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## Shakespeare through the social theory of March and Olsen

### Abstract:

In the following paper, I would like to propose a hopefully new approach to Shakespeare's works such as *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, which is using a very classical sociological theory of March and Olsen for interpretation of Shakespearean dramas and their main teaching through the scope of the Logic of Appropriateness and Logic of Consequences. It proves that reading Shakespeare helps to rediscover even great and working theories from the area of sociology in a new light but also – that using different theories for interpreting specific phenomenon in Shakespeare's plays may be more fruitful than forcibly trying to show what Shakespeare supposedly had to say on a subjectively chosen topic.

**Keywords:** Shakespeare, Logic of Appropriateness, Logic of Consequences, New Institutionalism, Sociology

### Abstrakt:

W niniejszym artykule podejmuję próbę prezentacji nowego podejścia do dzieł Szekspira, które wykorzystuje bardzo klasyczną socjologiczną teorię March'a i Olsen'a do interpretacji dramatów szekspirowskich takich jak *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice* w kontekście tzw. Logiki Stosowności i Logiki Konsekwencji. Jak się okazało, lektura Szekspira pomaga odkryć na nowo nawet wielkie i dobrze funkcjonujące od lat teorie z obszaru socjologii w nowym świetle. Dodatkowo, pokazuję, że używanie różnych teorii do interpretacji konkretnych zjawisk w sztukach Szekspira może być bardziej owocne niż próby siłowego niekiedy przedstawienia, co Szekspir miał rzekomo do powiedzenia na subiektywnie wybrany temat.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Shakespeare, Logika Stosowności, Logika Konsekwencji, Nowy Instytucjonalizm, Socjologia.

## Introduction

A lot has been already written on William Shakespeare. His works are still and endlessly touched by philosophers, linguists, psychologists, sociologists. Thanks to the Shakespeare widespread fascination, most of his works were already studied and synthetic canons of interpretation outlined. For instance, it is possible to read what Shakespeare had to say about power, love, what he (supposedly?) thought on history, political mechanisms, human behavior in general. I suppose that someone at the other end of the world has already defended a diploma after discovering the Shakespearean praise of civil society or constitutionalism (not yet existing in time of Shakespeare's life but who really cares?). I imagine an exceptionally determined interpreter using *The Merchant of Venice* to justify the confiscation of Jewish property in Poland<sup>1</sup>, and a Freudian analyst who mass-produces textbooks studying Hamlet's paranoid personality for everyday therapy of his aunt. Shakespeare simply fascinates, inspires, evokes emotions.

Of course, among tons of wasted paper there are outstanding works too - e.g. interpretations by J. Kott, A. Bloom, W. H. Auden, R. Girard. In my opinion, most of them should be introduced as readings in high school, even though at times they are too much painted with a personal philosophy of the authors rather than Shakespeare's thought. It can be voiced by opponents of the mentioned Shakespeare interpreters, that Shakespeare's long-dried pen serves these culturally dominant intellectuals as a tool for presenting specific ideologies and imposing them as "proper", deeper, striving for legitimacy by using a big brand of the English writer to justify what they personally think. No matter if it is true or not, Kott, Bloom or Auden works on Shakespeare still can tell us something useful – truth describing the modern world - not Shakespeare's England, Rome or Italy depicted in original dramas but more general, universal tendencies in human history, psychology and sociology. Writing this paper would not be possible if I had not read the mentioned texts before and if I had not participated in great seminar by Prof. M. Gdula on Shakespeare's social theory too.

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<sup>1</sup> Some radical right wing Polish nationalist would love writing such an essay.

## **Scientific goal and structure of the article**

In this particular paper, I would like to propose a hopefully new approach to Shakespeare's works. Duplicating topics and paths that have already been well studied by someone else and on which "everything has already been written" does not seem fruitful so another text entitled "Power relations through the eyes of Shakespeare" would not offer a great scientific value. This is why I will not draw individual threads from the dramas and synthesize everything in the form of "Shakespeare's theory on topic X". Alternatively, I offer the opposite approach – not induction of theory from writings but more of a deduction – choosing a theory first, then finding matching topics in Shakespeare's work to rediscover and reinterpret both a theory and canon approaches to Shakespeare's thought. While obviously appreciating Shakespeare's perceptive and his ability to create a timeless description of the mechanisms that guide human societies or behaviors in an individual sense, I take a very classical sociological theory of March and Olsen, and then select Shakespearean dramas studying them through the scope of this theory. At the same time, I show that reading Shakespeare helps to "rediscover" even great and working theories from the area of sociology in a new light.

The paper starts with description and analyze of theory of the logic of consequences and logic of appropriateness by March and Olsen. Then it is followed by a comment on classical Shakespearean plays: *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*. At the end, I draw conclusions and present a summary according a chosen sociological theory and a sociological value of Shakespeare work in general.

## **Institutional theory of behavior and politics by March and Olsen**

The American and Norwegian sociologist are representatives of the so-called *New Institutionalism* - a trend of sociology that explores the production of order, systemic cultural and normative tendencies, which allow to function in groups and to predict the behavior of people in modern societies. At the end of 80's, in their famous book entitled: "Rediscovering

Institutions: The Organizational Basics of Politics”, they asked what guides us in making individual and collective decisions. The answer was, in contrast to *Old Institutionalism* (Di Maggio, Powell 2006), that moral systems, social norms, tradition and public opinion are not crucial. They play a fairly important role, but are not the only determinants of actual behavior or even systemic social change. As a consequence, March and Olsen divided human behaviors into two types - those guided by the so-called logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences (March, Olsen 1984).

According to the first logic – the logic of appropriateness – when taking decisions, each of us even subconsciously wonders who he/she is, what norms are involved in this particular action, what is expected of us from society and based on those norms. Then we follow a socially appropriate pattern believing it is moral and correct because the norms say it (we want everyone to do the same). The logic of appropriateness, in eyes of March and Olsen, would be closer to the *Old Institutionalism*. It represents a strong belief in norms, some kind of general mechanism to guide societies making them to some extent predictable, repetitive, conservative (Ibid.). Undoubtedly, many people have always behaved like that and still do.

The logic of consequence, on the other hand, makes us always ask what general options are really available, what we expect from a given situation, what we consider to be most important predicting the potential effects and achieving them as effectively as possible. Then we choose a profit-maximizing action - closer to the rational choice theory (Ibid.). This type of thinking was called the anticipatory action. With change of times, people much more likely follow the logic of consequences than appropriateness – at least according to March and Olsen. It seems viable to some extent but since different groups still keep a logic of appropriateness alive and crucial, some return to it with time (like current right wing movements and parties all around the world) and people may choose different logics in different situations, describing social world and institutions requires understanding both of them (Ibid.). In practice, the presented types of logic look like instructions to make decisions, act, and predict the behavior of others.

**Table 1: Logic of Appropriateness and Logic of Consequences by March and Olsen  
– steps taken according to them when forced to take a decision.**

**a) Logic of Appropriateness (*obligatory action*)**

1. What kind of situation is it?
2. Who am I?
3. To what extent it is appropriate for me to act in this situation?
4. What would others expect from me?
5. The most appropriate action considering those dilemmas is what I should do.

**b) Logic of Consequences (*emancipatory action*)**

1. What are my options?
2. What are my goals?
3. Which rewards/effects are most important for me?
4. What will be the consequences of my choices?
5. Which costs are accepted?
6. The most economic/particularly rewarding action is what I should do.

March and Olsen, however, while rejecting theories of the *Old Institutionalism*, did not stop at classifying the possible logic of behaviors – they went a bit further. While trying to reflect on the role, which politics plays in the whole system of such two-way decision-making - they sought answers from the to the risks of uncertainty, chaos, and anomy drifting in shadow of the logic of consequences going rogue and radical (Di Maggio, Powell 1985). They forged the understanding of politics from the history of many nations, defining politics similar to A. Kłosowska's definition of culture - depending on the form, function and category of participation in it – all coexisting together at the same time but in different dimensions. Thus, they named different types of politics:

a) contextual politics - according to this form of using politics, it is an integral part of the society, not some separate category, but a key subsystem in the analysis of anything else. Society is supposed to consciously create politics (not vice versa and not with the hands of individuals, but only as the whole society) - because only politics allows for the proper harmonization of human groups within the social contract and only it ensures the survival of norms. A policy once created would gain internal autonomy, become a context - it would not be individual, it would not exist as a single action of individual, but as a kind of holistic mechanism, carried out by the hands of actors;

b) politics as reductionist policies – this type of politics derives from the collective behavior of individuals, not from organizations and rules of law, not from society as a whole,

but from a sum of billions of individual behaviors. However, it somehow still allows the society to be harmonized on the basis of norms - simply negotiated, intersubjective and achieving the consensus through collisions. Thus the state and its organization do not seem so important, the system of power either - because everything comes from natural interactions between positions, their relevant strength and alliances. It opens the possibility for the new visionary leaders to emerge and create something new, change the relation of power if needed;

c) politics as utilitarianism policy – this understanding and usage of politics goes even further in particular direction, it considers a political action to be existing solely for a profit and rational consensus. Norms do not even matter at all, politics today is not a value, values do not matter much either - but politics serves as a rational tool, still used to maintain social existence and order, harmony in its entirety based on the rational need of somehow living without killing each other;

d) instrumentalist and e) functionalistic politics – the last types of thinking on politics reduce the problem of politics totally suggesting that they are used only for resource allocation. Rituals, symbols would become invalid, norms and values as well – they are perceived simply as pretty masks of interests and may be unmasked by history itself after enough time passes (March, Olsen 1984).

After describing and classifying those types of politics, March and Olsen formulated their own complete definition of politics as a whole in *New Institutionalism* and again – prepared an organized, structured divide of understanding it.

## **Table 2: Politics as Rational Economic Competition or Chaotic, Temporary Order Creations**

a) <b>Politics as Rational Economic Competition</b> – exists so that there is no need to escalate conflicts, disputes and repair damage between stakeholders once they have reached critical points. Politics serves the purpose of anticipating opportunities, creating
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procedures that actually organize, become social norms and ensure the smooth functioning of societies. It is a vision of a civilized, positive mechanism of making decisions based on:

- information
- needs
- alliances

b) **Politics as Chaotic, Temporary Order Creations** – it allows for a temporary order and, in a way, it secures it in many areas of reality. Since events take place simultaneously, people tend to be selfish, to think with logic of consequences, and we are actually brutally fight among themselves for power and resources. In consequence, instead of killing each other, we act politically seeking even a temporary order of decision making or stability of state and world. This is a negative alternative avoiding decision making based on:

- chaos
- availability of choices and resources (or necessity of managing them better or worse)
- particular passions and interests of both society and individual politicians

March and Olsen present the latter way of understanding politics with the metaphor of the trash bin - everything lands in it and then, in order for society to function, we politically try to segregate the trash. One lucky man finds a golden watch, so he counts on it in the future as well, his expectations are growing, he is pushing more and more among his colleagues, the other one looks for years finding only leftovers; and the world and the contents of the trash bin are constantly changing. There is no question of a stable historical mechanism, all forms of power (monarchy, republic, democracy, dictatorship) can exist, can collapse, but we certainly will not find some great universal theory of what good governance is. In contrary, politics as Rational Economic Competition allows to find a way of harmonizing between particular logic of consequences (particular interests) and creating a stable structure of norms, mechanisms of solving conflicts and civilized mathematical competition.

## **Shakespeare's Plays through the scope the Logic of Appropriateness and Logic of Consequences**

### *Julius Caesar*

The first Shakespearean drama analyzed in the paper presents a dilemma of power. Power is very interesting topic in Shakespeare's works because it is totally different than

depictions of depressing, cruel psychological, social or historical mechanisms that push people into tragic, self-destructing events (Macbeth, Hamlet) typical of Shakespeare. When it is about a power understood as a phenomena itself we are dealing with a completely different story. It combines the themes of jealousy, cold thinking, deceit, truly human weaknesses and virtues (Cassius) with a morally pure, idealistic faith in authority, in norms, in honorable conduct of those who reach for power (Brutus). There also appears a figure completely outside these theoretical positions, the divine Caesar, and the stage is history, the period of transformation of the former Roman Republic into an Empire. Julius Caesar is a more "optimistic" and "true" vision of power than romantic depictions, which is why it is worth starting with it.

How we will proceed with the interpretation depends on the approach. I propose to act like Bloom, i.e., to make Caesar a permanent point of reference through which we look at the rest (Bloom, 1995-a) but my theoretical scope is March and Olsen - not the pagan hero, the ancient Romans, the philosophies of ancient Europe like in typical Bloom texts. Fortunately, in context of March and Olsen theory, Caesar is still an exceptional, "immovable" character - he exists as if totally outside of the order of the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences. Practically all his actions reveal the characteristics of both at different times or even at the same time - starting with the constant rejection of the crown (does he do so because he knows what the consequences will be, he chooses a strategically better action, or is he guided by what he should do or not do in relation to the people, in relation to the expectations towards Caesar-God so he does not accept something tempting for the sake of values and symbolical meaning of him for the Rome?). He has a very abstract approach to his own life (repeated statements about fate, necessity, trust and prophecy, calls himself in the third person, understands the true nature of his political collaborators to the key scene of leaving home and going to the important feast perfectly aware of danger (did he go thinking about the consequences, accepting the risks because the consequences would be more destructive, or did he really believe in norms, in the "appropriate" behavior of the society and political adversaries not really killing him in such a situation – because of norms, logic of appropriateness - or was he guided by the appropriateness of his own choices - in the context of creating the image of the divine Caesar? ).

In the end, when so much things are unclear, it is only when we approach Caesar from outside of the order of the logic of appropriateness and the logic of the consequences by March and Olsen that we can fully understand the indispensability, even the necessity, of the existence of such a character/being/situation which is not covered by the theory - through it we can see a theory itself, like with light and darkness – without darkness we will not be aware that light exists. Admittedly, we may classify quite clearly the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences of Brutus and Cassius correctly, because in my opinion they are quite simple, stereotypical for Shakespeare's plays. Cassius - a hard-tempered, jealous, but effective strategist who is not afraid to use deceit, is, of course, the embodiment of the logic of consequences (emancipation!), while Brutus with his old-fashioned necessity to legitimize actions with a sense of honor, but also with his personal characteristics of naivety and lack of strategic thinking, presents the logic of appropriateness (duty). Both, however, exist only in relation to Caesar; Caesar, like the law of gravity, defines their space of possibilities, shapes their characters - consciously or not.

Shakespeare draws a rather dark scenario for this configuration of characters in Julius Caesar. It is at the same time, according to one of the possible interpretations, a black scenario for the logic of appropriateness itself. After all, we are dealing with the final loss of a representative of pure, noble duty (Brutus and his beloved are dying). The "positive" dimension of the logic of consequences also loses (since Cassius can be considered a positive figure in comparison with Antony – a real bad guy following only his needs and the radical logic of consequences). Caesar obviously is killed in a literal sense while becoming a victim of Freud's “founding murder of a father” phenomenon – a murder to gain autonomy by next generations and to create the “founding myth” of the ideal father of the nation to be followed and inherited by the next rulers (Dybel 2009). We may ask whether we can go beyond the classical interpretation of this murder in relation to the founding of the “great mechanism” of power in general, which naturally puts people in such repeating configurations of always replaying scenarios of the founding murder again and again with individualism of characters actually irrelevant (Cott 1962). In opposite, I suggest to treat it as a basis for the creation of an order of the logic of appropriateness and logic of consequences (their actual institutionalization - because they bring results, because the Freudian sons realize the existence of these two orders and their real effects - and Caesar's unrivalled freedom from the

order of logic of appropriateness/sequence defines them but must die – it is a founding murder of the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences). Thus, Antony or Octavius become the winners of consequence - the most effective, cold, strategically thinking and acting in accordance with rationality from beginning to end, and in abstraction from any appropriateness, generally triumphs.

Is this also a key moment for March and Olsen's interpretation of the politics? Does Shakespeare suggest that contextual politics (formerly Greek-Roman style one) is dying, the instrumental ones are winning, so from now on - either rational economic competition should be applied, or we may only construct the temporary, chaotic order for a time being? Is this what the collapse of the elite and the gradual handing over of power to a growing number of people from a king/emperor 2000 years ago looked like? Or is Shakespeare, in line with Kott's interpretation (1962), on the side of defining timeless politics precisely as this “great mechanism”, which overwrites and creates a context for anything else?

I do not think any of the conclusions would be ultimately correct. Shakespeare wrote in Victorian England, under certain conditions found, which Kott mentioned (the slaughter of dozens of kings on the steps of the ladder of power) (Ibid.). At that time there was no mention of any of the definitions of power described and raised by modern people. In my opinion, Shakespeare has rather noted long-standing patterns in human behavior and the repetition of symbolic social roles or entire historical events (i.e., more Bloom (1995-a) approach than Cott one (1962)). He discovered a very strong tension between what March and Olsen later called the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences. Perhaps these mechanisms are ancient even, today politicians are entangled in the same dilemmas, nicely classified by March and Olsen, but the problem lies elsewhere. The search for a definition of politics according to any of the later categories or the creation of one's own category of a great mechanism does not seem fruitful, especially since Kott did the work in a yet meaningful way (1962).

Thus, in my analytical system, *Julius Caesar* play can already reveal some hints on the shades of grey and something that escapes the institutional order at all. That is, tensions exist regardless of whether people act morally, "properly" or whether they are guided by selfish interests and "bad" morality. This problem, however, is fully manifested in the next two

works. For the time being, let us treat the history of the Caesar as an introduction - we realize the existence of two logic types by immobilizing the symbolic Caesar and putting him out of order - as a god. In this way, the story reveals the areas of interests of other characters and defines the basic possibilities of taking actions – and defines the future types of politics being used – those described by March and Olsen.

## *King Lear*

Continuing the presented course of thinking, the next drama of Shakespeare can be treated as one more step forward. It would be an openly asked question (already with a moral tint) - a question which logic by March and Olsen wins, which is more profitable, what happens to politics and power in a country, when we choose an unequivocal answer, we will trust it. One may wonder whether Shakespeare himself, writing *King Lear* after *Julius Caesar*, after *Hamlet* filled with ambiguities, questions and shades of grey, but before dark, depraved *Macbeth*, wanted to show the consequences of events and people's actions (as a historical lesson). It is intriguing whether he was interested in appropriateness, morality or the cold mathematical analyze of how the world works? It is refreshing when we recall that he was once a person of blood and bones, he wrote plays for something, lived from something, dreamed of something, planned, wanted to go to a nice place for holidays. Undoubtedly, he himself was wondering whether he should do the right thing or maybe he should just earn money for a next dinner? The usefulness of reading Shakespeare through the sociological theory of March and Olsen becomes even more visible.

King Lear, believing in the effectiveness of social norms, in family morality, in love of his daughters, would be a really tragic person - a model of naivety in the logic of appropriateness. It seems to be so clear and even scream at the reader. The question is whether Lear is really the personification of the order of appropriateness - if he was, why did he banish his only sincerely devoted daughter? He obviously behaved inappropriately, and even the pretended pertinence in front of the crowd was more important to him than morals and truth. So is Lear a hypocrite or an extreme fool? Hard to say. The very mechanism of determining the inheritance and dividing of the kingdom seems, in turn, to be indeed the logic of the consequences (it honestly grants him holidays in peace and separates possibly

conflicted children by giving something to each of them). Perhaps again - a character causing tension - that is, both at once - a fool without a reason - a fool appearing and existing out of a beautiful social theory. He could use both types of logic as a god for the new generation to choose one and fight, which wins. The problem is that the logic of consequences should not lead to such stupid, unpredictable decisions by King Lear himself. Why assume that daughters would be more grateful to him and thus take better (more generous) care of him?

In this play, the "immobile" figure in relation to which we define the other characters becomes an ordinary man - a ruler, yes – but ridiculous in comparison with the divine Caesar and obviously not in a position of a God, which Caesar had. This is the great revolution, which reading of Shakespeare in context of March and Olsen theory introduces. We are dealing with a main character, who still outlines a space of possible events, but not at the level of the god. This is not the founding murder, the symbolic, powerful historical machine defining what politics and history will be like in case of Caesar. Lear is just an ordinary man in a crown - a bit stupid, a bit lost, a bit naive, just wanting a comfortable life, no problems, no thinking too much. Social theory always attribute laziness, indecision, social withdrawal, anything like that to some hidden property of individuals or the social structure. For Lear, there is however no social structure or anomy responsible for slacking. Everything simply happens - without much reason the king goes crazy, comes up with a completely stupid, cosmic idea and for no reason later escapes into further inactivity, theoretically being able to invade the castles of both daughters with an army of 200 knights he took and become a king again. This, however would impose obligations. This was not the point of the king's early retirement (the very idea for a retirement of a king deserves a Nobel Prize for Shakespeare - this is what the theory of power is basically unable to consume). In the end, it seems that some people may be even at highest positions without having a reason to – their main reason is to slack off and have an easy life in comfort. It totally destroys the logic of appropriateness and consequences when such a person takes bad decisions using the later. Caesar was a wise figure enabling others to realize and use one of logics he impersonated at the same time while King Lear is a black ship symbolical founder – he also has a power of using both but makes mistakes and in reality, he does not want to take any responsibility, take any action if it endangers his comfort.

Goneril, Regan, Prince of Cornwall, Prince of Wales and Edgar are all representations of the logic of consequences (emancipation). They do not care about principles, traditions, they are extremely emancipated, they think only of their own interest, the family is of no value to them - they sacrifice it without a blink of an eye, they use it for manipulations. Shakespeare draws a very interesting conclusion here - if Lear would be treated as a tragic victim of the logic of appropriateness (that is, in the simplest way – because he believes in norms, in the family, in the care of his daughters even if realizing particular interests from logic of consequences, he needs to believe in morals of others to base his strategy of avoiding troubles), then in the history of his daughters, princes and Edgar we see an identical necessity of the fall of the extreme, cynical logic of consequences. It can be as naive as the logic of appropriateness and, contrary to the positive dimension of the rationality of interests in theories of March and Olsen, here it brings an identical tragedy. If King Lear would be a person of logic of consequences, then the whole story between those characters becomes a devastating power of particularities also leading to tragedy. Nothing changes depending on Lear interpretation. Interpretations of other characters remain crucial. Those are clearly a story of tragic of the logic of consequences when it becomes radical and self-centred, greedy, extreme.

Speaking of further characters, I suggest treating Cordelia as the amusing embodiment of the logic of appropriateness - a who loves "as duty dictates", whether she is actually virtuous and moral, or simply mindless but with a great dedication, fulfilling the expected role. She walks like an empty shell, she does not do any evil, everyone loves her and considers her extremely fragile, pure. However, it also ends badly. She seems to play an important role, but the story of the drama would probably go the same way if she died/committed suicide right at the beginning. From this point of view, she is placed there only to be a model personification of the logic of appropriateness like her sisters are her opposite – the logic of consequences. Both types of characters radical, extreme and all end tragically.

It is certainly impossible to analyze Edmund in exactly the same way but he is probably the only "positive" personification of the logic of appropriation in the drama but in the end, he wins (he stands alive in the courtyard, with a very ambiguous Kent). After all, eventually, Edmund survived, won, rejected passivity and took action - he killed Edgar,

restored order to the kingdom. The logic of appropriateness triumphed (unless the King of France suddenly releases troops and takes the whole pool of winnings – he could theoretically do it).

The figure of Kent again seems very interesting with regard to what reading Shakespeare brings to the theory of March and Olsen. He is a very faithful, honest aristocrat, associated rather with the old order, i.e. old institutionalism, appropriateness, faith in honor, morals, norms. On the other hand, he thinks most rationally. If Edmund were equivalent to Brutus from *Julius Caesar*, Kent is a more positive strategist-Cassius. He does not allow the King to go mad, on the one hand, he fulfils the logic of appropriateness and at the same time he breaks it in relation to another social field (the servant criticizes the King). This is not yet so important, because perhaps the appropriateness of the universal good was above the appropriateness of conventions and feudal norms. Later on, however, he deliberately lies - in order to upset the king, to speed up the inevitable he acts directly according to the logic of consequences. Such characters in shades of grey would therefore appear more and more often in Shakespeare (believing the chronology of plays presented by historians in relation to when he wrote the dramas in question). The story of the *Merchant of Venice*, where basically all the main characters combine the logic of consequences and appropriateness at once, is somewhat disturbing. I will say that Shakespeare saw various tensions between what people should do and what they want to do. He has also seen the role of politics as a related element - whether it creates context or allows one to treat it instrumentally to achieve the goals.

While for my analytical perspective, *Julius Caesar* outlined the field, it opened it up thanks to the divine figure out of order, thanks to the founding murder at the level of the heavens (god, rulers of Rome) and defined something called by the March with Olsen the logic of appropriateness/consequence, *King Lear* transfers the situation more to the standard of living of ordinary people - even though it tells the story of kings and aristocracy. The folk does not appear in *King Lear* at all, while around the figure of Julius Caesar it played a significant role, but *King Lear* shows the mechanisms present among the people - among all of us - is more "approachable" for a typical person, and at the same time begins to show the tensions in social theory, which Shakespeare's theory of society can somehow expose. *Julius Caesar* is more a history of power, politics, larger systems, and the question of predictability,

possible ways to make a change, to transfer power. In *King Lear* the system itself is not in the center of the story.

### *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

The next drama is obviously a romantic comedy. Therefore, love would seem to be a natural subject, but as it happens in Shakespeare's works, we will actually find a few deep philosophical considerations on many levels and from many areas. What interests me most in the context of this paper is the question of order vs. chaos, self-agency vs falling again into the tribes of something we cannot influence. Auden followed a similar course in his lectures and essays on Shakespeare, focusing directly on nature and man, their relationships and relationships with each other (Auden 1959). I admit that this text has inspired me to use the "immovable" perspective character, but on a par with Bloom, which does not prevent me from honoring Auden as well (Ibid.; Bloom 1995-a).

So, once again, we would be faced with the discovery of a dynamic world by placing such a "motionless" being at the center. This time, Shakespeare decides to make such a figure a couple: Theseus and his fiancée - Hippolyta. They are standing on the side of everything - in a way. They observe the struggle between chaos and order, the logic of consequence and the logic of appropriateness, and their love is the only one capable of combining the two. They are people of blood and bones, you might even consider them the main lovers. It does not appeal to me to interpret this as only a strategic-based marriage without love - that is, a marriage in the logic of consequences. They seem to be happy lovers without problems, in a healthy relationship (leaving aside mythology and what was before because we study a play here). Here, however, they can act as judges for the rest - even for the magical world, although not literally. They are not touched by problems in love, in principle not even by Puk, because they are not supposed to be the answer to the question of order/chaos and the chances of reconciling different systems of love and reason. The rest of the relationships in *Midsummer Night's Day's Dream* allows us to make a thesis about the contradiction of feelings with order, with social acceptance, with the fact that they become happily appropriate. There is always something standing in the way, whether from the logic of appropriateness or the logic of consequences.

However, both stormy relationships of other characters driving the storyline basically form a square. There are the happy lovers of the logic of consequences: emancipated Lysander and Hermia, who are hindered by the logic of appropriateness (father's will and right - custom, social norm). They decide to escape and win with destiny, that is, they introduce chaos by valuing their own happiness more highly (typical logic of consequences). There are also emancipated or not, but certainly unhappy in love Demetrius and Helena. In the end, everyone is against order (mainly Lysander with Hermia as an active action takers, and poor Demetrius a little bit independently of his own will - because his lack of love for Helena brings chaos - which I will write about in a moment, because it is an extremely interesting and overlooked by the interpreters).

All four of them, however, are in a way "punished" by the personification of order - that is, nature (from the forest) - the kingdom of fairy-tale creatures - Oberon, Titans, fairies and the mysterious Puk. Theoretically, mythical creatures are supposed to represent the order, which in itself should be undoubtedly associated with the logic of consequences (nature does not know the idea of appropriateness, no norms - they are the creations of culture, the creations of man). The problem with Shakespeare's genius is that in the kingdom of nature we have analogous marital problems. We do not know how to understand them even - as a betrayal of Titania with a human or as an unjustified jealousy of Oberon about Titania, his greed for a beautiful servant/spouse, or something else? We face a double problem of ambiguity when we realize that those who punished the people's love quadrangle were not at all Oberon and Titania - that is, not the official authority, not the personification of the kingdom of magic (if we treat the kingdom of nature as Auden (1952-a)). The punishment was not given by nature. It was obviously Puk who did it - but, which is crucial - by a mistake. Was it really a mistake or maybe a conscious move by e.g. a mighty god/demon, stronger than Oberon and Titans, hiding only in the form of a funny Puk? If we are not dealing with another conspiracy theory, i.e. Puk is simply Puk, then it turns out that Oberon is actually fighting for order, for predictability, for everything to be in place, everything to end happily. The ruler of the kingdom of nature wants to restore the situation he should be in? This is the pure logic of appropriateness, not of consequence, and nature would have to be

based on the logic of consequence alone. And the unsolvable problem remains – who actually is Puk? A servant or a hidden master?

This brings us to the point where the reading of Shakespeare through the scope of March and Olsen theory reaches its climax. It turns out that we have many equally rational interpretations on a key issue. The whole range of unsolvable tensions, intertwined by chance, fate, which do not fit into the scheme, tell the story of ordinary people's lives. If so, then after all, it should be grasped and explained by the social theory - for example of March and Olsen. Does Puk, Oberon, whoever acting in some context, instrumentalizes politics? Do Theseus and Hippolyte do it?. Shakespeare's theory is different from the sociological ones in the end. Sociological theory shows general trends well, it allows to capture a certain tendencies better, which in itself gives a lot but it gets tangled up in details. Shakespeare's theory does not give a clear picture of big constructs - everyone thinks they have found it and that they know what Shakespeare generally says about power, about people, about this, about that, while the Englishman actually pays great attention to details, differences, shades of grey and does not offer the only right ideology at all. Here, in turn, social/philosophical/psychological/historical theory comes in handy to put the details from a given play into a broader context or analytical field but the details still exist and always remind that general theory has flaws and limitations due to the quite a big amount of chaos in the world escaping the structured description. However, Shakespeare does not fall into the trap of chaos theory - he shows it, while avoiding and allowing to find patterns, order, some general interpretations of chaos because it would be trying to force it into the order – a theory of chaos.

Going further, I am not convinced that the ending ending of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* has a direct reference to its action and is as important as one assumes. The role of the theater in the theater, the performance of art in the play become a kind of statement and reflection of Shakespeare thoughts on the theater, on his work, on himself (or herself?). Of course, it shows some reference to masks, to social roles, to general philosophy, because that is actually what theater is all about, but I would be afraid to draw any bigger conclusions on the rest of the drama from it. This is because we all skip a small detail - again not matching all the interpretations already done. The state reached at the end of the drama is somewhat strange - there is a happy ending, a calming of the situation in both kingdoms - earthly and

magical/natural, but in fact the situation is not "clean" and resolved at all. Everything functions, we are not dealing with another tragedy, because one of the lovers of the earth realm is still and forever under the spell of Oberon/Puk. We experience a happy end at somebody's expense (after all, Demetrius truly loved Hermia, did not fall in love with Helena of his own choice). Theoretically, everything would have ended in the same way if Puk had not introduced chaos and enchanted the right young man - after all, it was about coercion, incapacitation of a particular participant of the affair, introducing the risk of chaos unconsciously - not by his own choice. What is more – Puk seems the character closest to the logic of appropriateness. Demetrius would have married Hermia, maybe she would betray him, maybe she could kill him, maybe Lizander would do it, maybe jealous Helena. Still, Demetrius would not have pushed the first block of the dominoes. But is it Kott's unavoidable great mechanism of history (1962)? Or maybe we are dealing with Shakespeare's discovery of the social role of the "black sheep" and making it more and more important in his plays?

From another perspective, Helena is the only character in a truly "nightmarish situation". Hermia and Lizander love each other happily - they are disturbed by their father's decision, but they know that each of them wants to oppose. Demetrius will be lucky if he believes in the laws and norms as a guarantor of anything, and in the logic of consequences understood as the effects of Hermia and Lysander's actions. He undoubtedly believes and assumes that no normal person will reject everything, risk his life for love - all the more so when even preserving biological life is a loss of social life. Therefore, at least he does not know that he is a tragic figure, he is certainly not certain of failure, not very unhappy (at least before Puk starts guiding him with his tricks). Only Helena is aware of the tragedy of the situation in which she finds herself. Maybe not in English but in Polish language, her actions can be interpreted in two ways - interestingly, depending on the translation. The first translator (Barańczak) attributed the woman's desire for revenge on Demetrius, Lysander and Hermia when she informed the former about the couple's escape plan. The second translated the last lines of Helena's monologue in a "positive" way for her (Ulrich) - i.e., Helena does not want joy from the pain in Demetrius' gaze at all - she is even so in love and so devoted that she will be happy with every look of her beloved or at her beloved – whatever happens. Helena even understands her masochism, she knows about the pain that awaits her - after all, she helps Hermia, and yet she talks about everything with Demetrius. If Ulrich's translation

(which is very close to the original, when Baranczak, in my opinion, is writing a very loose license of a poet) is considered correct, Helena does not do anything wrong with premeditation - it is rather a toxic love - also a little disrupting the ordered social theory.

## *The Merchant of Venice*

The question about the logic of appropriateness and the logic of consequences can also be asked in relation to Shakespearean Venice. Is it a merchant republic with a policy of rational economic competition, where everyone lives in free environment, norms function fully rationally with a necessary minimum of law? Or maybe we are dealing with a multicultural, chaotic temporary order, shaking at the seams when any problem arises between Jews, Christians and traders? Is it about what is measured by money, or about the deep differences between religions and cultures at the level of the logic of appropriateness? Is politics a context of actions or just an instrument used? It is difficult to decide. In fact, I would venture to say that from the beginning, law was created precisely to reconcile it with itself, and in this sense, Shakespeare would once again teach us to look at the theories of politics and the logics by March and Olsen as something present, correct but not without its flaws when we get into details.

The conflict between the main characters - Antonio and Shylock - takes place on many levels. Differences can be found at the level of logic of appropriateness between religions. Some claim that virtues of contract/right are characteristic to Judaism and non-conditional mercy to Christianity. In this perspective, the difference in what is most important to whom in perspective of appropriateness (morally, and therefore, what is appropriate) becomes apparent. On the other hand, each participant in the conflict thinks about the consequences of a given choice, a given value, and uses the logic of consequences for his own good in court - insisting or agreeing to cut out the symbolic pound of the body or not, arguing. Therefore, in spite of everything, Antonio accepts the help offered, does not go under the knife to show honor, principles or other nonnegotiable virtues. At the same time, the money is not able to buy him out of grace or Shylock's disfavor when all interested offer to pay back three times the debt. Is it really the logic of lawfulness itself (the law is the basis of Venice, everything according to Shylock and also according to Antonio will break apart without it) or the logic of

lawfulness consequences (signing this, not another contract)? The whole story of the main thread of action allows us to see the tension between the coexisting logic of appropriateness and consequences. The direct reference to the laws - that is, in association with them - to the instrument of ordering is extremely interesting. It may be worthwhile to recall Montesquieu, Tocqueville and Mill, but in this way I would open up more themes requiring the whole books as a comment instead of a short scientific paper, so I must refrain.

Apparently it would be wiser to describe the other characters of the drama in scope of March and Olsen theories. The symbolic "princesses" in Merchant of Venice - that is, Portia with Nerissa - also show clear tensions in sociological theory. Apart from the second woman, because she is less important here and functions, in my opinion, as a "fifth wheel at the wagon" for Shakespeare's theory - i.e. "every woman must have the best friend in her shadow" - then Portia herself is bound by the logic of appropriateness by her father. She respects this will and wants to obey it (Bloom 1995-b). She rebels and emancipates very late, and since she understands perfectly well what the links of the logic of appropriateness are, she can use it as a negotiating asset in the process and, based on the logic of consequences, win the whole game - but it happens very late - this specific transition from one logic to another by using the binds of the previously believed one. It is, of course, female emancipation in a pure sense (she still dresses up as a Lawyer male however), but can it be so easily translated into emancipatory action (logic of consequences) in the March and Olsen system? Unlikely, it is not clear. Portia draws her strength from the connection or rather from the conscious play of tensions. It is Shakespearean theory that reveals these tensions, while social theory omits, even annihilating different phenomena for a better reasoning on a general level.

The test in a play itself serves, of course, the purpose of choosing the future Portia's husband. The Prince of Morocco chooses the highest value metal - gold. The choice is typical for the aristocracy. He does not believe that Portia (reward-wife) should be compared to other metals - after all, it would be inappropriate, the lawful culture appreciates norms, appreciates and imposes noble values - even objects. The Prince of Aragon thinks with a cautious rationality. He does not seek the gold to which everyone sigh, according to him, in silver "everyone will get what he or she is worth". Although the principle seems most appropriate, it is a more empirical, material and mathematical measure. It is connected with meritocracy,

with the right profit for the right contribution - that is, an effect born of the consequence of work. The merchant, on the other hand, rejects both logics and... in effect receives the highest reward - the hand of Portia. This can be treated as a criticism of social relations, it can be said that neither aristocratic virtues nor bureaucratic and mathematical rules should be translated into fields such as love. There is even a third interpretation - theoretically, love, such an unobvious one would offer solutions to tensions, solutions to the shortcomings of rigid, ordered categories.

Antonio's great friend Bassanio also has a shadow companion - Gratiano. It is very difficult to say anything on both logics of March and Olsen here. On one hand, both men are actually related to Antonio, on the other hand, especially Bassanio is able to play on the logic of appropriateness to get help, loan, while not too concerned about returning as much in terms of behavior or feelings. Whether he is Antonio's lover or simply a friend, he takes it on the basis of a sense of friendship, and this is not enough to give back anything. He knows and understands clearly the logic of appropriateness, uses it, but avoids reciprocating. Both protagonists also avoid the blade of the logic of consequences - after all, they gave their fiancé's rings in gratitude to their "advocates". Nevertheless, everything melts in the air. Maybe it is worth asking the question why? Isn't it another suggestion from Shakespeare that the world doesn't function according to the rules of institutionalization, which are arranged, fully anticipated and repetitive? If it did, there would be no wedding at all in the end. But if the rings, the trial, the law had no meaning, i.e. there was no logic of appropriateness, we wouldn't see the "happy ending" either.

Finally, I will just mention that Shylock's daughter Jessica and her beloved Launcelot fall directly into one of the types of March and Olsen logic. They present a classically understood youthful rebellion, emancipation in accordance with the simplest possible logic of consequence, which could still - even with difficulty, but still - be attributed to characters from other Shakespeare's dramas.

A little perversely, and according to my nature, I would ask about the role of the "SS" group in the Merchant of Venice - that is Salarino and Solanio. They comment on various events, but are not a typical choir. Perhaps they represent another incarnation of the folk

opinion in Shakespeare - this time a folk completely indifferent to the logic of consequences nor appropriateness. I think it would be as much fun for them to kick Shylock in some black alley as it would be to watch Antonio bleeding out after a lost trial. What does this say about politics, about an ordered sociological theory? Again, it does not fit – sometimes the bloody wolves take place of any logic just without a reason and the whole institutionalism somehow – misses the point or turns off for a while to reboot.

## Conclusions

The time has come, therefore, to sum up briefly what I have drawn reading the theory of March and Olsen through the prism of William Shakespeare's “social theory” in his plays. First of all, I came across more tensions, ambiguous interpretations, than clear assignments and places where ordered categories would sufficiently cover their epiphenomena. Secondly, however, it turns out that the modern language of the new institutionalism is very well spoken about certain properties of the world, of the human psyche, of the behaviors of the past even and is able to explain many of them – even if partially, than properly in general.

I think I also managed to show that it is good to look at political events and those connected with Shakespeare's power depiction in categories more open than an unambiguous interpretation that “Shakespeare considered power to be dangerous, demoralizing, leading to the tragedy of defenseless individuals and turning us in its wheels”. This is too much of a generalization, and as I have also deduced - Shakespeare's view on society and institutions copes better with diversity, with many details and subtle details - that we are trying to inscribe it into a general, nice contemporary vision of sociological theory.

The New Institutionalism in its approach towards politics would offer the opportunity to look at politics, or specific stories of Shakespeare's rulers, as systems, tools, structures, or perhaps even networks of repetitive, well-established, but fully variable, modifiable, and above all, very diverse possibilities from the whole spectrum. It is the diversity contained in

each concept, type of personality, different stories in very similar environments and conditions that Shakespeare's genius teaches.

It may be as an alternative to typical practice, that Shakespeare's unevenness of form and history of power reveals further tensions in classifying politics deterministically as rational economic competition or chaotic, temporary creation of order. Perhaps, depending on the times, the region, the culture, and even the personalities of individuals, groups, and people, we will most often find politics that completely escapes these categories created by March and Olsen. Sometimes, it will actually resemble, with a high degree of probability, one of them - then we will say so eagerly. At another point, unimaginable things become reality, reality in turn does not work rationally. Sometimes it even creates new forms of rationality of its own - too complex to describe with a universal model. I do not know what direction we are following as a humanity, it may be not proper to try saying if it is good or bad - we can certainly draw some conclusions from Shakespeare's historiographic approach and simply try to predict how the application of the logic of appropriateness or the logic of consequences to specific situations will result in given results, and how the world cannot be considered in these categories at all. Perhaps, however, a similar state of affairs has already existed in past, in a different political system, in different times, brought about some results that Shakespeare's social theory, philosophy, literature has captured. Then we are still capable of anticipating, reacting, learning to do good in some sense.

Reading Shakespeare through March and Olsen and vice versa shows, perhaps most tangibly, that the majority of population that has fallen into the category of not necessarily a certain logic of appropriateness and not necessarily a certain logic of consequences is the part closest to the average life. One can spread the stories of kings, look for a great mechanism, choose the biographies of individual, very interesting personalities, but there will always be people, who are imperfect, "ordinary" beings after all. On the other hand, and logic of consequences and appropriateness terms dictate the execution of the order for the as best as we can, regardless of the flaws in the tools, and understanding what happens around us. This is probably a funny statement, as well as a kind of paradox to which social theory is allergic again, but willingly consumes art, theater, also in the person of Shakespeare. Perhaps it is worth asking ourselves how many Kings Lear's have actually appeared in our real life? That is

why sociology has been revolving around the works of the English legendary poet for years, seeking authorial social theory, but that is why every now and then works such as mine are created, trying to expand and make it more flexible to look at "great" and big theories with more distance. Shakespeare was able to emphasize the tensions of social life, he placed the action in the most important scenes of the world, where change took place and where history was created. So let us learn from him, from his works even longer and interpret the same classical plays in a new light again and again.

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