human behaviour and most significantly theorises justice. To deal with the problem of justice, Plato considers the *ideal polis*, a collective unit of self-government, and the relationship between the structure of the Republic and the attainment of justice. Plato argues that philosopher kings should be the rulers, as all philosophers aim to discover the *ideal polis*. The '*kallipolis*', or the beautiful city, is a just city where political rule depends on knowledge, which only the philosopher kings possess, ignoring power altogether. Theoretically, it would be ideal if the Republic were ruled by knowledge, and not power and this is one of the major flaws of Plato's argument. As the question of who should rule emerges, to which the paper will conclude by saying that, in terms of Plato's argument, the philosopher kings should not be the rulers.

As Jonathan Wolff argues, "making political decisions requires judgement and skill. It should, Plato urges, be left to the experts." (67). Plato is not only stressing the idea that specialization is key to the running of the Republic, but also that philosophers were unappreciated in 420 BC Athens, and thus useless because the world would not use them and their knowledge. It also stresses the dangers of liberty and equality, as well as the unnaturalness of democracy. Plato's idea of specialization is also linked to justice, which he considers to be structural, as political justice is a result of a structured city, where individual justice is a result of a structured soul, and where each member of the *polis* has a particular talent or expertise for which he is predisposed.

Wolff also writes, "ruling ... is a skill" which requires special training available to few. (68). At the same time, philosophers must possess qualities that enable them to rule; for instance, they must be able to recognize the difference between friend and foe, good and bad. As philosophy becomes sovereign and the idea that philosophers must essentially be the connoisseurs of wisdom and learning and their wise rule symbolises justice. Similarly, justice is a virtue, as is knowledge, which requires understanding. Understanding refers to goodness, and thus, knowledge and goodness are one. The philosopher kings have virtue as they have knowledge, and thus, according to Plato, their rule is justified.



Plato's argument in *The Republic* is very much in line with how he defines a democracy which is the rule of the unfit. His argument may be valid, in the sense that he explains that these philosophers have "capacity to grasp the eternal and immutable" while common men are blind as they have "no true knowledge of reality, and no clear standard of perfection in their mind to which they can turn" (204-205). Ideally, these interest groups should have the necessary knowledge to bring about political change, but it is very hard to determine and quantify the necessary knowledge to bring about such change.

The fundamental prerequisite to becoming a philosopher ruler is to have knowledge of the forms, therefore knowing the truth. Armed with this truth, the philosopher rulers will always make the right decisions, and rule with total wisdom, justice and virtue. The Republic would be incorruptible, an absolute model of sensible world, perfection and justice. This is not however true in the context of the above mentioned plays, as the protagonists fail to live up to the platonic idealism and echo a utopian fallacy. Unfortunately, while Plato offers a very concrete and well defined method for producing potential philosopher-kings, he seems somewhat vague in his explication of how it would be possible to test them, to assure that they had achieved the wisdom necessary for them to function adequately. The dialectical discussion is key to both Shakespeare's philosopher-kings and also to testing them.

Hamlet and Prospero, both the protagonists are philosophising royalty and exude an aura of exceptional learning. In Book VI of *The Republic* Plato defined a philosopher firstly as its eponymous occupation, a wisdom-lover. It supports the idea that philosophers are the best rulers and Plato fashions the ship of state metaphor .. [A] true pilot must of necessity pay attention to the seasons, the heavens, the stars, the winds, and everything proper to the craft if he is really to rule a ship" (204). Although both Prospero and Hamlet are learned men and royal figures, they lack the ideal qualities fit to rule and seem good enough to be called only philosophers, rather than philosopher kings.

Prospero has to flee to an island, and Hamlet becomes a threat to his kingdom and he too is sent away to England. Prospero, being the ruler he was, epitomizes political failure and has a complete lack of understanding of how to become a successful ruler. Hamlet too is trapped



due to his indecision and procrastination and has no qualities which would make him an ideal ruler. It is significant that Prospero notes that he prizes his books 'above [his] dukedom.' In one sense, he is emphasizing that the usurpation was a result not of his brother's actions, but of his own inaction. However, he makes it clear that he had already chosen another path:

The government I cast upon my brother. And to my state grew
stranger, being transported .And rapt in secret studies....Me, poor man, my
library Was dukedom large enough.... (Act I, Scene 2)

Hamlet and *The Tempest* from the outside seem such different plays. The former is a tragedy and the latter, a tragi comedy but there are inherent similarities in these plays which are revelatory. Prospero has been wronged by his brother and forced to flee from his beloved kingdom to the wilderness of an island far away. Hamlet too has been grievously wronged by his uncle Claudius and is in an insular state of mind where doubt blinds his judgement completely. Both these characters are in a state of Aporia... a state of helplessness. Hamlet is stuck in the island of his mind where doubt and anxiety feed his imagination into inaction whereas Prospero is stuck in an actual island feeling the utter helplessness of his situation. All these features tellingly exhibit their lack of qualities to govern.

Shakespeare's *Tempest* exhibits certain Utopian tendencies and one of its main themes is the detachment of Prospero for a love of the study of necromancy. Following with the theme of Plato's *Republic*, Prospero is the philosopher king, ruling his small island in the way that he sees fit. Prospero represents Plato's philosopher king, as he shows himself as unwilling to rule because of his pursuit of magic. This magic seems beneficial if pursued correctly, but Prospero seems to abandon all other royal duties in pursuit of this. By becoming so devoted to his magic, Prospero becomes the aloof scientist that does not know how to take into account human nature. This is shown in when Prospero underestimates his brother's political power and will to rule, and Caliban's sexual drive. Ultimately, Prospero becomes totally immersed in his studies on magic.

Shakespeare's young Prince of Denmark, Hamlet too finds himself in a soup as he is unable to acquire the necessary intellectual and spiritual maturity which will make him fit to rule.



Torn between the conflicts of his heart and mind, Hamlet loses his sanity into the darkest depths of his psyche and he wilfully accepts his tragic fate, negating the greatness, wisdom and grandeur which symbolizes Plato's philosopher-king.

The play *Hamlet* unfolds amid political intrigue inside the Court and outside. Claudius is a powerful figure who dominates the Court at Elsinore. He is engaged in a psychological battle of wits with Hamlet, whom he regards as a threat to his new kingship. Hamlet is clever enough to know what Claudius is up to, but Claudius has power on his side. In these plays one can see fundamentally the central themes of authority and governance.

The eponymous hero Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, has all the qualities and he is good with the sword as he is with the word but unfortunately he lacks political ability, purpose, and strategy, qualities of governance requisite of a prince. Hamlet is seen as reluctant to enter the world of action, he would rather be in Wittenburg, with his books. Prospero, on the other hand, after twelve years of imposed delay, is impatient for the day when he can finally erase the memory of his usurpation. Yet, it can be argued that his position too is imposed, that he too was reluctant to enter the life of action and that he too like Hamlet is a conscript in a war who has done things, as we all do in wars, he would rather not have.

Walker Percy describes the problems of the scientifically transcended person as having, "a general fatuity in political matters, [and a] naiveté and credulity before tricksters" (117). Thus, one could argue that Prospero's aloofness and credulity are shown as manifestations of his "orbiting self" (114-115). Einstein's proclamation, "I went into science to escape the intolerable dreariness of everyday life" could most certainly be said of Prospero's escape from ruling to the study of magic (143).

In his studies of magic, Prospero's took his wife, daughter, brother, human nature, and his kingship and rendered as waste when viewed in lieu of his studies of magic. Thus, it seems that Antonio might be justified in his banishing of Prospero. After all, someone had to step in to fill the Prospero's place. This is because the scientist views the world through as a dyadic system of cause and effect. Perhaps this is the error of unbridled



utopianism, as the transcendent utopian sees the world as a series of exchanges between causes and effects.

Hamlet, rather than a tragedy of the early-modern self as Harold Bloom, Catherine Belsey and many others have recently argued, is a tragedy on the losing side of things, lamenting the demise of a political belief in man's ability to govern himself more by reason than by force. The first phrasing of the relations of reason and sovereignty occurs in *Hamlet* when Horatio, out of loving concern for Hamlet, calls out to him on the verge of the prince's interview with the "thing immortal":

What if it tempt you toward the flood, my
lord, Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff That beetles o'er his base into the
sea, And there assume some other horrible form Which might deprive your
sovereignty of reason And draw you into madness?" (Act 1 Scene 4 pp 69-74)

There are dangerous uncertainties regarding the sovereign rule at the close of *Hamlet*. Hamlet's sense of imperialistic culture subjects it to processes of ripening and rotting that not only level the political playing field but erase all human identity altogether. Shakespeare's plays indicate a critique and an abuse of power by the governing heads. *Hamlet* represents arguably the first mature fruit of Shakespeare's insight into what his own works as a playwright might contribute to contemporary critical debate on the nature and problems of human governance. Shakespearean drama aims to bring some light of justice to the dubious affairs of human sovereignty.

In *The Tempest*, Prospero tells his daughter on the unnamed island that he was originally Duke of Milan; but he was not content with being "a prince of power" (1.2.55); he became "transported and rapt in secret studies" (1.2.76-77). He never mentions why he became obsessed with "secret studies" and "prized" some volumes of his books "above his dukedom" (1.2.168). But from the fact that he gained magic power over the years on the island, we can infer that Prospero is actually like Faust, his "secret studies" are like Faust's secret contact with Mephistopheles.



As a human being, Prospero ought to be confined to his *human power*, which is to see, to hear, to feel, to think, and to do things like other human beings. Yet, he wishes to have *superhuman power* into the bargain. His studies in magic have finally made him a god-like being, as he has acquired the superhuman power to foresee things, to charm people from moving, to command spirits, to change fates, and to create the future at his will. Originally as the rightful Duke, Prospero did not have to struggle for existence when he was in Milan. Yet, he was obviously not content with the political/military power that his rank allowed him. He made himself obsessed with magic and that led him to neglect his ducal duty. Thus, he seemed to forsake political power in pursuit of supernatural power.

In seeking for infinite, supernatural power, Prospero is quite like Faust. Unlike Faust, however, Prospero does not make any deal with the devil, nor does he surrender moral integrity in order to achieve power and success. Although he is said to have done “secret studies” and to own a magic staff and some magic books, there is no mention that he has ever made any pact with Mephistopheles. Moreover, what he does on the island after he has divine power is not for such worldly pleasures as Faust has indulged.

His greatest pleasure, it seems, is to show the power of his necromancy. Readers may wonder why Prospero decides to forsake his “potent Art” by breaking his staff, burying it “certain fadoms in the earth” and drowning his book (5.5.50-57). As Prospero knows the limits of his power and it may be because he knows his magic is actually nothing but “rough magic” (5.1.50). It may also be because he knows that “We are such stuff / As dreams are made on” and power and man are both inconstant. (4.1.156-7)

The Tempest stands for Shakespeare’s vision of power, it is told partly in an allegorical manner and partly in a realistic/fantastic manner to depict the fallacy of the utopian ideals. The world of *The Tempest* is in fact the dramatic world of Shakespeare in miniature and shows Prospero as a failed philosopher-king. *Hamlet* brings into ironic focus an entrepreneurial kingship wielding the power of a state that has political domination or dominion but has no true sovereignty and honour, a kind of reason of state without reason, a dominion without justice. *Hamlet* makes evident a full-blown tragic politics of state reason.



As Wolff argues, “no one can be absolutely certain about anything at all. All claims of knowledge...are fallible” (70). Also, being a philosopher, and knowing about logic, ethics, metaphysics and political philosophy, does not necessarily make you an expert on the interests of the people like the plays portray. It is the people who, in theory, rulers are aiming to represent and support. Plato is obviously not concerned with a representative form of rule. Plato also argues that a specific education, available to few, will allow these few to become philosophers, but again this would create a ruling class that is not representative of the ruled. Arguably the real experts are those who are aware of the people’s interests.

Finally, the main flaw in Plato’s argument, which renders it highly unpersuasive, is the fact that he is describing and arguing in favour of what Voltaire defined as a “‘benevolent dictatorship’, where an enlightened despot, without the need to consult people, would nevertheless govern in their interests” (qtd. in Wolff 62). It is quite sufficient to state that power should not come only in the hands of the elite class and Plato argues in *The Republic* that “there will be no end to the troubles of states... humanity itself, till philosophers become kings in the world... and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands” (192).

Perhaps, Plato’s argument for a group of knowledgeable persons who have the ability to bring about happiness and justice in *The Republic* is ideal, but extremely unrealistic. As Aristotle argued, man is a political animal and it is inevitable for us all, not just for an elite of old men, to be interested, and have a say in politics, as it is a force which inevitably affects all. Plato’s argument is asking not only to be disinterested in the political process, but also to leave one’s rights and opinions in the hands of a benevolent dictator. For this reason his argument is not only unpersuasive but also unrealistic.

Accordingly, Shakespeare’s audiences are repeatedly invited to place questions of sovereignty and dominion within a conflicting framework of natural, civil and divine allegiances. His works show that social and cosmic powers, from below and beyond the monarch’s place in the human world, actively constrain the prerogative of princes. Only within a dynamic of social struggle does a master derive his power from those who serve.



First, in terms of dramatic conventions, like many Shakespearean dramas based on royal history, would require of any playwright frequent use of jurisprudential terms such as sovereign, sovereignty, liege, lord, law, reason, justice, and state. However, Shakespeare's choices in plot and diction more than simulate this royal speech. These imply a critical project carried on in the dramatic genre regarding the nature and function of governance which is layered very deftly in his drama.

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The Philosophy of Nothing: A multi theoretical approach to interpret *King Lear* with a thrust focus on Nothing'

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Abstract *King Lear* is seen as a conglomeration of several philosophical and theoretical thoughts, merged seamlessly into a unified whole. In particular, the word "Nothing" has a compelling significance that enables a multi theoretical interpretation of the play. From a polite 'Nothing' of Cordelia and a pompous 'Nothing' from Lear in the beginning of the play, to the Fool's ironic "I am a fool; Thou art 'nothing, and the invisible 'nothing' when Lear says, " I was everything" the word appears thirty four times in the play. Structurally, it serves as a connecting link not just for the plot to evolve but also traverses towards characters who jostle between having 'nothing' and having 'everything' not necessarily in that order. Denying property rights to a woman who refuses to proclaim unending love for her father raises Feminist questions, while Lear's mind pregnant with 'self love' crash lands on a realistic 'nothing'. His obsession with 'he gave all' but got back 'nothing', lends itself to a psychological understanding of the play. The power tussle between the have-all and the have-nothings points to well charted Marxist interpretation. However, the highest point of signification lies is the Existentialist Nihilistic reading of 'Nothing' that explains Lear's existentialist angst.

This paper analyses the significance of the word 'nothing' from a multi theoretical perspective.

Key words: Nothing, all, everything, fool, wise.

Introduction

According to AC Bradley, "the *peculiar* greatness of *King Lear* -- the immense scope of the work; the mass and variety of intense experience which it contains; the interpenetration of



sublime imagination, piercing pathos, and humour almost as moving as the pathos; the vastness of the convulsion both of nature and of human passion; ..." (202) and many more, make it easily one of the greatest pieces of Literature of all times. "*Lear* is a universal allegory ... and its dramatic technique is determined by the need to present certain permanent aspects of the human situation" claims LC Knights (2). Nevertheless, it remained grossly less popular than the other tragedies, so much so that the Restoration era, saw a meddling with the core of the story, - King Lear with a happy ending. It is only in the later years, especially in the twentieth century, that the richness of the play, its complications and compulsions were revealed by such great critics like AC Bradley, Wilson Knight, L.C. Knights and others. However, the ever expanding wealth of the play remains eternally elusive. If the fact that Michael Ryan has used the play to enumerate as many as ten contemporary literary theories is any indication, then the play is richer than what is conceived of it.

The focus of this paper is to reinvent a few interpretations possible through contemporary literary and critical theory with specific reference to the word 'nothing'. The word occurs thirty four times in the play, extensively used by Lear himself, ironically by the fool, and most notably by Cordelia whose 'Nothing, my Lord' (I. i) gets the action afoot. Others also use the word though with limited scope. From structural binaries of 'nothing' and 'everything', to Lear's obsessive and compulsive 'giving all and getting nothing', to the Marxist 'nothing' vs 'everything', to feminist 'nothing in the womb' and finally to the existentialist 'nothing', the word spells a whole new world of understanding of the play.

As Gloucester says, "the quality of nothing hath/ not such need to hide itself. /Let's see: come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles." (I. ii)

'Nothing' is indeed all revealing. Nonetheless, the fool nails it on Lear's forehead, literally and metaphorically.... "thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, /and left nothing i' the middle: here comes one o' the parings." (I. iv)

But Lear would not listen to him.



Nothing can also help Edgar disguise as Tom, “Poor Turly god! poor Tom!/That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am.” (II. iii)

Structural reading of ‘Nothing’

The structure of the play reveals the manner in which the different elements of the play are organised and arranged. They enumerate the relationship of these elements to one another. Structuralism proposes binary opposition which claims that there are certain hierarchically arranged theoretical and conceptual contrasts, generally attributed so by human logic. Such binary pairs include knowledge/ignorance, life/death, male/female, beautiful/ugly, speech/writing, rational/emotional, friend/enemy, signifier/signified, symbolic/imaginary and many more. As Ferdinand de Saussure states, the units of language derive their value or meaning from these binaries, wherein, each unit is in a reciprocal relationship with the other term (Fogarty, litencyc.com). Therefore the binaries are not in a contradictory relation but a structural, complementary one. For instance, we cannot conceive of righteousness if we do not comprehend unrighteousness. Another feature of these binaries is that, one dominates the other, as Pieter Fourie asserts (153). The binary oppositions lead to a deeper or second level of binaries that enable reinforcement of meaning. The concepts, hero and villain involve quite a few secondary binaries: good/evil, handsome/slovenly, loved/hated, victory/defeat and so on. King Lear revolves around the binaries of ‘nothing’ and ‘everything’, sometimes ‘all’.

The very opening scene of *King Lear* introduces the contrast between ‘nothing and everything’. Goneril and Regan, ‘love their father all’ much in contrast to Cordelia who has ‘nothing’ to say in the midst of blatant sycophancy. Consequently, Lear who has everything, endows nothing to her, while the other two get their share along with Cordelia’s, thus becoming the joint owners of Lear’s kingdom. Lear has unconsciously dropped the invisible ‘nothing’ upon himself. Having abdicated his kingdom, he loses authority, servants and eventually even a roof over his head. His daughters drive him out of their houses, though he gave them ‘all’. The pompous ‘all’ powerful King is a mere shadow of himself and is reduced



to 'nothing'! The swiftness of the fall from everything to near nothing is best illustrated by the fact that Lear's transit from his palace and later Goneril's house is complete in the First Act itself.

Lear is constantly reminded of the invisible 'nothing' by the fool. It is supreme irony when he claims that Lear is less fortunate than a snail, for it has its house over its head "not to give it away to its daughters and leave its head without a case", while Lear has 'nothing' over his head. Further, he adds that Lear has nothing inside his head too: "Thou should'st not have been old till thou hadst been wise." (I.v), raises questions as to who is wise and who is a fool? The relationship between Lear and the fool centres around 'nothing'!

'Nothing' dominates the Gloucester family too. Edmund had a birth worth 'nothing', while Edgar was driven away to 'nothing'. Gloucester could see 'nothing' in the world having lost both his eyes as a punishment for his betrayal in helping Lear to escape. With Gloucester and Edgar away, Edmund enjoys a brief 'everything', before his calumny is exposed.

Both Lear and Gloucester suffer mainly due to their indiscretion, though they blame it on filial ingratitude. It is the 'nothing' daughter and the 'nothing' son who save them and give a new lease of life to both of them, however short that may have been.

While structurally, 'Nothing' holds the plot together, Lear's mental disposition too centres around 'Nothing'.

Psychology of 'Nothing'

It is probable that Lear suffered from Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). According to Freeston and Ladouceur, this is an anxiety disorder where, unwanted, repeated thoughts, feelings, ideas, sensations (obsessions), or behaviours compel them to act in a manner not normal to them (336). Another point that is suggestive of OCD with Lear is that he has no control over his thoughts and behaviour.



Lear's obsession, shaved off all his glory, compels him to become fixated with his daughters' thanklessness. The 'monster ingratitude' that he attributed to Goneril, is symptomatic of the agony of fostering a thankless child". It is later transformed into 'filial ingratitude' when Regan too joined hands with her sister in driving him from the house and his senses. The tempest in his mind is reflected in the violent raging storm that ravages the night he leaves Regan's house. He tries to shun those thoughts, desires no more of them. Yet, they return to plague him. He calls upon the thunderbolts to singe his white head. He wouldn't tax them, for they owe him 'nothing'. He never gave them kingdom nor called them his children. His self-pity gets the better of him. He proclaims that he is a "poor infirm weak and despised old man" who has "two pernicious daughters". He reminds himself that he "will be the pattern of all patience. I will say 'nothing'" He then realises that "his wits begin to turn". Yet he craves to be alone! He promises to weep no more. It is their 'old kind father whose a frank heart gave all' (III.iv) that upsets him the most and repeatedly returns to haunt him. The invisible 'nothing' that they reciprocated to him torments his mind.

The tempest is also a revelation of sorts to Lear. He, for the first time thinks of those who have 'nothing'; their struggles to manage their lives in such circumstances. But these thoughts are short lived. Edgar brings back his obsession with 'nothing'.

His first words to Edgar is reflective of his obsession with 'nothing' at its best. "Dids't thou give all to thy daughter? And -art thou come to this?" Edgar's long discourse on his unenviable condition does little to disturb Lear from his compulsive obsession. He continues, "What, have his daughters brought him to this pass? - Could's't thou save nothing? Dids't thou give 'em all? The fool adds insult to injury as he is always wont to do. "Nay, he reserved a blanket else we had all been shamed."

Lear's obsession with 'nothing' persists quite unmindful of the raging storm or Edgar's rattles. Lear roars, "Death, Traitor! Nothing could have subdued nature to such lowness but his unkind daughters". Shocked and completely out of his wits, their rudeness and ungrateful actions recurrently revisit to hound him. He curses his own flesh for begetting such 'Pelican daughters'.



This dismissal of his own daughters, turning his blessings into curses, are precise those that give a feminist twist to interpreting the play.

Feminist Reading of 'Nothing'

A feminist reading of the play in general and with the term 'nothing' would appear to be farfetched. However, looking at Lear's showering of curses and abuses on his own daughters, no matter how insensitive they may have been in the treatment meted out to him, questions on domestic violence do arise. Crimes leading to domestic violence primarily have two key underlying similarities: The perpetrator is very often male while the victim is very often female.(criminal-justice.iresearchnet.com) Besides, these crimes aim to exploit and/or control the freedom of women from expressing themselves.

When Goneril refused to accommodate his train, he serves her with the choicest abuse.

Hear, nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen; that it may live,
And be a thwart disnatured torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt... (I.iv)



To put this in feminist perspective, it is not unreasonable to ask the old father to reduce the number of his followers. But Lear's overbearing frame cannot see reason in this. His quick temper has always been the cause of his own undoing. It is the same impulsive behaviour that made him give 'nothing' to Cordelia. He now wants 'nothing' to breed in Goneril's womb. If this is not abuse of woman, verbal violence, what is?

He trusted his other daughter to be of support to him. She was even less liberal with him, much to his distress. She would not allow more than twenty five of them that gradually came down to none. She would admit only her father and nobody else. She may not be entirely wrong in stating that her house cannot accommodate so many people on a stormy night. Wasn't it then Lear's choice to leave? It is at this point that Lear started losing his sense of balance. Much later in the heath, he rumbles,

Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds
about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that
makes these hard hearts? (III. vi)

While he wants nothing to breed in Goneril's womb, he wants to know what breeds about Regan's heart.

Right in the beginning of the play, his demand of expression of love from his daughters to win their dower, is a classic case of domestic violence. He refuses not only to part with his property to Cordelia for being true he even loses interest in finding her a good groom. Infact he banishes her from his kingdom – all for saying 'Nothing'.

Though these may not raise support and sympathy for the two older sisters, the fact that the victims of violence have been women and the perpetrator has been a male makes it interesting to view the play from a feminist perspective. Besides, his remark that Cordelia's



‘prices have fallen’ indicate Lear’s penchant for being materialistic, providing enough matter for a Marxist understanding of the play.

Marxist reading of ‘Nothing’

King Lear anticipates Marxism in ways not really imagined by the later day Marxists themselves. Historically, The Later Elizabethan and Jacobean era was the high water mark in feudal land ownership and the pride that goes with it. The play opens with the division of Lear’s kingdom, drawing clear boundary lines, earmarking the landscape and the rich natural resources that need to be divided among his daughters. Instead of attaching value just to the land, he credits value to the daughter who expresses maximum love for the father. She would get the richest share. Questions of equality or the lack of it rise automatically. The unequal division of kingdom also results in unequal treatment of the daughters for a petty infantile reason. Lear is every inch the feudal Lord. He expects typical feudal qualities like obedience, loyalty, duty, as use of words like “recreant”, “vassal” (I. i) identify him as a feudal. (Ryan, 122). Ryan (122) claims that Lear is less feudal than Cordelia, whose response smacks of the feudal loyalty better than Lear’s. “I Love you Majesty / According to my bond, no more nor less... I / Return those duties back as are tight fit.”(I.i) Marxist notions further spill over as Lear tells Burgandy that Cordelia’s “prices have fallen”(I.i).

Notwithstanding these, it is the equation of power with “everything /all” and powerlessness with ‘nothing’ that smells greatest of the Marxist flavour. Lear was all powerful, when he was still the king. He had ‘everything’. Cordelia was powerless when she had ‘nothing’. Goneril and Regan became powerful because they were bestowed with ‘everything’. Edmund became powerful when he had ‘everything’. Gloucester lost power when he lost his eyes. Edgar, bereft of power when he lost his father’s affection, parallels Cordelia, in much the same way. Both, misunderstood by their fathers were driven away with ‘nothing’. Both



continue to remain loyal despite this indiscretion and better still, return to nurse their fathers when they needed them most. As Lear tells Cordelia, they are “most rich being poor” (I.i).

Kent too is rendered a victim of the power vacillations. His loyalty to Lear though, remains unchanged irrespective of Lear’s position. When Lear has power he was treated with respect. Conversely, he was put in the stocks, when Lear started losing power.

Even nature exercises Marxism, if we are to believe Lear. The “pitiless storm” attacks the “Poor naked wretches” the “houseless heads” and the “unfed sides” more than those who are better endowed (III.iv).

A reading of the play with Marxist lens does reflect the shifting goal posts of ‘Everything’ and ‘Nothing’, while Existentialism and Nihilism reflect the despondency of Lear as he struggles to come to terms with ‘Nothing’.

Existentialist Nihilism, Angst in ‘Nothing’

Existential nihilism is the belief that life has no intrinsic meaning or value. It embraces the notion that all actions, suffering, feelings are senseless nothingness. As Sartre puts it, “To begin with man is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself.” (Sartre, 28) Consequently, the confrontation with nothingness causes excessive emotional anguish. Also referred to as angst, it is a negative feeling that stems from the experience of freedom and responsibility. Anguish is experienced in difficult decisions or choices that are borne out of exercising free will. Thereafter, life becomes a constant struggle between what man is and who he is?

Lear’s primary anguish however, is not filial ingratitude. It is his self- deception. He begins believing that he is ‘everything’, when his daughters knew he was nothing, how slenderly he has known himself as the following at the end of the opening scene of the play reveals:



GONERIL

You see how full of changes his age is; the
observation we have made of it hath not been
little: he always loved our sister most; and
with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off
appears too grossly.

REGAN

'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever
but slenderly known himself.

GONERIL

The best and soundest of his time hath been but
rash; then must we look to receive from his age,
not alone the imperfections of long-engrafted
condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness
that infirm and choleric years bring with them. (I.i)

Cordelia, has read her sisters well, and could clearly see what would befall Lear. But Lear too
much into his pompous self, banished her for being 'young and true', and paid the price for
his indiscretion.

The fool for his part, tries to instill some sense into Lear's 'nothing' head.

Fool

Can you make no use of
nothing, nuncle?

KING LEAR

Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool



[To KENT] Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of
his land comes to: he will not believe a fool. (I.iv)

Then Fool predicts this even before Goneril cuts Lear's train, but Lear's ostentatiously arrogant self-esteem refuses to pay heed.

The fool further warns, but in vain.

Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind;
But fathers that bear bags
Shall see their children kind. (II.iv)

He does realize his folly, but then, it is too late.

Anguish in *King Lear* transforms the individual anguish into a pure existential anguish of being and becoming. Lear's later anguish is the immediate upshot of ingratitude and betrayal. "Is man no more than this?"(III.iv) is the very essence of his existential anguish. Contrast this with "Hamlet's What a piece of work is man! How noble his reason!"(Hamlet,II.ii).

Lear goes on to add, "The unaccommodated man is no more but a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art, - ". (III. iv) This anguish forms the nucleus of the play.

Summation

King Lear has been among the greatest of plays of all times, not just for the theme of suffering through Aristotle's Hamartia, evoking cathartic reactions. If it continues to be popular today, in fact now more than then, one can attribute the popularity to the amount of interrogations the play, its, themes, dialogues, plot and characterisations permit the reader to



engage in. A sample interpretation is what is attempted in this paper. The Lear world is far too complex to make it a forerunner of any one theory. Indeed, as Dryden says, Shakespeare “had the largest and the most comprehensive soul”!

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Exploring Aspect of Emotion in Shakespearean Works

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Abstract This paper is an attempt to explore the emotional aspects in the characters of Shakespearean play there by bringing in the theory of Emotional Intelligence (which was popularized by Goleman (2004)).

The five components of Emotional Intelligence are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social awareness. Among these, self-awareness and self-regulation matter the most. But inability of to have an internal dialogue with oneself to regulate one's life will lead to a crisis. As his works hold a mirror up to life, it would be interesting to see how the heroes and heroines conducted themselves in terms of emotions which made them stand out among the rest in Shakespearean drama.

Key words Emotional intelligence, self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy.

Introduction

This paper first looks into aspects of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2004) and later looks into how this could be applied to certain characters in Shakespearean plays so that some insights into life could be gained by such an endeavour. Shakespeare's plays are a class by itself as it shows life both at its best and its worst. His tragedies show the dark side of life and his comedies the other extreme. As a gardener who is familiar with all flowers and plants, Shakespeare mirrors human nature as he witnesses them in daily life. His heroes are endowed with great potentials and dignity as Richard II and Henry V. Murthy (2009) states that Shakespeare has successfully employed his "ability to see both sides of every question and to



view with sympathy all sorts of conditions of men.” He has also been able to communicate all sorts of emotions that are common to humanity. This shows Shakespeare had an understanding of emotional intelligence which is much spoken about these days.

Meaning of Emotional Intelligence

In Frames of Mind, Gardner (1983) introduced eight different types of intelligences, one of which, ‘personal intelligence’ gave rise to the extensive development of EI. Further, Thorndike (1920) viewed EI through the lens of social intelligence which he suggested was the ability to empathize with others and succeed in human relationships. But it was in 1990 that psychologists Peter Salovey and Mayer coined the term emotional intelligence and defined it as “a subset of social intelligence which is the ability to monitor one’s own and others feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and use this information to guide one’s thinking and action.” The five components of Emotional Intelligence are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social awareness. Among these, self-awareness and self-regulation matter the most for a leader. Self-awareness enables him to understand how his feelings affect him, the people around him and his performance. It is only those who are not aware of these are prone to create an anxiety- provoking emotional situations for everyone around.

High Emotions in Shakespearean Characters

In certain Shakespearean tragedies characters meet a tragic consequence because they violate certain order and breach harmony. These men become victims to their own weakness because they are over-confident like King Lear, doubtful as in Othello, jealous like Hamlet and ambitious like Macbeth. They commit such ignoble crimes that ultimately destroy themselves. By the time they realize their follies it becomes too late for them to retreat from their consequences and ultimately fail to live up to their roles. So weakness of character is an



emotion and inability to understand one's own emotion and keep it under control is a gross flaw for men of such stature.

The importance of civility is a vital aspect required to maintain human relations. This code of conduct has not lost its importance even today. For instance, before avenging Claudius for having killed his father, King Hamlet, Prince Hamlet requests Horatio to observe Claudius while he watches the play to check if guilt reflects in his face. If he does react, he would decide to act upon the ghost's request to avenge his father's death.

In the play **Coriolanus**, the significance of society-centeredness is seen in Volumnia, the mother of Coriolanus. Coriolanus is full of self-pride and arrogance. But Volumnia is a typical mother of the ancient Roman days. She persuades Coriolanus having succeeded in war to go and speak to the plebeians and conduct himself well before them. Her strength and dignity is seasoned with sweetness and delicacy. But when the tribunes sentence Coriolanus to exile, she is filled with intense anger that she burst out her emotions like an insane lady. She curses Rome and the Romans for inflicting such a punishment on her son. But when she comes to know that Coriolanus plans to wage a war against Rome, she meets him with her daughter-in-law and grandchild to plead for the safety of Rome. Volumnia articulates a speech that makes Coriolanus relent and retreat. She is so noble a woman who is more concerned about the welfare of Rome and its people more than the victory of her son.

From the play, **King Lear**, one has to most importantly understand the character of King Lear. According to Hill(1975), King Lear is obstinate, rash and hurtful. Besides, he is known to "measure the merit of others by their confirmative will." It did not matter to him how his impulsive behaviour is going to affect others and even himself. He was incapable of appreciating others feelings as well. Thus he fails to find a common ground with Kent's argument. He expected the best answer from Cordelia and when his hopes were thwarted, his weakness burst out against his daughter. All this shows that King Lear did not have control over himself, nor the patience and ability to understand others from an EI perspective.



Portia, the heroine of *The Merchant of Venice* disguises as Balthasar, a man of law. In the course of the play the readers get aware of the fact that Portia has two reasons to cross-dress. First of all, she officially claims that the reason for her departure from Belmont in men's clothes consists in helping Antonio, her husband's best friend, who was not able to pay back the money he has borrowed from Shylock and who was consequently taken to court. Portia announces an additional reason for her disguise, namely experiencing the power to behave as freely as man. Additionally, Portia has to wear a male disguise because she is going to pretend to be a man of law and lawyers as well as judges were typical male professions to which Elizabethan women had no access. The third reasons for her trip in disguise rely on her to find out if her husband is loyal to her. Portia as a woman takes her male role very seriously, and comments on how she sees herself in man's role. Later in the court scene Portia obviously takes delight in her male role, which is shown by the fact that she is the only character present in the scene who actually dares to become active. Disguise gives her the necessary power to speak up in court. It is important to notice that Portia uses the law to defend Antonio, but at the same time she goes against the conventions of Elizabethan society by taking on a male disguise, an act which can be regarded as a risk of disturbing the Elizabethan social order. Moreover, in the course of the trial scene, Portia makes proof of her extreme cleverness, a characteristic which was also considered untypical of women. Her smartness is especially well mirrored in the way she reveals different aspects of the bond between Antonio and Shylock in order to defend the accused. It gives the audience the impression that Portia will eventually be able to outsmart Shylock because it will be impossible for him to cut a pound of flesh out of Antonio without him starting to bleed. She definitely beats Shylock's cleverness. The fact that Portia makes Shylock lose all his money and forces him to convert to Christianity hurts him significantly. At this instant, Portia experiences a real success because she makes Shylock suffer badly and simultaneously she manages to save Antonio's life. .



Of all Shakespeare's female characters, **Lady Macbeth** stands out - for her ambition, strength of will, cruelty, and dissimulation. At the commencement of the play, she has far greater strength of will than her husband. While he hesitates and is distrustful of his powers, she never wavers. She appears to be perfectly aware of her own strength, and of the influence which she possessed over the weak will of her husband

Macbeth himself shows the effect that her power has upon him, when he exclaims—

Bring forth men-children only,
for thy undaunted mettle should compose
nothing but males. (I. vii. 72-74)

Lady Macbeth knows quite well when she tells her husband to "leave all the rest to me," that by dissimulation and cunningness she could plan and carry out the murder of Duncan, so that no suspicion would rest upon either Macbeth or herself. When her husband returns trembling and terror-stricken from the murder, she never loses her presence of mind, but remains calm and even tries to allay his fears. On discovering that Macbeth has forgotten to smear the grooms with blood, and that he has brought away the daggers from the chamber, she bids him return and carry out the unfinished details of the plot. He firmly refuses to go. She carries out the fearful mission herself. On her return she again exhibits her self-possession. While the knocking is going on at the gate, she persuades Macbeth to retire to his chamber. Knowing her husband's weakness, she assumes the manly part, and calls upon the spirits to fill her with energy. She bids her husband to be resolute and fearless while committing treason against King Duncan. She plans the murder, she drugs the grooms and lays the daggers ready.

In *Othello*, the first climax of the drama is the disobedience of Desdemona. She leaves her house in the middle of the night to marry a man without her father's consent, not to mention that Brabantio, her father, was not even aware of her daughter's engagement.



Desdemona's personality shows essence and aptitude. On her first speech, in the Council Chamber, her father reminds her that she owes him obedience, she says: "I do perceive here a divided duty" (I.3, 183). Desdemona has strength of communication. She knows how to argue with the right words. Her point here is to prove that she has not done a mistake. About marriage, Desdemona states that she followed the natural order of things. A woman will leave her father and then follow her husband. Except in this case a woman did it without first asking for her father's consent or waiting for him himself to arrange her marriage. She has fallen in love, accepted a man's courtship and finally got married. All this took her courage, which is another sign of her unique personality. Desdemona is most generous. This can sound like a quality, but it ends up as a flaw. When she accepts Cassio's requests to help him acquire back his post, she gives Othello a call of her guilt. "If I do vow a friendship I'll perform it" (III. 3, 21). This is a grave fault because while she remembers Cassio's cause, she is completely unaware of her own. At this point in the play, Iago has already poisoned Othello and as much as she talks about Cassio, she gets herself into trouble. But when Othello shows violence by slapping her, she is most docile. This is the watermark of her personality. Her blind love and loyalty takes her step by step into Iago's trap. Desdemona's last chance to prove her innocence is by showing Othello that she is immaculate from any sin. Desdemona in her twofold character represents the women of the Elizabethan society. Women were expected to be submissive and obedient, but yet in Shakespeare's plays, they were superior in integrity. After all England had a Queen. Othello describes Desdemona as a life force that strives for order, community, growth and light. She is portrayed as an ideal figure of virtue. Cassio sees her as a creature of spiritual worth coming safely through the storm like a goddess. But unfortunately her good qualities are the very source of her undoing. She is concerned about others especially Cassio. Her concern for harmony and reconciliation is indicated by her final words where she states that she wishes to draw goodness out of evil and not to produce more unhappiness by trying to hurt her husband who has hurt her. Her final act and words indicate a total selflessness as she attempts to take the blame from Othello for her death, her love for Othello does not turn to hate, her love endures even to the point of death.



Conclusion

Shakespeare must have been concerned with humanism. He emphasized on human needs, their problems and on the whole was concerned about humankind as responsible, progressive and intellectual human beings. Human relations were important to him. The relationships between friends as in the Merchant of Venice, husband and wife as in Othello, Father and daughters as in King Lear or Father and son as in Hamlet are highlighted in his plays. If something went wrong in these relationships, it led to disaster. The bard also showed that weakness to understand one's emotion would finally lead to down fall. His plays showed the importance of human factor and characters with Emotional Intelligence acted rightly and those who lacked it did suffer at the end as in King Lear. One can in today's time, read Shakespeare's play from an EI perspective and see if Goleman's concept of Emotional Intelligence has a reflection in Shakespearean characters. This is a novel way to understand the bard's plays.

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Shakespeare and Death

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Abstract This paper explores the theme of Shakespeare and Death. Many Prolific writers have admired Shakespeare for his versatility. Undoubtedly Shakespeare has revolutionised English Literature. Many great writers had acknowledged him as their master. He was well known for his craftsmanship. He has been, he is and he will be inspiration for every generation. Shakespeare was a genius and nobody in a rich history of literature did not come any closer to him. His plays were read throughout the centuries and are being read even now. The universality of the Poet has parallel, the only book that could be comparable is the *Bible*, which still counts and is read throughout the world. Why is Shakespeare in this way universal? He had a lot of space and means to become the greatest but this was true for many of his contemporaries. The answers are very clear and have a lot to do with his unique style of writing as well as with his mastery of picturing the characters. Shakespeare was just one writer amongst many on London's thriving sixteenth and seventeenth century stage – but he's certainly one that has lasted! His work is at the centre of Britain's twenty-first century theatre industry, is constantly adapted for film, has been translated into hundreds of languages and is performed throughout the world today. Although great he was, but still could not save himself from the icy hands of death. Through this paper my intention is to commemorate the 400th death anniversary of Shakespeare and luckily present journal has too.

Key Words: Universality, Versatile, Shakespeare, Death, English Literature, Elizabethan Period.



William Shakespeare is one of the most important poets and playwrights in the history of English literature, even in literature in general. Every student of this language should be familiar at least with some of his works. Henry N. Hudson in *Shakespeare's Life, Art and Characters* claims:

Shakespeare by general suffrage, is the greatest name in literature. There can be no extravagance in saying, that to all who speak the English language his genius has made the world better worth living in, and life a nobler and diviner thing. And even among those who do not "speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake," large numbers are studying the English language mainly for the purpose of being at home with him. (Hudson 7)

As Joseph Quincy Adams writes in his book, no one can say precisely when Shakespeare was born. The year is known for sure. William was born in 1564. The precise date could be either Friday, April 21, Saturday, April 22 or Sunday, April 23. The Poet was baptized three days later, on Wednesday, April 26.

On Saturday, April 22, or Sunday, April 23, 1564, an important event took place in the Shakespeare home in Henley Street: a son and heir was born to John and Mary. A few days later, on Wednesday, April 26, he was baptized with the name "William." The entry in the baptismal register reads: "1564, April 26, Gulielmus, filius Johannes Shaksper". (Adams 21)

The period in which the Poet came to the world did not belong to the happy ones. Stratford became one of the places struck by plague, or the so called "Black Death." The plague came to Stratford in the summer of 1564 so the author was only an offspring. Shakespeare was very lucky to survive this. Fortunately the plague did not hit the house where the young author lived. He actually escaped from his tragic death very early. Samuel Schoenbaum in *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life* writes: "In plague the bell tolled most often for the very young and enfeebled old. Richard Symons, the town clerk, buried two sons and a daughter; in Henley Street, where the Shakespeares lived, Roger Green lost four children"



(Schoenbaum 26). It appears that nobody could escape this disaster. A lot of people died but Shakespeare and his family became an exception. One can only speculate, if some kind of divine intervention let Shakespeare live and let him become a genius of his time.

The story of William Shakespeare's life is a tale of two towns. Stratford bred him; London gave him, literally and figuratively, a stage for his fortune. In an unpretentious market-town he was born and reared in a house which has miraculously survived erosions by time and tourism. Before achieving his majority he took for his bride a local girl past the bloom of youth; she bore him three children, one of whom, the only son, died young. In London Shakespeare became a common player in plays, then a popular writer of plays. (Schoenbaum 3)

Marriage is one of the most important things in everyone's life and Shakespeare makes no exception. He married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of Richard Hathaway of Shottery. She was seven or eight years older. The question whether the marriage was happy or not cannot be answered but Anne gave William three children. The first daughter, by the name of Susanna, was born in May 1583. Almost two years after that Mrs. Shakespeare gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl. "Shakespeare took them to the Stratford church, and christened them Hamnet and Judith, after his friend Hamnet Sadler and Hamnet's wife Judith" (Adams 79). After the baptism of his two children, he left Stratford and set to a new life in London. Unfortunately for the Poet, his son died at the age of twelve, in August 1596. This unfortunate event definitely left its marks in Shakespeare's works as he was not prepared to face it.

The year 1616 did not start well for the Poet. He was surprised as well as angry about the marriage of his daughter Judith. She married Thomas Quiney who was six years younger. Shakespeare was not fond of this marriage and as it turned out, Thomas was far from being an ideal husband. Anyway, soon after the marriage Shakespeare got ill and this illness became a fatal one in the end. As it could be seen, the death was all around the Poet for the whole time those days. And, eventually, it came for him, as well.



Death was also stalking at the old homestead in Henley Street. On April 17, Shakespeare's sister buried her husband, William Hart, in the Stratford churchyard. Six days later, on April 23, the poet breathed his last - as tradition has it, on his birthday. The body lay in state at New Place for two days, and then, on Thursday, April 25, was interred, not in the churchyard, where his father and mother and other kindred had been laid, but in the church itself (Adams 472).

Shakespeare was a playwright, a poet, an actor, and a shareholder in his theatre company – a company that might perform one week for anyone who could afford a penny to stand and watch a play at the Globe, and for the fashionable courts of Elizabeth or James I the next. He understood how to take a familiar story and create tragic, hilarious, suspenseful, philosophical, challenging dramas with which people all over the world continue to identify.

Shakespeare was writing at a time before theatre technologies and complex stage design created visual worlds for theatre audiences and he created those worlds through language. He coined new words and phrases that we still use today and his rich, theatrical and poetic language can be both strikingly resonant and a challenge to access.

When young people watch or read Shakespeare today, they are pulled into a world that is both alien and familiar to them. In one scene, his treatment of love, jealousy, racism, mourning or power can seem strikingly relevant; in the next moment, the audience or reader might have to engage with concepts of religion, or family, or fashion completely different from their own. Shakespeare constantly challenges and confounds us: we might be asked to laugh in a painful scene or engage with profound philosophical questions in a comic one.

Watching, performing and reading the work of this extraordinary poet and playwright asks us both to challenge and celebrate our social and personal lives. Shakespeare can open up brave new worlds to young people and offer them fresh ways of dealing with familiar ones. His work can challenge our language skills and introduce us to new realms of poetic playfulness. He can extend our concepts of what fiction can do, and of what stories a drama



can tell. Working with Shakespeare can be challenging but is eminently rewarding, rich and fulfilling.

William Shakespeare became one of the most influential playwrights in English literature. Some critics still believe that Shakespeare existed but was not able to write so many works and that these were written by somebody else. Assuming that the author is a real historical figure and he really wrote all of the plays, and the majority of critics would agree with this opinion, his works and characters are interpreted in many ways. If we take Hamlet into consideration, for example, this character's ambiguity causes a lot of problems, when someone tries to interpret it. Hamlet looks like a complete idiot at first sight, but the reader cannot be sure whether he really is an idiot or only acts like one. He can really be trying to revenge his father's death by all means or he can only be trying to persuade everybody else that he is acting in his father's name and still act only for his own profit. His death, as well as the death of other characters in play, means the end of one sad era and the beginning of a new one.

Death in and around Shakespearean Time

Death always was and still is an almighty power that denies all differences between people. Every society has to deal with death because every other creature must eventually die no matter what. Shakespearean time was not different. Death was for many the only thing and hope that can make everybody the same, be it either a rich one or a poor one. But death, on the other hand, represented the power that brings the order of the world into a chaos (Hilský 476).

People at some times in history really needed to deny death, to hide it from the world and never speak about it. It could be the cause of our age when almost nobody is able to accept his own mortality. James L. Calderwood in his book *Shakespeare and the Denial of Death* writes: "On the whole, Middle Ages was not such a time, or if it was, the denial was accomplished so gracefully as to render death somewhat transparent. Transparent but by no means invisible" (Calderwood 9). Of course, death was connected to something bad,



especially when the person committed a bad deed. For those who lived virtuous lives death meant only a natural ending of something.

However, during the Middle Ages the principal cure for sin was hell. On canvas and from the pulpit, the nether regions were painted in such ghastly colors that death paled by comparison. Hell's full assortment of roasting, racking, boiling, flailing, and eviscerating was offered up in words, paint, and sculpture for the edification of those who lusted after sin. Death, on the other hand, though sometimes associated with Satan, was more often seen as the servant of God, doing his bidding. The spectre appeared as part of an inevitable and universal process, fetching Everyman to a final audit and settling of accounts. For the virtuous it was all as natural as the seasons. (Calderwood 9)

The look at death changed throughout the time very significantly. During the fifteenth century death became an obsession for the people. Death was horrified and hellified, all kinds of terrible pictures or murals appeared all around Europe. "Choreographed in paintings and murals all over Europe, the rotting mummies of the danse macabre promenaded their unbelieving partners toward eternity. Death's role in these dances graduated from gentleness toward increasing violence as the sixteenth century approached" (Calderwood, 10). The sixteenth century continued in this fashion but there appeared some kind of reaction to the obsession as well. The "invisible" death also made an entrance here. The important part of dying in the Middle Ages creates the so called *ars moriendi*. The man had to be prepared for his death in the best way he could. He was about to stand before his last judgement and he needed to prepare to face death.

Closer look should be made on the situation in Elizabethan England, to the second half of the 16th century and a few years in the 17th century. "In the late sixteenth century the sacred current flowed from both God and Queen, and it consisted in both grace and gold. But it had many other sources. And Elizabethans needed all the sources they could find after the breakdown of religious certainties occasioned by the Reformation" (Calderwood 12). People



in this era were obsessed with power and with the rank in society. They wanted to gain power no matter what it cost. Of course, when they get the power, they wanted to stay alive and, in the matter of fact, stay alive or deny death. Some of Shakespeare's characters could be examples of accumulating as much as they can by all means. "The art of being much or of acquiring much is fairly ardently practiced at all times. Certainly it is a passion of Shakespeare's characters, whether they seek to eat their way to greatness like Falstaff, hoard they way to it like Shylock, or slaughter their way to it like Macbeth. By these and many other means, the men and women of the plays heapwood on the sacred bonfire that keeps death at bay" (Calderwood 14). On the other hand, there are characters whose death is in some way inevitable in order to make the world better or to find peace, respectively. Hamlet, who has to die in his father's name. Romeo and Juliet and their unfulfilled love that ends in a tragedy which finally connects their two families together. And at last King Lear, who has to die to find peace and to connect with his beloved daughter.

Still there were some "tools" to make one immortal, or namely, to make the King immortal. The idea of "the King's Two Bodies" quickly spread throughout the Elizabethan England. The King had, next to his natural body, a state, mystical body (Body Politic). The natural body was mortal but his mystical, state body was immortal, making the King immortal as it was said even in their law system. Shakespeare used the metaphor of King's two bodies in Hamlet. The appearance of a ghost in the first scene can be seen as a state body, meanwhile the message about the murder of the King, that Hamlet gets from the ghost, contains a lot of information about the decay of his natural body.

The last thing one could do in the defence against the almighty and annihilating death were the funeral ceremonies. The funeral of a King, Queen or a Prince was a great event, played with strict rules clear scenarios. The position of the dead was enlarged because death itself erased his/her position in the society. Nobody could disturb this ceremony, it was taken even worse than the death itself. Going back to *Hamlet*, Hamlet is really offended by the marriage of his mother right after the funeral. The same thing happens to Laertes, as his father is not even properly buried despite being a high ranked officer.



Shakespeare, the Man of all Times

Shakespeare was a genius and anybody in a rich history of literature did not come any closer to him. His plays were read throughout the centuries and are being read even now. The universality of the Poet has parallel, the only book that could be comparable is the *Bible*, which still counts and is read throughout the world. Why is Shakespeare in this way universal? He had a lot of space and means to become the greatest but this was true for many of his contemporaries. The answers are very clear and have a lot to do with his unique style of writing as well as with his mastery of picturing the characters. As Hilský points out, Shakespeare did not invent the stories of his plays, he borrowed many of them. The thing is that he was able to implant his own rhetoric and style into works. Nobody else could imitate what Shakespeare does with the language. He mastered the play with the language, he works with nonsense and puns. He created the unique language of love in his literary works.

The other reason for Shakespeare's universality is the choice of characters in the plays. Characters like, Lear, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello or Lear's Fool and many others are the masterpieces of his works. They are so different that every other human can see himself/herself in any of them. Hilský says that Shakespeare created archetypes which address spectators and readers all over the world throughout centuries and works in every time as a mean of self-knowledge. This is perfectly true as people tend to be indecisive like Hamlet, they love their children like Lear or are jealous like Othello. Shakespeare's works are beautiful because everybody can find what they want in them. The interpretation of the plays is no easy thing and that is why many scholars still try to find something new and they are really successful. Shakespeare is, and always will be, the greatest author of all times.

A lot of writers try to tell the reader or the spectator how they should behave, react and think. Shakespeare does not do that. He only shows the people real situations. The reader/spectator creates his/her own opinion about the situation, the Poet does not want to give them his own will. Hilský writes: "Shakespeare's world is a stage, where Shakespeare placed a lot of mirrors – mirrors of the characters, mirrors of the plot, mirrors of the situations, mirrors of speech and also mirrors of the mirrors. But the mirrors cannot be



understood only as a reflection or imitation of a reality but mainly as mirrors of imagination” (Hilsky 29). Shakespeare’s works are beautiful because everybody can find what they want in them. The interpretation of the plays is no easy thing and that is why many scholars still try to find something new and they are really successful. Shakespeare is, and always will be, the greatest author of all times.

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Macbeth And Caligula As Despots: A Comparative Exegesis

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Abstract William Shakespeare, the “Sweet Swan of Avon” is not just a poet of England, but of the entire mankind. He has transcended our ordinarily imprisonment in the wheel of time and space and thus he has become the “Soul of the Age! the applause! delight! the wonder of our stage”. His uncannily familiar language portrayed the dreams, desires, frustrations, successes, failures, love and hopeless love and all other nuances in a character. He has carved a niche of his own by depicting the eternal verities which are universal in nature. He has become the rich heritage of man and we see the recordation of the heart- beats of the entire human race in his creative outputs. The paper endeavors to give a comparative sketch of Shakespeare’s King Macbeth and Caligula penned by the renowned French absurdist philosopher Albert Camus .The intended study will throw light on the commonalties and disparities, vaulting ambition and its dire consequences, power politics and tyranny existing in both the rulers albeit belonging to different age, custom, locale and language. This comparative approach aims to render a multi dimensional dissection of world literature which underscores the fact that when willpower is not guided by wisdom, the power is bestowed only in the terrible hands. Death, the great leveler shows the limitation of both King Caligula and King Macbeth in holding power. The proposed study will highlight the reasons which enabled them to “suddenly feel a desire for the impossible”. It intends to show that no sweet perfumes of Arabia can sweeten the hands with stains of any cruel kindness. The wicked men and women are, of course enemies of life. In tragedies, one or two heroes are sick of life, for they have passed through excruciating agony. King Macbeth’s exclamation underlines this



certitude. I would like to conclude the paper stressing that both King Macbeth and Caligula are a living proof of the truth by quoting the words from Shakespeare's Macbeth

“To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
and all our yesterdays have lighted fools
the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
that struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
and then is heard no more; it is a tale
told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
signifying nothing.” (V.v.19-28)

Keywords- King Macbeth, Caligula, vaulting ambition, power, tyranny.

William Shakespeare, the “Sweet Swan of Avon” is not just a poet of England, but of the entire mankind. He has transcended our ordinary imprisonment in the wheel of time and space and thus he has become the “Soul of the Age! the applause! delight! the wonder of our stage”. His uncannily familiar language portrayed the dreams, desires, frustrations, successes, failures, love and hopeless love and all other nuances in a character. He has carved a niche of his own by depicting the eternal verities which are universal in nature. He has become the rich heritage of man and we see the recordation of the heart- beats of the entire human race in his creative outputs. The paper endeavors to give a comparative sketch of Shakespeare's *King Macbeth* and *Caligula* penned by the renowned French absurdist philosopher Albert Camus .The intended study will throw light on the commonalties and disparities, vaulting ambition and its dire consequences, power politics and tyranny existing in both the rulers albeit belonging to different age, custom, locale and language. This comparative approach aims to



render a multi dimensional dissection of world literature which underscores the fact that when willpower is not guided by wisdom, the power is bestowed only in the terrible hands.

The play *Caligula* is apparently about a Roman emperor; Gaius "Caligula" Caesar (Emperor AD 37 -41) who was the youngest of nine children and the only boy to survive his grandfather, the emperor Tiberius. His father Germanicus, his mother Agrippina and all his brothers were either killed or starved to death by Tiberius and his lieutenant Sejanus. Gaius was given the nickname "Caligula" which means Little Boots by the soldiers because as a child he wore a child size version of army boots. Caligula devastated by the death of his sister Drusilla with whom he probably had an incestuous relationship, deserts the Roman assembly for three days and three nights. On his return he is determined to understand the meaning of life. Death of his cousin, who he was in love with, pushes him to the realization that *men die; and they are not happy*. He says,

I suddenly felt a desire for the impossible... Things as they are, in my opinion, are far from satisfactory... this world of ours, this scheme of things as they call it, is quite intolerable... I want the moon, or happiness, or eternal life – something, in fact, that may sound crazy, but which is not of this world... All that's needed is to be logical right through, at all costs. (Camus)

His reign will become synonymous with terror, murder, torture, cruelty and sexual excess. He has finally understood what absolute power is for. It gives the impossible a chance to exist. Freedom has no boundaries any more. With Drusilla's sudden death shortly after, Caligula changed and Suetonius says he became 'rather a monster than a man'. Caligula killed or tortured many of his subjects and eventually his patricians rebelled and murdered him. Suetonius attributed the drastic shift in Caligula's character to either epilepsy or the mind altering effects of a philtre (an aphrodisiac drink) given to him by his mistress, Caesonia. Camus, however, used Drusilla's death as a moment of epiphany for the grieving Caligula wherein he perceives the absurdity of human existence, an absurdity encapsulated in his line "Men are dying and they are not happy". Caligula then drives this essential truth of the



human condition to its logical and violent conclusion, believing that he will attain the omnipotent freedom of the gods whom he detests. Camus' friend, the poet Rene Leynaud, described the play as: "a lightning bolt, the revelation of the impossible in a soul". Caligula has the desire to become God. While everyone around him is constantly trying to find the human qualities which deem him a subject, he flees their attempts through the ultimate reification of his objectivity. He places himself as a God demanding to be worshipped, treated as nothing but an idol, stale and thing like. This is where the ultimate fear of God originates from.

"I don't like literary men and I can't bear lies." Cherea's lie, according to Caligula, is to "attribute importance to people and to things," when the truth is that "this world has no importance; once a man realizes that he wins his freedom." Scipio, too, is dismissed, for "what is friendship?" Alone with Caesonia, Caligula asks for her support, which she pledges. Some patricians enter and Caligula gathers them around. Gazing once more at his reflection in the mirror, he acknowledges himself with a proud "yes . . . Caligula" as act 1 concludes.

Caligula is now confronted by "the old patrician," who reveals the plot against the emperor, but Caligula displays no interest. He dismisses the man and sends for Cherea, who admits his guilt. "Why is it you hate me?" Caligula asks. "I cannot hate you," Cherea answers, "because I don't think you are happy." Cherea rejects a world where at any moment "the absurd" may transfix his life "like a dagger in the heart." True to the randomness of his atrocities, Caligula permits Cherea to go free. Camus uses the figure of Caligula to explore the apparent "absurdity" of human existence. All the patricians turned against him; but it is not the person whose son or father he has killed are against him; but it is them who have become laughing stocks, whose affected dignity now wages war against him. He knows that he has nothing to defend himself against their wounded dignity. Camus himself wrote the following about the play in program notes for the debut production at the Hebertot Theatre: "... if his integrity consists of his denial of the gods, his fault is to be found in his denial of men. Caligula is faithless towards humanity in order to keep faith with himself. He consents to die; having



learned that no man can save himself alone and that one cannot be free by working against mankind. But at least he will have rescued some souls, including his own and that of his friend Scipio, from the dreamless sleep of mediocrity". With Caligula, Camus sought to portray the results of a powerful individual pursuing nihilism to its ultimate conclusion.

Caligula revolts against the absurd, but does so in such a destructive manner that he ultimately abandons reason. He challenges to overcome death by enacting ridiculous policies, draining the treasury and ordering the destruction of countless lives. This "nothing is true; therefore, all is permitted attitude" is precisely what Camus claims as an incorrect reaction. With Drusilla's death, Caligula confronts the absurd directly—presumably for the first time in his life—and his response is different from any of those listed above. Instead of committing suicide, escaping, or coping, Caligula embarks on a campaign of terror in order to educate his subjects as to the true meaning, or meaningless, of life and death. In addition, he seeks "the impossible," the divine status needed to create meaning where none exists. As Erich Fromm said in *To Have or To Be*, "We are a society of notoriously unhappy people: lonely, anxious, depressed, destructive, dependent – people who are glad when we have killed the time we were trying so hard to save." "Men die; and they are not happy," proclaimed Caligula in Camus's play bearing his name. The sense of angst among many is so strong that, "There is only one hell and it is on earth," said Camus.

The play *Macbeth* begins and ends in a state of war. Especially horrible is the fate suffered by Macbeth at the end: beaten by Macduff in armed combat, his head is cut off and paraded before the audience mounted on Macduff's sword. So the play *Macbeth's* opening with witches planning a meeting with the central character prepares us well for the dire events that are to follow. Lady Macbeth herself attempts to commit the murder of Duncan while her husband merely plays the role of a smiling host. The 'vaulting ambition' of Macbeth is highly seen in his better half as she literally summons the power of darkness to overpower her. Albeit the witches play a quintessential part in this play, it is Lady Macbeth who really sets up the tragedy. She is even worse than witches at times.



Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts! Unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunkest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry Hold, hold! (I.v.39-53)

To her, Macbeth is a man who is afraid to try to get what he wants even though he wants it very much. She is sure she understands Macbeth, and knows that this will help her defeat his weakness. The acquisition of the crown by hideous murder seems to her something glorious. She is so firm in her determination of the act that she cannot see it as but glorious. In her soliloquy she says about Macbeth

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature:
It is too full o' th' milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way. Thou would'st be great,
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst highly,
That would'st thou holily; would'st not play false,



And yet would'st wrongly win. Thou'dst have, great Glamis,
That which cries „Thus thou must do, if thou have it“;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round
Which fate and metaphysical aid both seem
To have thee crowned withal.” (I.v.12-27)

At the beginning she is Macbeth's “dearest partner of greatness”, but at the end she is his “fiend-like queen”. She admits that she too is shaken nightly by “terrible” dreams. She refers to the three murders Macbeth has committed, as if the guilt is too much for her. She hopes washing her hands with water will cleanse her, but contrary to her assurance to her husband in Act II, it does not. She realizes that all the perfumes of Arabia“ cannot cleanse her hands of murder”. Earlier she claimed, “What is done is done”. Now she admits, “What’s done cannot be undone”. Before she felt they should put things behind them; now it is as if her conscience would really like to change things back to the way they were. When she loses control over Macbeth she also loses her mind and eventually dies a pathetic death. Even after her death, she continues to have an impact on the life of Macbeth whose way of life has fallen into the sear. The wicked men and women are, of course enemies of life. In tragedies, one or two heroes are sick of life, for they have passed through excruciating agony. King Macbeth’s exclamation underlines this certitude.

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools



The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more; it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing." (V.v.19-28)

Macbeth undoubtedly has vaulting ambition that pricks the sides of his intent. But this ambition and the accompanying thought of murder are stuffed in him neither by the witches nor by his wife. He has ambition for the crown even before his meeting with the witches is evident by the statement of Lady Macbeth. "Nor time nor place Did then adhere, and yet you would both." (I.vii.56-57)

Macbeth undertakes the murder as a grim and hideous duty. Banquo fears the anger and hatred of Macbeth who got the power and Malcolm and Donalbain flee quickly from Macbeth who has destroyed one who is stronger than them. Ironically the sons are suspected of having done the murder of Duncan. The play is thus motivated by the increasing passion of fear. The wine of life is indeed drawn and fear takes complete possession of the guilty soul. Macbeth isolates himself from humanity. Macbeth has the fear of Banquo's wisdom and his future as the father of kings. Macbeth sees that he wears 'a fruitless crown' and carries a 'barren scepter'. He has indeed given up peace and immortality to make the race of Banquo's progenies to rule. He will kill his fear by murdering Banquo and his son Fleance, he says, "Strange things I have in head that will to hand Which must be acted ere they may be scanned?" (III.iv.145-146).

This paper, thus, makes an interesting sojourn into their mind psychologically and helps to probe into their actual problem in their power politics. Their tyrannical attitude not only affects them but the people around them. Their death at the end shows the limitation of man in holding power. Their death would certainly teach the world that blood will have blood. Death, the great leveler shows the limitation of both King Caligula and King Macbeth in holding power. Although both of them "suddenly felt a desire for the impossible", no sweet



perfumes of Arabia can sweeten their hands with stains of any cruel kindness. Both the plays thrive on crime where one triggers for the other. The wicked men and women are, of course enemies of life. In tragedies, one or two heroes are sick of life, for they have passed through excruciating agony. King Macbeth's exclamation serves as a testimony for this. Hence the paper can be concluded by stressing the fact that both King Macbeth and Caligula are a living proof of the truth by quoting the words from Shakespeare's Macbeth

Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
that struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
and then is heard no more; it is a tale
told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
signifying nothing." (V.v.19-28)

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Anti –Semitism in The Merchant of Venice: A Critical Study

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Abstract: Anti –Semitism is a central theme in The Merchant of Venice. William Shakespeare's satirical comedy, The Merchant of Venice, believed to have been written in 1596 was an examination of hatred and greed. The premise deals with the antagonistic relationship between Shylock, a Jewish money-lender and Antonio, the Christian merchant, who is as generous as Shylock, is greedy, particularly with his friend, Bassanio. The two have cemented a history of personal insults, and Shylock's loathing of Antonio intensifies when Antonio refuses to collect interest on loans.

Shylock is an outsider who is not privy to the rights accorded to the citizens of Venice. The Venetians regard Shylock as a capitalist motivated solely by greed, while they saw themselves as Christian paragons of piety.

This research paper aims to portray the subject of Anti –Semitism in the William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice and projects the frustrations of the oppressed masses with the words of Shylock.

Keywords: Anti –Semitism, Prejudice, Venice, Christianity, Loan.

Introduction:

Prejudice is a dominant theme in The Merchant of Venice, most notably taking the form of Anti-Semitism. Shylock is stereotypically described as:

costumed in a recognizably Jewish way in a long gown of gabardine, probably black, with a red beard and/or wing like that of Judas, and a hooked putty nose or bottle nose (Charney, p. 41).



Shylock is a defensive character because society is constantly reminding him he is different in religion, looks, and motivation. He finds solace in the law because he, himself, is an outcast of society. Shylock is an outsider who is not privy to the rights accorded to the citizens of Venice. The Venetians regard Shylock as a capitalist motivated solely by greed, while they saw themselves as Christian paragons of piety. When Shylock considers taking Antonio's bond using his ships as collateral, his bitterness is evident when he quips, "But ships are but board, sailors but men. There be land rats and water rats, water thieves and land thieves -- I mean pirates -- and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks" (I.iii.25). Shylock believes the Venetians are hypocrites because of their slave ownership.

The Venetians justify their practice of slavery by saying simply, "The slaves are ours" (IV.i.98-100). During the trial sequence, Shylock persuasively argues, "You have among you many a purchased slave, which (like your asses and your dogs and mules). You us in abject and in slavish parts, because you bought them, shall I say to you, let them be free, marry them to your heirs...you will answer, 'The slaves are ours,' -- so do I answer you: The pound of flesh (which I demand of him) is dearly bought, 'tis mine and I will have it" (IV.i.90-100). Shakespeare's depiction of the Venetians is paradoxical. They are, too, a capitalist people and readily accept his money, however, shun him personally. Like American society, 16th century Venice sought to solidify their commercial reputation through integration, but at the same time, practiced social exclusion. Though they extended their hands to his Shylock's money, they turned their backs on him socially. When Venetian merchants needed usurer capital to finance their business ventures, Jews flocked to Venice in large numbers. By the early 1500s, the influx of Jews posed a serious threat to the native population, such that the Venetian government needed to confine the Jews to a



specific district. This district was called *geto nuovo* (New Foundry) and was the ancestor of the modern-day ghetto. In this way, Venetians could still accept Jewish money, but control their influence upon their way of life.

Elements of Prejudice:

Many of William Shakespeare's plays have sparked controversy. Probably the one that has sparked the most controversy is *The Merchant of Venice*, which many intellectuals have dubbed an anti-Semitic play. The character that this discussion centers around is Shylock, the rich moneylender Jew. The problem with most of these anti-Semitic arguments is that they lack the perspective of the sixteenth century audience. Throughout Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* the audience's perception of Shylock moves between utter hatred and varying amounts of pity. In contrast to today's audience, the original sixteenth century audience saw Shylock's religion as his biggest shortcoming.

Our first glimpse of Shylock's character comes in Act I, scene 3, where Shylock reveals to the audience why he hates Antonio. The first reason he gives of why he hates Antonio is because he is a Christian. (I.iii 43). This to the sixteenth century audience would be unreasonable, and this would evoke a sort of villainy towards Shylock. But a few moments later, the audience witnesses Shylock's speech about Antonio's abuses towards Shylock (I. iii. 107-130). This speech does well in invoking the audience's pity, however little it might but again at the end, Shylock offers that Antonio give up a pound of flesh as penalty of forfeiture of the bond, which Antonio sees as a joke, but which Shylock fully intends to collect (I. iii. 144-178).

This action negates any pity which Shylock would have one from the audience just a few moments before. Shakespeare, in this scene, uses Shylock's dialogue and soliloquies to push loyalties of the audience back and forth in a result of a negative view of Shylock.

In Act II, scene 8, Salarino and Salanio describe to the audience Shylock's reaction when he finds out that his daughter, Jessica, has run away to marry a Christian. Salanio says:



I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
as the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
'My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!
Justice! The law! My ducats and my daughter!
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl;
she hath the stones upon her, and the ducats.' (II. viii. 12-22)

One can't help wondering if the message is only as trustworthy as the messenger, for as we know, Salarino and Salanio have expressed their hatred towards Shylock. In this recount of events we notice that Shylock cries "*O my ducats! O my daughter!*" many times, which suggests that Shylock sees Jessica as just another one of her material goods, as the ducats. The audience would not respect this at all; after all, one's daughter should be much more important than any material wealth. This is yet another instance which the audience views Shylock as a shallow miser who only thinks of himself.

Act III, scene 1 is probably the biggest turning point in the play, especially for the audience. After being badgered by Salarino and Salanio, Shylock manipulates the audience's sympathies by offering a monologue on revenge. The scene is as follows:

Salarino: Why, I am sure, if he forfeit,
thou wilt not take his flesh:
what's that good for?

Shylock: To bait fish withal: if it will



feed nothing else, it will feed
my revenge. He hath disgraced me,
and hindered me half a million;
laughed at my losses, mocked at
my gains, scorned my nation,
thwarted my bargains, cooled my
friends, heated mine enemies;
and what is his reason? I am
a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not
a Jew hands, organs, dimensions,
senses, affections, passions? fed with
the same food, hurt with the same weapons,
subject to the same diseases, healed by
the same means, warmed and cooled by the
same winter and summer, as a Christian
is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?
if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if
you poison us, do we not die? And if
you wring us, shall we not revenge? If
we are like you in the rest, we will
resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a
Christian, what is his humility? Revenge.
If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should
his sufferance be by Christian example?
Why, revenge. The villainy you teach
me, I will execute, and it shall go hard
but I will better the instruction. (III.i. 53-76)



This monologue succeeds in silencing Shylock's critics both on and off stage. Shylock has successfully made the audience stop and think and even side with him. He makes the audience say, "You know what, he's right." Any prejudice the audience might have had has been put aside by this speech. Shylock, of course, won't keep the audience's pity for long, though. When Tubal enters Shylock says won't keep the audience's pity for long, though. When Tubal enters Shylock says to him; "I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! Would she were hearsed at my foot and the ducats in her coffin!" (III.i. 91).

This is the same reason the audience lost pity for Shylock before, because he is so shallow that he cares more about his ducats than he does his own daughter. He would like to see his daughter dead with the ducats and jewels in her coffin. What kind of caring father is that? The audience certainly would not take to this very kindly; and of course, Shylock has lost our pity once again.

Most of the women in *The Merchant of Venice*, true to the Elizabethan time period, are little more than an attractive presence. Despite their immortalization in art, Shakespeare, like his contemporaries, appears to perceive women as little more than indulged play things with little to offer society than physical beauty. Shylock is devastated when his daughter leaves him to marry a Christian, he regards her as little more than one of his possessions, just as he regards jewels and ducats. Portia, though possessing both strength and intelligence, she, too, is inclined to prejudicial judgments. She takes a disdainful view of the lowly class, and dismisses the 3,000 ducats as "a petty debt." Although she truly loves Bassanio in spite of his low social rank, Bassanio is initially portrayed as a crass materialist who regards Portia as little more than a prize to be won. Only by marrying her can he achieve any kind



of social nobility. Although Portia plays a powerful role in the play's climax, she must disguise herself as a man for her words to be taken seriously. Racial prejudice is also hinted at in *The Merchant of Venice*. The Prince of Morocco, though elegant in both manner and dress, has a pomposity which perhaps stems from being a dark-skinned man not altogether accepted in the predominantly white Christian surroundings. The bias of the city-state ruler is evident when during the trial, the Duke of Venice tells Shylock, "We all expect a gentle answer, Jew" (IV.i.34). The implication is that Christians are the models of gentility and social grace, whereas Jews are coarse in both manner and words. Is Shylock really the epitome of evil? Over the years, the "pound of flesh" phrase has been interpreted by both scholars and students alike.

Author W.H. Auden draws a similarity between Shylock's demand for payment in a pound of flesh with the crucifixion of Christ. Auden wrote, "Christ may substitute himself for man, but the debt has to be paid by death on the cross. The devil is defeated, not because he has no right to demand a penalty, but because he does not know the penalty has been already suffered" (Auden, p. 227). Shylock regards Antonio as his number one nemesis because of the countless public humiliations he has subjected him to and because Antonio has purposely hindered his business by refusing to collect interest on loans. Would Shylock have demanded a pound of flesh from anyone else in the world but Antonio? Does this make him a bad person or just a human one? By herding the Jews like cattle into the confines of the New Foundry district, aren't the Venetians symbolically extracting their own pound of flesh from the Jewish people? Why is Shylock singled out for his behavior? As he is Jewish, therefore, incapable of humanity in the eyes of the Christian world.



Conclusion:

Was William Shakespeare a bigot? His perceived Anti-Semitism in *The Merchant of Venice* depicts the Elizabethan perception of Jews, a people who were truly foreign to them in both appearance and demeanor. Edward I banished Jews from his kingdom in the 11th century; however Jewish stereotypes abound in England throughout the Renaissance. Although the average Elizabethan had probably encountered only a few Jews in his lifetime, his church sermons condemned them with words like "blasphemous," "vain," and "deceitful." The Christians considered the lending of money to be sacrilegious, but the using of this money to finance their businesses was not. *The Merchant in Venice* is no more Anti-Semitic than Christopher Marlowe's earlier play, *The Jew of Malta*. The parallels between Marlowe's protagonist, Barabas, and Shylock are startling. Marlowe's play begins with a description of Barabas "in his counting-house, with heaps of gold before him," discussing with his comrades his world of "infinite riches" (I.i.37). Barabas' self-serving deception and superficiality are identical to Shylock's. Marlowe's character, Ferneze acts as a self-appointed spokesman for the Christian community when he dismisses Barabas and all Jews with the words, "No, Jew, like infidels. For through our sufferance of your hateful lives, who stand accursed in the sight of heaven" (I.ii.73-75). *The Merchant of Venice* and speeches illustrating the hypocrisy that was so prevalent in Christian society, one can almost sense Shakespeare is satirically winking at us.

The sixteenth century audience would have definitely hated the character of Shylock. It probably wouldn't have been uncommon to hear boos and hisses every time he came on stage in an original production. Probably the only time when there wouldn't have been jeers from the audience would have been in Act III, scene 1; "*Hath not a Jew eyes*" speech. The sympathies of the audience were definitely in full swing in this play, going back and forth between a little bit of pity to a lot of hatred. Probably the most underlying quality of Shylock that the audience hated most was his religion. Shylock was the embodiment of all



that was bad about Jews - the people that murdered Jesus. But still, there had to have been some pity at some level from the audience In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare articulates the frustrations of the oppressed masses for all time with the words of Shylock.

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Half Way to William Shakespeare

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Abstract William Shakespeare, though born in 16th century, survives till today by means of his marvelous creation where each character is unique with a matchless instinct. Through his characters he illustrated the malicious human weakness and the outcome of it in the later part of the life. He cautioned the generations to be free from down fall resulting death or an insane treacherous end.

Technology brought unbelievable changes from the globe theater to global village. But the basic human nature is the same. In the modern society the same characters are alive practicing all the wicket traits and reluctant to see the U-turn of their so called prosperity and are blind to visualize the other end of the pipe line. The society is yet to learn the repercussions of the bad deeds and is still on the half way to Shakespeare.

Key words: Marvelous creation, human vices, righteous path, global village.

Introduction

William Shakespeare, the epitome of English literature was a poet, playwright, actor and the world's unsurpassed dramatist. His narration technique along with his writing skills, his art of borrowing, combining, and recreating something new with a twist is the key for his true excellence. Most of his plays echo the fact that life is not all gloom or all delight. His plays received highest accolade as he dealt with themes that range from wide comedy, great historical realities, tragedies characterized by lust, power, ambition, betrayal, murder, jealousy and other human characters those are closer to everyone's heart and a part of every one's experience.



He created comic, tragic, wise, foolish, sensible, idiotic, all sorts of humans along with their sins and passions, sorrows and misfortunes, weaknesses and strengths. He depicted the human qualities in their original sense in a very natural way. His characters are totally neither Gods nor devils but truly humans with common human emotions and weaknesses. This fabricated blend is seen today in individuals, in the society, in the nation, in the world at large. His works are not outdated because his characters are alive with all virtue and vice. Though centuries passed witnessing innumerable drastic changes, Shakespeare's characters are seen around in one or the other form and that reflects the magnanimity of his characters and characterization.

His *Comic Individual* is the victim of deception. Maybe he has a sensible ambition or object, maybe he has a patronizing purpose but he is inadequate to its fulfillment; the illusion is that he believes in his own ability to carry out what he wants. His object also may be a futile one; he chases it, however, with the same determination. A man with rationality acting irrationally is the cause of fun and amusement.

The theme of love is prevalent in every Shakespeare's work. Mistaken identities or mistaken situations and unhappy endings are the main concerns to the downfall of the characters. Revenge and ambition are the key elements of his tragedy. Examples of tragic flaws in Shakespearean tragedies are: Macbeth's obsession with power, Othello's jealousy, and Hamlet's indecisiveness, king Lear's love for sycophancy.

Through Shakespeare's characters the subsequent generations are exposed to get a glimpse of the virtues and vices that were personified. The repercussion of ill effects of their character was shown in the suffering and repentance. By going through his works one can have a telescopic view of what would be the fate if jealous, hypocrisy, hatred, lust, avarice for power and revenge dominate the society.



Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

Shakespeare's tragedies reflect the paradox of life, in the sense that the calamity and suffering experienced by the tragic hero are contrasted with the previous happiness and glory. This paradox is very clear in *Macbeth*. Initially, Macbeth was portrayed as the most brave and loyal soldier of the nation and was rewarded by King Duncan for his bravery and love for the nation. However, Macbeth was not satisfied with whatever he got and desired for more. This desire or over-ambitious nature led him to think evil and act on it, which was an extreme end of his real personality.

Shakespeare's plays also reflect the ancient social beliefs in the evil powers and those who practice evil rites to affect the central character(s). For instance, in *Macbeth*, when Macbeth encountered the three witches, he started believing whatever they said without questioning their existence.

Shakespeare showed that a corrupt crime could only leave the mind unsure and unable to rest. In *Macbeth*, the sleep, innocence, and guilt motif was important in showing how guilt could affect sleep and how losing one's innocence could mean losing one's ability to sleep. It symbolized the guilt that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth experienced after performing deceitful deeds. Macbeth repented and was driven mad because of the evil act he committed. In his words, "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine, making the green one red" (Peter, *Macbeth*. Act II, Scene ii pp 1007).

Lady Macbeth, who supported him all through was also under the same spell of guilt and says; "Here is the smell of blood. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." (Act V, Scene i pp 1022).



Today's Macbeth

Today in the society this Macbeth is not uncommon. In Shakespearian society when some evil was done that was haunting the person till the end and he/she used to regret for such dreadful actions. In modern society no such regrets or repentance and community became so immune to such sensitive feelings. People are not satisfied with what they get, they need more than what they deserve. The result is the innumerable scams, murders and illegal operations from top to bottom levels to procure power and wealth. They are blind of the blood on their hands and no point of trying to wash it. As they can't account their earnings they seek all possible secrete vicinities like Swiss Banks.

Moreover the poor and rich, uneducated and educated, foolish and prudent crave for the supernatural powers and adore the so called *babas*, who comfort them saying that life is nothing but an illusion. These babas perform the rituals for additional blessings to hide the malicious acts. The barefaced culprits who have almost forgot the feel of fear shamelessly moving around with a defensive and self justifying mask saying that their misdeeds are nothing but a story told by an idiot, full of noise and emotional disturbance without any sense.

“Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more; it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” (Act V, Scene v pp 1024).

Shakespeare's *King Lear*

When talking about the inward struggle of the hero, Shakespeare depicted the conflict as the struggle of thoughts in the hero's mind. The result of this struggle, many a time is that the hero goes insane (as in *King Lear*). *King Lear*, the aging king of Britain, decided to step down from the throne and divide his kingdom evenly among his three daughters. First, however, he put his daughters through a test, asking them to tell him how much each one



loves him. This was because Lear wanted to show how much he was admired, loved and cared about by his daughters to the court. Goneril and Regan, Lear's older daughters, gave their father flattering answers. But Cordelia, Lear's youngest and favorite daughter, remained silent, said that she had no words to describe how much she loves her father. When she said nothing, King Lear insisted "Nothing will come of nothing" (*King Lear*- Act I, Scene I pp 1074).

Saying so, Lear flies into a rage and disowned Cordelia and repented for his action of believing the hypocrisy of older daughters in the later part of his life. His repentance was revealed in his words, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child" (Act I, Scene iv pp.1082).

He was totally driven mad and along with other blind, neglected parent got some solace by the philosophical thought; "As flies to wanton boys are we to the Gods. They kill us for their sport." (Act 4, Scene i, pp.1099) and "I am a man more sinned against than sinning". (Act III, Scene ii pp 1092).

Today's King Lear

Today it is common that everyone yields to adulation and wants to be glorified. With flattery one deceives the other and gets the work done. The element of Regan and Gonerill is present in almost all individuals with some proportional differences. People like Cordellia are the victims of honesty. Parents like Lear still exist to create competence among siblings against each other for their love and land. Descendents inherit the property and leave the parents in old age homes. The family bond is weakened and those who can project hypocrisy are treated as dearer ones for some time and the sincere love is underestimated on account of lack of flattery. Cordillia like devoted children who think about the old parents can be counted on finger tips. Good number of aged parents like Lear is banished and spent their residual life with agony ruminating over their audacious faith on their children.



Shakespeare's Antonio & Shylock

Shakespeare portrayed the good and evil human nature from the humanitarian to legitimate level in his play "The merchant of Venice". Antonio, a leading merchant of Venice, was a wealthy, respected, and popular man. He was a charitable, willing, loyal and an understanding devoted friend. He was kind, generous, honest and confident, and was loved and revered by all who knew him.

Among his many friends was a young man named Bassanio, who owed Antonio a good deal of money. But when Bassanio approached Antonio for further loan to wed a wealthy lady in order to appear at least as well off as her other wealthy suitors, he was helpless at that point of time and he recommended a moneylender, Shylock., who would probably lend him the necessary amount and Bassanio could use Antonio's fame and name as security for the loan.

Shylock, a rich Jewish moneylender who harbored a secret hatred for Antonio, had agreed to lend Bassanio three thousand ducats for three months, on Antonio's bond. Foregoing his usual high interest rate, Shylock demanded a pound of Antonio's flesh from next to his heart if he failed to return the amount on time. Antonio agreed because all of his ships were due back in Venice a full month before the due date of the bond.

When failed to repay in time or on time, Shylock wanted nothing but a pound of flesh from Antonio. He insisted saying:

The slaves are ours.' So do I answer you? The pound of flesh which I demand of him is dearly bought. It's mine, and I will have it. (*Merchant of Venice* – Act IV, Scene I pp. 244)

Shylock cleverly used Venice's own laws to support his vengeful quest and pleaded. He supported his vengeance by saying; "If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we



not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?"(Act 3 Scene I pp.237).

Portia, the lawyer solemnly notified the court that Shylock was entirely within his lawful rights. She then tactfully informed Shylock that he must be very careful to cut off exactly one pound of flesh, and he must not spill one drop of Antonio's blood. Failing which Shylock's lands and goods would be confiscated.

Today's Antonio & Shylock

In our modern society, it is hard to find Antonio like people who risk their life for friends. If anyone wants to stand as security for other's loan, it could be as long as there is no loss for them. Portio like lawyers turning out the law points for the benefit of people rather than to kill them are not seen in the present courts. Even law courts show inclination towards the influential, strong people and manipulating the law suits to their favor if not they extend the verdict years together by adjourning the case repeatedly, so as providing a chance for the culprit to escape. Many like Shylock exists with all negative character traits like greed, jealousy and vengeance and made use of the loopholes for the personal benefit. Presently how many are punished by the court for their treacherous acts. In spite of the clear evidences of the wealth accumulation by unlawful ways, which court got the guts to prosecute the so called Shylocks? This is where the law courts stand today.

Shakespeare's Julius Caesar

Betrayal is another trait that was portrayed by Shakespeare in Julius Caesar. Caesar innocently proceeded to the Senate accompanied by the conspirators. On his way, a citizen, a well wisher tried to warn him by handing over a letter, but Caesar did not pay attention to it. At the Senate the conspirators bowed, spoke encircled him; then one by one they stabbed him to death. When Caesar acknowledged his dear friend Brutus coming forward to stab him he



said "*Et tu, Brute?*" ? (Julius Caesar, Act 3. Scène i, pp.983). The betrayal was such a surprise to Caesar because of his friendship with Brutus and his reputation for honor.

Cassius convinced Brutus to involve in the conspiracy by saying "Men at some time are masters of their fates: The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings" (Julius Caesar Act I, Scene ii pp 971).

Cassius reminded Brutus that fate was not what governed the affairs of people or even a nation. People had to make decision. In this way people become masters of their own destiny. To be more pointed, Cassius wants Brutus to join the conspiracy against Caesar and be an honorable and virtuous man.

From Brutus's point of view, Brutus loved Caesar as a friend; he had a great reverence to him as a true Roman hero, and great general. In spite of that he as a public servant, Brutus's chose to safeguard Roman Republic and the Roman citizens as his first priority and thus he explained his action to stab Caesar. In trying to make up his mind to become a part of the conspiracy, Brutus spent many sleepless nights trying to find logical reasons for joining the conspiracy. He was provoked by Cassius.

Today's Brutus

Today betrayal became a part of life style. Betraying others for small or big, mean or majestic, rude or royal ways is found in all the strata of the society. This is only for selfish purposes, for the personal benefits. More over it is considered as a common attitudinal attribution rather than culpability. Openly people in different fields especially in political field betray each other and definitely it is not out of love towards the country or countrymen but for their survival to execute power in the party to govern others. To be more pointed, under the pretest of serving the people as honorable and virtuous men politicians change the



party and speak ill of the parent party. There is no sense of guilt to put on a mask and they pretend as if they are doing good as public men.

Modern Society

The advanced modern society thoroughly read and understood the first part of Shakespeare, i.e. to commit a crime and yet to read the remaining part, the repercussions of the evil deeds. After reaching the height of treachery man stood at the end point with a sense of achievement. He has nothing further to go beyond except taking a turn but he fails to visualize the turning curve and fathom the bottom of his own down fall. "To be or not to be" (*Hamlet*, Prince of Denmark – Act 3, Scene I pp. 1047) a great use of contrast is rationalized before each treacherous act. Whether to do or not to do; whether to involve or not to involve has become a fraction of a second thought and the present generation plunge into action after seeing the immediate consequences or overnight riches, fame, power.

Who could be Mark Antony before the burial of Julius Caesar to address the crowd?

Who will make the people to realize the fundamental truth "The evil that men do lives after them, The good is oft interred with their bones" (*Julius Caesar* — Act III, Scene .ii pp.986).

Who will tell people that the greatness lies in serving the nation rather than grabbing the power? This reminds Antony's words in *Julius Caesar*, "I thrice presented him a kingly crown, Which he did thrice refuse" (*Julius Caesar*, Act III, Scene ii pp 986).

But the present elected representatives could go to any extent to grab power rather than serving the nation. Who will tell people to love their country and work for the prosperity of the nation rather than standing as a silent spectator without exposing the evil that they know to protect truth, honesty, sincerity and the so called value system. But people prefer to take some pleasure in cheating others and look forward for such opportunities. "The robbed



that smiles steals something from the thief". (*Othello, The Moor of Venice* -Act I, Scene iii pp.1120).

As the saying goes that wise man learns from the experience of others; an average from his own and a fool not even from his own, people need to be wise to learn from the Shakespearean characters.

But in reality ambitious people implement all the illegal means to reach the climax and looked around hoping that they have achieved everything but reluctant to see the other part, the down fall or the U-turn of their prosperity. If one visualizes the after effects of bad deeds nobody would like to be trapped in the consequences of the vices done. As Ben Jonson mentioned Shakespeare is "not of an age, but for all time". It is not too late to learn, remember the tragic ends of the malicious events and the fate of the executors and beware of the rest of the life's journey. One needs to travel long way to acknowledge the consequences of evil path as specified by Shakespeare.

Today's society is on the half way to Shakespeare

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Feminine Identity and the Woman Question in Selected Plays of Shakespeare

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Abstract The paper will examine in Shakespeare's plays how the man-woman relationship and its portrayal in literature are closely linked to the ideas of gender, identity and liberty. Despite the fact that Renaissance culture was essentially patriarchal, one finds feminine characters in Shakespeare's plays rubbing shoulders with their male counterpart and sometimes putting them in the shade. The character of Portia in the bard's play 'The Merchant of Venice' would stand testimony to this. Yet, it cannot be denied that in several plays of Shakespeare, women though witty and sharp are treated as ultimately subservient to a man's will which constitutes a patriarchal outlook. Shakespeare's play 'Taming the Shrew' has the irascible Kate as the central character and the dialogues express the view that a woman's primary role in relationships was utilitarian in nature. Petruchio sparring with Kate reinforce the idea that women are born to bear not only children but also the sexual weight of men.

In Shakespeare's tragedy 'Othello' Desdemona is treated as an acquisition. Despite Othello's marriage after a successful period courtship, his verdict that he has won her, reflect his state of mind. Othello appears almost narcissistic when he says that his love for Desdemona is rooted in the fact that she loves and admires him for his great prowess. While Petruchio and Othello conform to the prevalent patriarchal identities, Romeo in the play 'Romeo and Juliet' desires a union with Juliet, based on equality. This attitude demonstrates a belief in the fundamental worth of the others, rather than a selfish insistence on the worth of the self alone. Although Romeo places a lot of value on Juliet's physical beauty, his attitude reveals that mutuality and reciprocity are integral to his relationship with her. The play 'Romeo and Juliet' may have



progressive model of male-female relationship, yet it cannot be denied that the general pattern of Renaissance culture was patriarchal and hegemonic.

Key words: gender, identity, liberty, Renaissance, patriarchal, equality and hegemonic.

William Shakespeare began writing and performing plays in the latter quarter of the fifteen hundreds. Elizabeth Tudor began her reign as Queen in 1558, and died on March 23, 1603. Thus, two of the most prominent individuals from sixteenth and seventeenth century English history lived as contemporaries. They interacted with each other at Court. Both walked the streets of London. Shakespeare's company performed for the Queen. Did such level of interaction between the monarch and the playwright lead to Elizabethan influence on Shakespeare's writing? Shakespeare does give female protagonists power within many of his plays. In his comedies, the female protagonists act in authoritative ways with success. Yet, these plays do not address the role of women as dominant roles; they may be authoritative and independent at the onset but to mellow down due to love and circumstances. In the discussion of "The Psychoanalytic Point of view" in *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir said that "it is not nature that defines woman; it is she who defines herself by dealing with nature on her own account in her emotional life" (Beauvoir 42). This forms the basis of the consideration of women characters in this paper.

In the characters, Shakespeare reflects gender, self and identity anxieties; in the themes, he develops a representation of conflict and chaos erupting from such anxieties, and in the plays' contextual resolutions, he fulfils the desire for a return to state stability through a solidification of the patriarchal system. "Identity" is a central concept for much contemporary cultural and literary criticism, which, along with its even vaguer terminological twin, the "self," has become a cliché without becoming clear. The word "identity" is paradoxical in itself, meaning both sameness and distinctiveness, and its contradictions proliferate when it is applied to women.



While many Renaissance texts offer valuable information regarding paradigms pertaining to gender and identity, Shakespeare's plays contain some of the most complex and convoluted representations of women and men and, because these depictions are diverse, various comparisons and contrasts can be made. The actualities are embedded in the virtues of the women in Renaissance culture portrayed in the play. Patricia Kelly in "Revisiting Shakespeare and Gender: Gerlach, Jeanne, Rudolph Almsy and Rebecca Daniel" states that "women as the feminine represented the following virtues which importantly, have their meaning in relationship to male; obedience, silence, sexual chastity, piety, humility, constancy and patience" (Kelly). This fact becomes evident when one considers three of the most popular Shakespearean romances: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Leonard Tennenhouse, author of *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres*, professes that Shakespeare was distinctly a Renaissance individual and playwright, and his writing cannot be divorced from this perspective:

Where the literary figure is presumed to have written truths that obtain over time and across cultures, the man Shakespeare is situated in a Renaissance context. His writing is largely topical and allegorical as he comments on the figures and policies of his time in relation to which, then, one can fix his ... identity... Shakespeare becomes a means of turning the canonized Shakespeare into a window onto Renaissance social relations, a mirror of his times, a text that presupposes a context 'outside' of itself. (Tennenhouse n.p)

Tennenhouse suggests that Shakespeare's writing reveals the character of the Renaissance world as well as it portrays individual characters in the plays. Regardless of the perspective under which scholars suggest Shakespeare should be studied, they agree that his writing provides an opportunity to examine cultural perspectives during and immediately after Elizabeth's reign. Shakespeare opens a window on the nature of the Elizabethan world.



Throughout history, men and women have been assigned specific roles to which society prescribes standards and qualifications. There are certain tasks that have been traditionally completed only by men, and others that have been assigned to women; most of which are separated by the realm of the domestic sphere.

The legal status of men and women in Elizabethan society also had distinct features. While men held almost absolute authority, married women had virtually no rights as citizens. “Women differed from the men in their ability to be witnesses, make wills, act as guardians for their own children, make contracts, and own, buy, and sell property” (Wiesner 4). They were legally powerless in the society in which they lived. In all constitutional matters of their lives their fathers or their husbands had complete control over decision making. Women were definitely not free; “‘free’ meant to them [Renaissance scholars] enjoying the rights and privileges of a citizen and possessing an educated capacity for reason, neither of which was possible for women” (Wiesner 1). While married women had few rights within society, “single women, whether widowed or unmarried, could, if they were of full age, inherit and administer land, make a will, sign a contract, possess property, sue and be sued, without a male guardian or proxy. But married women had no such rights under the common law” (Greenblatt 9-10). In choosing to marry, women sacrificed any legal or constitutional rights as citizens.

During the period of the Renaissance, men and women were assigned very different roles within society. The value, social expectations, legal status, and rights of citizenship differed greatly between the sexes as well as among the classes.

Women, therefore, were often valued for their physical features. In the Renaissance, “. . . the beauty of woman is more praised and esteemed than any other beauty . . . [for] it appears to be the order of nature that what is lacking in one sex is supplied in the other, and since man is endowed with wit, judgement, and a mind almost divine, . . . woman is given bodily beauty that she may be superior to man in this respect” (Camden 20). Women were object to be viewed with pleasing affections, not with any sense of worth other than their physical features;



“. . . the only positive demand of the woman was that she should be beautiful” (Putnam 164-165). Women were also valued for qualities that define them as submissive and passive. A woman’s character should consist of specific attributions such as chastity, modesty, humility, constancy, temperance, piety, patience, and kindness (Dunn 17). All of the characteristics listed describe someone who has no authority in decisions and subscribes to being passive and obedient. Also, “her behaviour was carefully prescribed. She was to tend to her household duties industriously . . . she must be silent most of the time and not speak out or argue . . . [and] she must never be witty or clever” (Dunn 17). It becomes quite obvious that the value of women during the Renaissance was almost opposite than that of men.

Marriage is another important domain to examine in the study of Renaissance conceptions of gender roles. The duties of husband and wife were explicitly defined and expected to be followed by both men and women. The role of the husband is one of authority and dominance. Although, “the first duty which the husband has toward the wife is to love her, . . . the next duty is to rule or govern his wife in all duties that properly belong to marriage, using his knowledge, wisdom, and judgement to maintain himself in the place that God intended him to have” (Camden 112). Women were seen as inferior in their abilities to run a household and make moral decisions. A woman’s role as wife is also clearly defined. In the marriage contract, “. . . the wife must obey the husband. This obedience or submission extends not only to the performance of duties required by the husband, but also to the abstinence from those activities which are displeasing to him” (Camden 121). Women, who chose to become wives, which is the majority of the female population, agree to submit themselves to total control by their husbands. They move from living under the control of their fathers to living under the control of their husbands.

There are a few more broad categories in which men and women differed during the Renaissance, one of which is the field of education. “Intellectually, [women] were seen as limited; most Englishmen, including women themselves, thought that a woman was by nature



incapable of higher learning, being framed by God only for domestic duties” (Dunn 15). Women were not only excluded from the educational opportunities offered to men, they were thought of as physically unable to learn the same materials men studied. Furthermore, “many men seem to have regarded the capacity for rational thought as exclusively male; women, they assumed, were led only by their passions” (Greenblatt 18). Women were unable to escape from their emotions long enough to learn something factual. This assumption is also related to Renaissance conceptions of biology. Scientists thought that “it is heat which makes a man bold and hardy . . . but the coldness of woman makes her naturally fearful and timorous. And since women are weak physically, they must be weak morally and mentally” (Camden 18). This rudimentary conception of heat as a biological difference led people to believe that women were inferior to men in almost every capacity except those dealing with domestic duties.

Obedience and submissiveness, one could argue, is evident in, amongst others of his works, Shakespeare's comedy, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Bianca, the favoured and younger daughter of the wealthy Baptista Minola, is the silent and obedient daughter, as opposed to her sister, Kate, the shrew. It is Kate's temper, loose tongue, and failure to submit and obey her father, as well as society's expectations, that earns her the title of shrew and chases away many of her suitors. This indicates that an opinionated woman was not a particularly well thought of woman during the Renaissance. That it is a comedy could be symbolic as well-to have such a woman appear in anything but would threaten the idyllic image that the era's society had constructed, perhaps leaving some in the audience troubled.

In *Othello* too we find there was a shift in personality in Desdemona from the character that Othello thought he married to the character that she became after they were wed. Before their marriage, Desdemona was a strong-willed explorative equal to Othello. She conversed and related to him as a peer. Her ideas and abilities appealed to him and he regarded her as person capable of creative thought and personal aptitude. After their marriage, she actively tried to become a woman that she thought he would want more – the pure, virginal model. When they were wed, she became less of a person and more of an object to engage in sex with



and procreate. "...Motherhood is dangerous because it affirms a situation in which females must be only women and mothers; it denies the possibility of women developing personal creativity and creating a world that would be open and free for them" (Allen 315).

It is only in *Romeo and Juliet* that we find equality of perception. When one considers that *Romeo and Juliet* marks a departure from the prototypical heterosexual script—one in which men subjugate and silence women. Yet when considered holistically—in light of the fact that neither he nor she is subjected to physical or psychological abuse from the other—their relationship is most accurately defined as progressive and positive despite their shortcomings, selfishness, and suicides.

In the light of above context we shall analysis all these three plays which give us evidences that many heterosexual romances in Shakespeare's literature worked to reinforce male power by subjugating and silencing women. Those most Shakespearean romances reinforced and perpetuated male power.

Let now scrutinize 'The Taming of the Shrew' in this light. Set in the town of Padua, the play delineates the troubled and tempestuous relationship of Kate and Petruchio. As at the beginning we come to know how Petruchio views the prospect of a relationship with Kate as a conquest. This fact becomes evident when one considers Petruchio's assertion that he has "heard lions roar" (I.ii.196) and subsequently states that a woman's tongue "gives not half so great ablow to hear" (I.ii.204). That Petruchio views Kate as property rather than a person becomes more evident when one considers his brief discussion with her father. Informing Baptista that he wants to wed his daughter, Petruchio notes that "I am rough and woo not like a babe" (II.i.136). In making this statement, Petruchio reinforces the readers understanding that he views their potential relationship as a conquest in which he will subdue her. While Petruchio deems Kate an object whom he can and should subdue, the text makes evident her proclivity for an independent identity and self-assertion. That she possesses a mind and will of her own becomes evident during their first conversation. Engaging in heated dialogue that reveals their divergent views regarding what constitutes a good courtship, the two resort to



insults and Kate eventually hits him. Initially showering her with a slew of compliments, Petruchio notes that he is “moved to woo thee for my wife” (II.i.193). Unmoved, Kate refers to him as a “movable” (II.i.196), this term signifying her belief that he is inconsistent and unreliable. She goes on to note that “asses are made to bear, and so are you” (II.i.200). In making this statement, Petruchio reinforces the reader’s understanding that he views women through a profoundly patriarchal lens. Asserting both that women are made to bear children and bear the weight of a sexual partner, Petruchio reveals his view that women’s primary role in relationships is utilitarian. Inasmuch as this view promotes the notion that a woman’s role in sexual relationships and procreation is primarily slavish and secondary to men, Petruchio’s statement reinforces the notion that female desires and autonomy are ultimately insignificant. Openly engaging in a war of words which reveals his sense of superiority, the dialogue between Kate and Petruchio functions as an outline and precursor to their relationship.

Demonstrating that he views women as fundamentally inferior by noting that they are born to bear, Petruchio concludes their conversation with the assertion that he is born to tame and must have her as his wife. In making this statement, Petruchio reinforces the reader’s understanding that he views his position in the relationship as that of a patriarchal possessor. Stating that his purpose and ultimate aim is to subdue/tame her, he goes on to note that he must have her. This language makes evident his view of Kate as a consumable product who exists to gratify his variegated desires which include reducing her to a conquest and ensuring that her freedoms are limited by his presence and proclivities. That Petruchio and Kate’s relationship purports patriarchal paradigms regarding gender becomes more evident when one considers events surrounding their wedding. Clothing himself in what Tranio deems “mad attire” (III.ii.123), Petruchio wears inappropriate clothing to the wedding in an attempt to embarrass Kate. In addition to humiliating her by wearing unsuitable clothing to his wedding, Petruchio goes on to demonstrate that her will and desires mean nothing to him. When Kate implores him not to leave by stating “Now if you love me, stay”(III.ii.206), Petruchio responds by asking Grumio for his horse. Angry at his utter disregard of her, Kate states that she wants to go to the bridal dinner. In doing so, she both openly acknowledges that Petruchio has disrespected her



and simultaneously asserts her ability to make decisions about her life without his input. Aware that she is attempting to assert herself, Petruchio goes on to demonstrate that he will not allow her to operate as an independent agent when he states that the wedding guests can go on to the bridal dinner while she must go with him. Crystallizing the reader's understanding that he occupies the sphere of independent personhood while she exists as slave like object, Petruchio goes on to call her "my goods, my chattels, she is my house, my household stuff, my field, my barn, my horse, my ox, my ass, my anything" (III.ii.232-234). In saying this, Petruchio informs the reader that he exists as fully human and that Kate is a mere utilitarian object whom he will consume at leisure and for pleasure. Unlike Petruchio, Kate eventually accedes to a value system predicated on a relational mode of being and knowing. This becomes most evident when one considers issues surrounding her relationship with Petruchio. As made evident by the way their relationship begins, Kate's ability to assert her own opinions and make independent decisions remains limited. Beginning with the heated stichomythia she has with Petruchio, her acquiescence to his power becomes evident. That Kate remains dependent on Petruchio for the satisfaction of her basic needs becomes evident when one notes the fact that, in one of many instances meant to exert power over her, Petruchio precludes her from eating. When the servant Peter presents them with a meal including meat, Petruchio states that neither he nor Kate can consume the food on account of the fact that it was burnt. Noting the inaccuracy of his assessment, Kate notes that the meat "was well" (IV.i.157). Refusing her rationale, Petruchio discusses how he starves Kate when he notes that she "is sharp and passing empty" (IV.i.176). He goes on to state that "she ate no meat today, nor none shall eat" (IV.i.184). Ultimately, the fact that Petruchio starves Kate and she submits to this abuse demonstrates both her conformity to prototypical conceptions of how a woman should conduct herself. Just as happens when he deprives Kate of food and sleep, Petruchio has the last word regarding whether or not the garments are purchased and this fact makes evident the fact that Kate has no rule over her mind and body. Unable to determine what garments she adorns herself with, her body no longer functions as a locus for and symbol of her personhood. Rather Kate's body becomes the sphere through which Petruchio asserts his own authority and rule. Kate states that "thy husband is thy



lord, thy life, thy keeper, thy head, thy sovereign” (V.ii.146-147). Going on to note that women “are bound to serve, love, and obey” (V.ii.164), she concludes that females should “place [their] hands below [their] husband’s foot” (V.ii.177). This closing statement crystallizes the reader’s understanding that Petruchio’s wills and desires have prevailed in their romantic relationship.

Arguing against this notion, John C. Bean notes that the soliloquy proves that “because she now appreciates her own powers, Kate is able to envision the family as an ordered kingdom in which the subject’s obedience is a response not to the king’s will but to the king’s love” (116). In an attempt to secure romance and devotion from a woman, men can use hegemonic principles to attain this commitment. Indeed, the whole relationship ultimately amounts to Petruchio playing cruel mind games with Kate until she agrees to advocate and conform to his patriarchal ideology. Arguing this very thing, Detmer states that Petruchio “tests her tendency ‘to cross’ him until she submits, that is, until she “incorporates the world view of the aggressor” (288). During his wooing process, Petruchio informs Kate that her father has consented that she will become his wife (II.i.262-263). In making this statement, Petruchio reinforces the reader’s understanding that he finds it acceptable for the decision to wed to be left in the hands of a woman’s father rather than the woman herself. In addition to this voiced accedence to a hegemony predicated upon ensuring that men rather than women make decisions regarding how reality will be constructed, Petruchio goes on to argue that he is born to tame her. As made evident earlier, this taming process transpires through practices such as starvation and sleep deprivation.

Where one to argue that the ends justify the means, a thoughtful consideration of the pain and suffering Kate endured during the courtship phase of her relationship with Petruchio points towards her final soliloquy. Indeed, if the ends justify the means, her final assessments regarding her views about both her husband and relationships between men and women in general would best indicate whether or not the quality of her life had increased or decreased as a result of interaction with Petruchio. As delineated in the soliloquy, the result of Petruchio’s



influence is an attitude of slavish servitude which purports the patriarchal paradigm in which men rule both the domestic and public spheres. Stating that husbands are “thy lord, thy life, thy keeper” (V.ii.147), she goes on to argue that women are bound to “serve, love, and obey” (V.ii.164). Abandoning her original proclivity for challenging Petruchio’s assumptive and controlling behaviour, Kate here asserts that women should not seek for “rule, supremacy, and sway” (V.ii.163). When the reader considers these statements in light of other events that transpire throughout the play, the meaning of Kate’s words becomes clear. Formerly an agent operating according to principles of actualized free will and the pursuit of happiness, Kate’s interaction with Petruchio results in her eventual accedence to a system in which it is suitable for a woman to “place [her] hands below [her] husband’s foot” (V.ii.177). Thus when one considers Kate’s agreement to relegate herself to the position of powerless slave, the effect of Petruchio’s overbearings becomes evident.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*, the enforcement of a patriarchal value system does not result in the elevation of women. Rather, it generates the stagnation of women’s minds as they cease expressing their independent thoughts or forego thinking entirely in an effort to keep peace between themselves and their husbands.

In *Othello* too we see significant events that transpire in the lives of the protagonist and his wife, Desdemona. While Othello’s behavior and relationship with his wife indicate that he internalizes and embodies the prototypical masculine script dictating that he place primacy on thinking and acting as an independent agent, Desdemona also conforms to constricting paradigms rooted in a hegemonic gender schema. Rather than think and act as an individual who continually acknowledges and satisfies her desires, Desdemona repeatedly demonstrates that she adopts a relational mode of being and knowing by constantly subjecting herself to her husband and father. This fact becomes evident when one considers both her internal monologues and actions. Interestingly, her first line in the play concerns the well-being of her husband. In response to Cassio’s greeting, Desdemona asks, “What tidings can you tell me of my lord?” (II.i.88). Centering her own existence around Othello, Desdemona’s first utterance



indicates that her life revolves around him. That Desdemona remains subjected to her father just as she does her husband becomes evident when one considers her first line in the play. Indeed, her first statement is “My noble father, I do perceive here a divided duty; To you I am bound for life and education; My life and education both do learn me How to respect you” (I.iii.179-182). In making this assertion, Desdemona reveals that she considers obeying her father and following his instructions to be integral to her own existence. When one considers Desdemona’s reliance upon both her husband and her father for wisdom and instruction, the relational mode of being and knowing that she adopts becomes apparent.

One might argue against the notion that Desdemona’s existence and actions reflect complete conformance to a relational system of thought. Indeed, several conversations within the play indicate that she does value herself as an independent agent. In conversing with Iago and Emilia regarding the latter’s character, Desdemona asks Iago “What wouldst thou write of me, if thou shouldst praise me?” (II.i.116). In making this inquiry, Desdemona indicates that she places at least some importance on issues surrounding herself. Yet while some of Desdemona’s thoughts and actions reveal her proclivity for adopting an independent mode of existence, her life and death ultimately reflect her accedence to the relational system of thought that generates both her metaphorical and literal death. Indeed, despite her periodic assertions of independence, she ultimately allows her husband to determine the course of her life. This fact becomes evident when one considers that after insisting that he invite Cassio to dine with him, Desdemona finally concludes “Be as your fancies teach you; Whatever you be, I am obedient” (III.ii.89). In stating this, Desdemona reveals that while she does possess cognitive faculties and a will of her own, she will ultimately allow Othello to make the final determinations regarding issues that affect her. This decision crystallizes the reader’s understanding that she has adopted a relational mode of existence which ultimately works to subjugate her. The debilitating effect of the relational role Desdemona adopts becomes evident when one considers the continual erosion of her rights which takes place throughout the play. While her relationship with Othello initially reflects at least some degree of mutuality and reciprocity, his



lack of faith in her fidelity eventually generates dissonance between them and this in turn results in the implementation of verbal and physical abuse. After he has subjected her to both verbal and physical abuse, Desdemona remains in the relationship and attempts to convince Othello that she has been faithful. While obeying his commands, Desdemona also argues with him about the fact that she has been chaste, informing him that her religious training functions as a part of the impetus for her faithfulness (IV.ii.83). In addition to this, Desdemona continues to obey Othello's every edict despite the fact that he has thoroughly devalued and degraded her. Just as Kate periodically asserts her own will but eventually adopts the self-abnegating mindset that results in her insanity and ultimate absence from the text, Desdemona continually colludes in her own oppression by assenting to the hegemonic desires of her husband. Moreover, just as Kate's continual accidenceto an andocentric system of thought results in her metaphorical death, Desdemona's verbal and nonverbal consent to her husband's patriarchal ideology results in her demise.

While the relationships between Kate and Petruchio and Othello and Desdemona demonstrate collusion in a patriarchal system of thought that engenders the psychosomatic annihilation of the female participants, Romeo and Juliet's romantic union constitutes a relationship that defies the andocentric system of thought that guided Renaissance culture. That Romeo and Juliet have a relationship that transcends socio-culturally constructed conceptions of gender becomes evident when one considers how they think and act as individuals. As made evident by his discourse and decisions, Romeo does not conform to the ideology of individuation advocated and reinforced by the patriarchy. Rather, many of his internal monologues reflect a proclivity for placing primacy on interaction with others.

The play dramatizes the fate of two lovers victimized by the feuds and misunderstandings of their elders and by their own hasty temperaments. This becomes evident when one considers the words with which he woos her. Noting that if the fact that their families are feuding precludes them from attaining unmitigated love and unity, Romeo states that if his name were a word written, he would "tear the word" (II.i.99). Going on to assert the intensity



of his love for her, Romeo states that “stony limits cannot hold love out” (II.i.109). Both of these amorous assertions and his decision to marry her despite the fact that they are from feuding families’ makes evident the fact that maintaining a relationship plays a central role in how Romeo conceptualizes himself as a person. This in turn leads to the reader’s understanding that he conforms to a relational modality rather than an ideology of individuation.

Romeo’s behaviours demonstrate his proclivity for embodying a plenary mode of being and knowing, Juliet’s thoughts and actions reveal that she also possesses the sort of personhood that surpasses normative conception of what a woman should be as well as how and to what degree she should love. That Juliet does not conform to the archetypal idea of what a woman should be and think becomes evident at the play’s onset. Juliet asserts herself as an individual by expressing her views regarding marriage. When her mother asks how she feels about marrying a potential suitor, Juliet responds that “it is an honour that I dream not of” (I.iii.65). In making this assertion, Juliet demonstrates the fact that she possesses an independent mind and will of her own. When Juliet’s nurse and mother attempt to sway her through the use of rational arguments demonstrating why marriage would be beneficial, she responds by stating that she’ll “look to like, if looking liking move: But no more deep will I end art mine eye than your consent gives strength to make it fly” (I.iii.95). Here, Juliet demonstrates that while she will allow the views of her mother and the nurse to generate positive sentiments regarding marriage, she will ultimately look at potential partners with a somewhat apathetic attitude.

Her independence and agency are made evident when she discovers that Romeo is a Montague, she entreats him to deny his name and goes on to assert that if necessary she will no longer be a Capulet (II.i.78). In so doing, Juliet asserts that her position as a member of a powerful family does not override her desire and ability to make independent decisions.

Renaissance culture was rife with male-centered ideologies and their implementation. Explaining this very thing, Nostbakken (2000) asserts that “within the male-dominated hierarchy of English patriarchy, not only were husbands traditionally granted supreme authority over their wives, but women were also regarded as the weaker sex, physically and morally”



(85). As this statement implies, the English culture of Shakespeare's Verona was predicated on laws and customs that privileged men. Yet despite the influence that these biased mores may have had on Juliet and Romeo, their interaction reveals that they were perhaps less receptive to patriarchal edicts than their literary contemporaries. The society strives to achieve those virtues of the Renaissance women in their females and they keep them out of the theatre. This could be seen as domineering attitude of the males in the Elizabethan society. The men hinder the females from exhibiting their talent. It can also be interpreted as a respect for the monarch since a female, in the person of the Queen, is the head. This duality of role commenced with the monarch, Queen Elizabeth, who played the role of female and male. As explained by Kelly (1996) in her famous speech to the troops at Tilbury who had gathered for the landing of the Spanish Armada, Elizabeth played both the female and male role:

I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too ... I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarders of every one of your virtue in the field. (Kelly)

Faced with disparate yet similarly difficult situations, Juliet does not opt to remain within a cultural system which works to reify female subordination and silence. Rather, she challenges her father when he attempts to ensure that she will marry Paris. She also challenges the cultural notion that women place a great degree of primacy upon marriage when she informs the Nurse and her mother that the institution is a desire she does not have.

Thus—as becomes clear when one examines the decisions of Desdemona and Juliet—the impetus for their divergent decisions seems to be rooted in the fact that they possess the ability to think and arrive at their own conclusions regarding how to live and interact with others.

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Assorted Manifestations of the Sentiment of Love in the Select Plays of William Shakespeare

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Abstract Love is universal and eternal. Even though the Elizabethan psychology of love differs from that of the present century, certain conditions have always been recognized as favourable to the accomplishment and maintenance of a healthy relationship between a man and a woman. Irrespective of the genre to which the plays belong, the theme of love is the one that recurs in the plays of William Shakespeare. The bard's dexterity and skill is seen in his proper and contextual mixing of courtly love, compassionate love, romantic love, unrequited love and even sexual love in his dramas. William Shakespeare deals with diverse kinds of love in his plays as well his poems with much subtlety and efficiency. In his works, he deals with the love of friends for friends, the love of lovers for their beloved, the love between the husband and the wife, and many types of illicit loves. He handles the idyllic love between Ferdinand and Miranda, the burning passion of love between Romeo and Juliet, the sublime love between Antony and Cleopatra or the fairy- tale love between Rosalind and Orlando with equal dramatic skill.

Key words: Love, romantic, compassionate, unrequited

William Shakespeare deals with diverse kinds of love in his plays as well his poems with much subtlety and efficiency. In his works, he deals with the love of friends for friends, the love of lovers for their beloved, the love between the husband and the wife, and many types of illicit loves. He handles the idyllic love between Ferdinand and Miranda, the burning passion of love between Romeo and Juliet, the sublime love between Antony and Cleopatra or the fairy- tale love between Rosalind and Orlando with equal dramatic skill. Love is



universal and eternal. Even though the Elizabethan psychology of love differs from that of the present century, certain conditions have always been recognized as favourable to the accomplishment and maintenance of a healthy relationship between a man and a woman. Irrespective of the genre to which the plays belong, the theme of love is the one that recurs in the plays of William Shakespeare. The bard's dexterity and skill is seen in his proper and contextual mixing of courtly love, compassionate love, romantic love, unrequited love and even sexual love in his dramas.

Love defies all assays of generalizations. Poets, philosophers and many others have stated their own theories and interpretations but they still can't achieve the goal of capturing the true nature of this deep entity. The strength of love lies in its diversity. It possesses the unique ability to evolve, change and saturate through the path of one's life. Love possesses the ability to adapt to its internal as well as external environment and it is the final survivor. Love's reality, like beauty, is held solely in the eyes of the beholder. Love is often nothing but a constructive exchange between two people who get the most of what they can expect. Probably owing to its psychological relevance, love is one of the most important themes in art, literature and music. Just as there are many types of lovers, there are many kinds of love. Love is inherent in all human cultures.

The love between Ferdinand and Miranda in *The Tempest* is the best and the purest. The dramatist's notion of ideal love is that it involves a lot of self-sacrifice, physical or psychological or both, to which both Ferdinand and Miranda are subjected to. In order to test their love, Prospero creates many hurdles in their path such as Ferdinand is asked to carry a large number of wooden logs everyday and also warns Miranda not to have communication with Ferdinand. Both these are extremely difficult for both of them. We notice how both Ferdinand and Miranda express their mutual love to each other, and how each offers to share their burden of physical and mental torture of the other. Then again, we notice how innocently and frankly both of them avow their love to each other. Even Ferdinand may have



had previous experience of transitory, inconstant love of other women. Ferdinand seems to allude to it in the following lines:

Full many a lady
I have eyed with best regard, and many a time
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
Brought my too delight ear, for several virtues
Have I liked several women' never any
With so full soul, but some defect in her
Did quarrel I with noblest grace she owed,
And put it to the foil; but you, Oh you.
So perfect and so peerless, are created
Of every creature's best. (12)

The assertion above, which does credit to his generous heart, marks the height of his sincerest appreciation for Miranda. It is a noble love that he offers to her, so different from the love he had exchanged with other women previously. It is the most fervent and sincerest devotion to the ideal women, who at once touches his heart and imagination. Naturally, he cries:

The very instant that I saw you, did
My heart fly to your service; there resides,
To make me slave to it; and for your sake
Am I this patient log-man.
And Miranda responds thus:
I am your wife, if you will marry me.
If not, I'll die your maid. (14)

The next step is sympathy. Her sympathy is awakened when Prospero makes a too severe trial at Ferdinand. Her love is finally the outcome of her admiration and sympathy. Shakespeare contrasts the love of Miranda and Ferdinand with the love of Caliban and Ariel



for their master Prospero, and points out how both Caliban and Ariel regard service to their master as most annoying, which according to the dramatist is fake love. Neither Caliban nor Ariel is making love to the fair sex for the fulfilment of their bodily desires whereas in the case of both Ferdinand and Miranda their love is actuated by some kind of bodily desire and mental passion.

Miranda is a darling character of Shakespeare and as her name suggests, she attracts wonder and approbation from Caliban as well as Ferdinand. She herself has the capacity for wonder. Her wonder at Ferdinand and at the 'brave new world' is impulsive and sincere. Some regard her as a symbol of fertility, others as original virtue, chastity, love or beauty. Yet the quality that stands out is her pity. Her first speech and her tears reveal her sympathy for the crew of the ship as she presses Prospero to calm the storm. She still dwells upon that which is the most wanting for the completion of her nature these fellow creatures from whom she appears banished, with only one relic to keep them alive, not in her memory, but in her imagination. Again she weeps at the tale of Prospero's demeaning efforts.

Love has a more intoxicating magic than the magician Prospero. If one supposes that Prospero's magic is responsible for the awakening of love between Ferdinand and Miranda, one will soon find that love has a quicker pace than his magic and defies all Prospero's discreet calculations. Love remains the most human and natural, not a trick of magic. With his chivalrous sense, Ferdinand would have been incapable of doing any violence to the old and venerable Prospero. One may believe that he is blinded by the passion of love. But Prospero's insult is too exasperating to the young. Magic paralyses Ferdinand physically, but love as a more powerful magic conquers him. Ferdinand confesses:

My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up
My father's loss, the weakness which I feel
The wreck of all my friends,
Nor this man's threats,



To whom I subdued, are but light to me
Might I but through my prison once a day
Behold this maid! All comers else o' the earth,
Let liberty make use of; space enough
Have I in such a prison. (20)

In *The Tempest* after the acid test, Prospero being satisfied with Ferdinand, formally introduces Miranda to him. Prospero, however, warns him to be careful to preserve the chastity of Miranda till they are married with full and holy rite; otherwise their married life would be full of abhorrence and dissension. Ferdinand takes a solemn vow to follow his advice. Prospero celebrates the betrothal of the young couple and he calls up his spirits to play the masque of Juno. The betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda is a long step forward towards the successful completion of Prospero's plans. Miranda will not only inherit Milan, but will also be the queen of Naples.

Youth can bear true love as its finest fruit, but only through the hard ways of reparation and fidelity. The philosophy of love, as suggested in *The Tempest* is in a nutshell, a realization of the poets' philosophy of love. Accordingly, love means a perfect union of hearts emanating from the chastening of feelings and effacing oneself in agony and forfeit.

There are some points of similarity between *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* although *The Tempest* is the play of mature years, while *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the play of his youth. The play explores the nature of romantic love at its best. The sentiment of Love can make even a great intellectual a foolish idiot. In this play, the magic love juice causes the characters to fall madly in and out of love as they pursue each other around the woods, and even make the Fairy Queen fall in love with a literal jackass. "The course of true love never did run smooth," comments Lysander, articulating one of *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* most important themes—that of the complicatedness of love (200). Though most of the conflict in the play stems from the troubles of romance, and though the play involves a number of romantic elements, it is not truly a love story; it



distances the audience from the emotions of the characters in order to poke fun at the torments and afflictions that those in love suffer. The tone of the play is so jocular that the audience never doubts that things will end happily, and it is therefore free to enjoy the comedy without being caught up in the tension of an uncertain outcome. The theme of love's difficulty is often explored through the motif of love out of balance—that is, romantic situations in which a discrepancy or inequality interferes with the harmony of a relationship. The prime illustration of this disparity is the asymmetrical love among the four young Athenians: Hermia loves Lysander, Lysander loves Hermia, Helena loves Demetrius, and Demetrius loves Hermia instead of Helena—a simple numeric imbalance in which two men love the same woman, leaving one woman with too many suitors and one with too few. The play has strong potential for a traditional result, and the plot is in many ways based on a quest for internal balance; that is, when the lovers' tangle resolves itself into symmetrical pairings, the traditional happy ending will have been achieved. Somewhat similarly, in the relationship between Titania and Oberon, an imbalance arises out of the fact that Oberon's coveting of Titania's Indian boy outweighs his love for her. Later, Titania's passion for the ass-headed Bottom represents an imbalance of appearance and nature: Titania is beautiful and graceful, while Bottom is clumsy and grotesque.

The love potion is made from the juice of a flower that was struck with one of Cupid's misfired arrows; it is used by the fairies to wreak romantic havoc throughout Acts II, III, and IV. Because the meddling fairies are careless with the love potion, the situation of the young Athenian lovers becomes increasingly chaotic and confusing (Demetrius and Lysander are magically compelled to transfer their love from Hermia to Helena), and Titania is entertainingly disgraced (she is magically compelled to fall deeply in love with the ass-headed Bottom). The love potion thus becomes a symbol of the unreasoning, unreliable, erratic, and undeniably powerful nature of love, which can lead to inexplicable and bizarre behavior and cannot be resisted.

Romeo and Juliet has become forever associated with love. The play has become an iconic story of love and passion, and the name "Romeo" is still used to describe young lovers.



Shakespeare's treatment of love in the play is intricate and all-around. He uses love in its many guises to thread together the key relationships in the play.

Some characters fall in and out of love very quickly in *Romeo and Juliet*. For example, Romeo is in love with Rosaline at the start of the play, which is presented as an immature infatuation. Today, we might use the term "puppy love" to describe this. Romeo's love for Rosaline is shallow and nobody really believes that it will last, including Friar Laurence: Similarly, Paris' love for Juliet is borne out of tradition, not passion. He has identified her as a good candidate for a wife and approaches her father to arrange the marriage. Although this was the tradition at the time, it also says something about Paris' sober attitude towards love. He even admits to Friar Laurence that in his haste to rush the wedding through he hasn't discussed it with his bride-to-be:

Our classic idea of romantic love is embodied in *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare presents this as a force of nature, so strong that it transcends societal conventions. This idea is established in the play's prologue with the line "a pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life" (839). Perhaps Romeo and Juliet's love is fate - there love is given cosmic significance which can therefore overturn the social boundaries of "fair Verona." Their love is disallowed by the Capulet and Montague households, and Juliet is to marry Paris - Yet, they inexorably find themselves drawn together.

Many of the friendships in the play are as sincere as Romeo and Juliet's love for one another. The close relationships between Juliet and her Nurse, and between Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio are meaningful and heartfelt. They care deeply for another and protect each other's honor - this eventually costs Mercutio his life. This platonic love is offset by the sexual innuendos made by some characters - particularly Juliet's Nurse and Mercutio. Their view of love is earthy and purely sexual, creating an effective contrast with Romeo and Juliet's romanticism.



Romeo and Juliet is the most famous love story in the English literary tradition. Love is naturally the play's dominant and most important theme. The play focuses on romantic love, specifically the intense passion that springs up at first sight between Romeo and Juliet. In *Romeo and Juliet*, love is a violent, rapturous, overwhelming force that supersedes all other values, loyalties, and emotions. In the course of the play, the young lovers are driven to defy their entire social world: families; friends (Romeo abandons Mercutio and Benvolio after the feast in order to go to Juliet's garden); and ruler (Romeo returns to Verona for Juliet's sake after being exiled by the Prince on pain of death). Love is the overriding theme of the play, but a reader should always remember that Shakespeare is uninterested in portraying a prettied-up, dainty version of the emotion, the kind that bad poets write about, and whose bad poetry Romeo reads while pining for Rosaline. Love in *Romeo and Juliet* is a brutal, powerful emotion that captures individuals and catapults them against their world, and, at times, against themselves.

The powerful nature of love can be seen in the way it is described, or, more accurately, the way descriptions of it so consistently fail to capture its entirety. At times love is described in the terms of religion, as in the fourteen lines when Romeo and Juliet first meet. At others it is described as a sort of magic: "Alike bewitched by the charm of looks" (844). Juliet, perhaps, most perfectly describes her love for Romeo by refusing to describe it: "But my true love is grown to such excess / I cannot sum up some of half my wealth" (847). Love, in other words, resists any single metaphor because it is too powerful to be so easily contained or understood.

Romeo and Juliet does not make a specific moral statement about the relationships between love and society, religion, and family; rather, it portrays the chaos and passion of being in love, combining images of love, violence, death, religion, and family in an impressionistic rush leading to the play's tragic conclusion. The themes of death and violence permeate *Romeo and Juliet*, and they are always connected to passion, whether that passion is



love or hate. The connection between hate, violence, and death seems obvious. But the relation between love and violence requires further research.

Love, in *Romeo and Juliet*, is a grand passion, and as such it is blinding; it can overpower a person as powerfully and completely as hate can. The passionate love between Romeo and Juliet is linked from the moment of its inception with death. Tybalt notices that Romeo has crashed the feast and determines to kill him just as Romeo catches sight of Juliet and falls instantly in love with her. From that point on, love seems to push the lovers closer to love and violence, not farther from it. Romeo and Juliet are plagued with thoughts of suicide, and a willingness to experience it: in Act 3, scene 3, Romeo brandishes a knife in Friar Lawrence's cell and threatens to kill himself after he has been banished from Verona and his love. Juliet also pulls a knife in order to take her own life in Friar Lawrence's presence just three scenes later. After Capulet decides that Juliet will marry Paris, Juliet says, "If all else fail, myself have power to die" (856). Finally, each imagines that the other looks dead the morning after their first, and only, sexual experience ("Methinks I see thee," Juliet says, ". . . as one dead in the bottom of a tomb" (877). This theme continues until its inevitable conclusion: double suicide. This tragic choice is the highest, most potent expression of love that Romeo and Juliet can make. It is only through death that they can preserve their love, and their love is so profound that they are willing to end their lives in its defense. In the play, love emerges as a disgraceful thing, leading as much to destruction as to happiness. But in its extreme passion, the love that Romeo and Juliet experience also appears so exquisitely beautiful that few would want, or be able, to resist its power.

Much of *Romeo and Juliet* involves the lovers' struggles against public and social institutions that either explicitly or implicitly oppose the existence of their love. Such structures range from the concrete to the abstract: families and the placement of familial power in the father; law and the desire for public order; religion; and the social importance placed on masculine honor. These institutions often come into conflict with each other. The



importance of honour, for example, time and again results in brawls that disturb the public peace.

Though they do not always work in concert, each of these societal institutions in some way present obstacles for Romeo and Juliet. The enmity between their families, coupled with the emphasis placed on loyalty and honor to kin, combine to create a profound conflict for Romeo and Juliet, who must rebel against their heritages. Further, the patriarchal power structure inherent in Renaissance families, wherein the father controls the action of all other family members, particularly women, places Juliet in an extremely defenseless position. Her heart, in her family's mind, is not hers to give. The law and the emphasis on social civility demands terms of conduct with which the blind passion of love cannot comply. Religion similarly demands priorities that Romeo and Juliet cannot abide by because of the intensity of their love. Though in most situations the lovers uphold the traditions of Christianity (they wait to marry before consummating their love), their love is so powerful that they begin to think of each other in blasphemous terms. For example, Juliet calls Romeo "the god of my idolatry," elevating Romeo to level of God (901). The couple's final act of suicide is likewise un-Christian. The maintenance of masculine honor forces Romeo to commit actions he would prefer to avoid. But the social emphasis placed on masculine honor is so profound that Romeo cannot simply ignore them.

It is possible to see *Romeo and Juliet* as a battle between the responsibilities and actions demanded by social institutions and those demanded by the private desires of the individual. Romeo and Juliet's appreciation of night, with its darkness and privacy, and their rejection of their names, with its attendant loss of obligation, make sense in the context of individuals who wish to escape the public world. But the lovers cannot stop the night from becoming day. And Romeo cannot cease being a Montague simply because he wants to; the rest of the world will not let him. The lovers' suicides can be understood as the ultimate night, the ultimate privacy.



Love is something we all share no matter where we live, and it disregards social status or age. Shakespeare has captured the spirit of it, its highs and lows, and the beauty of falling in love in some of the most poetical lines ever written. He wrote 38 plays and the word love is mentioned in each one of them. In some, it is very frequent:

The Two Gentleman of Verona – 162 times

Romeo and Juliet – 120

As you like it – 104

A Midsummer Night's Dream – 103

Much Ado About Nothing – 89 (Gill 32)

But love in Shakespeare is not always tragic, unrequited or hurtful. In three of his early romantic comedies (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado About Nothing*) love is a source of pleasantry and amusement, sporting and playfulness. Familiar comic features are present in all three plays – mistaken identity, match-making and intervening magic. Everything falls into its right place and there is no serious damage done to anybody. There isn't a more delicate or imaginative representation of love than in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In this play Shakespeare draws on many fairy tales and nursery legends he had heard as a young boy, as well as the established tradition of midsummer celebrations. There was a notion in his time that love is introduced and taken away by magic, hence the play of fairies at midnight and the magical setting of the play

Just like in the other comedies, love in *Twelfth Night* is a game. It is never constant, is subject to suggestions, works its magic and not always results in a marriage. It makes characters love-sick and carries them through a warren of confusing circumstances. Shakespeare pokes gentle fun around them and their attitude to love. Viola falls in love with Orsino at first sight, as well as Olivia with Cesario, Sebastian with Olivia. Only Sir Toby and Maria really get to know each other. Viola's love is genuine. But like most women:



She never told her love,

But let concealment, like a worm in the' bud,

Feed on her damask cheek: she pin'd in thought (387)

In contrast, Duke Orsino is in love with the idea of love. It was fashionable at the time that noble men should admire women's beauty from a distance and without really getting to know the objects of their desires making them appear sick and melancholic. Love in Shakespeare's plays, just like in real life, makes sometimes a fool of us. Malvolio develops a very strange manner in his belief that Olivia has fallen for him. Servant Maria reports that he has been seen in yellow stockings cross gartered with a silly smile. Life enhancing qualities of love are captured by Shakespeare in another of the clown's song.

The playful theme is continued in *Much Ado About Nothing* where a clever jest tricks Benedick and Beatrice into loving each other by making them hear planted conversations. Their relationship doesn't start well, each one of them being a sober, down to earth person. Beatrice is not in a romantic mood:

For, hear me, Hero, wooing, wedding, and repenting is as a Scotch jig A
measure, and a cinque-pace; the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig
And then comes repentance, and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace
Faster and faster, till he sinks into his grave. (167)

Benedick is not far behind Beatrice establishing himself as a firm bachelor and 'professed tyrant' to women. Even when they are tricked to believe the other is in love with them, they stay apprehensive and love is 'no more than reason' (187). Beatrice takes him 'in friendly recompense' and 'consumption', he takes her 'in pity'. Shakespeare's take on love in the play is modern and fresh. Beatrice and Benedick's love has been developed as part of the complex plot of the broken and then restored romance of Claudio and Hero which causes a lot of 'do about nothing' in the play. Although in Shakespeare's times it was usual to suspect



women of dishonesty and deceit, Shakespeare takes it a step further and writes about men's infidelity: Love between a woman and a man in Shakespeare reaches its peak in marriage and is normally seen as a natural state of happiness.

The themes of love and power are set on the background of the medieval patriarchal society where men are the rulers and the women follow. However, society is captured in the process of change and Shakespeare's women are becoming more self-regulating and free to express their true identity. Cordelia, the youngest of King Lear's daughters, refuses to measure her love for her father in words: "True love cannot be put into fine words" (1092). It could be argued that words are important when it comes to reassuring the old father of respect and understanding. Ultimately, however, it is through each of the daughter's actions that true feeling is distinguished from duplicity. On another level, the theme of tragic filial love is enriched with the lines devoted to the troubled relationship of Duke of Gloucester, his son Edgar and his illegitimate son Edmund. The suffering, at times agonizing, of all the characters in *King Lear* takes on the proportions of a Greek tragedy, leaving the audience with feeling of sorrowfulness for the old king, and understanding the power of material temptations and the beauty of filial love. Just as in real life, Shakespeare mixes these feelings with thoughts on hypocritical love, unfaithful nature of women and the ugliness of false marriages. Thus the sentiment of Love finds its lovely expression in its variegated, assorted manifestations in the plays of the greatest dramatist that the world has ever seen.

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Tales from Shakespeare and Lamb(s)

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Abstract The paper attempts a brief study of Charles and Mary Lamb(s)'s *Tales from Shakespeare*, as a translated work of plays of William Shakespeare. For research purpose various books, blogs and online journals are consulted.

Key words: Children's literature, Child, Intralingual translation.

William Shakespeare is one of the greatest writers of English that have ever lived. There is hardly anyone who hasn't heard of star-crossed lovers Romeo and Juliet. The Hamlet's dialogue 'to be or not to be' is well acquainted expression. In every major language and cinema, one can find different renderings of it. He wrote thirty-seven plays, one hundred and fifty four sonnets and two longer poems. There is a universal quality inherent in all of his works. He wrote his plays in Elizabethan times but his work encapsulate emotions and truths that are timeless. Extraordinary facility for language, motley of topics and medley of characters are some of the striking peculiarities of his plays that make us want to read and re-read them. It is rightly said that 'he was not of an age but of all times.' 400th year anniversary of Shakespeare and yet every year something new is found about him or something new is



said. A great poet and an even greater playwright, the genius of Shakespeare is scrutinized, admired and criticized differently by different people. His works are dissected by feminists, postcolonialists, postmodernists and many more. They are interpreted by socialists, psychologists, anthropologists and so on. And again, they are translated in numerous languages and adapted across various Media. There are hundreds of plays, musicals, operas, ballets, movies and many more renderings that are in some kind of relationship with works of William Shakespeare. All aspects of his plays are explored and given dually attention. But almost two century earlier when Lamb sibling translated it into children's tales in *Tales from Shakespeare*, no further progress is made in further perpetuating them for children.

Children's literature

Clifton Fadiman in article "Children's Literature" written for Encyclopaedia Britannica writes that Children's literature is body of work, produced in order to entertain or instruct young people. The genre includes fairy tales, fantasy, fables, folk songs etc. It is reception based genre rather than conception based. The term 'young people' is used for there is no specific definition of the term 'children.' Usually young people up to their teen ages are considered as children.

Children's Literature is reception based for books like *Harry Potter*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Gulliver's Travels* are considered as cross- over fiction i.e. cannot be decided upon which category they fall – adult literature or children's one since these are equally liked by both. So works that are meant for children as well as accepted by them constitute Children's Literature.



In Europe, child is recognized as separate category only in Eighteenth century. Prior to that, he was considered as mini adult whose welfare was secondary to the economic status of the family. This change was brought out by many factors. Clifton Fadiman compactly sums up all the reasons of emergence of 'child' and writes that

His emergence (the Child), as well as that of a literature suited to his needs, is linked to many historical forces, among them the development of Enlightenment thought (Rousseau and, before him, John Locke); the rise of the middle class; the beginnings of the emancipation of women (children's literature, unlike that for grown-ups, is in large measure a distaff product) and Romanticism, with its minor strands of the cult of the child (Wordsworth and others) and of genres making a special appeal to the young (folktales and fairy tales, myths, ballads). Yet, with all these forces working for the child, he still might not have emerged had it not been for a few unpredictable geniuses: William Blake, Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, George MacDonald, Louisa May Alcott, Mark Twain, Collodi, Hans Christian Andersen. (Fadiman "To Instruct and Delight – A History of Children's Literature")

Above factors contributed to the recognition of 'child' but literature for children was still in nascent years. Before *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* published, Children's literature was basically instructional. Prior to and in times in which Lamb siblings published *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), religious books on moral and more unsophisticated fantastic tales published on horn book and chap books were the only inclusions that were meant for children. To adapt dramas of Shakespeare for children at that time, Lamb(s) did something



that was far ahead of their times. The work is not duly mentioned in Histories compiled of Children's Literature because of perception of inferiority of translated works up to a few years back. It would be interesting to see a study made on children's literature wherein effects of translated works on contemporary reading habits and on social and literary scene are recorded.

Tales from Shakespeare

Tales from Shakespeare is authored by Charles Lamb with his sister Mary Lamb. The book was published in 1807. In it, Shakespeare's plays are translated to be easily graspable by the children. If we consider Roman Jakobson's category of Intralingual translation (Bassnett 23) that he mentioned in his paper "On linguistic aspects of translation," *Tales from Shakespeare* is perfect example of such translation. Authors Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb took dramas of Shakespeare and molded them into easily comprehensible, highly enjoyable tales for children. Mary Lamb translated comedies, while Charles worked tragedies. They wrote the preface jointly.

The book contains following tales:

1. The Tempest (Mary Lamb)
2. A Midsummer Night's Dream (Mary Lamb)
3. The Winter's Tale (Mary Lamb)
4. Much Ado About Nothing (Mary Lamb)
5. As You Like It (Mary Lamb)
6. Two Gentlemen of Verona (Mary Lamb)



7. The Merchant of Venice (Mary Lamb)
8. Cymbeline (Mary Lamb)
9. King Lear (Charles Lamb)
10. Macbeth (Charles Lamb)
11. All's Well That Ends Well (Mary Lamb)
12. The Taming of the Shrew (Mary Lamb)
13. The Comedy of Errors (Mary Lamb)
14. Measure for Measure (Mary Lamb)
15. Twelfth Night (Mary Lamb)
16. Timon of Athens (Charles Lamb)
17. Romeo and Juliet (Charles Lamb)
18. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (Charles Lamb)
19. Othello (Charles Lamb)
20. Pericles, Prince of Tyre (Mary Lamb)

Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb

Charles Lamb lived from 10 February 1775 to 1827 December 1834. He is best known for his *Essays of Elia* and work for children- *Tales from Shakespeare*, which he co- authored with his sister, Mary Lamb. Mary Lamb lived from 1764 to 1847. Both faced a life full of tragedies. Both Charles and his sister Mary, endured a period of mental illness. Charles spent six weeks in a mental facility in 1795. At that time he had just started to make his name as a writer. Mary's illness was more severe and in one of her uncontrollable fit, she killed her



mother. After that Charles took over the responsibility for her and devoted his life to looking after her and, afterwards, never married. There was period in their life when only two of them had to shoulder the responsibility of family. In 1795, when Charles Lamb was in a private mental facility, Mary had to work as a seamstress and had to look after her senescent father. Her mother required constant care, and her brother John had had an accident and dependent on her for to be cared. The situation began to affect her mental stability.

Despite familial trials and tribulations, they both presided over the literary scene in London that included the poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, among others.

In 1806, William Godwin and his second wife Mary Jane Godwin, who were close friends of the Lamb(s), asked Mary to write something for their *Juvenile Library*. This was the beginning of Charles and Mary's collaboration on *Tales from Shakespeare*.

Apart from *Tales from Shakespeare* and *Essays of Elia*, Charles Lamb in 1796 published some of his poems in Coleridge's collection *Poems on Various Subjects*. Story "A Tale of Rosamund Gray and Poor Blind Margaret" appeared in 1798. It is written in Blank Verse and co-authored with Charles Lloyd. He wrote a number of dramatic works including *John Wodvil* (1802) and *Mr. H* (a farce in verse, 1806). These were followed by *The Adventures of Ulysses* (1808), *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare* (1808), *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare* (1811), and *Witches and Other Night Fears* (1821) and etc.

Tales from Shakespeare is sole work of Mary Lamb which he co-authored with his brother.

Tales from Shakespeare and Lamb(s)



Shakespeare's were dramas of great length. Lamb siblings transformed these universally acclaimed theatre renderings into simple tales. These tales are read as short stories in *Tales from Shakespeare*. Despite trimming of length, the flavor and ambience of Shakespearean tales are maintained. It can be seen that *Tales of Shakespeare* closely follow its source. This intralingual translation was created in different times. Shakespeare was from Elizabethan England. His plays were written for contemporary mature audience. We do see that to give a feel of Shakespeare's works to young readers of early nineteenth century England, "Shakespeare's own words, with little alteration, recur very frequently in the narrative as well as in the dialogue" (Lamb Preface).

Style of writing exudes an old world charm with imitation of Shakespeare's style. Dialogues do are incorporated especially for comedies but we find contemporary way of speaking. Dialogues of similar vein could be found in any of Jane Austen's work. Contemporary way of speaking amalgamated with archaic words to achieve a balance so that therein we find, as in the preface of *Tales from Shakespeare* Lamb sibling says, "an earnest wish to give as much of Shakespeare's own words as possible" (Lamb Preface).

In all tales of *Tales from Shakespeare*, third person heterodiegetic narrator is narrating. Because Shakespeare's medium was drama, personal comments could not be introduced in the stage renderings. Mature audience was left to draw their own conclusions. But in coauthored work of Lamb siblings, their own comments could be found thrown in, which are their own take or perspective on the respective tale.



The trope of 'once upon a time' is woven in all the tales of *Tales from Shakespeare*. It was, later, modus operandi of the fairy tales composed in Europe. Same context of 'far off land and archaic times' is found in Shakespeare's dramas as well. So, the trope of 'once upon a time' is reinforcing. Names of all individual tales are same corresponding with names of dramas authored by Shakespeare. Names of characters and narrational frames are also kept same but necessary changes are made in plots of narratives where ever authors have felt them indispensable to make. For instance, in tale "A Midnight Summer's Dream," 'the play within play' that is performed in the original work is edited. One reason could be that, in original play, most of the humor comes from the performance of this inner play which is difficult to achieve in written prose. Since, Lamb(s) wrote it in prose, its exclusion lends simplicity to tale.

According to Alexa Huang,

One of the most widely-read and globally influential intralingual translations is *Tales from Shakespeare* by Victorian author and critic Charles Lamb and his sister Mary.

Conclusion

Lamb siblings wrote in an era when issues like racism, gender inequality, Anti-Semitism and etc. were not even imagined. Their's were an earnest effort to produce a work that would be "submitted to the young reader as an introduction to the study of Shakespeare"(Lamb Preface). Lamb(s) in preface reasoned that these texts are mainly for girls as, "boys being generally permitted the use of their fathers' libraries ... before their sisters are permitted to look into this manly book" (Lamb). Alexa Huang writes that



The moralistic, simplified, prose rendition of select Shakespearean tragedies (by Charles) and comedies (by Mary) was initially intended for women and children who would not otherwise have access to Shakespeare's plays, but it has remained one of the most popular English-language rewritings to this day. Charles Lamb was a respected essayist and critic in his times, considered by such figures as William Hazlitt to be a sounder authority on poetry than Johnson or Schlegel. *The Tales from Shakespeare* bears the mark of its times, but the collection of twenty stories was an enduring monument to Shakespeare in translation and Victorian literature. Though the Lambs openly acknowledged that their rewriting was gendered and classed, they retained as much phrases and passages from Shakespeare as possible. We find a Hamlet who is caring and grieving for clearer reasons:

We don't see any efforts made in adaption of these works for children in any other culture or language.

Tales from Shakespeare has been republished many times. It was illustrated by Sir John Gilbert in 1866, by Arthur Rackham in 1899 and 1909, by Louis Monziès in 1908, by Walter Paget in 1910, and by D. C. Eyles in 1934. In 1893-4, the book was supplemented with some additional tales by Harrison S Morris and was re-published in the USA as a multi-volume set with colour plate illustrations. (Wikipedia)

It would be interesting to see future translation of Shakespeare's work for children with various issues addressed. It would be more delightful if we would find not only intralingual but interlingual as well as cultural translations in languages far removed from the English



Culture. Reimagined, reorganized, and often removed culturally diverse world of Shakespearean tales for children would, then, mirror their global readers.

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Domestication of Shakespeare in Indian cinema: A study of Vishal Bhardwaj's Shakespeare Trilogy

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Abstract: Adaptation of Shakespearian plays is not a new phenomenon in Indian cinema. Shakespeare has always been regarded as an important source of inspiration by Indian film makers. Many screen adaptations have been made of Shakespearian tragedies by many film makes in almost all Indian languages. But recently Bollywood has come up with a new genre of combining Shakespearian themes with Indian socio political issues. This paper is an attempt to study the new genre in details with core focus on the “Shakespeare Trilogy” of Vishal Bhardwaj.

Key words: Shakespearian Plays, Celluloid adaptations, Domestication and Shakespeare Trilogy of Vishal Bhardwaj

I. Introduction

The heart touching appeals of Shakespearian tragic plays have never been limited to the perimeters of literary world. Their richness has always attracted the artisans of various creative fields to try their hands in the evergreen themes challenging the limitations of time and space. Many adaptations have been made in the stage theatre and cinema over a period of time all over the world.



In India, Shakespeare has always been an integral part of the popular culture. In theatre, the influence of the bard has been loved and appreciated by common people as well as the critics since the early days of Indian theatre. In cinema, his presence can be traced back to the silent era. Since the time of Dada Saheb Phalke, the period of the developing phase of Parsi theatre, Shakespearian tragedies have remained one of the most fashionable subjects for the Indian film makers. But, recently Bollywood has come up with a new genre of adaptation presenting the plays with a domesticated Regional flavour. This paper endeavours to critically analyse the new genre with core focus on Vishal Bhardwaj's "Shakespearian Trilogy".

The objective of this paper is to study in details how the Shakespearian tragedies have been indigenised by the director in the three films selected for the study without making the charm light and retaining the typical Shakespearian flavour.

This paper is a close textual analysis of the three selected films: *Maqbool*, *Omkara* and *Haider*. Three variables have been selected for the study: Domestication of the characters, Domestication of the plots and story lines and Projection of Indian culture. Content analysis method has been applied to the variables for critical analysis.

II. Early Celluloid adaptations of Shakespeare

The first Shakespearian cinema in any country was made in 1899, a simple photographic adaptation of Sir Herbert Breebohm Tree's stage production of *King John*, by London studio (Sultana Parvin).

"The next three decades would see varied approaches to challenge of filming Shakespeare in medium denied spoken words" Wrote British Film Institutes' Michel Brooke. As he assumed, many Shakespearian tragedies were adopted in Hollywood in early twentieth century. In 1912 *Richard III* was made by André Calmettes and James Keane, following this in 1913 *Hamlet* was made by Hay Plumb, *Romeo Juliet* was made by J. Gordon Edwards and starring Theda Bara in 1916 (Free course: A survey of Shakespearian plays) .



When sound was introduced, British cinema was slow to deal with Shakespeare - the first straight adaptation, *As You Like It*, didn't appear until 1937, and the next one after that was released in 1944, though *Laurence Olivier's* boldly patriotic *Henry V* also turned out to be the first recognized British Shakespearean masterpiece. The next decade would see *Olivier* dominating British Shakespeare film with similarly unforgettable adaptations of *Hamlet* (1948) and *Richard III* (1955).

From the 1960s, other major directors attempted and filmed Shakespeare, with variable results - *Tony Richardson's Hamlet* (1969) fundamentally aimed a camera at his Roundhouse stage production, *Peter Brook's King Lear* (1970) shifted the play to wintry Denmark and *Roman Polanski's* violent, blood-spattered *Macbeth* (1971) matched the pessimism of its era. By contrast, *Franco Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet* (1968) was an abundant and magnificent costume drama, achieving a perfect balance between trustworthiness to the play and attractiveness to younger audiences.

Shakespeare films became remarkably more experimental in the 1970s, with *Celestino Coronado's* avant-garde *Hamlet* (1976) and *Derek Jarman's* far-reaching reworking of *The Tempest* (1979) paving the way for *Peter Greenaway's Prospero's Books* (1991) and *Tom Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1990), influenced by *The Tempest* and *Hamlet* respectively.

There have also been a number of modern updates or contemporary stories clearly inspired by Shakespearean themes. *Othello* was particularly successful in this respect, inspiring Venetian melodrama *Carnival* (1921, remade 1931), romantic comedy *Men Are Not Gods* (1936) and *All Night Long* (1961), set in the middle of the London jazz scene. Gangsters feature in *Joe Macbeth* (1955) and *My Kingdom* (2002, based on *King Lear*), while the second big-screen, *As You Like It* (1992) resettled the play to a run-down London housing estate, with mixed results. But *Richard Loncraine* and *Ian McKellen's* daring update of *Richard III* (1995) to an imaginary Fascist Britain was a victory, showing just how richly



imaginative British Shakespeare films can be when they have the courage of their convictions (Shakespeare on Screen).

In Hollywood Shakespearian themes gained prominence after 1907 with making of an adaptation of Hamlet. Since the time there have been made 250 adaptations of the Hamlet alone, 100 of King Lear besides the rest. Some important Hollywood adaptations are a double life (1947) based on Othello, Forbidden Planet (1956) based on The Tempest, Strange Brew (1983) based on Hamlet and Romeo must die(2000) based on Romeo Juliet (Maddox Maeve).

Popularity of Shakespeare never remained confined to the first world. The film makers around the world made many experiments with the narratives of the bard from time to time. One such internationally acclaimed, notable film is “Run” made by Akira Kurosawa in Japan in 1985 based on King Lear. (Sultana Parvin).

III. Shakespeare in Bollywood

The presence of Shakespeare in Indian cinema can be traced back to the early twentieth century. The first Hindi adaptation of Shakespeare was Savkari Pash directed by Baburao Painter in 1925 base on the merchant of Venice released even before the first Indian talkie Alam Ara was made. Sixteen years later in 1941 another adaptation of the same was made through Zaalim Saudagar by J.J.Madan (Gahlot Aashi).

It was Parsi theatre which brought Shakespeare to Hindi cinema. The Parsi theatre flourished between 1870 and 1940, adapting Shakespeare’s plays into Urdu, the literary Lingua franca of northern India. Those plays were in turn screened and adapted to Hindi cinema. One of the earliest such films was Dil Farosh (1927), a silent film based on Parsi theatre adaptation of the merchant of Venice. The Taming of the Shrew, Antony and Cleopatra and Measure for Measure were adapted respectively in Hathili Dulhan (1932), Kafir e Ishq (1939) and Pak Daman (1940). Hamlet meanwhile reigned among tragedies, adapted first into the silent film



Khoon e Nayak (1928) and later into the talkies, Sohrab Modi's Khoon ka Khoon (1935) and Kishore Sahu's Hamlet (1954) (Singh).

During the golden age of Indian cinema, one of the great pioneers of the field, the grand old veteran of Indian cinema Gulzar made Do duni chaar in 1968, based on The Comedy of Errors, starring the most popular face of Indian cinema, Kishore Kumar and the evergreen Tanuja. The film was a remake of Bengali film Bhrantibilas. In 1981 Gulzar made another adaptation of the play, Angoor, starring Sanjeev Kumar, Mausumi Chatterjee, Dipti Noval and Deven Verma. Quamat se Quamat tak by Mansoor Khan in 1984 was based on Romeo Juliet (Rediff movies).

The early twenty first century witnessed a wide ranged screen adaptations of Shakespeare in Bollywood. The popularity of the diversified themes reached to its peak with the most notable film makers trying their hands in adapting Shakespearian plays. The most noteworthy of them is Vishal Bharadwaj, whose internationally acclaimed Shakespearian Trilogy not just succeeded commercially but also brought him many prestigious awards, including Rajat Kamal, the second highest national film award of India after Dada Saheb Phalke. Among others are, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, whose National award winning Ram Leela was an adaptation of Romeo Juliet and Sharad Kataria, whose 10ml Love in 2012 was an unusual adaptation of a midsummer night's dream. Apart from these, the other popular movies of the period are, Ishaqzaade by Habib Faisal in 2012, based on Romeo Juliet and Issaq by Manish Tiwary in 2013 based on Romeo Juliet (Singh Prashant).

IV. Shakespearian influence in regional cinema

Influence of Shakespeare in Indian cinema has not been limited to Bollywood, many regional language films have also been made, inspired by the evergreen plays of Shakespeare and their astonishing themes.

- **Bengali Cinema**



In Bengal, Shakespearian tragic themes have always been regarded as one of the most popular source of inspiration by the prominent film makers. The first Bengali film inspired by Shakespeare was Saptapadi loosely based on Othello made by Ajoy Kar in 1961. The film was a big commercial success. Bhrantibilas, a film based on Comedy of errors made in 1963 by Manu Sen was another mega hit. An experimental film Hrid Majhare was made by Ranjan Ghosh in 2014 based on Othello, Macbeth and Hamlet.

It was not just the popular film makers who got inspired by Shakespearian plays, the tragedy of Shakespeare attracted the well-known faces of parallel cinema too. Zulfiqar, a film based on Julius Caesar was made by Srijit Mukherjee in 2014. The following year, Aparna Sen made Arshinagar based on Romeo Juliet (Harris Janathan Gill).

- **Malayalam Cinema**

The credit of introducing Shakespearian tragedies to Malayalam cinema goes to Jay raj. His film Kaliyattam based on Othello made in 1997 against the backdrop of Hindu They yam performance brought him the best director award in the Indian National film award 1997. Apart from this he made Kannaki based on Antony and Cleopatra in 2001. His upcoming film Veeram is based on Macbeth. Another popular adaptation was Karmayogi based on Hamlet made by V.K.Prakash in 2012. (Harris Janathan Gill)

- **Kannada Cinema**

A Kannada film Ultapalta based on Comedy of errors was made by N.S.Shankar in 1997. (Harris Janathan Gill)

- **Marathi Cinema**

A Marathi movie, Natsamrat based on King Lear was made by Mahesh Manjrekar in 2016. (Harris Janathan Gill)

V. Vishal Bharadwaj's Shakespearian Trilogy



Bollywood director Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool*, *Omkara* and *Haider* are collectively called his Shakespeare trilogy as all the three films are based on Shakespearian plays.

- **Maqbool**

Maqbool was made in 2003 based on *Macbeth*. The Indian version of the play was set in the commercial capital of India, Mumbai.

The film had its North American premiere at the 2003 Toronto International Film Festival. Though the film failed to entice much of an audience during its theatrical run in India, critics were appreciative and Pankaj Kapoor went on to win a Filmfare Award for Best Actor (Critics) and a National Film Award for Best Supporting Actor. The film was screened in the Marché du Film section of the 2004 Cannes Film Festival.

- **Omkara**

Omkara was an adaptation of *Othello*. The film was set in Meerut, a small town in Uttar Pradesh.

The film was showcased in the Marché du Film section at the 2006 Cannes Film Festival along with a book on the making of *Omkara*. It was also selected to be screened at the Cairo International Film Festival, where Bhardwaj was awarded for Best Artistic Contribution in Cinema of a Director. The film also won three awards at the Kara Film Festival, an award at the Asian Festival of First Films, three National Film Awards, and seven Film fare Awards.

- **Haider**

The last in the series, *Haider* was an adaptation of *Hamlet*; made in 2015, the film is set in Kashmir.



Haider was the first Indian film to win the People's Choice Award at the Rome Film Festival. Among several awards and nominations in India, the film won five National Film Awards: Best Male Playback Singer, Best Dialogue, Best choreography, Best Costume Design, and Best Music Direction.

- **Domestication of the characters**

In *Maqbool*, Macbeth becomes Maqbool who is a typical underworld gang star of Mumbai. Lady Macbeth is Nimmi, Duncan becomes Abbaji, Banquo is named Kaka, Fleance and Malcolm is represented in Guddu, Boti becomes Macduff. The most stunning part of the characterisation of the film is the witches appear on the screen in the form of two corrupt policemen, purohit and pundit. A satirical representation of the “anti” elements of the modern civilised society, the people, who carry the role of witches in the contemporary period.

In *Omkaara*, Othello becomes Omkaara Shukla, an illegitimate child of a high-class Brahmin, much contradictory to original Othello, the Moorish prince based in Venice as an ambassador of his country. Omkaara is a Political enforcer or the leader of a gang which performs political crimes. He works for Leader Tiwari Bhaisaab, the indianised version of the Duke of the Venice. Desdemona becomes Dolly Mishra, Cassio Keshav Upadhyay, Lago Ishwar Tyagi and Emilia becomes Indu Tyagi. It can be easily noticed that all the surnames suggest that the characters of the movie are all Brahmins. Bhardwaj has done it very intelligently to add an authentic Upian touch to the narrative originally set in the Republic of Venice as most of the population of the state of the Uttar Pradesh belong to the Brahmin community. The Duke becomes a political leader to make the narrative seem modern and contemporary as the social hierarchy systems have changed. The power centres of the current society are no more governed by princely persons. It is the political leaders who enjoy the power of controlling the society and the stately affairs.



In Haider, Hamlet becomes Haider Meer, the protagonist of the movie who has just returned to his home in Kashmir from Aligarh Muslim University. His father, Hiralal Meer, is a Doctor who is abducted and killed by Indian army. Ophelia is Arshia Lone, she is a journalist by profession. Unlike the original Hamlet, no character bears any connection with any royal family. They all are natives of Kashmir. The Ghost becomes Roohdar, a member in the separatist group in the movie, who reveals the fact about his uncle's involvement in his father's murder to Haider. In the background of the story of Hamlet, Haider endeavours to tell a story about the life in the valley of Kashmir.

- **Domestication of the plots and story lines**

In Maqbool one can notice, to the great surprise of the audiences, all the major characters are Muslims except Kaka and Guddu and also the new incarnations of the witches. Through the tragic story of Maqbool, Bhardwaj ventured to depict the condition of the exiled Muslim community set in the slum areas of Mumbai suburbs. Made in 2003, the film clearly reflects the tragic consequences of Gujarat riot in 2002. The trauma of the common people rules the screen throughout the movie. A parallel story line which passively talks about the loss and sufferings of the victims of the incident cannot remain unnoticed by the viewers.

The tragedy of Othello has been domesticated by altering the occupations and social background of the characters keeping in mind the socio-political condition of present day Uttar Pradesh. The core theme of Othello, male dominance over females in a patriarchal society is presented quite nicely with a hard core Upan essence in the movie though a subtheme, the political unrest in north India also dominate the narrative unlike the original story.

Haider is largely influenced by "Curfewed Night"; a book by Basharat Peer based on the insurgency hit Kashmir problems of 1990s. The screenplay of the movie was jointly written by Bhardwaj and Peer. Critics claim that it was "Curfewed Night" which inspired Bhardwaj to film Haider in Kashmir. The Historical background and socio political conditions of the valley are inseparable from the narratives of the films. There are clear depictions of



repressiveness and brutality of Indian counterinsurgency and the daily humiliation inflicted on the civilians based in a militarized area. The catastrophe of the border has been portrayed with unusually great details. There are heart breaking and horrified scenes projecting trauma of the common people who had been made victims of this political unrest. There are reflections of the torture of suspected insurgents in military camps, killing of innocent people in the name of patriotism, paranoid and claustrophobic environment faced by the inhabitants of the valley. Attempts have been made to depict the thinking and the mindset of the youths, who, as a result of the turmoil, have become aggressive and violent. Though brutality rules over the narrative throughout the movie, especially in the middle part, at the end, the director quite creatively establishes an anti war message, which with a touchy and emotional appeal, successfully brings back the audience, who have cried with the characters of the screen for their suffering and tried to realise their pain, to their normal condition.

- **Projection of Indian culture**

Bharadwaj has deliberately attempted to unfold the narratives of his trilogy in an Indian pattern with a typical regional flavour added to it. He has repetitively tried to project the elements of Indian culture through the locations, landscapes, sets, costumes, and use of local dialects in the dialogues, body language of the characters, projection of rituals, social patterns and regional traditions.

The speciality of the series lied in its extraordinary attempt of combining Victorian moralities with the rigid social values of post colonial India. In every film a particular social issue, typical of the region and the period, has been picked up and set in the background of the narrative. While in *Maqbool* one can re live the life of a victim of the Gujarat riot seeing the extremely strong projection of pathos, in *Omkara* the eyes get glued to the screen with the hearts filled with anger as a result of the authentic projection of political condition of U.P. In *Haider*, *Hamlet* does not depend on *Curfewed Night* for screen adaptation; rather, *Curfewed Night* takes Support of *Hamlet* for audiovisual projection



Above all, with the use of music the purpose of domestication has been achieved. Every film comes with a number of rich in melody songs which not just bear the flavours of the folks of the particular region but also give the audience a taste of the local lyrical patterns. Unsurprisingly the lyrics are composed in the local languages with some special words which are capable of establishing the geographical location in which the movie is set before the audience.

One must not forget Vishal himself is a renowned music composer. His expertise over music clearly reflects in the films. The use of song sequences has been intentionally kept to the minimal unlike most of the Bollywood films. These songs have been used in the movie with the purpose of nativisation of the plots and characters. Besides that the musical sequences played a crucial part in maintaining the flow of the narrative as an integral part of the movie.

The Maqbool song “Rone Do”, set in the bank of Arabian Sea, composed in a westernised urban tune, comes with a brilliant use of typical Mumbai style “Re” in at least two lines in the last stanza –

“Jab tu alag hoga, dard bahot hoga
Haan jab tu alag hoga piya, dard bahot hoga
Dard gujar jaaye jab had se, dard nahi hota re
Shaakh se tutake sabja koyi jard nahi hota re
Chot kahin hogi piya jakhm kahin hoga re
Rona toh hai rone do, rone do na ji bhar ke
Khaali nahi hote kabhi naina mere”

Similarly “ Ru ba Ru” composed in a Sufi pattern has a number of rich Urdu words in it to make a feel of the culture of the community. Throughout the song, one can see the rituals of the Muslim community being performed on screen with great details.



“Namak Ishq ka” of Omkara is influenced by an original folk song of the region. The Lyrics composed by Gulzar has some typical patterns of the locally spoken language interwoven in it like, “Haan ji Haan, Waah Ji Waah”, which makes the song authentically Upian while adding an Indian touch to the cinematic narrative.

“Bidi jalai le” not just bears the flavour of Upian low culture but also makes a successful experiment about how slangs can be used purposively without crossing the limits of obscenity.

“Dham Dham Dharam Dharaiya Re” Quite interestingly makes “Omkara” “Sabse bade Ladaiya” establishing the fact before the audience that he is the greatest warrior in the region who, though a gang star, has some principle. This song has a number of special words of “Khadhi Boli” which make it typically Upian –

“Chat par aakar gidh baithe aur parnaalo se khun bahe
Arre kaun gira hai, kaun kata hai, kisma dam hai kaun kahe
Chhakke chhut gaye dushman ke, omkaara
Chhakke chhut gaye dushman ke, dharatee maange chhutkaara
Omkaara, hey omkaara, omkaara re omkaara
Arre dham dham dharam dharaiya re, sab se badhe ladaiya re
Omkaara, hey omkaara”

Musical portion of Haider is comparatively less rich. The authentic patterns of typical Kashmiri folk music is hard to find in the movie but the landscapes, dialogues, projection of social and political happenings successfully establishes the point that it is Kashmir during mid nineties. The primary objective of this movie is to portray the dreadful consequence of the political unrest of the valley, hence it is comparatively less culturally rich than the earlier two movies in the series but it narrates an Indian story to the Indian audience wrapped in a Shakespearian tragic plot.

VI. Conclusion



Vishal Bharadwaj's Shakespeare trilogy is not merely adaptations of the evergreen narratives of the bard, they also serve as an endeavour to throw light on the darker side of the present day Indian society. Not a single time do the narratives seem to be old wines served in new bottles. Bharadwaj re authored the plays blending the themes with the contemporary socio-political condition of India. The movies not just touch the hearts of the audience but also popularise a new genre in Bollywood, which stands in between the parallel and the mainstream cinema as these carry the elements of both the disciplines interestingly. It will not be wrong to say, with the series, Shakespearian plays not just got popular among the common people of India who live their lives far away from English education; they got a new life in India holding Bharadwaj's hand.

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Bollywood's most memorable Shakespeare adaptations. Rediff movies.

<<http://www.shortlist.com/entertainment/films/ten-great-shakespeare-movie-adaptations>>.



Studying Vishal Bhardwaj's *Haider* : A Third World Reading of Shakespeare's Magnum opus

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Interpreting or reinterpreting, moulding or re-moulding of Shakespeare's oeuvre has been negotiating in innumerable ways and when it is concerned to filmcraft, Bollywood repeatedly gifts the finest of films involving Shakespearean plot as scripts. There have been in the last years a remarkable resurgence of interest in Shakespeare's biographies, led by Stephen Greenblatt and James Shapiro and the cryptic analysis of the 'real meaning' of the plays. Bollywood directors have more frequently turned to Shakespeare for inspiration. Like 1982 film *Angoor* adapted from *Comedy of Errors*, is directed by Gulzar (Sampoornan Sing Kalra). *Maqbool* (2003), adapted from *Macbeth* and *Omkaara* (2006) from *Othello* are the productions of the same director Vishal Bharadwaj. Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Ramleela* owed its central idea to *Romeo and Juliet*. Vishal Bhardwaj's latest Shakespearean adaptation of his magnum opus *Hamlet*, culminates into *Haider* in 2014.

Hamlet has undoubtedly been at the crux of not only Western but also World culture. Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* probably in 1600, approximately halfway through his career. Since then there have been hundreds of different interpretations, adaptation in theatres, television and films – and even in graphic novels. To quote Kathleen McLuskie here is appropriate:



The debate over whether Shakespeare is most fully represented on the stage or on the page has been going on since Shakespeare's own time. Linking that debate to the question of accessibility and innovation is, however, a more recent phenomenon (313).

This is the 'phenomenon' that instigates Vishal Bharadwaj to convert the 'Prince of Denmark' into a philosophy student from Kashmir, the former Himalayan principedom, who returns home from university after hearing that his doctor father has disappeared and his mother Ghajala is in a new relationship with his uncle Khurram. His quest to find his father suffers through procrastination, struggling with both his unnatural love and hatred for his mother as she succumbs to the advances of Khurram, Haider makes a murderous vow to avenge his father's death. Ophelia, whereas, is a young journalist, Polonius a sinister policeman and Laertes works for a multinational. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are local men who are paid informers for police intelligence. The climactic duel is a firefight in a snowy graveyard after the heart rendering "grave digger scene" and the famous "play within a play" features rows of synchronised dancers and much singing. Adapting a play set in Denmark and written by an English playwright four centuries ago to contemporary India was not easy. The genius of the film as well as of the director is how to reshape *Hamlet* to a whole new setting, and yet as an audience one wonders if they are watching an entirely new story.

Haider is a harrowing, powerful study of Kashmir in flames, seamlessly layered with the heart-wrenching saga of *Hamlet*. Set during the 1990s, when the armed struggle for freedom and Indian counterinsurgency operations were at their height which has pitted Kashmiri militants and separatists against security forces and their local auxiliaries for more than two decades. It helps that Bhardwaj joined hands with writer and journalist Basharat Peer, whose 2010 book *Curfewed Night: A Frontline Memoir of Life, Love and War in Kashmir* is considered one of the most authentic, personal narratives about the lives of



Kashmiris during the insurgency. The collaboration of Vishal Bharadwaj and Basharat Peer has resulted in a film wherein Bollywood conventions have been infused with a reporter's sense of realism. There have been a few films that explored the Kashmir situation—*Harud*, *Zero Bridge*, the least political of all, *Valley of Saints*, there came *Mission Kashmir* is somewhat naïve take on the insurgency in Kashmir. But Vishal Bharadwaj's *Haider*, has not just triggered the controversy portraying that uncomfortable picture but for the first time many Kashmiris are sharing a feeling of association with the movie.

'Hamletism' is thoroughly negotiated in the film as the term is explained by R. A. Foaks:

“Hamletism gained currency as a term to describe not only individuals, but the failings of intellectuals, political parties, or nation, and so *Hamlet* was restored to the public arena to characterize the condition of Germany, or Europe, or the world, or the decline of aristocracy in the face of democracy” (44).

With the live experience of Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Night*, Bhardwaj found the way of treating the Kashmir's issues in Indian context. To give us a sense of the regular life style, the director sets the film in middle class family. The scenes like, where a man is seen staring at the door of his house and he is allowed to enters his house with the permission of the Army officers. Being a doctor, Haider's father never refuses any patient during the time of the Kashmir conflict and his sudden disappearing, his mother's calling herself a “half widow” which is really a common term in Kashmir, Haider with a placard “My father, where is he?” suggests the situation of the loss of public security. Like in *Hamlet*, here also we see that there is a scene where Haider is performing in a public stage seeking an independent Kashmir but largely struggling to come to terms with “*hum hain ki hain nahi*” like the dilemma of “to



be or not to be”. Even the issue of the India-Pakistan border conflict prevailed in Kashmir is also depicted with the words in that street play by mad Haider “...law and order, law and order, India Pakistan nye milkar khela humse boarder boarder...”. Most of the critics think that the earlier films based on Kashmir were failed to explore the origin of the Kashmir problems but here *Haider* tries to fill the gaps.

Kashmir is highly political in nature and its mere representation ruffles feathers. Violence in Kashmir, disputed by India and Pakistan since the two countries won their independence in 1947, has been triggered in recent years, but extreme sensitivities always remain in India about the conflict and its history. However, the film represents a significant departure from mainstream Hindi cinema’s black and white portrayal of insurgency in Kashmir. There is unflinching and therefore path breaking depiction of the repressiveness and brutality of Indian counterinsurgency and the daily humiliation inflicted on civilians in a militarized zone. There are undoubted human rights violations. People are disappeared and are thereafter untraceable by their families. The father of Haider, turns out to have been killed by paramilitaries recruited by the Indian authorities and run by his uncle. *Haider* includes graphic scenes of torture in Indian army camps and other human rights abuses by Indian officials.

The mention of AFSPA or the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in the film reminds of the circumlocution mode of ‘brutality’, whereby any soldier of the Indian Army could, fire upon or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death where laws are being violated. No criminal prosecution will lie against any person who has taken action under this act. Ever since it was brought into law in 1991 (In Jammu and Kashmir), not a single army or paramilitary officer or soldier has ever been prosecuted for murder, rape, destruction of property, or other such crimes. Such disgraceful history has been omitted strategically and any possibility of raising voice crushed down with no waste of time. What makes *Haider* such a special film is that, unlike other works that have dealt with the Kashmir Conflict, it



does not pretend that history does not exist. There is no doubt that the security forces did torture detainees in holding cells across the state. The film has a scene where captured Kashmiris are tortured in a place called MAMA-II, a nod to the infamous torture center on the banks of the Dal Lake in Srinagar. Laws were twisted to such an extent; they ended up helping the oppressors and not the oppressed. The film has a key moment in which the deranged protagonist harangues a crowd in Lal Chowk in the heart of Srinagar. In his Lal Chowk monologue Haider goes on to condemn India and Pakistan: “Ab na hume chodhe Hindustan, ab na hume chodhe Pakistan. Arey koi to humse bhi puche ki hum kya chahte—azaadi. Is paar bhi lenge azaadi, us paar bhi lenge azaadi” (We have been tormented by both India and Pakistan. Did anyone ask us what we want? We will obtain freedom from the countries on either side).

“The Objective Correlative” as noted by T. S. Eliot in his eminent essay “Hamlet and His Problem” to bring forth the psychological trauma had equivalent projection in *Haider*. *Hamlet*’s position of eminence is also due much to its qualifiable characteristics as a revenge tragedy and the theme of revenge has been put forward at the very onset of the play:

Ghost: “Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder” (Tobin l. 25).

... ..

“If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not,

Let not the royal bed of Denmark be

A couch for luxury and damned incest” (Tobin l.81-3).

Haider similarly is alarmed with the revenge motive but the end is what suits the recurrent contemporaneous political scenario while the social unrest demands for the minimalisation of attack and counter attack. Haider certainly could meet his revenge killing his uncle but the director played the right tune to let his protagonist realize that enmity furthers the destruction; humanity solely can pacify the wound to recover. The climactic shift from the classic is call



of the day in association with multifarious third world political issues regardless of India-Pakistan, or with the extensive international usage of the term, United States of America and Middle East Asian issues.

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The Bard In the Bollywood: A Study of Cinematic Adaptation and Appropriation

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Abstract: The journey of Shakespeare's play from text to screen via theatre has rendered him increasingly global and fluid across various cultures, breaking down England's monopoly over Shakespeare. Shakespeare has been ceaselessly alluring the movie makers with his varied plots and layered characterization. His plays with amusing stuff - love triangles, comedy, melodrama, twins and mistaken identities and without legal and copyright hassles have lent themselves very easily for screen adaptations. Besides Akira Kurosawa's *The Throne of Blood* (Adaptation of *Macbeth* 1957) and *Ran* (adaptation of *King Lear* in 1985) in Japanese feel and flavour, up to a number of Bollywood films also echo, resemble and adapt Shakespeare, *Do Dooni Char* (1968, Gulzar re-adapting from Bengali film *Bhrantibilas* which is an adaptation of *Comedy of Errors*), *Angoor* (1972, Gulzar's adaptation of *Comedy of Errors*), *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (1988, Mansoor Khan adapting *Romeo and Juliet*), *10ml Love* (2010, Sharat Katariya adapting *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), *Ram Leela: Goliyon Ki Rasleela* (2013, Sanjay Leela Bhansali adapting *Romeo and Juliet*), to name only a few. However it is only Vishal bharadwaj's trilogy of Shakespearean adaptation which gained enough national and international praise. As Shakespeare travels across the globe of different geo political and cultural space and in varied filmic, he acquires many meanings contributing to other 'shakespeares, improved shakepeare'. With focus on Bharadwaj's trilogy – *Maqbool* (adaptation of *Macbeth* in 2003) *Omkara* (adaptation of *Othello* in 2006) and *Haider* (adaptation of *Hamlet* in 2014) the paper makes foray into adaptation and appropriation, the two fundamental aspects of film making. It also attempts answers to questions like –how



Bharadwaj adapts and appropriates Shakespearean plays to fit them into the particularised sociological and political issues of /in India? Can such cinematic adaptation of Shakespearean plays be still Shakespeare? What forms functions meaning and significations Shakespeare acquires when transported to different space and time?

Keywords Bollywood, adaptation, appropriation.

Introduction

Shakespeare in India was a colonial import of the English in the mid nineteenth century. Shakespeare's studies was institutionalised in colonial curriculum for promoting cultural and colonial hegemony over the native Indian tradition. By the early twentieth century educated elite middle class Bengali babu, 'Bhadralok'(Girish Chandra Ghosh, Tagore, Utpal Dutt) started staging Shakespeare for the Bengali audience. The history of Indian adaptation of Shakespearean text tells that the practise of such adaptation started with Parsi theatre which adapted Shakespearean plays into a variety of local languages. As Parsi theatre morphed into Bombay talkies, it retained elements that arguably trace back to Shakespearean songs, dance and idea of forbidden love and separated twins. Bollywood seems to be bluntly Shakespeare-esque in its temperament. Many movies like Dil Bole Hadippa (based on Twelfth Night) Ishqzaade, Ishaaq and Ramleela are adaptations of Shakespearean love saga 'Romeo and Juliet'.

Problems and Possibilities of Adaptation and appropriation

Adaptation and appropriation are two fundamental aspects of adapting text for film making. The Latin root of the word adapts is 'adaptare' which means to 'make fit'. A work of adaptation transposes / casts a work of specific genre into another generic mode to make a text relevant and comprehensible to new audience via the process of 'proximation and updating'(Sanders, 2006, 18). Adaptation is an acknowledged transposition which offers an extended engagement with a work and which can be identified something creatively distinct



from the source text. It involves adjustment and alteration of the source text in the target cultural context.

When a text is adapted for a film it is trimmed to counter the issue of time and space and this shortening may lead to quality compromise. Often the author's intention is overlooked and reader's participation is also limited contrary to the process of reading where a reader has the liberty to participate in shaping the meaning of the text, in cinematic adaptations the director becomes the reader who trims, graft and, prune the text according to his own vision.

Linda Hutcheon studies the process of adaptation in book, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006). She suggests that adaptation can be studied from "three distinct but interrelated perspectives" (7). She remarks that adaptation can at first be studied as a, "formal entity or product", secondly as a "process of creation", and thirdly it can be studied as a "process of reception" (7-8). Hutcheon further observes that adaptation is "a form of intertextuality" (8). Gerard Genette in his celebrated work, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982), made a detailed study of the palimpsestuous nature of the text, which focused on the interaction between the texts. He appreciated this interaction, and encouraged intertextuality for promoting artistic expression. Thus, it may be concluded that an adaptation is, "a derivation that is not derivative— a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing" (Hutcheon 9).

Another very useful process in filmmaking is that of Appropriation'. Julie Sanders, while delineating with the aspect of 'appropriation' suggests that, this process deals with the source-text by appropriating it into a different blend of cultures. She says that this transformation might involve generic instability and that, "the appropriated text or texts are not always as clearly signalled or acknowledged as in the adaptive process. They may occur in a far less straightforward context than is evident in making a film version of a canonical play" (Sanders 26). Shakespeare believed in appropriation himself because he appropriated many folktales, legends and myths in his plays. He was greatly inspired by writers like Ovid and Plutarch.



Techniques of cinematic adaptations.

Innumerable cinematic efforts are being made globally to cherish Shakespeare's writing. Captivating adaptations of literary classics and revolutionary celluloid advancements have altered the experience of watching movies. The visual senses are rapidly stimulated by perception of images on screen rather than through the conventional reading process. Thus, the scope of cinema, irrespective of geographical or cultural diversity has earned massive popularity, and has also amalgamated with the social fabric. E. Ann Kaplan in her essay, "Fanon, trauma and cinema" affirms that:

...cinema functions like night dreams and daytime fantasies to permit regression to infantile stages inadequately worked through. It functioned as temporary wish-fulfillment the better to enable people to carry on their physically burdened lives Cinema could function like Freud's mourning process— to accommodate people to loss of the object. (150)

Watching the plays of Shakespeare as movie adaptations is a visual treat that transports the audience to a cinematic utopia for a couple of hours. Visual of the film replaces the verbal of the text . In the words of the adapter-novelist John North in Louis Begley's novel Shipwreck (2003), "[T]hrough images film conveys a vast amount of information that words can only attempt to approximate...but approximation is precious in itself, because it bears the author's stamp" (Hutcheon 2). Though cinematic adaptation is an offshoot of popular culture that celebrates mosaic multiplicity, merging hierarchies and blending genres, questions of fidelity pervade the unconscious of the motion picture of a trans-genre adapted text, confirming Tagore's thoughts "[C]inema is still playing second fiddle to literature" (qtd. in Hutcheon1).The sexual suspicion in Othello is conveyed through figurative language.the songslike naina thag lenge (The eyes will con you),O sathi re convey the theme of sexual suspicion much like in Othello similarly in Maqbool the metaphorical Language and figures are used to convey the supernatural dimension of Shakespeare ex;the two corrupt corps are akin to the



witches in Macbeth similarly the coming of the birman wood is conveyed through the seas.

‘Recycling Shakespeare’: Macbeth in Mumbai

Bharadwaj transplants the shakespearean tale of ambition and avarice in the film(genre),in the murky underworld Mumbai(setting),hindi/urdu (language) . *Maqbool* is set in the criminal underworld of modern-day Bombay (now called Mumbai).² Two corrupt policemen (the equivalent of the weird sisters) predict Maqbool's rise to power by means of horoscopes, which Maqbool manages to do by killing Abbaji (the Duncan figure), the head of a crime family who treats Maqbool as if he were his own son. Additionally, Maqbool is deeply in love with Abbaji's mistress, Nimmi, who successfully instigates Maqbool to kill Abbaji after the latter gives the hand of his daughter, Sameera, to Guddu (Fleance), the son of one of his lieutenants, Kaka (Banquo). The policemen predict that Maqbool will be safe as long as the sea does not enter his house, but this is what happens, so to speak, as customs agents foil a vital smuggling deal at the port and raid Maqbool's home with the intention of arresting him. Instead, the customs agents find the dead body of Nimmi, who has, in the meanwhile, given birth to a child; whether it is Abbaji's or Maqbool's remains uncertain. When Maqbool, attempting to take his newborn son and flee the country, sees the child being taken care of by Guddu and Sameera at the hospital, he decides not to continue this life of violence and vengeance. Instead, as he emerges from the hospital, he is killed by Boti, another gangster who has joined with Guddu against Maqbool as their common enemy. In the memorable final shot, Maqbool's dying impressions are conveyed by a gradually reddening screen, as noises of commotion gradually fade into nothingness.

Critical reception of the film has ranged from qualified admiration to generous enthusiasm. Poonam Trivedi (2007) and Douglas Lanier (2007) have found qualities in this adaptation of *Macbeth* that make it stand out among the film adaptations of Shakespeare's play — its economy of narration, its focus on the Abbaji-Maqbool (i.e., Duncan-Macbeth) relationship that makes Abbaji's murder even more loaded than would be the case if Abbaji were not a father-figure to Maqbool, its ingenious recasting of the weird sisters as a pair of corrupt



policemen having connections with the underworld, and, perhaps most significantly, the recasting of the love between Maqbool and Nimmi (Macbeth and Lady Macbeth) as a forbidden romance. Indeed, Maqbool, Abbaji, Nimmi, and the others are all caught in a web of ambition, as well as of sexual desire. Maqbool is driven to kill Abbaji as much by his love for Nimmi as by his resentment at the idea of having to serve under Guddu, who would become the heir to Abbaji's gang through his marriage to Sameera. Such complex motivation leads to Maqbool's murder of Abbaji on the night before Guddu and Sameera's wedding. On the other hand, Nimmi's hatred of Abbaji is triggered by their age difference — Abbaji is old enough to be her father, and she feels repelled by his appearance — and also because Abbaji has acquired a new mistress. Furthermore, Maqbool is strengthened in his resolve to kill Abbaji once he learns from the corrupt policemen that in all likelihood, Abbaji himself killed his mentor in order to head the gang. Consequently, after Abbaji himself is murdered, there is little doubt in anyone's mind that Maqbool is the killer, and the members of the gang soon regroup, isolating Maqbool in the process.

The murder of Abbaji more than halfway after the film begins and the relatively quick move to the denouement have been seen by some as creating a structural imbalance (Rosenthal 2007, 123); but this can be understood as the consequence of the radical reworking of the relationships tying Abbaji, Nimmi, and Maqbool. In fact, as Lanier has observed, the second half of the film, following Abbaji's murder, "closely parallels *Macbeth* in plot, motifs, and character" (Lanier 2007, 217). Those who see *Maqbool* with Shakespeare in mind will note the ingenuity and thoroughness of Bhardwaj's adaptive approach. For example, the banquet scene is replaced by a meeting of Maqbool's gang, from which Guddu and Kaka (Fleance and Banquo) are missing. When Kaka's dead body is brought back, only Maqbool thinks that Kaka is alive and looking at him and so becomes visibly disturbed. Maqbool's fear of Kaka's gaze is tied to Abbaji's murder scene, in which Abbaji dies looking at Maqbool. His blood splashes over Nimmi, who like her Shakespearean counterpart, becomes increasingly obsessed with imaginary bloodstains. Another brilliant reworking is the recasting of Macbeth's downfall with the foiling, by the port authorities, of Maqbool's attempt to offload



contraband and the subsequent raid of his home. The coming of the sea is the film's suggested parallel with Birnam Wood, a parallel that, given the setting in Bombay, would have had to be abandoned if any literal transposition had been attempted. Shakespeare's supernatural dimension is interestingly recast in metaphorical terms, even as the very real setting of crime and criminalized politics is conveyed through a realist idiom.⁴

Adapters of *Macbeth* have often reworked the play's ending. While some (such as William Davenant and Giuseppe Verdi) have emphasized a return from chaos to order, others (such as Roman Polanski and Eugène Ionesco) have depicted a cyclical pattern of violence. Bhardwaj, uniquely, treads a middle ground. On the one hand, he realizes the redemptive potential of the play not in a return, at a social level, from anarchy to order — the Bombay underworld remains corrupt and violent — but at a personal level: Nimmi's newborn child is taken care of by Guddu and Sameera in an act of humanity that transcends personal and gang rivalries. But even this reading can be undermined by the film's repeated suggestion that the unkindest cut of all has always come from the most unexpected quarters — from Abbaji, who killed his mentor, to Maqbool, who kills the person who brought him up as a son.

Though *Maqbool* claims to be only a "loose adaptation" of *Macbeth* (Trivedi 2007, 153), the film actually employs a range of strategies to incorporate the Shakespearean text in interesting, visual ways. For instance, the day before Abbaji's murder, Maqbool is seen as cooking food for the guests in a huge cauldron as he plots the murder. Later on in the day, a little before the murder, he hallucinates that blood is coming out of the cauldron, an image that provides further incitement for the act he plans to commit. Thus, while Bhardwaj departs from Shakespeare at a literal level, he nevertheless is able to bring together the cauldron and dagger scenes of *Macbeth* in a way that shows his deep understanding of their significance and his ability to incorporate them in a radically new setting. The policemen's prediction of rain, which is extremely unusual for the time of the year, comes true and creates a suitably tense atmosphere right before Abbaji's murder. At the same time, the scene also translates into cinematic terms the Shakespearean technique of mirroring an upheaval in the moral order by an unnatural upheaval in the natural order. Bombay mafia dons, the film suggests,



constitute the true rulers of the state, with their strong behind the scenes presence in various aspects of life, from politics to the Bollywood film industry itself. Indeed, Abbaji makes Maqbool responsible for negotiating deals with Bollywood stars as a reward for his loyalty. The setting of *Maqbool* — the Bombay underworld — is sharply etched, and it plays a much more important role than the stock urban or (idealized) rural settings of many previous Bollywood films. Bhardwaj's attention to setting is accompanied by a focus on language: the characters in *Maqbool* use a spectrum of language, from Hindi slang and colloquialisms spoken in Bombay (popularly called "Mumbaiya Hindi") to Urdu, reflecting the fact that Bombay is perhaps India's most cosmopolitan city, where people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds live and work together. There are visual images, too, that reinforce this cosmopolitanism, albeit in the seedy premises of the Bombay underworld: in the predominantly Muslim world of *Maqbool*, Muslims and Hindus cooperate with each other.⁵ Such attention to detail is among the hallmarks of a small and experimental new group of Bollywood filmmakers who have departed, at least in part, from the conventions of mainstream Bollywood films. One such director, Ram Gopal Varma, in films such as *Satya* (1998) and *Company* (2002), provides critiques of urban corruption, just as *Maqbool*, while remaining an adaptation of *Macbeth*, also does. In fact, one of Bhardwaj's greatest strengths is his ability to successfully indigenize Shakespeare at the level of setting, plot, language, and generic conventions without diluting the complex issues raised by Shakespeare's play.

Bhardwaj's use of some Bollywood conventions in *Maqbool* may be as much a matter of choice as of compulsion. The presence of Bollywood trademarks such as "family scenes of festivity and weddings, catchy music, dances, and songs" (Trivedi 2007, 153-54), including an "item number,"⁶ is all the more strange for a filmmaker who has dismissed mainstream Bollywood as kitschy (interview with Raja Sen, "Today *Othello*" 2006). In a globalized world that equates Bollywood with Indian cinema, in no small measure because the powerful Indian diaspora and the well-oiled publicity machines of the Bollywood industry actively



promote such a view, it is impossible for a filmmaker making films in Hindi to escape from the hegemony of Bollywood itself. As Ashish Rajadhyaksha has observed,

While Bollywood exists for, and prominently caters to, a diasporic audience of Indians, and sometimes (as, for example, with Bhangra-rap) exports *into* India, the Indian cinema — much as it would wish to tap this "non-resident" audience — is only occasionally successful in doing so, and is in almost every instance able to do so only when it, so to say, *Bollywoodizes* itself . . . (29; italics in original)

Othello in the moor of meerut

Bhardwaj contextualises Othello to the ground level politics of Uttar Pradesh, the lead Omkara played by Ajay Devgan plays a Bahubali or a political fixer for a local politician. The narrative is quite securely rooted in the setting of Uttar Pradesh which not only accounts for the characters but also provides the messy setting of local corrupt politics. The film dwells on the complexity of human relationships. Instead of putting things as black and white, the film brings out the grey area. While in the context of British empire, the Bard is also a token of Englishness, that could be used to justify British colonialism, Bhardwaj's project can be described as an attempt of post-colonial rewriting and therefore a possible revision of Shakespeare's position within a postcolonial India. This he achieves by appropriating Shakespeare's masterpieces and situating them to Indian cultural contexts and hence points to the possibility of finding common grounds. While race is a central theme in Othello, caste is given the same prerogative in Omkara. This has to do with the parallel that can be drawn between race and caste and also the centrality and peculiarity of caste system to India. However the director transgressed only to some extent. Instead of making the dark complexioned Omi Shuklaa Dalit, he portrayed him as a half caste while the female lead Dolly Mishra played by Kareena Kapoor is a Brahmin. But as the film moves ahead, the jealousy of love becomes the main focus as opposed to caste. Another factor that takes centre stage is power and ambition. The character of Iago played by SaifAli Khan and called Langda has multiple shades. Langda Tyagi is married to Omkara's sister and hence he has family. Being a second lieutenant, he is also the rightful heir



to Omkara. But when it comes to choosing an heir, Omkara chose a young urban educated boy Kesu played by Viek Oberoi. He hoped Langda would understand the tactical move of portraying an educated young guy as the successor. The film pushes to the furthest point a victim exposition of Langda when it seems he is going to receive the ceremonial plate but it is finally handed over to Kesu. The scene showing Langda crowning himself after the ceremony with his own blood as he looks at himself in the mirror, has a purpose of presenting a more sympathetic Iago. Billo, a free spirited dancer is also given good screen time. It is through these characters that Bhardwaj Indianised the Shakespearean play. The film then moves on to show how Langda capitalizes on the insecurities of the jealous lover Omito pave his own way for power and dispose of Kesu, his rival. He played on the supposed treachery of Doli towards Omi by manipulating a certain series of event. Even Doli's father told Omkara that a daughter who can cheat her father can never be loyal to anyone. All this was used by Langda meticulously to serve his own purpose. While the temporal and spatial context of Omkara is pretty farfetched in local politics, there are few converging points. Langda believes that Kesu is not even deserving of what he got in the same way as Iago thinks of Michael Cassio who has no real battle experience. Iago also makes up about a false affair between Desdemona and Cassio. All this leads to Cassio being killed but when Othello discovers the misunderstanding he does not kill Iago, rather leaves him to a life of pain and despair. Similarly Omkara on discovering his mistake instead of punishing Langda, plunges a knife in his own chest and kills himself. While both Othello and Omkara is about ambition manipulating jealousy and distrust, there are few points of divergence in the two stories. While Iago suspected Othello of having cheated with his wife, Langda's wife is a sister of Omkara. So Omkara is not a lascivious manipulative person. Rather his only mistake has been choosing Kesu over Langda overlooking Langda's own political ambitions

Hamlet in the wounded valley of kashmir

Bhardwaj reimagines and recontextualises hamlet and his problems in the insurgency hit



kashmir. The plot of Haider can be summed up thus: The film starts portraying Kashmir during the Kashmir conflict in 1995. Hilaal Meer (Haider's father), a doctor agrees to perform an appendicitis operation on the leader of a separatist group at his house. On the next morning, during a crackdown he is accused of giving refuge to terrorists and is taken away by Indian army. Haider, (Hamlet) a poet and research scholar who is pursuing his research in "The revolutionary poets of British India" in Aligarh Muslim University comes home in Anantnag after getting the news of his father's disappearance and finds his house in ruins. He finds his mother, Ghazala (Gertrude) having an affair with his uncle Khurram (Claudius). Being shocked at his mother's infidelity he begins the search for his father in various police stations and detention camps with the help of his journalist fiancée, Arshia. When Haider was about to lose hope for not getting any clue of his father Arshia encounters a stranger named Roohdaar who asks her to inform Haider that he will provide information about Hilaal Meer. Roohdaar narrates the story of his imprisonment with Hilaal in the same detention centres. He conveys the fact that his father is dead and it was his father's wish to avenge his brother Khurram for his betrayal and to leave Ghazala for god's justice. Being indecisive of what he should do, Haider re-enacts the show of his uncles' betrayal through the 'mousetrap' or the play within a play, here through the performance of the song "Bismil" enacted in the Martand sun temple after the marriage of Ghazala and Khurram. Haider gets caught while trying to murder Khurram who was in his prayers; and Arshia's father Pervez Lone set Haider to be murdered by Salman and Salman (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern) but luckily he escapes. When Haider meets his mother, Ghazala she tells him that she had disclosed about terrorists hiding in their house out of fear to Khurram unknowing that he was an informer of the Indian army. Meanwhile Arshia's father traces them in their ruined house and tried to shoot Haider but shooting at Pervez's head he escapes. Depressed at her father's death in the hands Hai Haider goes to the graveyard where his father was buried, he contemplates about the inevitability of death along with the grave diggers. In the meantime he saw Liyaqat, Arshia's brother in the graveyard and deduced that the dead body must be of Arshia's and ran towards her. A fight takes place between Haider and Liyaqat where the later dies. Meanwhile



Khurram arrives there with armed forces and a gunfight takes place. When Khurram was about to blow the hideout, Ghazala intervenes and requests a chance to convince Haider to surrender. She tries to convince Haider that revenge only begets revenge but he was determined in avenging his father's death. She kisses Haider and steps outside wearing a suicide vest. Before Khurram and Haider reaches her she pull the pins of the hand grenades causing her death and leaving Khurram heavily injured. Lamenting her mother's death finally when Haider goes on to take revenge at his uncle by shooting him in his eyes he is reminded of his mother's last words and leaves him. Khurram being his legs amputated at the blast begs Haider to kill him to set him free from the guilt and treachery but Haider leaves him.

Reprocessing Shakespeare

Bhardwaj reprocesses Shakespeare in varied ways for his cinematic adaptation. Haider's subversive soliloquy at Lal Chowk articulates the unsung stories of civilian disappearances. Interestingly enough, the scene of the monologue is shot using grayer shades, mostly greyish. The initial line given to Haider is a reworking of Shakespeare's "To be or not to be: that is the question" in Act III, Scene I – "Hum hain ke hum nahin/ Hum hain to kahan hai/ Aur gaye to kahan gaye" (Do we exist or do we not? If we do, then where? If not then where have we gone?) It requires the talent of a master-mind to imagine the Hamletian dilemma in the lives of the Kashmiris. The quintessential Shakespearean question turns out to be the hushed up howls of the Kashmiris whose right to self-determination, at odds with the hegemonic intent of the state, produces a cauldron of violence and nihilism that matches the anguished utterances of the Shakespearean tragic hero. It is here, Haider's story becomes the life-haunting narratives of thousands of Kashmiris and Bhardwaj attains the height of universality the Bard possesses. Haider's voice becomes the call of conscience which has remained buried deep within the practised complacency of a terror-stricken marginalised existence. Through the matrix of Shakespeare and the apparent mumbling of raving Haider, Bhardwaj exposes the bleeding wounds of a postcolonial nation state. Such remarkable episodes highlight how Bhardwaj uses Shakespeare's own concerns about state and authority in Hamlet to a telling effect in his portrayal of Kashmir which acts as the



lifeline of the adaptation. This is again evident from the simulation of the 'play within a play' episode from Shakespeare, where the representation soaked in the flavours of Kashmir is a manifestation of the traditional folk dance Dumhal, performed in the valley by Wattal tribes. Bhardwaj successfully employs the folk structure to provide Haider the occasion of enacting a living replica of the disappearance-murder-incest riddle right in the celebratory function of his mother's re-marriage.

Both adaptation and appropriation are collaborative process and forms of inter textuality which revises, updates any work of art. Ben Jonson's famous observation that Shakespeare 'was not of an age but for all time' need not be taken to endorse the hoary old claims for his universality but rather as an indication that he remains available to subsequent ages to adapt and adopt as they wish as Marsden notes "each new generation attempts to redefine Shakespeare's genius in contemporary terms, projecting its desires and anxieties onto his work" (Sanders).

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58. @@222Bollywood retakes: Literary adaptation and appropriation in contemporary Hindi cinema.



‘Why, When and How’ to Introduce Shakespeare at the Secondary and Higher Secondary School Level

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Abstract In our Indian education system, most of the students have below average reading levels and aim for high-test scores, which is a priority. Different types of teaching contents are available but the question arises whether teaching Shakespeare at the Secondary or Higher Secondary level in schools is relevant or not as it is more challenging. Studies show that a majority of high school students, despite creative teaching methods, see his works as irrelevant, difficult, and boring. This paper examines whether introducing Shakespeare early in small doses at secondary and higher secondary level as a second or first language in schools, in his original language by using effective and performance-based methods, can be a part of larger scaffolding efforts to improve student’s perception and long-term appreciation of Shakespeare. The paper considers why Shakespeare is relevant, when Shakespeare should be introduced, and how to effectively introduce him to young students with a view to creating the utility of the literary works of the greatest versatile actor, dramatist, novelist, poet in the minds of the young learners at the secondary and higher secondary level too.

Keywords: Secondary School Level, Pioneer, Classics, English as a Second Language (ESL).

Objectives

- To introduce the great works of Shakespeare to the learners at the Secondary and Higher Secondary level.



- To create an awareness and interest among the school learners for the literary works of Shakespeare the pioneer of English literature.
- To discuss the relevance of the introduction of Shakespeare's works at the school level.

Introduction

“All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts.” As quoted by Shakespeare the great English poet, playwright, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist is often called England's national poet, and the 'Bard of Avon'. Shakespeare has made many contributions to English Literature and the one that affects us every day is his contribution to the English language.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, his works have been repeatedly adapted and rediscovered by new movements in scholarship and performance. His plays remain highly popular, and are constantly studied, performed, and reinterpreted in diverse cultural and political contexts throughout the world. Shakespeare's work is also lauded for its insight into emotion. His themes regarding the human condition make him more acclaimed than any of his contemporaries. Humanism and contact with popular thinking gave vitality to his language. His plays borrowed ideas from popular sources, folk traditions, street pamphlets, and sermons.

The valuable contributions made by him cannot be ignored and in fact, Shakespeare actually frequently made up his own words, which still live on in the English language today. Scholars point out that Shakespeare is responsible for coining about 1,700 of the English words found in our English vocabularies.

In this context, considering the present scenario, at high school level (HL) Stephen Leacock, R. K. Narayan, Isaac Asimov, Ernest Hemingway, Somerset Maugham, Charles Dickens, A. G. Gardiner, P. B. Shelley, Wordsworth, Robert Frost, Nissim Ezekeil, Anton Chekhov,



Ruskin Bond, O Henry, Rudyard Kipling etc. are taught but not Shakespeare. The learners at school level are deprived of the great dramatist, novelist, play writes, poet, such as Shakespeare. There are many works by Shakespeare such as ‘Merchant of Venice’, ‘Julius Caesar’, ‘The Tempest’ etc. and poems Seven Stages of Men from ‘As you Like It’, speech by Jacques which can be introduced at the school level.....but on the contradiction many high school English teachers are beginning to avoid teaching Shakespeare in their classrooms. The reason behind leaving Shakespeare off of their syllabi being that it is too hard. Sometimes when approaching Shakespeare, teachers even send students the signal that learning Shakespeare is really harder than it is.

Need for Introducing Shakespeare at the Secondary and Higher Secondary Level

“Ignorance is the curse of God; knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven.” William Shakespeare wrote this in King Henry VI Part 2. In relation to this, a different approach to Shakespeare than in the past is necessary. Scholarly studies of Shakespeare teach students ‘to critically interpret and analyze Shakespeare’s writing and language’. His unique style of language and choice of word usage calls students to increase their vocabulary base in order to interpret and discuss possible multiple meanings that Shakespeare is famous for. The complexity of Shakespeare’s plays does make them somewhat difficult, but the accomplishment of understanding his work is rewarding in both knowledge and understanding. Therefore, his plays should continue to be taught in high school classrooms because they provide students with better test scores, better prepared college bound students, and students exposed to part of all cultural fabric. Reading and acting out plays is a great transition from childhood to adulthood that involves the imagination and keeping the mind busy.

Many topics covered in Shakespeare’s plays, such as violence, race, sex, tragedy, and loss are what students are facing in their everyday lives, or watch in their favourite movies or TV shows. This relativity can spark interest and help students better remember what they are



studying. His works deal with ‘superficial appearances and character,’ students are facing issues with these ideas and this makes studying Shakespeare more interesting, relatable, and timeless. He brings more than just literary elements to the table; “a significant bit of ethics, politics, and religion” are quite prominent features in his plays (Andreas, 3:1991). All of Shakespeare’s plays call out issues and wrongdoings by characters in another time and place facing the same prevalent problems that were occurring in his day and age. What is amazing is that we are still facing many of these problems today. The timelessness he captures that keeps his works relevant and relatable not only as history from his own time, but useful in similar ways into today’s society. By confronting these issues in class discussion, students are forced to think about the many problems within society. We are still facing issues with racism, sexism, suicide, and malicious conniving. And until people overcome their pride and prejudices people will continue to need works like this to know that overcoming these issues is possible.

“Shakespeare is perceived as a treasure not because he is a treat, a confection of music, dance, sex, prank, and confusion that in just about any available production will intrigue the interest of the most jaded adolescent taste” (Andreas,1991:5). These are exactly the topics that high school students choose to watch in movies and on television. Why not use them to further their education? Shakespeare’s complexity and contributions to the English language are reason enough to keep his works in classroom studies. Scholarly studies of Shakespearean plays greatly increase vocabulary bases, the ability to comprehend and discover connections that already exist, and can be so well related to our own time and lives, that students can bond with Shakespeare’s characters and use their outcomes to make their own decisions and life choices.

The study of Shakespeare invokes the valuable life lesson of learning to persist in the study of literature. Students will learn the pleasure of seeing beautiful language as a reward for a diligent process. They need to face concepts, and language, that they may find difficult - and



to be given the chance to recognize that what is strange and difficult, can also be thought provoking, arresting, or beautiful.

Problems Encountered

It is hard to contend with the facts regarding Shakespeare's influence in the world; however, effectively teaching Shakespeare may be more demanding when the goal is more about high-test scores than about authentic learning and engagement. Teaching for the test often requires teachers to put aside performance-based teaching methods for more traditional methods to adequately prepare students to give memorized answers to an exam. When the ability to recall answers for a test becomes the ultimate goal of the classroom, the reflective experience with Shakespeare's text is diminished, and students and even teachers blame the literature instead of a faulty system. This cycle of frustration leads to questions regarding the relevance of Shakespeare and other quality literature. Students should be empowered to find out for themselves what has made him great through four centuries of an ever-changing world by exploring these themes. Rex Gibson most potently summarizes the argument for Shakespeare for all students: Every student is entitled to make the acquaintance of genius. Shakespeare remains a genius of outstanding significance in the development of the English language, literature and drama. Given Shakespeare's unparalleled value in the arts, his influence on modern language, his universality, and his skilled poetry, students should be given the experience of engaging with his works. Unfortunately, most students are not given the tools or time to truly appreciate Shakespeare. So the need arises why, how and when to introduce Shakespeare.

Why to teach Shakespeare?

Shakespeare is such a foundational part of the English language and modern society, so then why shouldn't students benefit more from being introduced to him earlier in their academic careers? As Rex Gibson writes: An easy answer to the question 'Why teach Shakespeare?' is 'Why not?' (Gibson, 1998: 1) Many examples from students and teachers who attest that



experiencing Shakespeare early using performance-based methods empowers students throughout their academic careers and teaches them principles to use later in their lives and professional careers. When young students start to interact with Shakespeare using condensed scripts and age-appropriate activities, a seed is planted that will be cultivated over many years when their language and literary skills are developing rapidly. Younger students are far more open to Shakespeare because they have no presuppositions about him. ‘Scaffolding’ Shakespeare from elementary school to middle school to high school using performance-based techniques and activities will likely enable the best possible learning outcome for students, remove negative stigma surrounding Shakespeare, and foster a life-long appreciation for one of the most prolific writers in history.

The argument presented in this paper is that students should receive Shakespeare’s works in small doses throughout their academic career at school level. Students’ incremental exposure to Shakespeare prepares students for full-length plays and sonnets in high school, which helps them appreciate Shakespeare without intimidation and culture shock.

This makes the case that not only is it beneficial to start Shakespeare early, but that starting Shakespeare in high school may be too late considering the negative perceptions older students typically have about Shakespeare, compounded by the increasing distractions and demands on them as they progress in school. Since the works of Shakespeare are not introduced most of the learners other than who study English literature are deprived of the flavour of his works.

When and How to Introduce Shakespeare?

We can introduce Shakespeare at the secondary level in the supplementary section for the learners who learn English as a second language and in the intensive study section for the first language learners. We can also introduce Shakespeare in the intensive study section for the higher secondary learners for the second language learners. The methods in which teachers approach Shakespearian plays, has a big part in how well students respond to the



material. There are many activities set up to approach Shakespeare in fun ways that lightly introduce students to his language.

Step:1 One of which involves students having a different word and saying it aloud when a beach ball is thrown to them. Through hearing these vocabulary boosting words, this game frees the students of their inhibitions about Shakespeare's language. This unthreatening method rids students of fears and nervousness towards studying Shakespeare because of the teacher's careful guidance.

Step: 2 Another method to introduce students to Shakespeare's language suggested having students participate in an 'insult-swapping contest' using Shakespearian quotes. This focuses on building vocabulary bases in Shakespeare's language and can keep students from using curse words for some time. This, 'getting the kids on their feet' approach with 'the emphasis on performance' makes students remember what they have learnt in class longer (McDonald, 1995: 146).

Step: 3 The teacher's approach to relatability with his work and his insight in noticing this connection and then incorporating into the curriculum is exactly what will help improve our society's acceptance of diversity. The goal here is to "stimulate discussion about feminism, drugs, war, human sexuality, racism, religious and political persecution, terrorism, and other issues." (Andreas, 1991: 5). When students have been taught using these student-centered approaches, they are more 'ready and willing to take on Shakespeare for themselves.' A literary studies of Shakespeare "feeds the intellect, spirit, and imagination of both student and teacher" (McDonald, 1995: 155). Certain suggestions can be taken into consideration in the implementation regarding the same are discussed below.

Suggestions

Attitudes towards Shakespeare



Research presented about children's language development support the claim that at primary level learners not only have the capacity to understand Shakespeare at an introductory level, but also at that early time in their development is actually ideal to expose them to Shakespeare's rich language and universal stories. Using drama in the classroom with condensed versions of the plays and age appropriate activities are useful when introducing students to Shakespeare's original language. Performance-based-teaching methods are proven as one of the most effective ways to capture the attention of young students.

Exposure

It is not necessary to introduce entire Shakespearian plays or sonnets. Small sections or major scenes are enough to get students familiar with the language and then increase exposure over time. It is reasonable to encourage young students to understand the overall meaning but not necessary to demand a thorough analysis of the entire play. The important thing is to get students on their feet to act out small portions of the play and to conduct creative writing exercises to teach them about Shakespeare's rhythm and language.

Maintaining Originality

Shakespeare's works should be presented in their original language as much as possible, not only through modern adaptations. Adaptations and storybook versions, especially with young students, can be used in various contexts but not as a replacement for the artistic poetry of Shakespeare's words. As it is not just Shakespeare's stories that are brilliant, but how he crafts them and the way he uses language. The poetry itself is the work of art. "Students would not experience Shakespeare if they do not actually read Shakespeare's words." (Foster and Johnson, 2000: 13).

Teacher's Insight and Perceptions

The method used to present Shakespeare and the role of teacher expectations are both key elements to a successful introduction to Shakespeare. Rex Gibson lists what he considers as



‘qualifications’ needed to teach Shakespeare to young children: “...a love of language, the desire to help the learners achieve their full potential in reading, speaking and writing; the ability to achieve that ambition in the classroom, presenting oneself and what one teaches with integrity, truthfulness and enjoyment” (Gibson, 2000: 1). Also, teachers do not need to be experts in Shakespeare; they simply have to be comfortable modeling the learning process with the students. The teacher is a guide for students to discover Shakespeare.

Performance-Based Methods

By introducing Shakespeare at an early age, using the performance-based method, teachers can expose their students to great literature, get them engaged in the imaginative world of well-written stories, and increase their confidence level in reading. A Shakespeare script is a blueprint from which actors and directors construct their vision of the play. Similarly, teachers and students respond to its multiple possibilities (Gibson, 1998: 12).

Utilization of Resources and Up gradation

Teachers should invest in doing research, preparation, participate in a seminar or training in order to provide the best possible experience for their students. It is not, however, a requirement that a teacher becomes a ‘Shakespearean scholar’ to teach Shakespeare’s plays. Vast resources are available for elementary and middle teachers to assist them in introducing Shakespeare and to help them see that the benefits are worth the effort. The earlier the students are engaged with his work, the more confident they will become each time they read him.

Word games to Enrich Vocabulary

Shakespeare’s more difficult words can be introduced with collaboration and context clues. Groups can be formed and a word is given on a card. They are to work together to find the meaning and then present it to the class first using an image and then performing a skit so that



the class can guess the meaning. This method is similar to the way English is taught as a Second Language (ESL).

According to Jacqui O'Hanlon, the RSC Director of Education, "In order for young people to be engaged and inspired by Shakespeare, they just need to do three things: (1) Start Shakespeare earlier, (2) See Shakespeare live, and (3) Explore Shakespeare actively and on your feet." These three points sum up the main aspects of the performance-based method that each example described here have sought to implement.

Conclusions

The idea of introducing Shakespeare early is not just for advanced students, but a valuable learning experience available to all students. From the many accounts presented, it is clear that studying Shakespeare does not require above average intelligence. Yes, it can be challenging, but part of teaching Shakespeare is teaching students to believe they can learn anything with some guidance, effort, and collaboration.

At present, students are not taught Shakespeare's relevance by connecting his themes to modern day issues or by discussing what Shakespeare means to them. Some teachers may feel plowing through the material is the only option because of large class sizes and limited time, but there has to be a better way. Certainly, no matter what the approach, students may struggle with Shakespeare at first, as they do with many new concepts and ideas. All the effort to plan and implement a Shakespearean unit should focus on empowering students to personally engage with the text and to assist in eliminating any barriers that prevent them from doing so.

One of the most important reasons to teach Shakespeare to students is that they gain insight for life and develop a love for great literature. The reason for introducing Shakespeare at a young age is not to gather academic accolades regarding how smart our students must be for studying Shakespeare early. Shakespeare was prefaced with a poem by Ben Jonson, in which



Shakespeare is hailed, presciently, as ‘not of an age, but for all time’ which certainly holds true.

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Imparting Language Skills to ESL Students through the Dramas of Shakespeare

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Abstract The most striking feature of Shakespeare is his command of language. Shakespeare is credited by the *Oxford English Dictionary* with the introduction of nearly 3,000 words into the language. His vocabulary, as culled from his works, numbers upward of 17,000 words (four times that of an average, well-educated conversationalist in the language). Although the Elizabethan dialect differs slightly from Modern English, the principles are generally the same. There are four critical areas this paper addresses: Learning Words and Expressions, Learning Grammatical Structures, Learning Wordplay, Learning Maxims and Pithy Sayings and Versification. The paper closely examines how an ESL student can learn various aspects of the language as mentioned above by reading the dramas of Shakespeare.

Key Words: dialect, double negatives, word play, maxims and versification

Introduction

English Language can be acquired and improved through several methods. The best among them is immersion. If the learner is placed in a situation where he has to use the target language, he will acquire it fast. The other methods include English newspaper reading, book reading, writing a page every day and so on. This paper proves that language can be better learnt through literary pieces. To prove this point, the researcher has taken the dramas of Shakespeare, using which language can be taught and learnt in an effective way.



Shakespearean dramas can be used to teach several aspects of language such as vocabulary, grammar, maxims and so forth.

Learning Words and Expressions

First and foremost, there have been numerous vocabulary changes in English since Shakespeare's time. While many words are still recognizable today, others have undergone a change in terms of their meaning or dropped out of usage. For example, Now a days we do not find words such as *bodkin* (a piercing tool), *contumely* (verbal abuse), or *fardel* (a bundle). There are also conventions such as the informal *thou* versus the formal *you*. Often the context in which a word is used helps us determine its meaning. A Shakespeare edition with good footnotes will help us. The important thing is to be aware that even a word that is familiar today may have been used in a different sense in Shakespeare's works.

Now let us see some examples:

Play	Location	Speaker	Expression
Hamlet	1.2	Claudius	Wisest sorrow
			Delight and dole
Othello	1.3	Brabantio	Chains of magic
	2.1	Iago	Double knavery
	3.1	Iago	Divinity of hell
	3.3	Othello	Ocular proof
King Lear	1.2	Lear	Excellent foppery
			Filial ingratitude

Learning Grammatical Structures

This is where the flexibility of Shakespeare's English is often most apparent. Parts of speech are frequently switched, such as nouns or adjectives becoming verbs. Verbs and subjects do not always agree. Words are often omitted in phrases. Word endings such as *-ly* are



inconsistently applied. Shakespeare uses double negatives in spots and phrases such as "most unkindest" with regularity. Even sentence construction can be tricky, with inversions of the basic subject-verb-object order. Whereas we would say, "John caught the ball," Shakespeare might render the same statement with the same meaning as "John the ball caught," or "The ball John caught." As a result, it is important to recognize which part of speech a given word actually represents in a given line.

Now let us see some examples:

1. We can practice **simple present tense** from the following dialogue:

Julius Caesar 1.2

Caesar (about Cassius):He reads much,

He is a great observer, and

He looks quite through the deeds of men.

He loves no plays, as thou dost, Antony;

He hears no music.

Seldom he smiles.....

2. We can learn the structure of imperative statements... (Verb + Object)

Othello 1.1

Iago:Call up her father,

Rouse him, make after him, poison his delight,



Proclaim him in the streets; incense her kinsmen...

Learning Wordplay

Some of the most difficult passages of Shakespeare occur when the Bard purposely plays with language. Metaphors and similes abound in poetic comparisons and render some passages complex or difficult to understand. Apparently, Elizabethan audiences loved puns, which explains why Shakespeare incorporated them into his plays by the dozen. In a similar vein, many words are used with intentional double meanings. This is especially prevalent in the numerous sexual innuendoes pervading his works. Malapropisms are another device Shakespeare often uses for comic effect. Therefore not only does the contemporary reader have to interpret surface meanings that may have changed, but also account for the subtext of Elizabethan humor. A key point here is to look for lines containing homonyms or repeated words; they are some of the most common giveaways.

Now let us see some examples:

1. King Lear 1.1

Cordelia: Nothing, my lord.

Lear: How? Nothing can come of nothing.

2. Celia: Are you thinking of your father?

Cordelia: No, I am thinking of my child's father.



Learning Maxims and Pithy Sayings

Language learners can directly use maxims that are found in the plays of Shakespeare. In *Hamlet* we have a number of maxims. In the following speech we see Polonius offering advice to his son Laertes using these maxims:

Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice:
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy:
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be:
For loan oft loses both itself and friend;
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all,—to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.



In Othello 1.3 the Duke says:

To mourn a mischief that is past and gone

Is the best way to draw new mischief on.

Versification

An issue that is often overlooked is that Shakespeare's plays were written as dramatic literature, meant to be performed and spoken aloud, not silently read. That distinction is accentuated where Shakespeare writes in verse. Verse allowed Shakespeare to write lines with a poetic rhythm crafted for the stage. Typically, he wrote in *iambic pentametre*, which is a fancy way of saying ten-syllable lines that alternate unstressed and stressed syllables (although the pattern varies widely within speeches to avoid sounding monotonous). Shakespeare's verse is written either in pairs of rhymed line endings (*couplets*), or unrhymed lines (*blank verse*). We have to keep in mind that verse and poetic license sometimes force Shakespeare into phrasing that can look foreign at first glance. Verse is easy to spot by its different margins and capitalization of the first word in each line, keep an eye out for it, and know that we may have to pay more attention to these passages to get at their meaning.

Conclusion

The best way of teaching is through a context. When we read a play we do have a context in which words and expressions are used. Therefore instead of teaching language without any context it is better to teach it in a context for which we have enough resources from Shakespeare's plays. It would certainly be helpful to include a play of Shakespeare in general English course and while teaching the play the focus should be on imparting the language skills discussed so far.



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