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CONTRASTS, CONTRADICTIONS AND CONSPIRACIES – THE FRAME OF SHAKESPEARE’S DRAMA JULIUS CAESAR

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Abstract

Contrasts are eminent elements in drama. It gives the drama and emotional essence. The audience appreciate contrast that inside their own emotions. It highlights personality and reactions in relation to a situation or an event. It works as the tipping of scales audience to new and inexplicable affinity. Contradictions refer to the opposite ideas when it is being portrayed in the same context. It enables deeper expressions it connects differences and similarities. These are obvious in nature, situations, personalities, characteristics and all the elements of a drama. Highlighting the opposition, give a clear appearance of the existing elements within the drama. It enhances comprehension and help better identification of personal connectors. This research paper intends to focus on the conspiracies in the play “Julius Caesar”. It draws to attention the contrasts in every aspect of the play. It highlights the contradictions present. This paper brings to a balance the unnoticed components within the fabric of the play. It gives scope to argument, it gives the drama a good flux and background, it has a strong impact on audience, points in the direction of the opposite giving it the glamour of paradoxical ethics.

Keywords: Contrast, contradiction, conspiracy, characters, plot, drama, play.

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*"Cowards die many times before the deaths,
the valiant never taste of death but once."*

Introduction

This drama was written in 1599, by the well-known playwright "William Shakespeare". It comes under the category of tragedy, as typically to the characteristics of "Shakespeare's tragedy", there is death as the main plot and all other subplots are interwoven around it. In this particular play "Julius Caesar" it is argued who exactly is the protagonist is it "Marcus Brutus" is it "Julius Caesar" himself. Since "Julius Caesar" dies halfway through the play many people have come to the conclusion that "Marcus Brutus" is the protagonist. Though he is portrayed with some drawbacks and some flaws he is still the hero of this play. Miriam Griffin's 2009 work in "A Companion to Julius Caesar" centers around a detailed exploration of Julius Caesar's historical, literary, and cultural impact. The central point of her work is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Caesar as both a historical figure and a character within Shakespeare's play, examining the interplay between the historical realities of Caesar's life and the dramatic portrayals in literature and other cultural expressions. By probing deeply into the life, political career, military victories, and assassination of the historical Caesar, Griffin offers a comprehensive overview. (Reynolds, 1973)

Understanding the depth and richness of his representation in Shakespeare's play requires knowledge of this historical context. She looks at how "Julius Caesar" by Shakespeare dramatizes historical events, emphasizing the ways the play both interprets and deviates from historical truth. Griffin examines the play's themes of ambition, power, and treachery as well as how these ideas are based on actual events that occurred during Caesar's reign.

Caesar's lasting influence on Western culture is also covered in the study, which examines the ways in which Caesar's image has evolved over centuries. This covers how he is portrayed in different books, artworks, and popular media. Griffin offers a thorough examination of Shakespeare's play's principal characters, with a focus on Brutus and Julius Caesar. She talks about their intricacies, intentions, and the moral and ethical dilemmas they raise. Her investigation of the political and philosophical issues brought up by Shakespeare's play and Caesar's life is another important facet of her work. Talks about republicanism, despotism, leadership, and the moral ramifications of political assassination are all included in this. (Taylor, 1973)

Griffin's main goal in writing is to show how Julius Caesar is a literary icon as well as a complex historical figure. Griffin seeks to close the gap between historical truth and literary representation by offering a sophisticated analysis of Caesar's life and Shakespeare's dramatization, demonstrating how each influences and enhances the other. Her comprehensive approach offers readers a deeper appreciation of the complexities surrounding Julius Caesar and the timeless relevance of his story. (M Griffin, 2009)

The protagonist as well as the so called villain both had admirable qualities, the way both Mighty in their own way their lives were meaningful, both face the consequences of deceit and betrayal the life and death alternated between contrast, contradictions and revolved around conspiracies. Both their deaths were untimely and unexpected. It is stemmed and had its roots in envy and hatred. Disbelief mistrust and pain were faced by both equally. The drama shows qualities like

determination, the characters come from good reputed families yet they retort to disgraceful outcome. "Julius Caesar" was treated badly as a result of some people's jealousy and vengeance. His intentions were good for everyone which resulted in them turning bitter towards him. It was the contradiction of hatred being returned in lieu of love; betrayal is returned for sweetness and honesty. This play opens up an array of different contrast giving it a mesmerizing effect. Each new act and episode encountered, unfolds different types of feelings, which are varied, it uncovers a variety of perspectives in which the audience themselves are shocked where truth and loyalty, faithfulness and love are met with deceit, dishonesty and conspiracies (Griffin, 2009).

This drama was written in an era when Rome used to be a Republic ruled by an elected group of people called the senate. "*Julius Caesar*" came into the limelight, came the ruler in a system of autocracy. There was a change in the system but society could not change as people's minds were not prepared enough to accept a single member ruling instead of the group of senates. He then gained popularity by defeating territories that were their immediate neighbours and getting them under his rule. His power was multiplying with this system. The main reason for this assassin was that, the ones who were in power before his reign wanted to bring back the Republic system. These people had a grudge for him, when they saw his power increasing. They knew his capabilities; they were observing the general public taking a liking towards him. They tried to show the general public that the reason of the assassin and he needed to be murdered as he was becoming too ambitious. The conspirators took the help of people closest to him in order to put the plan to action. They also wanted to camouflage the deed, as being *noble* in the best interest of the country and the people of Rome. They wanted to show that there was no personal involvement in this assassin.(Suetonius, 1957)

In his 2008 book "Julius Caesar: The Colossus of Rome," Richard A. Billows claims that the historical, political, and social backdrop of the Julius Caesar narrative is intricately woven together. In order to provide readers a thorough grasp of the context in which Caesar's life and deeds took place, Billows explores a number of important topics. The Decline of the Republic and the Political Landscape of the Late Roman Republic In his discussion of political unrest and the fall of the Roman Republic, Billows emphasizes the erosion of republican institutions, power struggles, and corruption. Rise of Populism: The conventional senatorial authority was questioned by populist politicians during this period of time. Julius Caesar had a significant role in this movement with his laws and reforms. Military Conquests and Exploits: Gallic Wars: Caesar's military expeditions, especially in Gaul, greatly extended Rome's sphere of influence and strengthened his position of authority (Suetonius, 1957).

Civil War: An important aspect of the historical background is the battle between Caesar and Pompey, which culminated in Caesar crossing the Rubicon and starting a civil war. Social and Economic Factors: -Economic Inequality: Billows draws attention to the social unrest and economic inequalities that were common in Caesar's day. Caesar won the people over by addressing important concerns like debt relief and land reform. Urbanization and Public Works: Caesar's larger initiatives to stabilize and enhance Roman society included a number of public works initiatives, including as the construction of infrastructure and the creation of jobs. Caesar's Personal Ambitions and Reforms: -Dictatorship and Reforms: Caesar's installation as a lifelong dictator and his following measures to consolidate power and solve the republic's issues. (Wells and Dobson, 2001)

Although these actions were advantageous in several ways, they also stoked worries of despotism. Assassination Plot: Understanding the dramatic dynamics of the times requires an understanding of the political intrigue and conspiracy that resulted in his assassination. Two of the most important aspects of the historical drama are the conspirators' reasons and Caesar's death's aftermath. Cultural and Intellectual Climate: -Roman Culture and Values: Caesar's actions and intentions were influenced by the values, beliefs, and intellectual currents of the day. Billows investigate the ways in which Roman culture shaped the social and political structures. The main goal of Billows' investigation is to provide a thorough picture of the intricate and turbulent setting in which Julius Caesar functioned. A greater awareness of the political, social, cultural, and historical settings is necessary for readers to fully comprehend Caesar's activities and the significant influence he had on the development of Roman history. Caesar's life and the drama that surrounded him were results of this complex and intertwined backgrounds, as Billows' work emphasizes. (Billows, 2008)

To study the paradoxes within the drama.

To analyze the contrasts and contradictions in the play.

To study the role of the conspiracy within the play.

Table 1. Contrasts and Contradictions

1	Content
2	Condemn or Criticism
3	Commend
4	or Praise
5	Contradictions and consistence
6	Commencement and decline
7	Capture, freedom and liberation
8	Convincing and rejection
9	Comrades and friends when they become Rivals
10	Conquering and loss
11	Condition
12	Confidence, trust, reluctance and betrayal
13	Confusion and certainty
14	Connivance and refusal
15	Cowardice and Fear
16	Conflicts
17	Confiding and secrecy
18	Conciliation
19	Control and powerlessness
20	Power and weakness
21	Success and failure

Brutus criticizes Cassias for taking bribes, also criticizes Julius Caesar for being ambitious, yet to contradict that did you not pay the soldier salary on time. Ironically praises Brutus for being too pure by not taking bribes himself. Mark Antony praises “Julius Caesar” for his nature and gives a fantastic eulogy. Mark Antony also praises “Brutus” as being one of the noblest people. This is contradictory knowing “Brutus' deeds, and considering that Caesar was growing in his ego. War was to be impending, when in reality it was the main changing point the crucial focus. Good and Evil: There is a fluctuation of supernatural and

unnatural elements. There is a presence of a soothsayer, Caesar's ghost as well as faith in God or the presence of a higher power. There is a mention of dreams and omens. The debts of ambition are said to be paid off with war (Lattanzio, 2014).

In spite of them being mighty, poor judgment by characters was obvious within the play. "Brutus" needs Cassius to win in war. "Julius Caesar" did not pay heed to the fortune teller, when he was warned. He regarded the warning with disbelief, it is hypocritical "Julius Caesar" declined to be crowned thrice over when it was offered to him. Belief and disbelief is evident in this. "Brutus", wife Portia also treated him with disbelief when he wouldn't tell her what he was up to. It is an oxymoron where, they had done the most heinous crime of publically stabbing Caesar in front of the crowd of people, yet when somebody suggested to kill "Mark Antony" when he asked the reason for the crime "Brutus" said that it seemed too violent to kill him. This seemed both ironical and contradictory as the words and the actions do not match. The speeches spoken by both "Brutus" and "Anthony" are rather contradictory, both are equally paradoxes, as they mean one thing and they represent another. Mark Antony said that Brutus and all the other conspirators our honorable men whereas, "Brutus" says that Caesar was ambitious. They also want to bring out the purpose that "Brutus" loved the country of Rome and the people much more than he loves his dear friend Caesar this is also a contrast and in some sense contradictory. In reality "Anthony's" speech is sarcastically exposing the reality whereas Brutus' speech is camouflage in the reality. The use of Paradox and oxymoron throughout the play make the essence of contradictions even stronger. (Wells and Dobson, 2001)

Another contradiction can be seen where "Caesar" refused a crown that was offered to him in dignity whereas his cloak, had the piercing marks from where the daggers had punctured his body. "Caesar" left huge fortune to the people of Rome but on the contrary, at his death the people did not even mourn for him, when before, they loved and were in awe of him. The beginning and the end - A new era of ruling began with reign of Julius Caesar. However, this new beginning was also the beginning to Julius Caesar's end. This also marks the end to two Noble people Brutus and Cassius. Brutus impales himself as he runs into a sword held up right by a soldier, and thereby kills himself. Cassius is unable to tolerate what he has done in that state of unbearable emotion he commits suicide. "Life and death"- Cassius wonders if the day of his birth anniversary would also mean his death day, since he had to fight on that day, thereby bringing out the deeper meaning of the beginning and the end side by side to each other. The decline of the ruling parties can be seen where the political system was taken over by Caesar, at Caesar's death his nephew, Octavius and Lepidus took over the ruling. We notice the commencement and decline the beginning and the end of the ruling system through this. (Wells, 2001)

On one side we see "Brutus" with the intention to be liberated is captured by his own weak mindedness and falls into the trap of conspiracy by causing the death of "Julius Caesar". On the contrary "Julius Caesar" with the intention of liberating people in Rome is captivated in the heinous conspiracy and becomes a victim causing his own gruesome death; thereby we see capture and liberation run parallel within this drama. Cassius persuaded Brutus to be part of the conspiracy and make the assassination happen. Julius Caesar rejected the advice of the soothsayer when he was correctly being warned to be on guard. The poet persuades Brutus and Cassius convincing not to fight or be against each other, but rather to be friends again. (Arthur, 1999)

“Julius Caesar” loved “Brutus” more than he could love anybody else. He was very close to him, yet they became rivals. The conspirators needed the people closest to “Julius Caesar” to make the assassination a success. Therefore, we see that this contrast in situation was the foundation of the plot. We also can point out that unity and division another contrasting element takes shape and form here. Celebration and enjoyment becomes sorrow, war and mourning: when “Julius Caesar” conquered and increased his power, the people were all rejoicing and celebrating but no sooner there was a change of events and it turned to sorrow and mourning. Brutus shed tears at Cassius’ death. Portia committed suicide out of frustration, resulting in sorrow. It was the very conquering that led to the major loss in Rome. Brutus, being idealistic in nature, gives in very easily to being convinced, lost a good soul and his good relationship. The major loss was due to this personality flaw. Brutus lost the battle at Phillipi. (Spevack, 2004)

Dictatorship or democracy: The ruling condition was to be considered. It was a Republic but some people mistook the condition of becoming dictatorship. arrogance and humility: in some scenes of the play Julius Caesar is said to be arrogant, where is in contradictory wish you Anthony saying that he was soft hearted, in the eulogy when he mentioned that “*ambition should be made of sterner stuff*”, there was an implied meaning pointing out that he was humble and had the people of Rome’s best interest at heart. Throughout the drama we see the alternating between trust and betrayal where the elements correspond to each other. “Brutus” reluctantly joined the conspiracy, whereas “Mark Antony” confidently spoke up in a sarcastic manner to bring out the truth and reality. Caesar was suspicious of the wrong people. Both Caesar's and Brutus' wife fear and worry for the husband's respectively. They are not confident of what is happening. They had strong sense of intuition. (French, 2013)

“Brutus” is in mental confusion whether he should support Cassius and be a part of the assassination or not. “Julius Caesar” was certain about his comrades. “Brutus” is easily distracted in his confusion; he almost lets himself down and lets off the truth to his wife about what he is doing. Eventually he doesn’t tell her. The people easily switched their emotion from hatred to love, from anger to sympathy just when they heard Caesar’s will read out.

Brutus agrees to be a part of the conspiracy. Marc Anthony refuses to hear anything against “Julius Caesar”. We see this refusal and acceptance; agreement and decline throughout the fabric of this play. Metellus, one of the conspirators got down on his knees and begged Caesar to allow his banished brother to return to Rome. Caesar refused this request. This act of refusal was the moment and main point at which the assassination took place.

“Mark Antony” runs away from the scene of the crime where “Julius Caesar” is murdered, at first. Then when he realizes everything was safe for him to return, he comes back when his fear had subsided. He is then able to deliver an impassioned eulogy. The Plebeians versus The tribunes: the plebeians were enjoying and celebrating the victory because of the sons of Pompeii. While the tribunes verbally attacked the people saying that they were volatile and their mind was weak to celebrate the defeat of someone who ruled them and who was a leader to them. (French, 2013)

The Crux of the plot was hatched in secrecy, when Brutus' wife asked him to confide in her and open up about the truth he somehow didn't. We see here that secrecy and confiding go together. Caesar secretly hoped the crowd would insist that he accept the Crown when it was offered to him but he openly refused it. He was disheartened to see that the crowd was cheering as he refused the crown. We

see that towards the end of the play that there is reconciliation between Antony and Brutus. Octavius and Antony are able to claim victory only because of this sensible action. Major loss was further avoided.

The elements of danger safety and security: the people suspect that Caesar would be dangerous for the smooth functioning of Rome, they metaphorically compare him to a serpent's egg which is right now not reached maturity but if it is allowed to grow it could prove dangerous and threaten the security of the citizens of Rome. Power and weakness are seen alternating: power when it is blown out of control when it is used with pride and ego is feared. When people are weak in Spirit and they do not have a strong mind stand for what is right and wrong that leads to conspiracy. Octavius is overthrown by the power the Brutus possessed at that time. There was in a sense lack of control. There was power in Brutus' speech. He was a good orator. Antony's eulogy was also powerful enough to change the mind of the mob. Success and failure seen in various acts throughout the play, the conspirators succeed, Anthony succeeds, Brutus succeeds, and Octavius succeeds. On the contrary Portia fails to get the truth out of "Brutus". The ones who loved him and the soothsayer, Caesar failed to save the life of their beloved. "Brutus" failed to live up to the nobility of friendship and love of Caesar. "Caesar" failed to establish the trust of those who were jealous of him. (Brady, 1931)

Greg Woolf explores the assassination of Julius Caesar and its wider ramifications in "Et tu Brute? The Murder of Caesar and Political Assassination," drawing comparisons to the themes of contrasts, contradictions, and conspiracies found in Shakespeare's play "Julius Caesar." Woolf's study clarifies how important these components are to the theatrical portrayal of the historical event as well as to it. Woolf examines the contradiction between important characters like Caesar, Brutus, and Cassius's private goals and their public personas. Shakespeare's play, in which people exhibit one face to the public while harbouring different secret objectives, revolves upon this contradiction. It draws attention to the contrast between Brutus' idealized portrayal of Rome and other characters' practical, frequently brutal political scheming. While some are motivated by power and personal ambition, Brutus believes in the just cause of the republic. Woolf talks about the plot's moral inconsistencies in the assassination. The violent deed is fundamentally cruel and deceitful, but the conspirators—Brutus in particular—justify it as a way to defend the republic. (Woolf, 2006)

Caesar is presented as a leader who aspires to absolute power while still serving as a champion of the people. This contradiction gives rise to a multifaceted character whose actions lend themselves to several interpretations. One of the best instances of political intrigue is the plot to assassinate Caesar. Woolf explores the conspirators' motivations, looking at the ways in which political strategy, dread of dictatorship, and personal grievances interact. A crucial component of both Shakespeare's play and the historical event is the use of rhetoric to influence public opinion and defend acts. For example, Antony's funeral speech is a master class in swaying public opinion. Woolf gives readers a thorough understanding of the historical background of Caesar's assassination, which aids in their comprehension of the political conflicts that existed in real life and how Shakespeare dramatized them. This covers the conspirators' nuanced motivations, Caesar's supporters' devotion, and apprehensions about a dictatorship.

The points examined are the moral ramifications of using assassination as a political instrument. Woolf talks on how the play's main themes—justice, loyalty, and the greater good—are called into doubt by Caesar's murder. Consideration is given to Caesar's assassination's lasting legacy in terms of history as well as how

it is portrayed in literature and popular culture. Woolf illustrates the story's enduring significance by demonstrating how the tragedy has been understood in several ways, such as a tragic error, a necessary evil, or a noble sacrifice. The analysis of Greg Woolf in "Et tu Brute; Shakespeare's dramatic portrayal of the actual event and the themes of contrasts, paradoxes, and conspiracies are interwoven, as demonstrated in "The Murder of Caesar and Political Assassination." By looking at these components, Woolf offers a sophisticated analysis of the Julius Caesar assassination, shedding light on the intricate interactions between governmental power, personal ambition, and moral considerations that are still relevant in contemporary retellings of the tale. (Woolf, 2006)

Conclusion: As the play progresses unexpected twists of events it was the version of challenge of power led to the reforms that followed. Many people will blame for auto crazy at the time there was less violence during that Reign. We see the contrast in the plot as well as in the characters. Many ideas and words spoken are contradictory in nature with a view of beliefs and values. Considering this contrast, we can draw concrete conclusions of the sins of the play. This research paper attempts to throw light on all those abstract features within the play. These are crucial as they can alter the comprehension of it. Readers would observe the play in a new perspective and understand the connections that it arises bearing in mind the setting plot character and the interwoven nature. Readers are presented with a different point of view. There is a deeper understanding of different influences to the play. It shows a binding between scenes a continuity of theme and the essence is maintained.

We also get a clear understanding of the mentality of people of that era. They believe and their interactions influence the society and in the same way the society influenced peoples beliefs and behaviour. The authors of "A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare, 1599," James Shapiro and L. Grenville, explore the complexities of this crucial year for Shakespeare and the English political system. By highlighting the inconsistencies, contradictions, and conspiracies in the play set against the historical backdrop, their work offers a thorough context for comprehending "Julius Caesar". Shapiro and Grenville draw attention to the sharp disparity that exists between the public and private selves of their characters. This can be seen in Brutus, who presents an image of honour and integrity to the outside world but is secretly troubled by the moral ramifications of killing Caesar. Republican Dreams vs. Monarchical Reality: The play's conflict highlights the differences between Rome's republican dreams and the burgeoning monarchical power. (Shakespeare, 1999)

Moral Ambiguity: The writers draw attention to the moral ambiguities that exist among the characters, especially Brutus, who epitomizes both naivetés and nobility. In addition to being a betrayal, his assassination of Caesar was a foolish attempt to preserve the republic.

Ambiguous Heroism: Characters with contradicting qualities that are both heroic and imperfect, such as Brutus and Caesar, are portrayed. While Brutus is a noble man but politically unsophisticated, Caesar is a strong leader who can also be easily arrogant.

Political Intrigue: Shapiro and Grenville highlight how the conspiracy against Caesar is akin to Elizabethan England's political machinations. Shakespeare's era's misgivings and intrigues are reflected in the covert planning and manipulation.

Persuasion and Manipulation: The play illustrates the use of eloquence and persuasion to sway public opinion and spur action. The ability of the conspirators to influence Brutus and, later, Antony's brilliant speech highlights the significance of language in political plots. "Julius Caesar" is situated by Shapiro and Grenville within the broader context of Shakespeare's theatrical works and the 1599 socio-political climate. They contend that the play captures the tensions and uncertainties of the era, such as the dread of political instability and the succession crisis. By concentrating on these components, Shapiro and Grenville offer a thorough analysis that aids readers in comprehending the intricate dynamics of "Julius Caesar" and its applicability to audiences in both the modern and Shakespearean eras. (Shapiro, 2005)

Each scene gives way to the next consequent scene. The effects of the actions are visibly evident. This research recommends abstract thinking and consideration of different viewpoints within the drama. Complete and concise comprehension can be enhanced even at a psychological level. Analysis of each character's psychology can also be considered in further study. The cause effect norm and action consequence effect strongly recommended in future study considering this play. The effective impact and widening knowledge to give a bird's eye view of all possible dimensions is also recommended. The 1998 study of William Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" by M. Hamer and H. Hackett offers an analysis and study suggestions. They focus on recognizing the political climate of Shakespeare's day, the historical context of the Roman Republic, and the biography of Julius Caesar. This aids in understanding the play's themes and intentions thorough analysis of the primary characters, Mark Antony, Cassius, Brutus, and Julius Caesar. The examination delves into their intricacies, incentives, and the dynamic nature of their connections. They paid attention to identification and investigation of major themes, including those related to authority, treachery, fate vs free will, public versus private identities, and the function of eloquence and persuasion. (Hamer and Hackett, 1998)

Shakespeare uses language, focusing on his use of metaphors, images, and rhetorical tactics. The way in which these components improve the drama and the viewers' comprehension of the characters and topics is mentioned here. Suggestions for how to interpret and execute the play. This involved the way various scenarios are brought to life effectively, the staging, and acting choices. Reviewing the play from a variety of critical angles and interpretations over time. Both standard readings and more modern or unusual points of view are included in this. Activities, discussion points, and essay questions that encourage students to think more deeply about the play are provided as teaching ideas. Hamer and Hackett provided a comprehensive guide that enhances both the appreciation and understanding of "Julius Caesar" through these various lenses, making it accessible and insightful for students, educators, and readers. (Shakespeare, 1999)

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