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SHAKESPEARE'S ANTAGONISTS AND COLONIALISM, AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON SOME FAMOUS PLAYS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze Shakespeare's antagonists by using Historical and Post Colonial theoretical lenses. It assessed the influence of domestic politics and colonialism on the creation of these characters. There was an excessive influence of the humanist approach as far as criticism on Shakespeare is concerned. Another aspect which acted as a counter argument was somewhat religious. Although these approaches fell in line with Aristotelian tragedy, they limited the scope for further research on these antagonists of Shakespeare. The article endeavored to provide an alternative point of view by discussing some famous plays. It proved helpful in breaking the ice accumulated due to an excessive influence of the Liberal Humanist approach. By this alternative perspective, the scope of research was widened as new insights continued to appear on Shakespearean theatre.

Keywords: *Aristotelian, Alternative, Colonialism, Liberal Humanist, Politics.*

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1. Introduction

This is a comprehensive study which is concerned with a presentation of an alternative perspective of research regarding the creation of antagonists in Shakespeare's plays. A framework based on the Historical and Post Colonial

approaches has been chosen for this project. The reason behind this is to point out limitations and weaknesses of Humanist and traditional or religious criticism on these plays. It also endeavors to understand the dynamics of politics and colonialism which influenced the creation of these antagonists.

Shakespeare is a canonical name as far as tragedy is concerned. The theatre of Renaissance would remain shallow if his contribution is not mentioned. Shakespeare has given birth to some exquisite plays like *Hamlet, Othello, Merchant Of Venice* to name a few. Other acclaimed tragedies include *Romeo and Julliet, Julius Caesar, Coriolanus* and *The Tempest*. Alongside tragic plays, he constructed some well-known comedies. These include *Twelfth Night, As You Like It* and *Comedy Of Errors.*

Scholars have highlighted *a* strong presence of poetic rhythm in his work. This was due to the influence of poetry which dominated the literary landscape in the sixteenth century. Prose was in a developmental process at that time therefore literary works were composed in poetic verse form. An influence of symbolism and imagery has been observed as well. The plot has been constructed on limited themes but is captivating to engage the audience. Shakespeare made use of Aristotelian tragic forms revolving around the fall of the protagonists, a salient feature of plays composed in the Renaissance period. His characters consisted of Royal nobles, merchants and important figures. Although a good part of this characterization also addressed domestic issues faced by common people. This immense range of characters added flavor to his plays. Much has been written in the name of criticism on Shakespeare. But his antagonists have been the hottest of topics for debate. Even today, the creation of these antagonists drives interest and is still capable of igniting heated debates within the learned community.

1.1. Background

As discussed earlier Shakespeare wrote in an era which was considered as a defining moment in European and British history known as the Renaissance. Towards the latter half of the fifteenth century and leading up to the third quatrain of the sixteenth century, the political and literary landscape went through some rapid advancements . The advent of the printing press in 1462 was a game changer as it facilitated in speedy publication of scientific and philosophical texts which contributed to this wave of change. Furthermore, a revival of Greek and Latin helped in understanding Classical knowledge which bred modern scholarship.

At this point in time in England, Henry viii's scuffles with the Catholic Church generated controversy as the Protestant School was found leading to the creation of a new church as England parted ways from the Papal Order. Although its decision was met with condemnation. Towards the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth

century,, the political atmosphere spelled winds of change in the Iberian Peninsula as the Christian empire of Portugal overthrew the Muslims in 1492 and established their order in Spain by wiping out remnants of Moorish Muslim and Jewish population. It was a landmark in history as the Spanish Armada sowed the seeds of colonialism.

Other Continental powers including Britain followed in their footsteps as lands were grabbed and conquered within a span of few centuries. The drive for power attested this act of looting as legal and religious which was a popular theme of Shakespeare's plays. In short, this period of turmoil reached its apex when Elizabeth I became Queen of England. Her exploits against the Spanish Armada became a salient feature of contemporary literature. Finally, Britain got the upper hand in this race for colonies and subdued her rivals.

From a philosophical standpoint, concepts dealing with an assessment of human spirit heavily influenced poetry and prose. Concepts of dual vision were responsible for giving rise to Liberal humanism. This point of view gained popularity as it was advertised as an alternative approach

Masses in the West had got fed up with the religious fabric of Catholicism as its corruption was exposed. People took interest in this approach as it began influencing the theatre of the Renaissance.

1.2. Statement Of Problem

Despite being a good alternative to the traditional approach, Liberal humanism had its fair share of limitations which brought it under intense scrutiny. The model on which it worked was based around some profound aspects. This involved the action of free will. This element was introduced to understand the psyche of humans in power roles. This model was applied to Shakespeare's antagonists in order to understand the working and corruption of power. On the contrary it limited an understanding of the creative process. The problem lay within the mechanics of Liberal Humanist criticism. Since the text became the primary focus and all contexts were thrown away, these plays on a whole and Shakespeare's antagonists especially lost their true essence as the creative process could not be comprehended .This led to a search for alternative approaches.

The traditional approach in contrast limited this creative process even more .It only dealt with the basic contents of a tragedy and focused solely on the fall of the protagonist. The Aristotelian model diminished the role of the antagonist. He was just there to manipulate the protagonists. These limitations within the Aristotelian model called for a revisit of the context. In short the need for a sound historical context was greatly felt.

1.3. Research Objectives

The study shall focus on the historical dynamics which influence the creation of Shakespeare's antagonists. It shall also present an alternative perspective to the humanist critical paradigm by using a Post Colonial approach. The influences of domestic politics would also be made part of this study.

1.4. Research Questions

The following questions were asked as part of this study.

- How does the humanist approach limit this creative process as far as Shakespeare's antagonists are concerned?
- How are the influences of domestic politics and colonialism depicted through these characters?
- Does this article succeed in presenting an alternative perspective on Shakespeare's plays?

1.5. Significance

The paper would prove significant in assessing the political ecosystem responsible for the creation of Shakespeare's antagonists. The mercantile pursuits in combination with colonial expansionist designs can prove complex at times .The paper shall attempt to resolve this problem by an application of these concepts on these characters. It shall help explain the framework and thought processes of the West during the Renaissance. It shall do its best to negate the influences of the Humanist approach . By doing so, it shall broaden the scope of research regarding Shakespeare's antagonists.

1.6. Limitations

The article did not include all tragic plays by Shakespeare and included limited characters. It has also not chosen his comedies. The chosen framework has disregarded the traditional approach to tragedy in an effort to offer a compelling counterargument against pre-existing paradigms.

2. Review Of Literature

Much has been written on Shakespeare's tragedies. Scholars have pointed out a variety of themes in their criticism. An observation of these excerpts presents a vivid picture of the existent critical paradigm. Among these essays ,Bradley and Lewis attracted a major chunk of attention as torchbearers of their respective schools. Their works acquired added emphasis as they explained the creation of Shakespeare's antagonists

by using different approaches. Bradley took the traditional approach whereas Lewis went with the humanist approach. In this section, an assessment of this creative process would be made to understand the theoretical aspirations working behind the creation of strong antagonists in Shakespearean plays.

These approaches present conflicting perspectives regarding the functions of antagonists in Shakespeare's tragedies. According to Bradley and like-minded traditionalists, the protagonists in these plays carry a pure and innocent persona which leaves them open to all sorts of manipulation by the antagonists ultimately resulting in their downfall. But this argument drives its inspiration from the Aristotelian approach which governs these plays. The fall of the protagonist is an essential element in Aristotelian tragedies . The argument looks incomplete as it does not evaluate the reasons for this manipulation and the resultant tragic fall.

On the other hand, Lewis 's argument focused the implications of free will on the actions of both the protagonists and antagonists. He rejects any signs of influences by antagonists on the protagonist's actions and fall. According to him these weaknesses or evils are a part of the protagonist's personality. They become prominent with time and the antagonists' manipulation has nothing to do with this fall. This is a humanist position which looks compelling but like the Aristotelian approach, it also has limitations which influence the creation of Shakespeare's antagonists in an adverse manner.

Modern scholarship has reduced the influences of humanism as far as Shakespeare is concerned. It has attached an added emphasis on political concepts like neoliberalism. A focus on rhetoric was observed as far as his plays were concerned. These concepts were assessed by Colclough (2020) while studying Shakespeare's *Coriolanus.* His work used Quintin Skimmer's framework of Para diastole focusing on its weaknesses. He pointed out the use of rhetoric and in Shakespeare. Skimmer's reservations on the use of Para diastole were evaluated. Colclough concluded that this use of Para diastole made Coriolanus stand out giving way to some unresolvable questions. However, it does not imply to protagonists or antagonists in other plays by Shakespeare.

A historical model is mostly made part of political criticism. This use of history is often linked with an assessment of meaning in a political context. This topic was brought into discussion by Semple and Vyroubalova (2018). They presented a survey of pre-existent criticism on Shakespeare. An evaluation of sociopolitical events in a European context was presented in their project. They also focused on a determination of meaning and Shakespeare's own treatment of his characters which gave a

Eurocentric attire to his work. The advent of the colonial enterprise has played its part in this act of glorifying European characters in Shakespeare.

Political prejudices in the Renaissance have impacted on the representation of race and ethnicity. The politics of color is an important theme of Shakespearean tragedy. A study by Brotton (2014) presented a comprehensive outlook on the matter. He began by highlighting the inclination towards Shakespeare's Moorish characters. The play chosen here was *Othello.* He used a historical model which provided accounts based on Anglo Islamic relations. The article then takes a different approach on the matter by adopting a psychoanalytic approach to Shakespeare's History Plays. The article alluded to an ambivalence towards the Turks who were a powerful adversary to the West during the Renaissance. This article concluded that the creation of an ambivalent Turk specter gives rise to a theatrical and enjoyable fantasy. It is also responsible for bringing up new perspectives on Shakespeare's *Othello.*

The creative process involved behind *Shakespeare*'s antagonists has also been made part of scholastic activity. Influences of political discourse have been framed as a major factor in this process. The working of rhetoric is a salient feature of Shakespeare as pointed out by Dodd (2020) . He has explained the working of rhetoric in Shakespeare's plays in detail. Shakespeare's rhetoric works on a four-step process. The selection of topics is a key part. His findings point out the presence of Universalist topics in which Shakespeare was trained.

A neoliberal outlook has been given to recent political criticism on Shakespeare. Scholars' categories Shakespeare's plays as training manuals due to their literary effectiveness. Polito (2006) has cited this in her article. She noted the use of these plays by corporations and the military to understand and enhance professional development. The article hinted at the development of self-help movement which is observed in a number of Shakespeare's characters. She notes that the concept of self-help and development is a neoliberalism concept. At the surface it shows its mission of liberty and prosperity. But internally its motives have shown an inclination to serve oneself. A major point of concern in the sixteenth century was to serve for the commonwealth which alludes to the presence of a colonial enterprise. The crux of this article revolved around a sociopolitical assessment of professional development involving an interpretation of liberty. This is a prelude to understanding the function of Shakespeare's antagonists as they make use of these concepts.

Strong influences of domestic and intercontinental politics have been witnessed in Shakespeare's plays. The setting and plot hints at some major landmarks in European and

British politics. Apart from this aspect, they shed light on the events happening outside Europe and Britain. An example of this is available in the dialogue of characters. Scholars have noted a variety of concepts which allude to this working of politics particularly on Shakespeare's antagonists. A similar instance was reported in a study by Naum Scurru (2021). He focused on the disruption of identities by using a temporo-corporeal approach to politics. A monster analogy was used in this work as he assessed Shakespeare's *Henry v*. He was of the opinion that such analogies were used to portray the destabilization of existent constructs . The article found an immense working of body politics in Shakespeare's works which make them intriguing for readers.

Critics also assess the weaknesses and discrepancies of a political order while discussing Shakespeare. Among these topics, aspects of disturbance at a domestic level are highlighted. A discussion on these disturbances was observed in an analysis of Shakespeare's *Othello* by Logan (2004). She has pointed out an outbreak of tensions caused as a result of the modern model of state-craft. She notes that certain privileges rooted in an imperialist design are responsible for chaos as ethical choices are undermined. She provides examples through the character of Iago who is dissatisfied and as a result resorts to Machiavellian tactics. The article alludes to a politics of race as the existent order is woven around a white-supremist belief. The article thus questions these ideals while assessing the problem of disaffection with the modern nation-state in detail

Some plays by Shakespeare have been termed as political tragedies. They depict the debacle of a political hierarchy by portraying a conflict between characters. One such play which comes to mind is *Antony and Cleopatra*. Scholars have deemed this play as a tragedy of politics. This assessment was further carried out by Alulis (2012). The article looks at this love story from different perspectives as elements of descent and tyranny stand out. It was a result of excessive patriotism towards Rome which led to a fall of both characters. However, the article cites a working of love at a personal level. This love is more noble than the one shown for a nation. In short the article presents conflicting positions on the matter.

The working of laws and legal framework is an essential part of a political discourse. This presence of laws is also noticed in some plays of Shakespeare. Scholars have studied this matter in combination with a desire to defy order followed by a sense of restoration. In a study on *Richard iii* by Squitieri (2019) the constraints of feudal laws were assessed. She referred to some scenes which depict this complex mechanism of feudal laws. A defiance against preexisting norms give a feminist outlook to this play. On the contrary a sense of loyalty and restoration of feudal laws balances this gendered

outlook on this play of Shakespeare. On a whole this article elaborates the act of treason in light of feudal laws.

A working of a socioreligious order often dominates this practice of political criticism on Shakespeare. An ongoing struggle between Catholic and Protestant ideals provides ground for a regicide of resistance as observed by Marotti (2023). His criticism used a framework built on a working of power and history. He noted the roots of this power which was initially displayed by the popes as they excommunicated Elizabeth ii of England. Later on, this power took a Protestant outlook which relied on a politics of resistance. This also led to an outburst of tyranny which was made part of the regicide. It concluded that this politics of power influenced the socioreligious order and also impacted the actions of characters in Shakespearean tragedies.

The advent of the colonial enterprise is a hallmark of the Renaissance. As discussed above, after the fifteenth century Western powers felt an urge for exploring and capturing new markets. This marked the start of a bloody looting expedition which was legalized out of mercantile interests. Shakespeare also hinted at this colonial enterprise in his plays. His antagonists were more influenced by this project than his protagonists. Plays like *The Tempest* provide an ideal platform for understanding European psyche and the process of colonial enterprise. An assessment by Borlik (2013) makes note of these concepts. The article begins by pointing to the fact that texts like *The Tempest* are a classic example of the Post Colonial approach . It further stated that the depiction of characters like Caliban alludes to a mistreatment of the Third World. A consumption of local resources by the West is another concern. However, this act of colonization can begin within a system of a nation-state. In short the Englishness of this play was questioned as the play was inspired from an Anglo-Saxon legend. A prelude for new critical approaches, especially an environmentalist approach, has been provided in the article.

Questions of race and ethnicity are included while assessing this colonial enterprise. Critics usually assess the mistreatment of black characters in plays of such nature. These concerns were revisited in an ethnographic essay by Chapman (2023). He notes the mistreatment of the black performers by using an American context. There are references to a college performance of Shakespeare's *Othello*. These African performers are manipulated by the white men for theatre capital which demeans their persona and they succumb to a narrative of anti-blackness portrayed by white production houses. The protagonist in *Othello* faces similar circumstances before drowning into a sea of self-doubt which is the crux of this article.

The British literary landscape is also responsible for the creation of this colonial enterprise. Maley (2007) presented this view while assessing some plays entitled under the British tetralogy. His assessment focused on factors which supported this venture of grabbing new markets. The political order of the early modern period was at the helm of affairs. By using a New Historicist and Cultural Materialist approach the paper focuses the colonization of Ireland. There are references to the Nine Years War in these plays. The act of surrender and unification of crowns acquires added importance. In short these plays provide historical information on the advent of British colonialism. Therefore, these works by Shakespeare are often termed as History Plays.

A different perspective has been forged after an assessment of Postcolonial theory. This assessment calls for a revisit of Shakespearean plays and Postcolonial theories as Singh and Shahni (2010) point out. Their work focused on a historical interpretation of postcolonial theories in relation to Shakespeare. They noted that postcolonial approaches performed two functions. Firstly, they were responsible for dethroning the traditional bard and second they presented an outlook of competing histories. Aspects of gender and class also find a place in such narratives. The article concluded by giving an interpretation of key terms like early colonial, precolonial and postcolonial. The implications of these terms have been assessed exhaustively while performing a Postcolonial reading of Shakespeare.

In an interesting article on the question of identity, Niyaesh (2008) uses a historical framework to provide new insights on ideas of otherness. His work deals with an explanation of Persians in Shakespeare and other Elizabethans plays. The term Saracen has its roots from the Middle Ages and is viewed as a metaphor of colonialism. The West perceived Persians as a separate entity despite their religious differences. A delicate and complex alliance was forged against the Turks whose remnants could be found in numerous plays by Shakespeare. This article in short focuses on breaking up a space of negation, negotiation and confusion regarding identity and otherness in a Post Saidian era.

3. Methodology

3.1. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework based on Said's work on Postcolonial criticism has been chosen for this article. His book s *Orientalism (1989) and Culture and Imperialism(1991)* provide valuable insights on this process of colonization. Both works lay the foundations for a psychological assessment on Western obsession with the *Other World* which led to the creation of the concept now known as *The* Orient. Said's analysis is based on an enterprise which was created as a result of West's lust for power. This lust for new

markets drove the West towards Oriental lands. This process of familiarization found its origin in the Middle Ages. Western crusades on Arabian soil was the first example of this interaction. Moved by this potential chance of establishing a mercantile stronghold, Western powers began establishing colonies and called them their prized possessions

The loss of these colonies dented the West psychologically as they were unwilling to accept the newly acquired independent status of these Oriental lands. In short these works assess the working of neocolonialism. By drawing upon several examples from contemporary literature, they provide a description of how dominant cultures rule over the values of a native community and drain them on all fronts. The insights are of value for the article as they would aid in understanding the creation and working of Shakespeare's antagonists on similar political grounds.

3.2. Research Design

A method of Character Analysis has been adopted for this article. Antagonists have been chosen from three well-known plays by Shakespeare. These include *Othello, Hamlet, and King Lear*. Textual references would be included to add credibility to the project.

4. Discussion And Findings

In the previous chapters, the article focused solely on the literary limitations imposed by the humanist approach. The absence of a context made it difficult to comprehend the creative process behind the creation of Shakespeare's antagonists. This over-emphasis on the text along with traditional allegations of manipulation were highlighted as key reasons for this limitation. A review of the literature presented a contrary point of view. A political outlook was presented to counter the influences of humanism. Concepts related to the working of a colonial enterprise were also included to put forward an alternative perspective on Shakespearean plays. In this chapter, the work shall foresee an assessment of selected antagonists to pursue the above-mentioned gap highlighted in the previous chapters.

4.1. Iago in Othello

The character of Iago has always been interesting in the eyes of readers and scholars. This antagonist has generated controversial views. An example was observed in the duel between Bradley and Lewis. The former put the blame of Othello's fall on Iago whereas the latter dismissed these charges. Iago's creation as an antagonist has been done in a conventional manner but that is just the tip of the iceberg. There is more in this process

rather than just a plain act of manipulation. The political scenario of the Venetian state presents an ideal foil.

Evidence of mistreatment become a prevalent theme. It turns out that Iago was equally gallant and talented as Othello on the battlefield. He had proved his metal on numerous occasions. He played a pivotal role in strengthening the defenses of Venice and deserving aspired to become lieutenant in the army. Instead, Othello favored Cassio who only had bookish knowledge of military strategy. Iago was infuriated and this injustice on the part of the state aroused his inert demon. Cassio's lineage and nationality is the first reason which triggers Iago as observed below.

"One Michael Cassio,a Flourentine."(Acti, Scene 1)

It is eminent that in the sixteenth century Italy was divided into city states which did not stand each other. A selection of a Flourentine in Venetian forces was an outrage in the eyes of Iago. Cassio's lack of experience was the last thing needed as this excerpt depicts

"That who never set up a squadron in the field of battle. Not the division of battle he knows more than a spinster. Unless the bookish theoric." (Act I, Scene 1)

Moreover, Iago complains about the increasing influences of favoritism which has corrupted the Venetian society as observed below.

"There is no remedy. To the curse of service. Preferment goes on by letter and affection. And not by old graduation when each second stood heir to the first." (Act I, Scene 1)

This description is a classic case of discrepancies within the modern nation-state which aggrieved Iago. For these reasons he harbored feelings of distain towards Othello.

Feelings of racial prejudice also contribute to this vindictive mindset. Othello came from a Moorish family and rose to the rank of general in a white dominant society. He was victimized due to his dark skin and African origin and Iago was not willing to leave any opportunity to malign him. A use of racial slurs like *A black ram* and *Berbery horse* allude to a colonial enterprise which influenced Iago.

4.2. Claudius in Hamlet

On the contrary ,the construction of Claudius has been done on a different plane. The antagonistic capacities of Claudius depict a working of strong political implications.

Aspects of conspiracy and betrayal present an intense political outlook. Shakespeare used his knowledge of Machiavelli's political ideology based on ultimate opportunism. His poetics of ruthlessness also impact this construction of Clauddius. Historical accounts of political turmoil within Ottoman ruled Türkiye and Mughal ruled India also play a part in the conflict.

From the beginning this character of Claudius wears a Machiavellian outlook. The dialogue between Hamlet and the Ghost of the deceased King provides a comprehensive account of this regal debacle. It was discovered that Clauddius planned to capture the throne at the cost of his brother. He murdered the king in his sleep and thus became the Supreme ruler of Denmark. The account provided by the Spirit is a testament to Clauddius's Machiavellian aspirations. A passage from the play is helpful in understanding this conflict.

"I could unfold a tale that would barrow thy spirit and freeze thy blood." (Act I, Scene 3)

A similar prediction strengthens this act of foul play.

"There is something rotten happening in the state of Denmark." [Act I, Scene 3)

It becomes evident throughout the play that Clauddius conspired to serve his ends historical accounts reveal that murdering brothers for the sake of the throne was considered fine. This plague infiltrated the Ottomans after the era of Sultan Suleman. But in the subcontinent this malpractice had been going on for centuries and reached its apex by the era of the Mughals. This context was strong enough for creating a powerful and politically corrupt villain. This interpretation has developed interest among readers regarding the character of Clauddius. Later on, he sends Hamlet to England which gives him more time to hatch a plot for Hamlet. Thus, by ensuring Hamlet's demise, Clauddius ensured the removal of all obstacles. This portrayal of Clauddius cemented the narrative of Machiavellian aspirations which led to a political outlook on the construction of Clauddius.

4.3. Edmond in King Lear

A continuation of rising political tensions between England and France in the Jacobian period signified the construction of Edmond as an antagonist in *King Lear*. In this case the tendency to pounce upon an opportunity reached its apex. The character of Edmond depicts ruthlessness and Machiavellianism. On the other hand, this display of cynicism is the heart and soul of the play. It is responsible for the fall of Lear the

protagonist. Not only this but Edmond's exploits affect the trajectory of other characters as well. These observations are enough to explain the influence of a well-constructed antagonist on Shakespeare's plays.

Evidences of domestic politics engulf the conflict within the play. These influences are stronger as compared to other plays by Shakespeare. Edmond has figured out Lear's incapacity to establish his right as a king from the beginning. Lear's tenderness towards Cordelia and his ineffectiveness to control Gonnorel and Regan is the catalyst which instigates Edmond's regal aspirations. His Machiavellian instincts force him to go for the throne by hook or crooke. Edmond however plays his cards cleverly and takes a different approach.. He plays his innocence to his father Gloucster when he hears about a possible coup against Lear led by Kent. This confrontation presents Edmond with an opportunity to show his skills as an antagonist. Edmond masterfully plays the wolf under the guise of the lamb. He puts the blame on Edgar who has to flee as a consequence.

However, the dynamics on which Edmond's character works are different from previous instances. His actions and manipulations do not solely serve his motives but also the motives of his allies or handlers. The political situation depicted in the play is not as simple as it looks. After reading the play, one assumes the presence of superior figures like Gonnorel and her husband who are secretly pulling the rug from Lear's feet. Edmond is unintentionally working his own demise in the process. Although he manages to convince the Duke of Albuni against Lear and Gloucster. First he accuses Lear of being mad and incompetent as a regal authority. Next he dispatches Gloucster in a cynical fashion as he is executed on charges of treason. Since the sisters also draw their battle lines against one another and Cordelia, the heir to the throne is absent and later finds herself imprisoned; Edmond is given an open field to do his bidding. The play reveals short-term success of his plot against Lear. Readers may still consider these aspirations as human nature but there are political implications behind the construction of Edmond as an antagonist.

Contextual assessment of this play provides valuable information on the matter . Historical documents presented a brief outlook of the boiling tensions between England and France. Allies in the reign of William the Conqueror in 1066 AD , both states now remained at each other's throat constantly. One reason for this animosity was embedded in their political desires overseas. A race foe new markets and colonies intensified this conflict. Thus, a prelude to the Hundred Years War was given.

Besides this the political structure in the fledgling years of the Early Modern Period was volatile. The Palace was a breeding ground of conspiracy. It was believed that

Elizabeth U allegedly executed her rivals as they attempted to conspire against her. The conspirators nature of the play drew its inspiration from the volatile state of regal affairs in Ottoman families after Suleman's reign. Edmond's character was designed as a result of political instability in Mughal ruled Indian subcontinent. The tactics he uses became a hallmark of the political structure in the Middle stages of the eighteenth century where a power-hungry scoundrel driven by Machiavellian instincts takes over . Edmond's character signifies turmoil. It also depicts the consequences of weakness shown by a king which leaves the state prone to occupation from foreign as well as interior forces . On these grounds , Edmond's character becomes a case study for students of politics and strategy.

5. Conclusion And Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

To sum up the discussion Shakespeare's works offer a wide range of critical paradigms**.** The most commonly used ones include a humanist and a traditional one. Both schools of thought have influenced these plays . At the same time, these approaches have their weaknesses which limit the creative process behind these works. The traditional approach also known as the Aristotelian approach in particular is the culprit behind this limitation. Due to a strict set of rules, this approach has been criticized for highlighting the tragic fall of the protagonist. This fall is caused by constant manipulation from a powerful antagonist. On the contrary a humanist approach blames the protagonist for allowing himself to be manipulated. A working of free will signified this approach which was refreshing initially. But an over-emphasis on the text and an absence of a context left it ineffective in understanding these plays. Therefore, a need for an alternative perspective was strongly felt.

In this article we looked at the construction of Shakespeare's antagonists on grounds of domestic politics and the working of the colonial enterprise. The plays selected for this purpose included *Othello, Hamlet* and *King* Lear. These antagonists have driven a variety of views among the literary community. The first character assessed on these grounds was of Iago in *Othello*. It was observed that prevalent injustice in the Venetian forces combined with a feeling of animosity among Italian City states led to villainous tendencies. A historical context was added for credibility. The apex of this frustration was reached when Iago was denied of his chance of becoming lieutenant. A feeling of racial prejudice was fueled as a result of this colonial enterprise. Iago's manipulations were embedded in his distrust of the modern nation state . Although considered anti-state, Iago's construction told about the desire for power and colonies which was now taking over Western minds.

In the case of Clauddius's construction, a different strategy was adopted to ensure the fluidity of this creative process. A strong influence of power politics dominated this play. Clauddius is presented as an ideal representative of Machiavellianism. He eliminates his brother and Hamlet y employing a brilliant tactical play thus capturing the throne in the process. This construction drew inspiration from the political turmoil in Ottoman Türkiye and the Indian subcontinent where this foul play was a common practice. Whereas in *King Lear*, The construction of Edmond includes different factors. Historical record depicted references to tensions between England and France. Domestic politics and contention among family members present an ideal foil. There are accounts of treason and Machiavellianism. A striking difference noted here is that Edmond's opportunism yielded him brief joy but a more powerful antagonist in the form of Gonnorel was there to capitalize which made this construction intriguing for the audience. On the whole this article endeavored to present an alternative perspective on Shakespeare as contemporary approaches like the Aristotelian and humanist approach limit the working of creative process.

5.2. Recommendations For Further Study

The paper opens new avenues in the domain of Shakespearean studies. This allows scholars and students to work with a wide range of topics. First and foremost, this paper recommends a redefinition of Shakespeare's antagonists. The concepts elaborated here can also be applied on protagonists. A psychiatric and ecological assessment could be done as well. Students of military strategy, politics and diplomacy can use these plays to enhance their learning. Approaches based on economy could also be employed to widen the scope of study on Shakespeare.

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