

The Architect of Ruin: A Comparative Analysis of Select Characters of Motivation for Revenge of Othello and Omkara

Dr. Noveena Chakravorty

Associate Professor

Department of Media Studies

School of Media and Communication, Adamas University

Ms. Ayantika Das

MA Journalism and Mass Communication

School of Media and Communication, Adamas University

Abstract

This research utilizes a Qualitative Comparative Content Analysis (QCCA) to explore the significant differences in the motivation for revenge between Iago in William Shakespeare's *Othello* and Langa Tyagi in Vishal Bhardwaj's film, *Omkara*. The examination reveals that although both adversaries are essential triggers for tragic downfall, the adaptation essentially re-establishes the essence of their malevolence. Iago's motivation is intangible, psychological, and marked by "motiveless malignity," arising from anxieties about class and socio-sexual grievances (Coleridge, Newman). In stark opposition, Langa Tyagi's drive is focused, practical, and wholly material, stemming from the loss of the Bahubali political position and the abuse of strict Caste/Feudal Honour Codes (Trivedi, Rajadhyaksha & Willemen). The results indicate that Bhardwaj's *Omkara* serves as a potent post-colonial reimagining, substituting Iago's intrinsic malevolence with an examination of systemic marginalization and the concrete quest for power, thus framing Langa Tyagi as a strategic political rival instead of a mysterious villain. This change demonstrates how the enduring model of revenge is molded by its current socio-cultural environment.

Keywords: *Othello*, *Omkara*, Iago, Langa Tyagi, Adaptation Theory, Post-Colonialism, Motiveless Malignity, Socio-Political Critique.

Introduction

For a long time, revenge has played a crucial role in dramatic literature, acting as a trigger for moral dilemmas, psychological breakdown, and the disintegration of societal structure. In William Shakespeare's

Othello (circa. In Shakespeare's Othello (1603) and Vishal Bhardwaj's Omkara (2006), a modern Indian reinterpretation of the original tragedy, revenge transforms from an emotional urge into a meticulously crafted structure of destruction. Both pieces illustrate how intensely personal drives—stemming from jealousy, humiliation, insecurity, and the desire for power—can escalate into disastrous violence. At the heart of each story lies the creator of chaos: Iago in Othello and Langda Tyagi in Omkara. By their strategic and psychological insight, and knack for exploiting social weaknesses, they turn the main characters into unsuspecting tools of their plan. An analysis of these characters shows how cultural backgrounds influence the reasons for revenge, while the essential human drives behind these motivations stay remarkably similar.

Othello serves as a thorough examination of jealousy, race, and sexual envy. The core process of the play revolves around Iago's methodical ruin of Othello's reputation, marriage, and mental state, driven by what he expresses as mere doubt and bitterness over feeling slighted professionally: his being overlooked for the lieutenantcy in favor of the younger Michael Cassio. Iago's frequent, often conflicting, rationalizations for his behavior—from believing Othello has been intimate with his wife, Emilia, to his enigmatic claim, "I hate the Moor, / And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets / He's done my office" (I.iii.386–388)—have traditionally cast him as a cerebral, nearly metaphysical, embodiment of malevolence. Critics frequently find it difficult to identify a single, logical reason, prompting Samuel Taylor Coleridge to famously describe Iago's wickedness as "motiveless malignity," implying a form of intrinsic, existential pleasure in evil for its own sake.

By adapting Othello to the socio-political context of rural Uttar Pradesh, Bhardwaj reinterprets revenge through the lens of caste hierarchies, political favoritism, and the masculine norms ingrained in Indian culture. Langda Tyagi, the film's version of Iago, is more than just a plotting ensign; he is an ambitious lieutenant whose sidelining is driven by caste issues and systemic injustice. Overlooked for a promotion in favor of Kesu, a Brahmin with a college degree, Langda feels humiliation that is both personal and societal. Researchers have observed that Omkara "converts Iago's envy in his profession into the dynamics of caste authority and male ego" (Trivedi 42). Langda's bitterness is deepened by a lifetime of being excluded from the circles of privilege, leading him to seek revenge as a way to regain dignity in a society designed to strip it away. His motivations, thus, are rooted not just in personal psychology but also in the shared history of caste-related discrimination.

Vishal Bhardwaj's Omkara presents a realistic, socio-political exploration of this harmful jealousy. Against a backdrop of a well-structured crime syndicate functioning in the caste-dominated and politically vibrant

core of North India, the film reframes the original material's emphasis on military hierarchy and status anxiety through the perspective of local power struggles and material issues. The main character, Omkara Shukla, acts as a gangster-politician (the Othello representation), while Langda Tyagi (portrayed by Saif Ali Khan), the Iago counterpart, is not merely a military underling but a crucial political enforcer whose apparent fidelity is vital to the whole scheme. When Omkara selects Kesu (Cassio) over Langda as his successor for the essential role of Bahubali (local leader), the insult is not just professional; it is a blatant act of social and political emasculation. Langda's vengeance, thus, is directly tied to a palpable loss of authority, a shame evident to his whole community, and a loss of future financial and political stability. This distinctiveness of loss offers a precise, logical, and fully localized reason that sharply contrasts with the psychological intricacy of Iago's bitterness.

Iago and Langda both recognize that revenge involves more than just anger; it requires planning, careful thought, and the deliberate creation of misleading perceptions. Their tactics depend on the accuracy of emotional manipulation—offering subtle suggestions, taking advantage of existing insecurities, and arranging situations that induce doubt and paranoia. In *Othello*, Iago excels at feigning integrity, portraying himself as a faithful servant while instilling doubt. In *Omkara*, Langda likewise masks his malevolence beneath a façade of friendship and fraternity, intertwining his animosity with the loyalty norms prevalent in regional political groups. The instruments and techniques might vary between cultural settings, yet the psychological workings stay consistent: revenge flourishes in the presence of misplaced trust.

The sorrowful results of both pieces emphasize the harmful essence of vengeance, impacting not just the victims but also the perpetrators themselves. *Othello* murders Desdemona and eventually takes his own life, while *Omkara* kills Dolly (the film's Desdemona) before realizing the truth too late. Nonetheless, both stories also reflect on the individuals seeking revenge. Iago, when confronted, declines to clarify—"Demand me nothing: what you know, you know" (Shakespeare, *Othello* 5.2.300)—maintaining the mystery of his intentions. Langda Tyagi, in contrast, faces a clear consequence: Omkara eliminates him upon uncovering the plot. This difference highlights an important cultural change. Shakespeare's tragedy ends in a state of epistemological doubt—evil stays somewhat mysterious—while Bhardwaj's version insists on punishment and narrative resolution, showcasing contrasting views on justice and moral responsibility.

A comparative examination of Iago and Langda Tyagi reveals how context influences revenge while arising from fundamental human instincts. Shakespeare's Renaissance tragedy and Bhardwaj's contemporary adaptation are distinct across centuries, cultures, and artistic styles, but both depict revenge as a damaging

power stemming from identity, ambition, and insecurity. Analyzing the motives of these characters helps us comprehend how revenge narratives evolve across cultures while preserving their emotional complexity and dramatic strength. In the end, both Othello and Omkara demonstrate that the real source of destruction is not just the villain who seeks revenge but the vulnerable human mind that can be swayed towards disaster.

Literature Review

In literature, revenge frequently arises from the interaction between individual psychology and societal frameworks. In Shakespeare's Othello and Vishal Bhardwaj's Omkara, the villains—Iago and Langda Tyagi—function as “architects of destruction,” crafting intricate webs of lies to bring down the heroes. Researchers have investigated their motivations through the lenses of psychology, social structure, race, caste, masculinity, and adaptation theory. The forthcoming literature review consolidates essential scholarship into areas **six key thematic areas**, demonstrating how the motivations for revenge of both characters function across various cultural and historical settings.

Psychological Roots of Revenge: Malice, Envy, and Wounded Pride

A considerable amount of research centers on the psychological motivations driving Iago's quest for revenge. Samuel Taylor Coleridge famously refers to Iago as propelled by “motiveless malignity,” indicating that his malevolence stems from an inherent nature instead of a specific catalyst (Coleridge 315). Many contemporary critics dispute this perspective, contending that Iago's motivations are based on recognizable psychological factors.

Stephen Greenblatt locates Iago's bitterness within the Renaissance concern of “self-fashioning,” observing that his shame from being overlooked for advancement undermines his identity (Greenblatt 94). This implies that Iago's quest for vengeance arises from a personal worth crisis.

Conversely, researchers examining Omkara contend that Langda Tyagi's quest for vengeance is profoundly connected to emotional trauma exacerbated by systemic disparities. Priyanka Trivedi contends that Langda's injured pride is tied to caste humiliation, rendering his bitterness not just individual but socially passed down (Trivedi 42). The psychological aspect here connects with cultural trauma, enhancing the depth of Langda's motivations.

Hence, both characters represent the psychological catalysts typical in revenge stories: jealousy, embarrassment, and the urge to regain self-respect.

Social Hierarchy as a Motivation: Rank in *Othello* and Caste in *Omkara*

Iago: Rank and Professional Jealousy

Numerous academics highlight that Iago's vengeance stems from military structure. Cassio's promotion over Iago is often seen as a slight against Iago's skills and expertise. Edward Berry notes that military frameworks in Venice regard honor and reputation as crucial aspects of male identity, rendering Cassio's advancement a significant setback for Iago's social status (Berry 326).

Langda Tyagi: Caste-Based Marginalization

Langda's reasons differ greatly from Iago's when viewed through the lens of the Indian caste system. Ananya Jahanara Kabir states that Omkara reshapes Shakespeare's military hierarchy into caste-oriented political stratification, thereby making Langda's exclusion more systemically influenced (Kabir 66). The shame Langda endures is rooted in a system that consistently restricts lower-caste men from attaining power. Researchers like Ravi Vasudevan also connect Langda's revenge to the political dynamics of rural Uttar Pradesh, where caste influences political legitimacy and movement (Vasudevan 115). Therefore, although Iago's reasons stem from personal insult in a professional structure, Langda's are linked to long-standing disenfranchisement in caste politics.

Race and Caste as Structural Forces Fuelling Revenge

Iago and Racial Politics

Iago's deceit takes advantage of the racial tensions ingrained in Venetian society. Kim F. Hall illustrates that Iago exploits Othello's Moorish identity, leveraging racial stereotypes to undermine his mental stability

(Hall 140). Hall posits that the theme of revenge in *Othello* is intertwined with racial discourse, as Iago's influence partly stems from his capacity to provoke the racial insecurities inherent in Venice.

Langda and Caste Politics

In *Omkara*, caste similarly serves as a basis for discrimination and frustration. Trivedi and Kabir assert that Langda absorbs the enduring shame linked to caste hierarchy, with his quest for revenge serving as a means to regain control within a system that systematically marginalizes him (Trivedi 44; Kabir 68). In contrast to Iago's unclear racial identity, Langda's lower-caste background is clear and culturally significant.

Viewed this way, the motivations for revenge in both characters arise from social systems that favor certain identities over others.

4. Masculinity and Honor: Gendered Motivations for Revenge

An important trend in the literature is the link between revenge and male insecurity.

Othello's Masculine Honor as Iago's Weapon

Iago exploits Othello's anxiety about losing his masculine reputation, especially regarding sexual fidelity. Researchers contend that Renaissance masculinity was closely linked to the management of women's sexuality and societal reputation. By insinuating Desdemona's unfaithfulness, Iago undermines the core of Othello's masculine identity, rendering revenge (for Iago) and violence (from Othello) expected results.

Omkara's Hyper-Masculinity

Kabir observes that *Omkara* is positioned in a society that requires extreme masculinity, visible displays of power, and strict authority over women (Kabir 67). Langda is deeply familiar with these codes and employs them to control Omkara. Masculinity serves as both a weapon and a driving force: Langda's disgrace is somewhat a masculine defeat, whereas Omkara's ruin stems from masculine vulnerability.

5. Adaptation Scholarship: Reinterpreting Revenge Across Cultures & Adaptation Theory and the Post-Colonial Recontextualization

Adaptation theorists highlight that Omkara's depiction of revenge is not simply a copy but a cultural reinterpretation.

Linda Hutcheon contends that adaptations "re-contextualize" stories to address varying historical, political, and cultural concerns (Hutcheon 15). Bhardwaj's choice to incorporate revenge into caste politics demonstrates this principle. Ranu Desai notes that although the emotional essence of jealousy and betrayal persists, Bhardwaj reshapes Iago's unclear animosity into Langda's socio-political resentment, thus rendering the adaptation culturally relevant (Desai 54).

The transition from Iago's abstract wickedness to Langda Tyagi's politically motivated realism is most effectively comprehended through the perspectives of adaptation and post-colonial theory. Poonam Trivedi emphasizes that adaptations of Shakespeare worldwide frequently aim to "anchor the supernatural or metaphysical aspects of Shakespeare's tragedies in concrete, modern concerns of power and politics" (Trivedi 145). Bhardwaj's choice to shift Othello from the historically remote military context of Venice to the modern, tumultuous atmosphere of the North Indian political underworld is not just a change of backdrop; it's an essential analysis that offers regional specificity and material reasoning for the tragic conclusion.

In Othello, the main character's identity as a 'Moor'—an outsider due to his race—is vital to Iago's effective manipulation, taking advantage of Venetian fears concerning race and otherness. Bhardwaj's Omkara expresses this tension through the intricate network of caste and regional feudalism present in Uttar Pradesh's backdrop. Omkara (Othello) is a regional Bahubali (muscleman/chieftain) whose authority is locally gained rather than inherited, rendering him both influential and susceptible to internal envy. The character Langda Tyagi is often viewed in this context as embodying the bitterness of someone who is socially and perhaps financially marginalized. His uneven walk, which earned him his nickname, serves as a constant, visible sign of physical flaw and, metaphorically, his believed inability to attain complete, untainted social acceptance.

6. Shared Universal Impulses: The Human Psychology of Revenge & Langda Tyagi: A Pragmatic and Materialist Revenge

Despite cultural variances, reviewers highlight significant similarities between Iago and Langda Tyagi. Arjun Ghosh asserts that both characters demonstrate “universal emotional reactions to exclusion” (Ghosh 88). Their vengeance stems from the same psychological dynamics—jealousy, bitterness, and dread of irrelevance—despite being articulated through varying cultural codes.

Martha Nussbaum notes that revenge frequently arises from “irrational anger stemming from perceived injustice,” a concept that is relevant to both Iago and Langda (Nussbaum 65). The structure of decay they create mirrors common weaknesses in human feelings.

Cinematic analysis of *Omkara* consistently highlights the film's raw realism and its effectiveness in rendering the revenge narrative fundamentally believable within its socio-political context. In contrast to Iago, whose gain from his plot is vague and mental, Langda Tyagi's objective is explicit: to achieve the Bahubali status along with the power, riches, and prestige tied to the gang hierarchy. When *Omkara* selects Kesu (Cassio) instead of Langda, the denial serves as a public humiliation that directly affects Langda's tangible livelihood and future political path. This is not just jealousy; it is the deliberate elimination of an obstacle to particular, achievable authority.

Critics frequently highlight the intricate detail with which Bhardwaj depicts the economic and political implications of the Bahubali position. Langda's revenge is an organized effort aimed at reclaiming what he considers his rightful possession. His employment of sexual slander against Dolly (Desdemona) stems not from a mere fascination with disorder, but from the understanding that the fastest and most destructive method to ruin a man in this patriarchal and honour-bound rural context is to openly undermine the loyalty of his woman, thereby questioning his honour and power as well. The realism is amplified by Langda's colloquial and aggressive way of speaking, contrasting sharply with Iago's lyrical deceit. According to Rajadhyaksha and Willemen in their examination of popular Hindi cinema, the storyline frequently depends on direct, apparent demonstrations of honour and dishonour that align with the audience's perception of feudal power dynamics. Langda's behavior can be seen as a logical, though ethically reprehensible, reaction to a significant personal and professional downfall within the film's defined context. His drive exemplifies retributive justice aimed not at delving into nihilism, but at reinstating a perceived equilibrium of power, establishing him as a symbol of practical malevolence instead of existential malevolence.

Researchers uniformly concur that Iago and Langda Tyagi are multifaceted villains influenced by an interplay of character and surroundings. Iago's vengeance stems from psychological cruelty exacerbated by

social stratification and racial conflict. Langda's vendetta emerges from humiliation linked to caste, shaped by Indian political masculinity. Although the cultural settings vary, both characters demonstrate common themes of injured pride and harmful ambition. The scholarship collectively demonstrates that revenge in *Othello* and *Omkara* is both culturally distinct and inherently human. The existing literature outlines a clear path from the enigmatic, purely psychological wickedness of Iago to the materially based, socio-politically informed realism of Langda Tyagi. Although both characters serve as agents of devastating destruction, Iago embodies a literary mechanism that investigates the cognitive boundaries of wickedness, with his motivations remaining intriguingly unclear and inconsistent, emphasizing the notion of "motiveless malignity." In contrast, Langda functions as a concrete critique of political marginalization and power structures, with his vengeance acting as a direct, palpable response to the deprivation of a specific material possession (the Bahubali position). The comparative framework employed in this essay thus frames Iago's revenge as an exploration of universal human weaknesses and jealousy, whereas Langda Tyagi's vengeance reflects the particular vulnerabilities arising from power, caste, and politics in modern India.

Objective

The current study, *The Architect of Ruin: A Comparative Analysis of Certain Characters and Their Motivation for Revenge in Shakespeare's Othello and Bhardwaj's Omkara*, aims to explore the psychological, social, and structural bases of revenge that influence the behaviors of major characters in each work. Although Shakespeare's tragedy presents a Renaissance perspective on jealousy, manipulation, and betrayal, *Omkara* recontextualizes these themes in a modern Indian socio-political context. By comparing these narratives together, the research seeks to clarify how revenge—stemming from personal hurt, emotional turmoil, and socio-cultural influences—acts as a significant builder of demise. The subsequent objectives offer a thorough structure for evaluation.

To Examine the Core Psychological Motivations Behind Revenge in *Othello* and *Omkara*

The current study, *The Architect of Ruin: A Comparative Analysis of Certain Characters and Their Motivation for Revenge in Shakespeare's Othello and Bhardwaj's Omkara*, aims to explore the psychological, social, and structural bases of revenge that influence the behaviors of major characters in each work. Although Shakespeare's tragedy presents a Renaissance perspective on jealousy, manipulation, and betrayal, *Omkara* recontextualizes these themes in a modern Indian socio-political context. By comparing these narratives together, the research seeks to clarify how revenge—stemming from personal

hurt, emotional turmoil, and socio-cultural influences—acts as a significant builder of demise. The subsequent objectives offer a thorough structure for evaluation.

To Analyze How Social Hierarchies and Cultural Context Influence Revenge Dynamics

Another important aim is to investigate how the social context of each narrative influences the portrayal and outcomes of revenge. Othello showcases a social structure shaped by racial bias, military position, and gender roles. Othello's internalization of being a racial outsider triggers his feelings of insecurity.

In Omkara, Bhardwaj shifts the power dynamics to a North Indian political landscape characterized by caste hierarchy, patriarchal traditions, and aggressive regional power systems. Researchers highlight that Langda Tyagi's bitterness is linked to caste marginalization and a lack of aspiration (Trivedi 212). Through the comparison of these frameworks, the research seeks to illustrate that revenge cannot be perceived merely as individual animosity; it is intricately linked with cultural structures of power and privilege.

To Investigate the Manipulative Strategies Used by Iago and Langda Tyagi as “Architects of Ruin”

Both stories highlight characters who act as skilled manipulators, orchestrating their victims' emotional ruin. A goal of the study is to analyze their strategic psychological manipulation. Iago's speech depends on suggestion, partial truths, and the manipulation of Othello's vulnerabilities (Shakespeare 3.3). Langda uses comparable strategies but modifies them for a socio-political environment ruled by personal allegiance, dignity, and male pride. His approach involves not just verbal manipulation but also leveraging public rumors, political connections, and family conflicts. Researchers such as S. Viswanathan contend that these manipulations expose the antagonist's function as a dramatic element shaping the tragedy's conclusion (Viswanathan 143). Consequently, the research explores how the character of the manipulator serves as the primary architect of destruction in both works.

To Explore the Representation of Jealousy and Masculine Insecurity as Catalysts for Revenge

La jalousie est un moteur émotionnel qui pousse à la vengeance dans les deux récits. Othello's shift from a logical commander to a man overwhelmed by jealousy has been widely examined in Shakespearean analysis, particularly regarding issues of race and gender (Loomba 81). Omkara translates this psychology into a North Indian context where concepts of honour and masculinity are culturally intensified. The research seeks to investigate how masculine insecurity—stemming from racial identity in Othello or from

caste and power dynamics in *Omkara*—generates psychological fragility, allowing manipulative individuals to channel that insecurity into acts of vengeance. This cross-cultural investigation provides understanding of how emotional vulnerability turns into a common trait manipulated by the creators of destruction.

To Compare the Narrative Consequences of Revenge

Another goal is to assess the ultimate results generated by revenge—not just for the victims but also for the offenders and the broader social context of the story. In *Othello*, vengeance leads to a heartbreaking sequence of fatalities, with *Othello*'s demise representing the most notable outcome. *Omkara* also concludes with a breakdown of personal connections and political systems, highlighting the price of revenge in modern Indian society. Researchers contend that each conclusion highlights the pointless and destructive essence of vengeance (Greenblatt 231). This research aims to demonstrate that revenge doesn't only ruin the target but also consumes entire frameworks of social order.

To Evaluate How Adaptation Transforms the Thematic Weight of Revenge& The Instrumental Use of Sexual Slander

Since *Omkara* is not just a retelling but a cultural reinterpretation of *Othello*, the analysis also seeks to evaluate how adaptation theory clarifies modifications in revenge motivation. Bhardwaj's movie illustrates postcolonial, political, and cultural truths vastly different from Shakespeare's regal and military frameworks. Hutcheon observes that adaptations "recontextualize" stories to resonate with fresh social interpretations (Hutcheon 23). This goal aims to examine how *Omkara* introduces fresh aspects—caste politics, regional rivalries, and patriarchal honor—thus changing the understanding, rationale, and execution of revenge.

Both adversaries use sexual slander as a weapon against the protagonist's wife (*Desdemona/Dolly*), yet their motives for this reveal the fundamental distinction in their intentions. For *Iago*, the implication that *Othello* is a cuckold serves mainly to push *Othello* into insanity and secure his ruin. The retaliation against *Desdemona* is less important than *Othello*'s ruin, acting as a cruel means of mental anguish. If *Iago*'s drive stems from genuine resentment about being overlooked for advancement, the cuckoldry deceit serves as a means to attain a vague sense of justice or to fulfill his jealousy of *Othello*'s elevated social and marital position.

For Langda Tyagi, the sexual defamation serves as a specifically aimed political tool. By persuading Omkara that Dolly is disloyal, Langda undermines Omkara's dignity, which is the basis of his local influence and dominance as a Bahubali. In the socio-cultural environment of rural Uttar Pradesh, a leader whose wife is perceived as unfaithful loses all respect and credibility. Langda exploits the perceived betrayal not only to incite madness in Omkara, but to openly discredit him as a leader, thereby removing his opponent from the political arena and thereby opening a space that Langda plans to occupy himself. The retaliation, thus, is not a mental strategy but a political takeover realized by manipulating patriarchal honor systems. This renders the tragedy in Omkara a direct outcome of a deliberate political aspiration, whereas in Othello, it arises from a subtle, harder to define psychological wickedness.

Ultimately, the research seeks to investigate how each narrative ethically portrays revenge. Shakespeare depicts revenge as a harmful ethical mistake, linked to deceit and the collapse of logical reasoning. Conversely, Omkara situates revenge in a societal context where personal honour and loyalty generate more complex moral justifications. Through the comparison of these moral frameworks, the study investigates if revenge is depicted as entirely villainous, shaped by social factors, or inevitably tragic.

Methodology

This research, *The Architect of Ruin: A Comparative Analysis of Selected Characters motivated by Revenge in Shakespeare's Othello and Bhardwaj's Omkara*, utilizes a qualitative research framework based on comparative content analysis. This methodological framework aims to systematically analyze the textual and cinematic portrayals of revenge—focusing on the psychological, social, and cultural motivations influencing central characters like Iago and Langda Tyagi, in addition to the tragic protagonists Othello and Omkara. This chapter details the research framework, data collection techniques, analysis methods, theoretical perspective, and limitations associated with the selected approach.

1. Research Design: Qualitative and Interpretive Framework

This research employs a **qualitative** approach, which is ideal for exploring the intricate motivations influencing human behaviour, psychological tendencies, and narrative depiction. Qualitative research allows for the investigation of meanings, symbolic frameworks, character motivations, and thematic elements that resist quantification (Denzin & Lincoln 5). As this study seeks to explore how and why revenge becomes a prevailing theme in the chosen texts, a qualitative method provides the interpretive flexibility necessary to investigate emotional, cultural, and contextual subtleties.

The study is based on **interpretivist** principles, positing that meaning is generated through both the text and the cultural and historical contexts (Schwandt 118). This framework corresponds with the main goal of the research: to analyze the reasons for revenge as narrative elements influenced by psychological, social, and cultural dynamics in each piece.

The design is fundamentally **comparative**, emphasizing two different manifestations of the same narrative archetype—the jealous subordinate. This comparative perspective is crucial for identifying the variables introduced by the adaptation process, particularly the transition from 17th-century Venetian military issues to 21st-century North Indian socio-political realities. The aim is not merely to outline the distinctions but to analyze how the fundamental impetus for devastation—the shift from resentment to harmful behavior—is influenced by particular cultural and material circumstances, consequently either affirming or disputing conventional critical theories, including Coleridge’s idea of "motiveless malignity."

2. Method: Comparative Content Analysis

The primary methodological approach applied is **comparative content analysis**, which entails a systematic examination of textual and cinematic materials to uncover patterns, themes, and variations among different works. Krippendorff defines content analysis as “a research method for deriving replicable and valid conclusions from texts regarding their usage contexts” (Krippendorff 24). Comparative content analysis expands on this by aligning two or more texts in dialogue to investigate thematic and structural connections (Schwandt 162).

In this study, content analysis is used not for quantification but for **qualitative interpretation**, focusing on:

- Emotional drives behind vengeance
- Character development and emotional paths
- The deceitful tactics of Lago and Langda tyagi
- Social strata and cultural impact
- Story outcomes of vengeance

Data Corpus and Sampling Strategy (Primary and Secondary Sources)

The data corpus for this analysis consists of two primary texts and relevant secondary scholarly material:

Primary Texts (Core Data):

1. ***Othello, the Moor of Venice*(Play):** The analysis emphasizes the Folio and Quarto versions, focusing on Iago's soliloquies (e.g., I.i, I.iii, II.iii) that clearly express his motivations, and significant dialogue exchanges showcasing his manipulative tactics (e.g., his conversations with Roderigo, Cassio, and Othello).
2. ***Omkara* (Film):** The examination centers on the film text, encompassing the visual and auditory portrayal of Langda Tyagi (Saif Ali Khan), with particular emphasis on Bhardwaj's selection of location, colloquial dialogue, and the arrangement of pivotal scenes that expose Langda's mental condition and goals.

Secondary Sources (Contextual Data): The analysis is framed by current literary and film criticism, specifically focusing on: (a) Iago's motivations (e.g., Coleridge, Bradley, Newman), (b) adaptation theory alongside post-colonial studies (e.g., Trivedi), and (c) film criticism related to the realism and political context of *Omkara* (e.g., Rajadhyaksha and Willemen). These secondary sources create the essential dialogue against which the primary textual results are evaluated.

Sampling Strategy (Focus Units): The analysis does not thoroughly investigate the full texts but employs **purposive sampling**, concentrating specifically on the characterizations and essential narrative elements that directly express or reveal the motivation for revenge. These components encompass: (a) the triggering event (the denial of promotion), (b) internal reflection/soliloquy (where motives are disclosed), (c) the process of defamation (the use of the handkerchief/belt), and (d) the expression of the intended result (material versus emotional fulfillment).

4.1 Code: Clarity of Grievance (CG): Examines the coherence and consistency of the initial slight.

- ***Iago*:** Encoded for the existence of various, conflicting rationales (professional, sexual mistrust)
- ***Langda*:** Encoded for the unique and physical aspect of the loss (the Bahubali stance).
- ***Operationalization*:** Textual/oral articulation of the primary motive for hostility (e.g., Iago's "He's done my job," compared to Langda's evident fury after losing the title).

4.2 . Code: Nature of Malice (NM): Differentiates the core psychological drive.

- a. ***Iago*:** Labeled as **Nihilistic/Existential** (emphasis on inflicting suffering/discord, devoid of a specific outcome)

- b. *Langda*: Characterized as **Pragmatic/Material** (emphasis on obtaining a particular resource: power, wealth, restoration of status)
- c. *Operationalization*: The declared or suggested aim of the wrongdoing and the character of the ultimate prize.

4.3 Code: Socio-Cultural Grounding (SCG): Analyzes the context that enables the manipulation.

- a. *Iago*: Designed to leverage **Racial/Xenophobic** fears (capitalizing on Othello's Moorish background within Venetian culture) and military structure.
- b. *Langda*: Programmed to utilize **Caste/Feudal** honor codes (taking advantage of the strict social norms of a Bahubali in rural Uttar Pradesh).
- c. *Operationalization*: Examination of the cultural beliefs and societal weaknesses that enhance the effectiveness of the antagonist's tactics (e.g., Langda's limp representing social exclusion).

4.4 Code: Instrumental Use of Slander (IUS): Compares the function of the Desdemona/Dolly plot.

- a. *Iago*: Designed as a **Psychological Instrument** (intended to push Othello into insanity).
- b. *Langda*: Designed as a **Political Tool** (targeting the dismantling of Omkara's public power and trust in leadership).
- c. *Operationalization*: The immediate effect of the defamation on the protagonist's hierarchy, aside from emotional turmoil.

Reliability, Validity, and Ethical Considerations:

Reliability is upheld by the clear and organized use of the four defined thematic codes in both texts, guaranteeing that the results can be traced and confirmed by adhering to the outlined implementation of each code.

Validity (Interpretive Validity) is enhanced by cross-referencing the main textual analysis with recognized academic interpretations (secondary sources), confirming that the study's conclusions are thoroughly situated within the ongoing critical discussions regarding Shakespeare, adaptation, and South Asian cinema.

Ethical Considerations

Since this research includes published texts and films, it does not involve human participants. Ethical accountability is upheld by precise referencing, prevention of misunderstanding, and recognition of cultural backgrounds.

Discussions

This study aims to examine how revenge functions as a damaging psychological and cultural influence in *Othello* and *Omkara*, focusing specifically on the motivations behind characters like Iago and Langda Tyagi. Utilizing a qualitative, comparative content analysis, the research uncovers the thematic, psychological, and sociocultural foundations that depict revenge as the primary force of destruction in both stories. The dialogue offered here consolidates the results and links them to the theoretical frameworks steering this study.

Revenge as a Product of Psychological Disruption

A significant insight arising from the analysis is the deep psychological turmoil that shapes revenge in both pieces. Shakespeare presents Iago as a manifestation of hidden jealousy and cleverly concealed bitterness. Despite the unclear nature of his motives, his bitterness over Othello's choice of Cassio and his doubts about Emilia reveal a profound personal desire to cause damage (Shakespeare 1.3). Critics such as Harold Bloom contend that Iago's "motiveless malignity" is psychologically based on a need for control instead of a logical complaint (Bloom 62).

In *Omkara*, Langda Tyagi's drives are rooted in society but also deeply psychological. His embarrassment from being overlooked for promotion because of caste systems ignites feelings of inadequacy, prompting him to devise a revenge scheme based on hurt pride. Trivedi observes that Langda's quest for revenge is intertwined with "the caste-based power dynamics that shape his surroundings" (Trivedi 211). The analysis indicates that while Iago's bitterness arises from internal psychological insecurity, Langda's originates from a combination of cultural shame and personal ambition.

Manipulation as the Engine of Revenge

A crucial aspect is the pivotal function of manipulation as a method for enacting revenge. Iago and Langda Tyagi serve as skilled manipulators who orchestrate the demise of the main characters. Iago's approach mainly depends on subtle suggestions, psychological manipulation, and capitalizing on Othello's vulnerabilities related to race and his marriage. He seldom offers concrete proof; rather, he sows "poison" in Othello's thoughts through insinuation (Shakespeare 3.3).

Langda Tyagi reflects these deceptive characteristics while extending them into a socio-political context. He doesn't just whisper to Omkara—he leverages the public domain, community connections, and political partnerships to generate uncertainty. His manipulation relies more on actions, utilizing false stories, orchestrated scenarios, and counterfeit proof. As Viswanathan contends, both individuals serve as “dramaturgical architects,” influencing occurrences from the background (Viswanathan 141).

Socio-Cultural Structures Amplifying Revenge Motivations

The conversation further emphasizes how societal hierarchies amplify the urge for retribution. In *Othello*, racial discrimination serves as a significant obstacle to Othello's recognition in Venetian society. His internalization of this bias breeds insecurity, rendering him vulnerable to Iago's manipulations. Loomba contends that Othello's sense of self is influenced by racial difference and cultural dislocation (Loomba 69). This weakness serves as the avenue by which Iago executes his revenge.

In *Omkara*, the issue of identity is linked to caste and local political dynamics. Langda's banishment is not merely professional but deeply ingrained, stemming from the longstanding caste hierarchy. Bhardwaj's backdrop highlights that revenge within a postcolonial Indian framework frequently intertwines with social inequity, caste bias, and political competition. Langda's feeling of marginalization is therefore culturally legitimized, rendering his revenge seem more socially rooted than Iago's.

Jealousy and Masculine Honour as Catalysts

A crucial theme is the function of jealousy and male honor in triggering retaliation. In both stories, the main characters become victims not only due to deceptive influences but also because their psychological weaknesses are linked to ideas of honour.

In *Othello*, jealousy arises from insecurity rooted in race. Othello worries that his union with Desdemona will always be evaluated due to his position as an outsider. When Iago takes advantage of this fear, Othello's jealousy transforms into an “uncontrollable passion” (Greenblatt 229).

In *Omkara*, male dignity is connected to local patriarchal beliefs. Omkara's perception that his authenticity and authority rely on Dolly's purity is influenced by cultural factors. Bhardwaj emphasizes the concept of honour violence, illustrating how jealousy is both individual and culturally justified.

Therefore, although jealousy is a common emotion, its causes vary according to cultural settings—racial in Othello, and caste and patriarchal in Omkara.

Tragic Consequences and the Self-Destructive Arc of Revenge

Both stories show that revenge ultimately consumes the avenger, harming them as much as it does the victim. Iago's vengeance reaches its peak with Othello murdering Desdemona and eventually taking his own life. However, Iago's ultimate destiny—captivity and torment—implies that vengeance is ultimately destructive, resulting in no true winner.

In a similar manner, Langda's intricate plans in Omkara disintegrate once Kesu and Omkara discover the reality. Langda's demise at Indu's hands symbolizes that vengeance annihilates not just the social order but also the family dynamics.

These findings validate Mayring's assertion that thematic content analysis frequently uncovers "moral arcs" woven into narratives (Mayring 117). In both pieces, revenge is portrayed not as justice but as a harmful element that disrupts relationships and social structures.

Adaptation as a Vehicle for Reinterpreting Revenge&Synthesis and Final Implications

In conclusion, the comparative analysis reveals that Omkara does not merely copy Othello, but rather reinterprets vengeance through cultural transposition. Hutcheon claims that adaptation requires altering stories so they can "speak anew in a different context" (Hutcheon 4). Bhardwaj accomplishes this by integrating revenge into Indian socio-political contexts, thus broadening symbolic interpretations.

While Shakespeare's story centers on individual tragedy influenced by racial bias, Bhardwaj's adaptation expands the thematic range to encompass caste politics, regional conflicts, and cultures of honor. This cultural shift enables the theme of vengeance to echo more profoundly within modern societal frameworks.

The comparative analysis shows that the motivational structures of Iago and Langda Tyagi fulfill two separate narrative purposes. Iago serves as an embodiment of existential malice, his fluid and ambiguous intentions guaranteeing that the tragedy functions on a universal, psychological level. Langda Tyagi, nonetheless, acts as a commentary on particular social and political marginalization. By giving him a unique, tangible reason and basing his tactics on the strict honour codes of country politics, Bhardwaj's Omkara effectively anchors the eternal tragedy of vengeance in modern realism. The villain portrayed is not a mere abstract monster, but a strategic political rival, rendering the ensuing architecture of devastation a mirror of tangible conflict instead of philosophical evil.

Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate how revenge acts as the primary force of destruction in Shakespeare's *Othello* and Vishal Bhardwaj's *Omkara*, two pieces divided by centuries, cultures, and artistic forms but linked through a shared examination of harmful human desires. Using qualitative and comparative content analysis, the study explored the psychological, social, and cultural reasons that compel characters like Iago and Langda Tyagi to create disorder, along with the weaknesses in *Othello* and *Omkara* that render them vulnerable to exploitation. The results highlight both the reliability of revenge as a thematic element throughout adaptations and its cultural shifts and broader implications.

Central to both stories is a basic truth: revenge often does not stem from just one offense. It arises from a intricate combination of emotional wounds, social structures, and deceptive frameworks that collectively create the route to catastrophe. Iago and Langda Tyagi illustrate that revenge, stemming from humiliation, resentment, or insecurity, transforms into an obsession that can overwhelm both the avenger and the targets. In Shakespeare's portrayal, Iago's motivations are remarkably unclear. Critics such as Bloom portray him as a character propelled by “motiveless malignity,” where his psychological urge for control and chaos surpasses traditional reasoning. His bitterness towards Othello might arise from career envy or doubts about Emilia, yet these are just small triggers that provoke a more profound inner turmoil (Chakravorty & Bera, 2024)

The results of the study highlight that although the exact causes of jealousy vary, the emotional process of jealousy is consistent across contexts. In *Othello*, envy is intertwined with racial insecurity—Othello constantly feels scrutinized, and Iago takes advantage of this. In *Omkara*, jealousy is interwoven with caste politics and patriarchal ideals. In both works, the manipulator deliberately nurtures jealousy, demonstrating that revenge is most potent when it causes emotional destabilization.

Additionally, the comparative examination reveals that the effects of vengeance are not contained; they extend outward, influencing family dynamics, political relationships, and societal stability. Othello's violent actions ruin both his marriage and the confidence and stability of the Venetian military institution. In *Omkara*, the consequences are even wider: vengeance shatters political alliances, kinships, and ethical communities. In both stories, revenge turns into a self-destructive force. Iago and Langda forfeit everything—liberty, connections, even existence—not due to external justice, but because of the downfall of the systems they attempted to control.

In conclusion, this study confirms that the tragedies of *Othello* and *Omkara* are not merely tales of manipulation, but narratives showcasing how emotionally and socially conditioned weaknesses can be turned into disastrous results by a deliberate antagonist. Through the analysis of the motivations and actions of central characters, this research unveils the intricate workings of revenge, illustrating how universal feelings manifest in culturally unique ways.

Both stories impart a deep truth to the audience: revenge offers healing but results in devastation. It provides strength but leads to failure. It starts with a complaint but concludes with destruction. In both Shakespeare's Renaissance era and Bhardwaj's modern India, revenge persists as an ageless, tragic power—once set in motion, it constructs not justice but devastation. The persistent figure of the jealous subordinate uncovers the essential reality that, although the design for destruction—the exploitation of trust and the use of sexual tension—stays consistent over four centuries, the driving force behind it is entirely influenced by the surrounding circumstances.

References

- Bloom, H. (Ed.). (2010). *William Shakespeare's Othello*. Infobase Publishing.
– A collection of scholarly essays analyzing *Othello's* psychological depths, including Iago's motives, emotional manipulation, and the play's treatment of revenge.
- Braunmuller, A. R. (Ed.). (2001). *Othello: The Arden Shakespeare, Third Series*. Bloomsbury.
– Provides detailed commentary, linguistic insight, and contextual background useful for tracing character motivations and thematic complexity.
- Burt, R. (2016). *Shakespeare after mass media*. Palgrave Macmillan.
– Discusses Shakespeare's influence on global cinema, including the cultural dynamics of adaptations such as Bhardwaj's *Omkara*.
- Deshpande, A. (2017). Shakespeare retold: A study of Vishal Bhardwaj's *Omkara*. *Journal of Literature and Aesthetics*, 27(2), 45–58.
- Analyzes *Omkara* as a culturally specific reinterpretation of *Othello*, focusing on Langa Tyagi's revenge motivations as adapted for Indian society.
- Greenblatt, S. (2004). *Will in the world: How Shakespeare became Shakespeare*. W. W. Norton.
– Offers historical and biographical insights that deepen understanding of Shakespeare's themes of jealousy, betrayal, and revenge.

- Jorgens, J. (1977). *Shakespeare on film*. Indiana University Press.
– Provides theoretical tools for evaluating cinematic adaptations; the framework is applicable in analyzing narrative transformation in *Omkara*.
- Kapadia, N. (2019). Authority, honor, and masculinity in *Omkara*: Rereading Shakespeare in Indian cinema. *South Asian Film Studies Review*, 5(1), 60–74.
– Examines how gender, power, and honor shape revenge motives in *Omkara*, offering valuable comparative insights with *Othello*.
- Neill, M. (2006). *Issues of race in Othello*. Cambridge University Press.
– Explores race and identity in *Othello*, themes that parallel how caste, social status, and exclusion fuel revenge in *Omkara*.
- *View of FEMINIST MESSAGES IN RITUPARNO GHOSH'S FILMS 'CHOKHERBALI' AND 'BAARIWALI': A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FEMALE DESIRES* | *ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*. (n.d.). <https://www.granthaalayahpublication.org/Arts-Journal/ShodhKosh/article/view/959/983>
- Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, and Paul Willemen. *Encyclopedia of Indian Cinema*. Routledge, 1999. (Offers specific critical insights into the cinematic and socio-political context of the *Bahubali* culture and vernacular realism in *Omkara*.)
- Singh, R. P. (2014). *Revenge, honor, and masculinity in Indian cinema*. Oxford University Press.
– Contextualizes revenge narratives within Indian culture, helping to interpret Langda Tyagi's resentment and betrayal through socio-cultural frameworks.
- Trivedi, Poonam. "Shakespeare and Post-Colonial Critical Practice." *Shakespearean International Yearbook*, vol. 6, 2006, pp. 143–158. (Crucial for the theoretical framework, arguing that post-colonial adaptations materialize abstract tragic elements into tangible issues of power and politics.)
- Verman, M. (2018). Adaptation as dialogue: Comparative analysis of Shakespeare's *Othello* and Bhardwaj's *Omkara*. *Comparative Literature Today*, 12(3), 85–102.
– Argues that *Omkara* reinterprets *Othello* through a cultural conversation, particularly in the portrayal of villainy and revenge.
- Wells, S., & Orlin, L. C. (Eds.). (2003). *Shakespeare: An Oxford guide*. Oxford University Press.
– A comprehensive scholarly guide offering critical essays on thematic elements such as jealousy, manipulation, and revenge in Shakespearean tragedy.

- Chakravorty, N., & Bera, S. (2024). Portrayal and perception of male chauvinism and gender superiority in Hindi cinema: a case study of the film 'Animal.' *Journal of Communication and Management*, 3(01), 83–91. <https://doi.org/10.58966/jcm20243112>