

Original Paper

Palatial Conspiracy in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Abu Zafar's

Siraj-ud-Daulah: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

*A conspiracy is defined in criminal law as an agreement between two or more people to commit a crime in the future. It is a nefarious, illegal, treacherous, or covert scheme devised by two or more people in secret. Instead of explaining an occurrence or circumstance, a conspiracy theory suggests that it is the plan of evil and powerful people, generally with political motives. The phrase 'conspiracy theory,' with its pejorative connotation, suggests that people who believe in conspiracies are motivated by bias or a lack of proof to back up their assertions. For this purpose, this study would like to examine Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Sikandar Abu Jafar's *Siraj-ud-Daulah* to foster the real picture of palatial conspiracy historically. It would like to investigate some powerful male and female characters of the two well-familiar historical plays, including Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah Ghaseti Begum, and Mir Jafar on one hand, as well as *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth* on the other hand. It aims to explore the historical contexts to expose the source on which the stories of the plays have been grounded. Finally, this study aims to look at the comparative discussion of the protagonists in light of writers' treatment of palatial conspiracy of the age, art of characterization, and plot construction. Thus, it aims to create a novel dimension of English literature by highlighting the historical concerns of sixteenth-century England and the eighteenth-century Indian subcontinent, respectively.*

Keywords

Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Siraj-ud-Daulah, Ghaseti Begum, Mir Jafar, Shakespeare, and Abu Jafar

1. Introduction

Both William Shakespeare and Sikandar Abu Jafar are distinguished writers in the history of global literature. Playwrights from two different countries and different centuries; there is a gap of two hundred years between Shakespeare and Abu Jafar. One has been written in the English language and the other in the Bengali language, respectively.

Bengali writer Abu Jafar is a word-conscious, socially conscious struggling poet. He is outspoken in his speech and in favour of being strong in temperament. He finds the main melody of his poetry in the sorrow of social conflict. He expresses the depravity and injustice of his time in a ridiculous bitterness. On the other hand, In the history of Western culture, English playwright Shakespeare, a playwright and poet from England, writes some of the most acclaimed and important works of literature. In addition to his plays and sonnets, he also composes two narrative poems and 154 sonnets. Scholars may trace the external realities of Shakespeare's life through the remnants of legal and ecclesiastical documents and current references found in his literary works.

Abu Jafar's stories, novels and essays, editorials, the liberation of Bangladesh and its exploited and deprived people, and the triumph of humanity have become banal. At the same time, he is a nationalist and an internationalist. Jafar's sharp pen is vocal in favour of the freedom-loving people of different countries all over the world. An editorial in the literary magazine *Samakal*, edited by him, also features the voice of a progressive humanist writer. In this magazine, under adverse circumstances, he publishes stories, poems, and essays written in favour of Bengali nationalism with unequal courage. His famous poems written during the war of liberation in 1971 are compiled from the book of poems *Bangla Charo (Quit Bengal)*. On the other hand, Shakespeare attains international fame. Shakespeare is often considered to be the greatest British writer who has ever lived. Among his numerous works are explorations of the mysteries of life, love, death, vengeance, loss, envy, murder, and magic. He nurtures the popular plays of his time, including *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Unlike any other writer, he had an uncanny knack for putting himself in the shoes of his readers and eloquently capturing the full spectrum of human emotion.

Jafar is vocal against communalism, famine, lack of democracy, etc. He has always been a staunch supporter of civil rights. On the eve of the centenary of his birth, the lack of an extraordinary poet, lyricist, pioneer editor, and above all, a unique humanist personality is being felt even today. He is a man of many thoughts. His poetic essence has been dedicated to the liberation of the masses. Just as he had a courageous literary role in the liberation war of 1971, in his short life he is always vocal in favour of human rights. His literary works have occupied a very high place in the history of Bengali literature indeed. Here, this study aims to look at the historical contexts as well as the theme of the palatial plot of the two plays, *Macbeth* and *Siraj-ud-Daulah*.

2. Rethinking *Macbeth* in Historical Context

Shakespeare penned *Macbeth* shortly after King James of Scotland's accession to the English throne, between 1605 and 1606. Scotland, which the English previously regarded solely as an enigmatic and conquered neighbor, is thrust into the public eye by the new monarch. Political and religious strife characterizes the reign of James, the majority of which draws the kingdom's attention to the peril of regicide.

According to Brett R. Warren (2016), a primary source is the 1597 *Daemonologie* of King James, which contains a news pamphlet titled *News from Scotland* that provides a comprehensive account of the infamous North Berwick Witch Trials of 1590. A few years prior to the tragedy of *Macbeth*, *Daemonologie* is published, and its themes and setting are in direct and comparative contrast to King James' preoccupation with witchcraft, which intensifies after he realizes that the stormy weather that threatens his journey from Denmark to Scotland is a deliberate assault. The subsequent legal proceedings transpire in Scotland, and the female accusation is documented as having performed rituals employing the same demeanors as the three witches while under torment. A reference to one of the evidenced passages occurs when a defendant woman confesses to having attempted to sabotage the ship carrying King James and his consort on their way back from Denmark by igniting a tempest through the use of witchcraft.

Thrasher (2002) writes that Shakespeare reportedly extracts the narrative from multiple anecdotes found in *Holinshed's Chronicles*, a widely recognized historical work concerning the British Isles that was familiar to both Shakespeare and his contemporaries. There is an absence of references to the Weird Sisters, Banquo, and Lady Macbeth in all medieval accounts of Macbeth's reign, with the exception of the latter. Hector Boece, a Scottish historian, first mentions the characters of Banquo, the Weird Sisters, and Lady Macbeth in his 1527 book *History of the Scottish People*. Boece's intention was to disparage Macbeth in order to bolster the House of Stewart's claim to the Scottish succession. In Boece, Banquo is depicted as a progenitor of the Stewart kings of Scotland, and a prophecy states that Banquo's descendants shall ascend to the kingdom. The Weird Sisters, on the other hand, paint a picture of King Macbeth acquiring the throne through the use of malevolent supernatural forces. While Macbeth does enter into matrimony, Boece's depiction of her as power-hungry and ambitious is ambiguous, which further serves his purpose by compelling Macbeth to recognize that he accepts the throne merely at his wife's insistence and without a legitimate claim to it. *Holinshed* unquestioningly incorporates Boece's account of Macbeth's tenure into his *Chronicles*. Shakespeare derives the dramatic potential of the story as narrated by *Holinshed* and employs it as the foundational material for the play. (Palmer 343)

On August 5, 1600, King James, who was reigning over Scotland at the time, was nearly assassinated. The Earl of Gowrie and his eldest sibling, Alexander Ruthven, manipulate the King into a solitary encounter with an individual who is ostensibly accused of theft but is actually armed with lethal weapons in order to assassinate the monarch, who is without his retinue at that moment. The endeavor to assassinate the monarch garners widespread public interest, resulting in an abundance of pamphlets detailing the affair—one of which is even autographed by the king. Sermons delivered in England and Scotland emphasize the blasphemous nature of the attempted assassination. At this time, regicide—more specifically, the assassination of a king—is regarded as an even greater offense and sin than murder itself. An assassin who besieges a king, as is commonly believed, not only claims human life but also the monarchy, which is predetermined by a higher power. (Exploring Shakespeare 2003)

3. Palatial Conspiracy in *Macbeth*

Macbeth is the central figure in the play *Macbeth*. He is the one who commands attention throughout the play. He is a loyal lord of the king, descended from King Duncan of Scotland's lineage. To him, the monarch gives the honorific titles of gallant cousin and deserving gentlemen. People admire him for his bravery as a leader. He is a power-hungry soldier who aspires to a position of authority. His encounter with the witches serves as a visual representation of evil powers, which feeds his ego. Despite being crowned Thane of Glamis by the king, he still craves power. Eventually, his thoughts shift to assassinating King Duncan and ascending to the throne of Scotland in his stead. In this regard, I agree with Goertzel (1994), who points out that a conspiracy theory is a way of looking at things that suggests evil, powerful groups are behind an event or circumstance, usually for political reasons, even though there are alternative, more likely explanations. (Goertzel, p. 731) From Goertzel's argument I suggest that Macbeth invokes a conspiracy through his sinister and powerful plan to kill the king to achieve the throne.

Macbeth ponders the moral ramifications of his deeds, and he is far from a cold-blooded monster devoid of remorse or dignity. Macbeth considers assassinating King Duncan because, in early Scottish history, the throne did not automatically pass from father to son. If the king were to die, he would likely be the next in line to the throne. Duncan, on the other hand, has a son, who is subsequently named as his legitimate successor. For him, realizing that he has achieved his goal in the wrong manner means that the predictions of the witches will come true in the worst possible way. Because of this, he seeks great accolades for himself without resorting to unethical methods.

MACBETH: He hath honoured me of late, and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon. (I.vii.45)

The malevolent powers of the world have warped Macbeth's psyche to the point where he is easily influenced by the prophecies of the witches. The crowning of Thane Glamis and Thane Cawdor fulfilled the prophecies of the witches. His evil purpose is shown by this, as it casts suspicion on Malcolm and Donalbain, the sons of King Malcolm and King Donalbain, who had escaped from danger in Scotland.

In order to carry out his murderous plot against Banquo, whom he views as preventing him from becoming king, Macbeth recruits a squad of assassins. Consequently, Macbeth arranges for Banquo's murder. His noble character and the witches' prophecy make Banquo an extremely dangerous adversary. The fact that Banquo's son Florence escaped the scene of the crime makes her a danger to Macbeth. The gang has singled out a Scottish lord called Macduff as someone who could pose a threat to him. The murders of Lady Macduff and her children by Macbeth are far more heinous than his earlier acts. The fact that he slaughtered the defenseless victims in his pursuit of power is evidence of his heartlessness. The fact that he has been lied to and trusted by the shadow side is something he is

fully cognizant of. However, he has either ignored or neglected Banquo's warnings and demonstrations of the risks on multiple occasions.

BANQUO: That trusted home
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor.
But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence.
Cousins, a word, I pray you. (I.iii.21-23)

Because Macbeth was not born of a woman, Macbeth murders Macduff and claims that the second witches' prophecy was also false. Despite the false sense of security, he had due to the witches' prophecies, Macbeth fought bravely and ultimately met his demise at the hands of evil. His lofty ambitions had led him astray, and he had put his trust in something that was either wicked or useless.

Malcolm and his brother Donalbain prepare to flee their nation after learning of King Duncan's death to preserve their own lives, which must be in jeopardy. Malcolm has gathered an army with the backing of the English to battle against the wicked Macbeth. As a result of his departure from Scotland, Macduff fled to England with his army to exact vengeance on him for the death of his whole family back in Scotland. If we take a look at Malcolm as he prepares to take on Macbeth. Macduff can take down Macbeth by hand-to-hand combat, and Malcolm is recognized as Scotland's legitimate King.

In conspiracy theories, the conspirators are usually claimed to be acting with extreme malice. As argued by Robert Brotherton (2013):

The malevolent intent assumed by most conspiracy theories goes far beyond everyday plots borne out of self-interest, corruption, cruelty, and criminality. The postulated conspirators are not merely people with selfish agendas or differing values. Rather, conspiracy theories postulate a black-and-white world in which good is struggling against evil. The general public is cast as the victim of organized persecution, and the motives of the alleged conspirators often verge on pure maniacal evil. (Brotherton, p. 14)

I argue that Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's evil palatial conspiracy shows their self-interest, corruption, cruelty, and criminality against Duncan. From the moral point of view, both husband and wife are mean, selfish, and highly ambitious. They crave power and rule to empower evil design across the country. Both of them have lost social dignity and palatial status and are the real traitors in the eyes of the Danish people.

As the leader of Malcolm's attempt to usurp King Duncan's throne, Macduff exemplifies wisdom, courage, and natural nobleness. He believes Macbeth killed King Duncan since he confessed to killing the king's guards in the king's chamber, and he accuses Macbeth of the crime. A nobleman from

Scotland named Rosse attempts to convince Lady Macbeth that her husband has gone to England to gather troops against Macbeth's tyranny.

Banquo is shown as a nobleman who is honourable, courageous, and courteous. He has a good relationship with the king and Macbeth as well. His position and noble character, on the other hand, make him a serious threat to Macbeth's motif. Banquo is a guy who puts too much stock in outward appearances and is duped into believing that everything is well in Macbeth's castle due to the attractiveness of its location. His mind is still filled with visions of the witches' prophesies from when they first met. However, Macbeth will have another chance to meet Banquo. After seeing the witches' eight kings, Banquo's spirit chases after them in the mirror. As a result of Fleance's escape, Macbeth believes that despite the death of Banquo by his men, Fleance may continue to be the father of a royal family. Despite Macbeth's victory on the throne, it is prophesied that his descendants will never be kings. However, Macbeth has a soul with a defect, albeit a magnificent one. The circumstances surrounding his demise are huge, and the repercussions are dire. (Berquist, p. 117) Anybody who believes Macbeth's wickedness is out of the ordinary has a poor understanding of human experience. Macbeth deserves our pity, and we should feel a sense of relief when we see him fall. His tragedy transcends old comprehension due to tremendous weight of primary action. (Heilman, p. 12)

The palatial conspiracy made by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth shows their intentional motif, war, powerful ruler, and traitors in the eyes of the law. However, I do not agree with Popper's mention that "unemployment, poverty, shortages are the result of direct design by some powerful individuals and groups," because Shakespeare in *Macbeth* has mentioned unemployment, poverty, and shortages.

According to Langis (2012), Lady Macbeth is a major character in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. She is Macbeth's wife who murders the Scottish monarch and becomes Scotland's ruler. Lady Macbeth encourages Macbeth to perform this terrible act, and she becomes the queen of England.

If Lady Macbeth were a more masculine individual, she would have perpetrated the murder herself rather than permitting her hesitant husband to enter Duncan's bedroom. Lady Macduff and her children are subjected to a carnage. Due to the immense mental distraction caused by her feminine appearance, she develops the tendency to walk and speak while asleep. Ultimately, she commits suicide by leaping from the elevated terrace of her castle. Her lack of originality significantly contributes to her singular objective.

Lady Macbeth is a lesser demon than her husband since she never tells him to kill Banquo, Lady Macduff, or any of her innocent children. She cannot, like her husband, anticipate the threats posed by Banquo or his son, or by Macduff, who travels to England to seek assistance from Malcolm and the King of England to bring about Macbeth's demise. She had put too much faith in her human will. She needs God more than medicine. Due to the severity of her death, we must postpone our judgment of her offences and only repeat them with the doctor. (Nabhan, p. 27)

God, God forgive us all!

Look after her;

Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still, keep eyes upon her, So, good night.
My mind has mated and amazed my sight.

I think but dare not speak. (V.i.61-65)

According to Cariot (2010), Lady Macbeth gets out of bed with a lit candle and starts walking and talking to herself loudly, despite being deep asleep. Her eyes are open but blind for now. This is a mental as well as physical phenomenon. Some believe it is a nerve illness. Whatever it is, it is unquestionably the consequence of a severe disruption in a person's body and psyche. Her condition is purely psychological, the consequence of severe mental stress or disturbance. She seems unaware that Macbeth's agents murdered Lady Macduff and her children. That is why she remembers Macbeth's bloodied hands and cries out in pain and sorrow. Lady Macbeth's masculine quality is always tongue-in-cheek. Her failure to kill Duncan with her own hands reveals her real character. Her desire dyes her will to do evil. (Mustafa, pp. 110-112)

4. Rethinking Siraj-ud-Daulah in Historical Context

Siraj-ud-Daulah was the son of Amina Begum, the youngest daughter of Mirza Muhammad Alivardi Khan (three daughters). Nawab Alivardi died on 10 April 1757 at the age of eighty. After the death of his grandfather, Siraj-ud-Daulah was appointed Nawab of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. In the history of the Indian subcontinent, the Battle of Plassey marks the beginning of British control in India, which is generally regarded as a watershed moment. As a result, the British dispatched more soldiers from Madras to retake the fort and exact vengeance on the invading army. At Plassey, a retreating Siraj-ud-Daulah comes face to face with the British. According to the plan, he is to set up camp 27 miles away from Murshidabad. On 23 June 1757, he called on Mir Jafar to express his sorrow at the unexpected death of Mir Mardan, who had been a close-fighting comrade of Siraj's for many years. The Nawab approaches Mir Jafar and begs for assistance. Mir Jafar encourages Siraj to take a day off from his duties. The Nawab commits a mistake when he orders the bout to be stopped prematurely. According to his orders, the Nawab's troops are returning to their respective camps. (Dalrymple, p. 78) Robert Clive and his army launch an assault on the troops. When being confronted with such a rapid assault, Siraj's army becomes disorganized and unable to devise a strategy for defending itself. So much of this army withdrawal has been cancelled. In a scheme orchestrated by Jagat Seth, Mir Jafar, Krishna Chandra, and Amir Chand, he is betrayed and forced to flee after losing the fight. He mounts his horse and rides away, first to Murshidabad, and then to Heerajheel or Motijheel, his palace in Mansurganj. He urges his main commanders to engage their soldiers to ensure his safety, but since he has been stripped of his authority as a result of the defeat at Plassey, they are hesitant to provide unqualified assistance. Some urge him to surrender himself to the English, but Siraj considers this to be treason on his part. Others have suggested that he should provide more incentives to the troops, and he seems to agree with this suggestion. Despite the fact that the number of people in his entourage is

decreasing. Soon after, he sends the majority of women in his harem to Purneah, where they would be protected by Mohanlal and be rewarded with money and elephants. Then, accompanied by his main consort Lutfunnisa and just a handful of attendants, Siraj attempts to flee to Patna by boat but is apprehended by troops loyal to Mir Jafar's regime. (Subhan, p. 536)

After Siraj-ud-Daulah was caught red-handed, Mohammad Ali Beg executed him on July 2, 1757, at Namak Haram Deorhi, on instructions from Mir Miran, son of Mir Jafar, as part of the agreement between Mir Jafar and the British East India Company. The execution is part of the agreement between Mir Jafar and the British East India Company. The mausoleum of Siraj-ud-Daulah may be found at Khushbagh, Murshidabad, Pakistan. It is distinguished by a one-storied mausoleum that is surrounded by a beautiful garden. Due to the defeat of the battle of Plassey, the nation of Indian Subcontinent lost its freedom and could yield to the colonial rule of the British.

5. Palatial Conspiracy in *Siraj-ud-Daulah*

On 23 June 1757, Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah takes an active part in the war against the British in the desert of Plassey. The Nawab had more weapons, ammunition, and troops than the English. The English had three thousand troops and eight cannons; In contrast, the Nawab's army numbered fifty thousand and the number of cannons fifty-three. Despite having such a huge military capability, the defeat of the Nawab was because the generals known as Robert Clive's donkeys abandoned the independence of Bengal. To hold the remembrance of the battle of Plassey, Sikandar Abu Jafar wrote the play *Siraj-ud-Daulah* based on the palatial conspiracy against the Nawab to create an impression among the minds of the people of the Indian Subcontinent.

Abu Zafar's *Siraj-ud-Daulah* is composed of twelve scenes in four acts. The protagonist Siraj-ud-Daulah himself is present in eight scenes of the entire play which revolves around Siraj's character. The story of the play is presented through the dialogue of Siraj and other characters regarding the war against the British. Siraj's forces attack Calcutta and drive out the British. But Siraj is not relieved because palatial conspiracies are going on to remove him from the throne. With this, the story of the drama has spread out. His closest relatives, including his chief of staff, and various nobles have joined the British in the conspiracy that has caused a dreadful situation throughout the Indian Subcontinent. The playwright has created such a situation and a dramatic conflict that is being borne by Siraj's multi-dimensional crisis. On the one hand, the independence of Bengal must be maintained. Abu Zafar has taken the play to a climax through the theatrical conflict being created around the freedom of Bengal. He wants to foster that Siraj understands everything but his human qualities are preventing him from taking the toughest steps. By creating such a complicated situation, the playwright has brought back the atmosphere of war in the Indian subcontinent. This time the conspiracy reaches the pinnacle. Siraj's trusted military officers sacrifice their lives one after another on the battlefield. Siraj has to leave the battlefield in the end - not to save his life but to return to the capital and make a last-ditch effort to regain his strength and throne from the clutch of British rule.

The play moves towards the liberation of the Indian subcontinent. In the end, Siraj's resolve has not been realized and is captured, imprisoned, and killed at the hands of the ungrateful Mohammed Beg in the final scene of the play, which ends with an immense pain burdening the readers' and audience's painful heart. I can mention Keeley's (1999) comments in this sense that Conspiracy theories are difficult to refute and are supported by circular reasoning, which turns evidence for or against the conspiracy into support for its veracity. As a result, the conspiracy ceases to be verifiable and becomes a matter of faith. (Keeley, p. 109) Here Siraj's close relatives and the chief of the army plot to dethrone him according to the evil design of the British. The conspiracy of Mir Jafar has violated faithfulness like Macbeth's treachery against King Duncan.

Sikandar tries to follow Bengali history. He did not omit or change any important event recorded in history. However, there is some historical factual inconsistency in the use of dates at the beginning of some numbers. The development of Siraj's character has also been hampered in giving importance to history. The lack of the kind of art-care needed to develop Siraj's character-psychology, especially in the time it wants to develop theatrical conflict, can be noticed in the play. The anguish of Siraj under the pressure of historical events and the wailing can be heard in the play in a very low voice. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that he was able to discover from the monotonous sources of history a liberal-hearted Nawab with an absolute human quality.

The presence of one or more characters in a play can be noticed, and the playwright's art of characterization seems to be active behind their implementation. From this point of view, it appears that the central characterization strategy of the playwright is to create a national hero who is involved in a conspiracy. It is noteworthy that to show the catastrophe of the hero, the villainous characters of the play also need to be created with equal artistic skill. Otherwise, it is not possible to glorify the hero's climax. This issue has not been followed continuously in the play. There are about forty characters in the play. But apart from Siraj, no other character has developed dramatic qualities.

Ghaseti Begum, Robert Clive, and Mir Zafar are deceitful characters. On the contrary, Mir Mardan, Mohanlal, Raisul Juhala, and Narayan Singh are only moral and kind-hearted characters. No individuality of Lutfunnesa catches readers' eye. The problem of one-dimensionality also exists in Siraj who is also calm, steadfast, sympathetic, and almost flawless. If the character of the error of judgment of not being able to abandon the loved ones or failing to inflict severe punishment had not been inculcated in his character, the whole play would have been in danger in the minds of the viewers and readers.

The most important aspect of Siraj's character is his transformation from a feudal Nawab into a patriotic leader with the belief in awakening to the power of the people. At the end of the play, it can be noticed that Siraj and the people are standing in the same row. They support Siraj, but the crowd does not know about the palatial conspiracy against the Nawab. So, after the capture of General Mohanlal, the people gradually leave the Nawab-Darbar of Murshidabad due to a palatial conspiracy. It is not difficult to understand that this departure is very difficult to save their lives. It is this publicity that has

taken the character of Siraj to extraordinary heights. But the weakness of his character is the limitation of his suffering. His conversation with Lutfunnesa after the departure of the crowd from the Nawab's court did not provide the necessary opportunity to unravel the concentrated climax that could have given rise to the hope of renewing energy on the one hand and the filth of escape on the other. According to Ted Goertzel, "Historically, conspiracy theories have been closely linked to prejudice, propaganda, witch hunts, wars, and genocides" (Goertzel, p. 493). Abu Jafar's play *Siraj-ud-Daulah* represents historical facts meaning a palatial plot against the noble and young ruler who struggles to control the British evil policy. Due to the colonial power and rule, prejudice, propaganda, witch hunts, wars, and genocides were the prime concerns in the then-Indian subcontinent.

The suffering of the captive Siraj, his conflicts, regrets did not get a chance to develop at all. However, the playwright wants to overcome this limitation by maintaining the image of Siraj's popularity among the readers and audience. The play ends with Siraj's death but the playwright's message spreads among the readers and viewers. When he wants to narrate the scene of Siraj's death, he says that the grief of death makes his hands tremble and tremble forever as he clenches his fists in an attempt to grab the ground. His grief is nurtured by the readers and audience. They have to be able to do what Siraj could not do. They have to finish the unfinished battle of Siraj. The country must be liberated by breaking the net of all conspiracies, freedom must be protected. The success of Siraj's character is to awaken this fighting spirit in the masses through the transmission of tragic consequences.

Frank P. Mintz (1985) points out that conspiracism serves the needs of diverse political and social groups in America and elsewhere. It identifies elites, blames them for economic and social catastrophes, and assumes that things will be better once popular action can remove them from positions of power. As such, conspiracy theories do not typify a particular epoch or ideology. Due to socio-political and economic instability catastrophes are seen in many countries of the world. But here Jafar's play is a symbol of British conspiracy against the newly appointed rule of the eighteenth-century Indian subcontinent.

Sikandar Abu Jafar did not do much research on the structural features of the play. Even how the scenes will be staged is not explained very clearly. One of the notable features of the play *Siraj-ud-Daulah* is the use of useful dialogue based on history. When Siraj said to Wats,

AvwjbMḥii mwÜi kZ© Abymvḥi ḥKvḥúvwbi cÖwZwbwa wnḥmḥe `ievḥi ḥZvgvḥK Avk^aq
w`ḥqwQjvg| ḥmB mḥḥvḥbi Ace`envi Kḥi GLvḥb eḥm Zzwg ,ḥPḥii KvR KiḥQv| ḥZvgvḥK mvRv
bv w`ḥqB ḥQḥo w`w"Q| ḥewiḥq hvI `ievḥi ḥḥK| K-vBf Avi IqvUmḥK wMḥq msev` `vI ḥh, Zvḥ`i
Avwg Dchy³ wkÿv ḥ`e| Avgvi Bḥ"Qi weiaḥ× ḥeBgvb b`KzgvḥK Nyl LvBḥq Zviv P`bbMi
aÿsm KḥiḥQ| GB J×ḥZ"i kvw-Í Zvḥ`i h_vḥhvM`fvḥeB ḥ`Iqv nḥe| (II. I 77-78)

[According to the conditions of Alear I have sheltered you in the palace; you are acting as a spy on me violating the terms. Get out of the palace. Inform Clive and Watson of the news that I will teach them a good lesson. Traitor Nandakumer has taken a bribe without my consent, and Chandanagar has been destroyed. They shall be punished for this treachery] (My translation)

This quotation implies Siraj's courage and heroism, which is essential for a historical play. When Siraj-ud-Daulah was fleeing to Patna with his wife and daughter after the tragic defeat at the battle of Plassey, Mir Jafar's brother Mir Daud captured the Nawab and brought him to the capital with his family. Clive wants to kill Siraj-ud-Daulah quickly for fear of mass protests.

The playwright chose the path of quick killing with Mohammadi Beg to make the people more emotional and hamartia. In the second scene of the fourth act of the play, *Siraj-ud-Daulah*, it is found: When Mohammadi Beg is going to kill Sirajuddaula, he says, "Zzwg G KvR Kiv bv †gvnvq\$w' †eM| AZx†Zi w`†K †P†q ††Lv, †P†q ††Lv| Avgvi AveYv-Avq\$y cy††-œ†n †Zvgv†K cvjb K†i†Qb| Zuv†`iB mš†v†bi i†† †m-†-œ†ni FY Avt..." ["Don't do this Mohammadi Beg. Look at the past, look. My father, mother and son have taken care of you. In the blood of their child, he owes affection"] (IV. ii 126). [My translation]

Siraj's statement shows his cowardice. He proves through this statement, he is a criminal, so he is begging Mohammadi Beg for his life. The playwright has done injustice to a Nawab, ruler, or hero in his play. Because a hero will die like a hero. Here the playwright has completely underestimated Siraj-ud-Daulah's heroic qualities and deeds. (Rizvi, p. 45) On the other hand, Ghaseti Begum is the eldest daughter of Nawab Alivardi Khan. The real name is Meherunnesa. Nawab Alivardi Khan marries his three daughters to the three sons of his elder brother Haji Ahmed. Ghaseti Begum is married to Nawazis Muhammad Shahmat Jung and she (Shahmat Jung) is appointed Naib Nazim of Dhaka. Alivardi Khan's daughter accumulates a lot of wealth by exerting the influence of her dignity. The childless Nawazis-Ghaseti couple adopts Ikramuddaula, the younger brother of Sirajuddaula, as their foster son. Ikramud Daula dies of smallpox, and Nawazis lives only a short time after his death. Ghaseti Begum acquires ownership of her husband's huge fortune. She stores her inherited wealth in Motijheel Palace along with her earlier accumulated wealth.

When the old Nawab nominates his youngest daughter's son Siraj-ud-Daulah as his successor, Ghaseti Begum conspires against the throne and tries to dethrone him with his second sister's son Shawkat Jung. After the death of his grandfather, Siraj ascends the masnad/throne, and soon after, he locks him in the palace as a measure against Ghaseti Begum.

wmivR : wmivRD††Šjv GKwU w`†bi R†b`I my†L bevwe K†iwb LvjvAvq\$y|

N†mwU : G†m†Qv kqZvb| avIqv K†i†Qv Avgvi wcQy|

wmivR : Avcbvi m†½ cÖ†qvRb Av†Q|

N†mwU : wKš' †Zvgvi m†½ Avgvi †Kv†bv cÖ†qvRb †bB|

wmivR : Avgvi cÖ†qvRb Avcbvi mq\$wZi A†c†v ivL†Q bv LvjvAvq\$y|

N†mwU : ZvB eywS †mbvcwZ cvwV†q Avgv†K msev` w`†q†Qv †h †Zvgvi Avil wKQy UvKvi`
`iKvi|

wmivR : Lei Avcbvi ARvbv _vKvi K_v bv| [III, i 97-98]

[Siraj: Sirajuddaula was not happy for even a single day, Aunt.

Ghaseti: You have chased me, Saucy.

Siraj: I need a talk with you.

Ghaseti: But I need not you.

Siraj: But my need does not wait for your consent, aunt.

Ghaseti: So, you have sent your Chief General to bring me here for the sake of your money.

Siraj: You were not uninformed of the news.] (My translation)

This dialogue between Siraj and Ghaseti seems to be certainly controversial. Though Siraj respects his aunt, she tries to cheat him because she has an evil plan in her mind to dethrone him.

Siraj-ud-Daulah also asks Raj Ballav for an account of the treasury of Dhaka. But Raj Ballav fails to give accurate details. His son Krishna Ballav flees and takes refuge at Fort William of the East India Company in Calcutta. The Nawab sends a letter to Roger Drake, the English Governor of Calcutta, to hand over Krishna Ballav to him. (Sensarma, p. 172)

Alivardi's chief generals Mir Jafar and Siraj-ud-Daulah are not relieved to get the throne. Ghaseti secretly allies with Mir Zafar. She pays him a lot of money for the conspiracy against Siraj. Businessmen Jagat Seth joins the conspiracy and Umichand/Amir Chand, Ghaseti, and Mir Zafar. The common aim of all these conspirators is to oust the Nawab from the throne and to take over it. After the battle of Palashi, Siraj-ud-Daulah is killed and Mir Jafar is made Nawab of Bengal by the British. Mir Zafar first captures Ghaseti Begum along with Amina Begum, the mother of the defeated Nawab in Murshidabad. He, then, removes them from Dhaka and keeps them in the Jinjira Palace in Dhaka. Mir Zafar's son Miron considers Ghaseti Begum a dangerous enemy even in captivity. Miron orders Ghaseti Begum and Amina Begum to be shifted to Murshidabad. It is said that both of them are buried beside the river Buriganga. (Sarkar, p. 436)

6. Comparative Analysis between Siraj-ud-Daulah and Macbeth

This study would like to examine the palatial conspiracy of plays, (e.g., *Siraj-ud-Daulah and Macbeth*), to expose the faithful picture of sixteenth-century and eighteenth-century aristocratic families through the art of characterization and plot construction. Playwrights from two different countries and different centuries; there is a gap of two hundred years between Shakespeare and Sikandar Abu Jafar. One has written in the English language and another in the Bengali language. This study aims to examine Shakespeare's and Jafar's treatment of palatial conspiracy through male and female characters. It aims to look at the historical contexts as well as the theme of the palatial plot of the two plays.

Siraj-ud-Daulah is a tragic-humorous play based on the story of history. The play is based on the defeat and fall of Siraj-ud-Daulah in the battle of Plassey in 1757. Sikandar Abu Jafar has very skillfully replaced the question of modern life in the structure of history in this play. On the other hand, Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* between 1605 and 1606, shortly after the ascension of King James of Scotland to the English throne. The new monarch brings Scotland, known to the English only as a mysterious, conquered neighbour, into the public limelight. Shakespeare's hero Hamlet is a loyal lord of the king, descended from King Duncan of Scotland's lineage. A valiant Scottish commander called

Macbeth is told by three witches that he will one day be King of Scotland. Macbeth kills King Duncan and seizes the Scottish throne, driven by ambition and his wife. He is plagued with remorse and paranoia. To avoid hatred and suspicion, he becomes a tyrant. The massacre and subsequent civil war drive Macbeth and Lady Macbeth insane and to death. On the other hand, Zafar has taken the play to a climax through the theatrical conflict being created around the freedom of Bengal. He wants to foster that Siraj understands everything but his human qualities are preventing him from taking the toughest steps. In this regard, I can mention as follows:

wmivR : Avcbv†`i weia†× Awf†hvM Rvbvevi †Kv†bv evmbv Avgvi †bB| Avgvi bvwjk AvR
Avgvi wb†Ri weia†×| wePviK Avcbviv| evsjvi cÖRv mvavi†Yi myL-^v”Q>” weavb Ki†Z
cvwiwb e†j Avwg Zv†`i Kv†Q Acivax| AvR †mB Aciv†ai R†b” Avcbv†`i Kv†Q Avwg
wePvicÖv_x©| [II. i 73]

[Siraj: I have no intention to take any objectionable decision against you. My justice is against me today. You are a judge to me. I have failed to bring any happiness and prosperity to my poor subjects. As a result, I beg your pardon. Today for that crime I appeal to you all as a postulant.]
(My translation)

Siraj has been chosen to remember both Bengal’s freedom and the conspiracy of his close family by the Bengali writer. He knows everything yet his human characteristics bound him. His final attempt fails. The conspirators won. The drama concludes with his death and a sad atmosphere. The playwright has recreated Siraj-ud-Dualah’s biography using historical sources. These are the major human characteristics that the writer wishes to portray in his character of Siraj-ud-Daulah as a warrior, a loving spouse, a loving parent, and a devoted believer. On the other hand, Macbeth is a tragic hero in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. He is a hero of many virtues. But one misstep fills his life with dread and sorrow. As the play’s protagonist, he deserves admiration. His combat abilities demonstrate that he is a skilled soldier and devoted to his King. His combat courage is lauded. Due to his brilliance and bravery in fighting for his nation, he becomes a strong thane and later a king, with major consequences for his kingdom. In contrast to Siraj, the other characters are very naive and motivated only by malice. Mir Zafar, Ghaseti Begum, and Robert Clive, for example, are the only characters with a dishonest mindset; similarly, Mir Mardan, Mohanlal, and Raisul Juhala are the only morally upright characters. The character development of Lutfunnesa, the female protagonist, could not have been better planned. A good example of a one-sided primary character is Siraj, who seems to be a perfect guy who cannot be matched properly with a historical figure. By having Clive wear a burqa or adding comedy to Urmichand, Jagat Seth’s, and Mir Zafar’s conversation, the writer has also emphasized the timidity of Robert Clive.

Macbeth is a tragic hero because he is determined to achieve his objective. With the help of Lady Macbeth and a series of unfortunate events, he went from being a strong, valiant, and loyal man to a wicked person hated by most Scots. Macbeth is a tragic hero with one fault, ambition, which is the primary cause of his demise. Macbeth has slaughtered King Duncan to ascend the throne and he has

confessed to his wife Lady Macbeth. On the contrary, Sikandar Abu Jafar's play *Siraj-ud-Daulah* deserves a unique achievement except for small faults. The play presents an immense role in awakening patriotism in the minds of Bengalis at that time. It has also been able to win the hearts of readers and viewers in terms of readership or stage success. Considering all aspects, it can be said that the position of Sikandar Abu Jafar's play *Siraj-ud-Daulah* in Bengali literature is very strong. The plot of *Macbeth* seems to be allegorical, and historical elements are not found. Whereas *Shiraj-ud-Daulah* is written based on historical contexts. Some imaginary and fanciful dialogues are found to make the characters significant and symbolic.

The protagonists, Macbeth and Shiraj-ud-Daulah, have been presented as round characters who are found to play their role models throughout the plays. They unfold one after another event and bring the climax of the story. There are also some round characters and flat characters in the dramas. The characters of Lady Macbeth, Ghoshti Begum, Mir Jafar, and Miron are found to play the role of round characters. Flat characters are present to serve their role purposefully.

Another important aspect of the play, *Shiraj-ud-Daulah*, is that the protagonist falls victim to a palatial conspiracy by his relatives and the commander-in-chief. On the other hand, in the play, *Macbeth*, the hero himself is responsible for a palatial conspiracy in which Lady Macbeth and three witches stimulate Macbeth to kill King Duncan and usurp the crown.

Siraj-ud-Daulah is found to play his role as an emperor. On the other hand, Macbeth is found to play his role as a commander-in-chief. On the other hand, Lady Macbeth possesses formidable strength, exhibits a merciless nature, and harbors ambitious aspirations. She proposes to Macbeth that they assassinate Duncan in order to fulfill the witches' prophecy. Exhibiting a greater determination than Macbeth, she assists her husband in overcoming his apprehension following his murder of Duncan. Conversely, Ghoshti Begum is the eldest offspring of Nawab Alivardi Khan, the ruler of Bengal, and Princess Sharfunnisa, who is the paternal aunt of Mir Jafar. Her paternal grandfather, Mirza Muhammad Madani, is of either Arab or Turkic ancestry. He is the son of a foster brother of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. The selection of *Siraj-ud-Daulah* as the Nawab triggers rivalry and hatred among his maternal aunts, Ghoshti Begum (Mehtar un-Nisa Begum), Mir Jafar, Jagat Seth (Mehtar Chand), and Shaukat Jang (Siraj's cousin). Ghoshti Begum wields significant wealth, which serves as the foundation of her influence and power.

Mir Miran is the eldest son of Mir Zafar, the first Nawab of Bengal under the British East India Company. On July 2, 1757, *Siraj-ud-Daulah* is betrayed, captured, and executed under the orders of Mir Miran, after which Mir Jafar becomes the Nawab and the British begin to wield real power.

The play *Macbeth* demonstrates that men have agency over their own destinies, even when external factors sow seeds. Because Macbeth thinks the witches' words can lead him to power, he listens to them.

This article shows how Macbeth and *Siraj-ud-Daulah* both meet their demise: After fleeing to Murshidabad, the Nawab takes a boat to Patna. However, Mir Jafar's forces apprehend him in the end.

Following instructions from Mir Jafar, the puppet ruler the British had placed in Persia, Siraj-ud-Daulah was executed on July 2, 1757, by Mohammad Ali Beg. In reality, Siraj-ud-Daulah are Indian warriors. Even though he is king, he battles and dies for his cause. A major factor in the Nawab's demise was the noncombatant attitude of the troops under the direction of Mir Jafar, who was a commander under Siraj-ud-Daulah. By pledging to make him nawab once he deposes Siraj-ud-Daulah, Robert Clive wins his allegiance. However, Lady Macbeth's avarice and ambition for her husband to become king, as well as Macbeth's own greed, envy, and ambition, are the factors that lead to Macbeth's demise, along with the witches' deceit and prophesies. An enormous part of Macbeth's demise and execution is due to the witches.

Both Siraj-ud-Daulah and Macbeth are not prudent and diplomatic. Macbeth's target is to usurp the throne, and he is impractical by nature, whereas Siraj is practical-minded, though he was born in a palace.

Both Shakespeare and Sikandar Abu Jafar have composed their tragic plays based on historical sources, meaning that Shakespeare has written his play about sixteenth-century England and Roman history whereas Sikandar Abu Jafar has written his play based on eighteenth-century Indian subcontinent when the British used to rule the common people and even the rulers of that period.

It can be said here that many writers (e.g., Shakespeare and Sikandar Abu Jafar) have composed their literary works based on historical sense. The above-mentioned plays bear the testimony of the age.

Macbeth and *Siraj-ud-Daulah* are tragic plays, which demonstrate the palatial conspiracy of the sixteenth century in England and the eighteenth century in the Indian Subcontinent, respectively. Macbeth becomes corrupt as a result of the authority he attains. Siraj is found to be heroic and magnified due to his noble mission. He is still now respected and loved by all and sundry. But Macbeth is hated for dishonest, ambition, greed, and conspiracy. Both protagonists have occupied a remarkable place in the field of global literature and global history, that nobody can deny.

7. Conclusion

Concerning Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Abu Jafar's *Siraj-ud-Daulah*, I can conclude that a person who has a great ambition to fulfil but uses evil means to reach it will destroy his or her own life to the end. This happens to Macbeth and his wife, Lady Macbeth. As predicted by the witches and bolstered by his success as a soldier, Macbeth has lofty aspirations of becoming king. Macbeth's wife, Lady Macbeth, is just as driven by ambition as her husband. On the other hand, Siraj's character is his transformation from a feudal Nawab into a patriotic leader with the belief in awakening to the power of the people. Abu Jafar chooses the path of quick killing with Mohammadi Beg to make the people more emotional and hamartia.

Lady Macbeth encourages Macbeth to proceed down the wicked path because they have no other options. Then they commit the act together, murdering the king, and Macbeth becomes the new King of Scotland. Macbeth wishes to obtain power without accomplishing anything to achieve his goal. Siraj,

on the other hand, is elevated to a heroic status as a result of his noble objective. He is still remembered across the Indian subcontinent. But Macbeth is despised for his ambition, avarice, and conspiracy. Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Mir Jafar, Ghaseti Begum, and, above all, the British have used evil means to win the crown and rule the country, and they can no longer hide their terrible acts, defeating cowards and meeting fatal fate. Zafar and Shakespeare's portrayal of palace conspiracy has been portrayed in a historical context.

Playwrights have borrowed the sources from history to compose their plays. Readers and audiences can gain knowledge about palatial conflicts, history, and evil motifs of human characters through Zafar's and Shakespeare's art of characterization and plot construction, respectively. Like Macbeth and Siraj-ud-Daulah, even today, palatial conspiracy in many countries of the world is found to be occurring.

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