



## REVISITING SHAKESPEARE'S MEASURE FOR MEASURE: A PROBLEM PLAY IN TERMS OF THE ISSUE OF JUSTICE <sup>1</sup>

SHAKESPEARE'İN "MEASURE FOR MEASURE" ADLI OYUNUNA YENİDEN BAKIŞ: ADALET KONUSU AÇISINDAN PROBLEM OYUNU

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### Abstract

*William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure (1603) has been categorised as a problem play since the eighteenth century. However, scholars and critics have provided different views about what makes the play a problem play. The problem in genre, the darkness in tone and the unsatisfactory ending have been examined as the problematic features of the play. The aim of this article is to analyse Measure for Measure as a problem play in relation to the issue of justice. It will be demonstrated that Angelo, who takes over the management in the absence of the Duke, abuses justice through the strict enforcement of law eliminating the element of mercy while the Duke abuses justice as he monitors the corruption instead of fighting it, and exploits his subjects through tricks. Thus, Angelo's abuse of justice is related to the law whereas the Duke destroys his subjects' sense of justice. Accordingly, the questions which are raised in the minds of the audience/readers about the place of the spirit of the law in the enforcement of law, and the Duke's desire to stay in the background while being indirectly, though actively, involved in the action will also be examined as the features which make Measure for Measure a problem play.*

### Öz

*William Shakespeare'in Measure for Measure oyunu (1603), on sekizinci yüzyıldan bu yana problem oyunu olarak sınıflandırılmaktadır. Ancak bilim insanları ve eleştirmenler, oyunu problem oyunu yapan özellikler konusunda farklı fikirler sunmuşlardır. Oyundaki edebi tür problemi, oyunun üslubundaki belirsizlik ve okuyucuyu/izleyici tatmin etmeyen sonu, oyunu problem oyunu yapan özellikler olarak incelenmiştir. Bu makalenin amacı, Measure for Measure oyununu adalet konusunun ele alınışı açısından problem oyunu olarak incelemektir. Dük'ün yokluğu sırasında yönetimi devralan Angelo, merhamet ilkesini yok sayarak kanunları katı bir şekilde uygular ve adaleti kötüye kullanır. Dük ise ülkede artan yozlaşmayı engellemek yerine izler ve oynadığı oyunlarla vatandaşlarını kendi çıkarı için kullanır. Dolayısıyla, Angelo'nun adaleti kötüye kullanması kanunlarla ilgiliyken, Dük, vatandaşlarının adalet duygusunu yok eder. Buna bağlı olarak, kanunların uygulanmasında kanunun ruhunun yeri ve Dük'ün dolaylı ancak aktif bir şekilde olaya dâhil olurken geri planda kalmayı istemesi konularında seyircinin/okuyucunun kafasında oluşan sorular Measure For Measure oyununu problem oyunu yapan özellikler olarak incelenecektir.*

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*Measure for Measure* (1603) has been studied by various Shakespearean scholars and critics as a problem play, which is a term appropriated by Frederick Boas, especially from the plays of the nineteenth century playwrights like Henrik Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw, in order to refer to the problematic issues in the structure of *Hamlet* (1599-1601), *All's Well That Ends Well* (1601-1602), *Troilus and Cressida* (1603) and *Measure for Measure* (1603) (345). Samuel Johnson finds *Measure for Measure* problematic as it is the darkest play of Shakespeare (qtd. in Halliday 238). Edward Dowden points to the play's tone by defining it as "dark and bitter" (vi) while Boas highlights the generic ambiguity and the difficulty of classifying the play (345).

<sup>1</sup> This article is an abridged version of the third chapter of my unpublished PhD thesis entitled "Revisiting Shakespeare's Problem Plays: The Merchant of Venice, Hamlet and Measure for Measure".

Eustace Tillyard deals with the problem in content and resembles the play to “[...] *the genuinely abnormal child, whom no efforts will ever bring back to normality*” (10). For Arthur Percival Rossiter, the generic ambiguity (116) and the ending which generates a discussion about certain issues without providing satisfactory solutions (128) are the main features of *Measure for Measure* as a problem play. Similarly, Peter Ure argues that the ending of the play is doubtful with respect to the multiple interpretations it provides (52). According to Ernest Schanzer, the problematic aspect of *Measure for Measure* is the “[...] *double vision and the divided, problematic response*” of the audience/readers to the main characters and incidents in the play (184). While Richard Wheeler emphasises the uncertainty of genre and the conflicts which are left unresolved at the end of the play (3-4), Vivian Thomas lays stress on the generic ambiguity and the open-endedness (21). Last, Edward Risdén studies *Measure for Measure* as a problem play in terms of genre and the questions it poses (9). Therefore, each scholar and critic has focused on different aspects which make *Measure for Measure* a problem play.

Hence, different from these scholars and critics who have analysed *Measure for Measure* as a problem play in terms of genre, tone and the problematic ending, this article aims at analysing the play as a problem play in terms of the issue of justice. Accordingly, it will be argued that the issue of justice is problematised in the play. In this respect, Angelo’s abuse of justice through the strict enforcement of law by disregarding its spirit; and the Duke’s abuse of justice through the employment of disguise and his attitude towards Lucio, Isabella, Mariana and Barnardine will be dealt with in detail. It will be demonstrated that the Duke’s delegating his power to Angelo turns Angelo a tyrant. Angelo ignores the importance of mercy in the enforcement of law, and rules by the letter of the law. It will also be displayed that the Duke abuses justice because he controls the course of events through disguise instead of intervening with Angelo’s unjust practices. He uses his absolute power to punish Lucio, and takes advantage of Isabella, Mariana and Barnardine through the bed-trick and the head-trick. Hence, it will be argued that Angelo abuses justice in legal matters, which poses a dilemma for the audience/readers about whether to be stuck to the letter of the law or regard the spirit of the law while the Duke fails to give justice to his subjects. It will be concluded that the attitudes of the two rulers to the exercise of justice, though they use different means, raise questions, which are left unanswered, in the minds of the audience/readers regarding the issue of justice. The audience/readers are shocked at Angelo’s relentless attitude in the enforcement of law and his indifference to the

judicial regulations along with the matter of forgiveness while they ask why the Duke prefers to monitor the events rather than being directly involved in the action, which causes his subjects to suffer. In this regard, first, Angelo's abuse of justice in Claudio's case and in his relationship with the lower-class people will be studied. Then the Duke's abuse of justice through his disguise, the bed-trick and the head-trick will be presented.

After the Duke delegates his power to Angelo, "[a] man of stricture and firm abstinence" (Shakespeare, I.iii.12), to rule the country in his absence and "[l]ent him [his] terror, drest him with [his] love, / And given his deputation all the organs / Of [his] own power" (I.i.19-21), Angelo uses the law to control people and severely punish the guilty regardless of the type of crime they commit. In his statements about the enforcement of law, Angelo disregards the importance of mercy: "We must not make a scarecrow of the law, / Setting it up to fear the birds of prey, / And let it keep one shape till custom make it / Their perch, and not their terror" (II.i.1-4). Therefore, it may be deduced that for Angelo, the law should spread terror among people to prevent them from performing illegal acts and keep everybody under the control of the government. The first practice of Angelo as a ruler reflect his thoughts about the enforcement of law. As Miss Overdone puts forth at the opening of I.ii., Claudio, who is accused of impregnating Julietta out of wedlock, is arrested and to be executed soon. However, Angelo's decision is sharply condemned by both the commoners and the nobles as it is regarded as an unjust practice. For Lucio, the punishment inflicted on Claudio is cruel, which is done by Angelo on purpose, "[t]o make [Claudio] an example" (I.iv.68), so that his subjects will fear his absolute authority. Hence, through Claudio's punishment, Angelo declares that anybody who breaks the law or commits even a minor crime will be severely punished. Instead of taking Claudio directly to the prison, the Provost makes him walk among people to be seen and judged, which confirms Lucio's statement. When Claudio asks the Provost, "Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to th'world?" (I.ii.108), his response, "I do it not in evil disposition, / But from Lord Angelo by special charge" (I.ii.110-111), demonstrates that Angelo's aim is not only to put Claudio in prison but also to make his crime be acknowledged by the public. As Darryl Gless states, "[...] Claudio is undergoing a form of punishment often used in Shakespeare's England for the correction especially of sexual offenders and for the edification of the public" (91).

At the very beginning of II.ii. the Provost expresses that the punishment imposed on Claudio is heavy, and puts emphasis on the fact that “[a]ll sects, all ages smack of this vice” (5). Therefore, the sentence for pre-marital sexual intercourse should not be the death penalty. When he asks whether Angelo ordered him to kill Claudio the next day, Angelo irritably orders that his command be carried out: “*Did I not tell thee yea? Hadst thou not order? / Why dost thou ask again?*” (7-8). At this point, the Provost defends Claudio’s righteousness and maintains that “[u]nder [Angelo’s] good correction, [he] [has] seen / When, after execution, judgement hath / Repented o’er his doom” (10-12). In other words, once the execution takes place, feeling regret will be futile since the damage is irreversible. Hence, the Provost wants Angelo to reconsider the sentence and not to make a wrong decision, which he will later repent. However, Angelo harshly rejects the Provost’s suggestion and wants him to “[d]o [...] [his] Office, or give up [his] place” (II.ii.14). In this regard, Angelo’s indifferent attitude towards the Provost demonstrates that he assumes supreme authority as the ruler, which leads him to uphold the law at will and disregard the objections to the way he exercises justice. As Josephine Waters Bennett points out, “[...] the protests not only of Claudio, Lucio, Mistress Overdone, and Pompey, but also of the just Escalus and the honest Provost, puts the sympathies of the audience so fully on the side of Claudio that his execution is [unthinkable]” (25). In other words, Angelo’s uncompromising attitude to Claudio’s case, despite all the warnings about the terrible consequences of such toughness, makes the audience/readers side with Claudio.

In this sense, Escalus, a wise adviser to the Duke, mentions the matters of the spirit of the law and the place of mercy in the enforcement of law in his conversation with Angelo in II.i. He expresses that though the government should be fierce in the implementation of law, certain principles like mercy should not be ignored: “*Ay, but yet / Let us be keen, and rather cut a little, / Than fall, and bruise to death*” (4-6). In other words, assuming a relentless attitude towards criminals will lead to irremediable situations and cause a deadlock. Furthermore, Escalus emphasises the significance of showing mercy to the guilty in certain cases as he reminds Angelo of the fact that he himself might have committed a similar crime to that of Claudio’s in the past. Similar to the Provost’s comments, Escalus articulates that it is highly possible that Angelo, too, was once overwhelmed by his sexual drives, which indicates to his relationship with Mariana that will be revealed by the Duke:

That in the working of your own affections,  
 Had time coher'd with place, or place with wishing,  
 Or that the resolute acting of your blood  
 Could have attain'd th'effect of your own purpose,  
 Whether you had not sometime in your life  
 Err'd in this point, which now you censure him,  
 And pull'd the law upon you. (II.i.10-16).

As clearly indicated above, everybody can be overwhelmed by their passions, which is humane, and nobody should be punished with death penalty for such a common crime. If Angelo, the ruler, has the right of being forgiven for such a crime, then Claudio, the subject, should have the same right to be pardoned. However, Angelo's attitude towards Claudio's crime is rigid as he resolutely refuses to show mercy to Claudio because he sees Claudio's impregnating a woman out of wedlock as a major crime and expresses that Claudio committed this crime consciously. For Angelo, Claudio is guilty not only of being aroused but also of putting his sexual drives in action. In contrast, Angelo argues that he himself was only tempted by women in the past but never fornicated with them. In a sense, as in Angelo's words, "*'Tis one thing to be tempted [...], / Another thing to fall*" (II.i.17-18). Angelo asserts that the people who had committed the same crime or even more serious crimes were not punished as severely as Claudio in the past, which should not be used as a criterion for Claudio's case. Angelo thinks being lenient to criminals has been a mistake that should be corrected under his rule:

[...] I not deny  
 The jury passing on the prisoner's life  
 May in the sworn twelve have a thief, or two,  
 Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to justice,  
 That justice seizes. What knows the laws  
 That thieves do pass on thieves? (II.i.18-23).

As is stressed in these lines, Angelo vividly states that the previous legal practices were mostly unlawful, and in some cases the judge favoured the person of interest and made decisions contrary to the law. However, he contradicts himself when he accuses the judges who served in the courts of Vienna of favouritism and perverting the course of justice while he acts at will in Claudio's case. Instead of considering



the spirit of the law, following the regulations and securing justice by winning the respect of his people, Angelo oppresses his subjects; ignores the counsel of the wise nobles and imposes an autocratic rule, which results in the abuse of justice.

The extremism of the new legal practices introduced by Angelo is also seen in his closure of the brothels and the strict control of sexual activities, which adversely affects the lives of the lower-class people. According to the new measures Angelo imposes against illegal sexual practices, “[a]ll houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down” (I.ii.88-89). However, “[the brothels in the city] shall stand for seed: they had gone down too, but that a wise burgher put in for them” (I.ii.91-92). In other words, only the brothels in the suburbs will be demolished, yet the ones in big cities will be sold to wealthy people in order to gain profit. Moreover, as Escalus explains, the whoremongers and prostitutes will be executed if they continue their profession despite the new law: “There is pretty orders beginning, I can tell you. It is but heading and hanging” (II.i.233-234). Pompey mocks the decision with the following sarcastic question: “Does your worship mean to geld and splay all the youth of the city?” (II.i.227-228). As understood from Pompey’s reaction to the restrictions brought to the low life of Vienna, he does not find the prohibition realistic because it is impossible for any authoritarian rule to forbid the sexual desires of the youth. In this sense, he maintains that these tough restrictions on prostitution and pimping will not be recognised by people and will not last any longer than ten years:

If you head and hang all that offend that way but for ten years together, you’ll be glad to give out a commission for more heads: if this law hold in Vienna ten years, I’ll rent the fairest house in it after three pence a bay. If you live to see this come to pass, say Pompey told you so. (II.i.235-240).

Therefore, for Pompey, such restrictions on sexual activities do not fit in with the social structure of Vienna, and the effort to enforce the law banning these activities is nothing but a futile attempt of a tyrant. Though Escalus threatens Pompey with having him beaten and whipped if he continues to work as a whoremonger, Pompey does not give up and names pleasure and money as the two things nobody can do without, and he believes that restrictions and despotism will eventually terminate: “[...] but I shall follow it as the flesh and fortune shall better determine” (II.i.250-251). Pompey further manifests his courage in the face of tyranny when he asserts that he is not afraid of being whipped or severely punished as “[t]he valiant heart’s not whipt out of his trade” (II.i.253). Thus, it may be argued that Pompey’s determined resistance to Angelo’s despotic acts and inhibitions reminds the audience/readers

of Claudio's strong opposition to the heavy punishment imposed on him. However, the extent of the arrests under Angelo's command, as presented by Pompey, displays that Claudio is not the only victim of Angelo's authoritarianism, and despite the protests by both the commoners and the nobility, Angelo does not retreat. In this sense, Pompey's colleagues, clients and acquaintances are arrested for various reasons. According to Pompey's account, "[*Master Rash*]'s in for a commodity of *Brown paper and old ginger, nine score and seventeen pounds; of which he made five marks ready money [...]*" (IV.iii.4-7). Then, Master Caper is accused of knavery and begging due to his failure to pay the cost of "*some four suits of peach-coloured satin*" (IV.iii.10-11). Pompey further gives the names of the people who suffer imprisonment as follows:

Then have we here young Dizie, and young Master Deep-vow, and Master Starve-Lackey the rapier and dagger man, and young Drop-heir that killed lusty Pudding, and Master Fortright the tilter, and brave Master Shoe-tie the great traveller, and wild Halfcan that stabbed pots, and I think forty more, all great doers in our trade, and are now 'for the Lord's sake'. (IV.iii.12-20).

As indicated in these lines, those who were in brothel and bawdry business and not punished during the Duke's rule are now swiftly and severely punished by Angelo. It may be said that the heavy sentences which are imposed by Angelo for petty crimes such as being in debt, begging, fraud and violence lead both the indicted and the innocent citizens to lose their belief in the possibility of a fair trial.

The Duke, who "*deliver'd to Lord Angelo / [...] / [His] absolute power and place in Vienna*" (I.iii.11-13), disguises "[*l*]ike a true friar" (I.iii.48) and surveys how Angelo rules the country and enforces the law. For Wharton, the Duke's disguise is different from the other disguises used in both Shakespeare's other plays and the plays of his contemporaries: "[*T*]he use of disguise as a means to observe others is actually not typical. Disguise is usually donned only for survival [...]. What is more, the disguise as a friar is unique to this Shakespeare play [...]" (62). Thus, the Duke delegating the power of a ruler assumes the power of a clergyman, and although the nature of the authority he holds changes, he still has a say in the governance through surveillance. In other words, as a powerful figure of authority he observes his deputy and subjects and aims to rule the country without making his presence felt. In this regard, the Duke, who controls "*an action he never participates in directly [...]*" (13) in Wheeler's words, both monitors and dominates the course of events behind the scenes, and in the disguise of a friar he aims to find solutions to

the problems caused by Angelo's severe legal practices. In Augustus William Schlegel's words, "[the Duke] takes more pleasure in overhearing his subjects than governing them in the customary way of princes" (388). Nicholas Marsh here compares the Duke to Prospero in *The Tempest* who stays in the background as the supervisor of events: "Prospero is, also, a dramatist in the same sense that the Duke is: he designs the circumstances in which the other characters find themselves, provides them with testing experiences, and controls the outcome" (239). As to David Bevington, the Duke "is often seen as manipulative intruding into people's lives, playing with them insensitively for his own purposes" (105). Bevington further asserts that the Duke also "operates like [a] divine power [...] he is an absolute ruler in a culture that often idealized kingship as embodying divine authority on earth" (106). Therefore, the Duke secretly plays multiple decisive roles in disguise not only in the social life of Vienna but also in legal matters. He not only acts as a keen observer who longs for involvement in the action under an assumed identity but also experiments with his subjects' lives, which leads him to do his subjects wrong. In other words, as the all-seeing and conscious power, the Duke leaves his people to be victimised by a tyrant who wields absolute power. In addition, the Duke's desire to control the course of events leads him to fall into error as he exploits his subjects' helplessness.

The Duke explains that the reason for his abrupt leave is to make "strict statutes and most biting laws" (I.iii.19), which lost validity during his rule, be enforced under Angelo's rule. The lack of these tough laws during his rule led to deterioration in the society. Consequently, illegal sexual activities and the number of brothels increased and debauchery spread throughout the country. According to Cynthia Lewis, the major defects that the Duke aimed to correct by delegating his power to Angelo were "drunkenness, prostitution, and 'disease.'" (273). In addition, the government was overcome by languor, and the guilty were forgiven, which is described as "the disorder resulting from official negligence" by Knights (146). Therefore, the Duke does not want to bring discredit to his own name and hence plans to make Angelo handle the chaotic situation in the country. As Harriett Hawkins maintains, the Duke created "social chaos" as a consequence of his neglect of the enforcement of law for fourteen years and now "[h]e does not want to take the responsibility, or the rap, for enforcing the law [...] and so has brought in Angelo to scourge the vice his own permissiveness had encouraged" (52-53). Lewis also supports that "[t]he Duke's reasoning here may seem sound enough: feeling unable to right his former wrongs as he would wish, he elects what he considers the best of the



*choices remaining available to him*" (275). However, Angelo's extreme ruthlessness, as has been analysed in the punishment inflicted on Claudio and the harsh penalties given for the minor crimes, averts the possibility of maintaining social and political order. On the contrary, it results in deterioration in the enforcement of law. Thus, it may be argued that the Duke is held responsible for the increase in unjust practices throughout the country.

The sudden absence of the Duke is criticised by lower-class people who are severely oppressed under Angelo's despotic legal practices. As in Maurice Roy Ridley's words, the Duke "[...] *runs away from his plain job, and leaves it to others to do his duty for him [...]*" (154). In this respect, Lucio criticises the Duke for leaving the government so suddenly saying, "[i]t was a mad, fantastical trick of him to steal from the state and usurp the beggary he was never born to" (III.ii.89-90). Hence, Lucio believes that the Duke's disappearance is an utterly irresponsible act for a ruler. Moreover, Angelo spreads fear throughout the country by making use of the old and forgotten laws: "*Lord Angelo dukes it well in his absence: he puts transgression to't*" (III.ii.91-92). In this sense, not only the absence of the Duke but also the surrogate to whom he delegated his power adversely affects the social order and government. Thus, it may be argued that the Duke's leave, which led to the victimisation of the public under Angelo's strict rule and unmerciful enforcement of law, is an act of violation of justice for the whole country.

Accordingly, the Duke's abuse of justice after he delegates his authority to Angelo is first presented in his harsh treatment of Lucio just because he severely criticises the Duke's personality and rule. Lucio asserts that the Duke is "[a] *very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow*—" (III.ii.136). He also asserts that the Duke will be unable to reveal Angelo's illegal and unmerciful practices on his return as he is not an efficient ruler: "*The Duke yet would have dark deeds darkly answered: he would never bring them to light: would he were returned!*" (III.ii.170-172). However, the Duke in disguise blames Lucio of envying the Duke for his virtuous and decent character and says: "*Therefore you speak unskilfully: or, if your knowledge be more, it is much darkened in your malice*" (III.ii.142-144). He further threatens Lucio that he will deeply regret his insults to the Duke because once the Duke comes back, Lucio will be forced to express his views before him. The Duke wants to learn Lucio's name, which indicates that he will punish Lucio as soon as he reveals his true identity. The Duke says: "*O, you hope the Duke will return no more; or you imagine me too harmful an opposite. But indeed, I can do you little harm*" (III.ii.159-

160). In Hawkins's words, *"the Duke finds Lucio's insults harder to pardon than any other offences in the play – major or minor, attempted or committed, including murder"* (51). After the Duke's identity is revealed and Lucio is arrested, the Duke takes pride in his unmasking of Lucio: *"Thou art the first knave that e'er mad'st a duke"* (V.i.354). Then, in order to save his own life, Lucio tries to convince the Duke that he was not sincere in his comments about the Duke's character, and *"[he] spoke it but according to the trick [...]"* (V.i.502). He requests the Duke to reduce the severity of his sentence and to have mercy on him: *"[I]f you will hang me for it, you may: but I had rather it would please you I might be whipped"* (503-504). First, the Duke orders Lucio to marry the prostitute whom he impregnated, then to be whipped and executed: *"As I have heard him swear himself there's one / Whom he begot with child – let her appear, / And he shall marry her. The nuptial finish'd, / Let him be whipp'd and hang'd"* (V.i.508-511). Then, he suddenly forgives Lucio's offences but he is still resolute about Lucio's marriage to a prostitute: *"Thy slanders I forgive, and therewithal / Remit thy other forfeits. – Take him to prison, / And see our pleasure herein executed"* (V.i.517-519). Thus, unlike Angelo, the Duke shows mercy to the criminal; mitigates his punishment, yet the question of whether Lucio is ever to be punished remains controversial for the audience/readers.

The Duke in disguise further abuses justice as he uses Isabella, Mariana and Barnardine in his bed-trick and head-trick, which he played in order to gain control of the course of events. First, the Duke in disguise, who learns about Claudio's sentence in II.iii., meets Isabella, Claudio's sister in cloister, who was asked by Angelo to sleep with him so that Claudio would be pardoned. The Duke tells Isabella his plan in order to save Claudio's life. He reveals the story of Angelo and Mariana whom Angelo was about to marry but changed his mind when Mariana's brother Frederick was confirmed dead in a shipwreck and Mariana lost her dowry. Mariana was highly affected by Angelo's indifferent and relentless attitude towards her afterwards, and according to the Duke, she still suffers as Angelo *"[l]eft her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort: swallowed his vows whole, pretending in her discoveries of dishonour: in few, bestowed her on her own lamentation, which she yet wears for his sake"* (III.i.225-229). The Duke then elaborates the bed-trick he plans to arrange and explains that Mariana's love for Angelo never ended. On the contrary, it turned into great passion. Depending on the Duke's accounts, Isabella feels deep compassion for Mariana while she is filled with intense hatred for Angelo and asks, *"[b]ut how out of this can she avail?"* (III.i.235). Accordingly, the Duke reveals the rest of his plan as follows:

Go you to Angelo; answer his requiring with a plausible obedience; agree with his demands to the point. Only refer yourself to this advantage: first, that your stay with him may not be long; that the place may have all shadow and silence in it; and the time answer to convenience. This being grated in course, and now follows all. We shall advise this wronged maid to stand up your appointment, go in your place. If the encounter acknowledge itself hereafter, it may compel him to her recompense; and hear, by this is your brother saved, your honour untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt deputy scaled. The maid will I frame, and make fit for his attempt. (III.i.243-257).

As indicated in these lines, Isabella will accept Angelo's offer but she will lay some conditions down such as meeting at a silent and dark place at a time she herself will determine. Mariana will accompany Isabella as her maid but she will be at the centre of the bed-trick as Angelo will sleep with Mariana surmising that she is Isabella. For the Duke, both Isabella and Mariana will benefit from this plan because Isabella's honour will not be tarnished while Claudio will be saved and Mariana will unite with the man she desires. In order to convince Isabella, the Duke further adds: "*If you think well to carry this as you may, the doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from reproof*" (III.i.257-259). In these lines, the Duke implies that his plan to make use of the sexualities of Isabella and Mariana is not thoroughly decent. That is why he puts emphasis on the advantages of the plan rather than its negative sides. In parallel to this, the central problematic aspect in the Duke's proposal is that Mariana's dignity is utterly disregarded while Isabella's honour is aimed to be defended. In a sense, Isabella will not lose her virginity; she will save her brother; and she will be able to avenge Angelo's insulting proposal. However, none of these will change the fact that Mariana will have sex with the man who abandoned her. As Wheeler states, "*[a]lthough it leads eventually to the marriage of Angelo and Mariana, the bed trick [...] is designed primarily to prevent the unacceptable sexual union of Angelo and Isabella and to preserve the already consummated union of Claudio and Julietta*" (13). And, it may be said that this trick will be beneficial for Isabella and Claudio, yet what Mariana will eventually get is open to the interpretation of the audience/readers, which is defined as "*[a] mess of double standard*" by Marsh (54).

Therefore, the Duke, acutely conscious of the possible undesirable effect of the bed-trick on Mariana, needs to attentively tell her about the plan in order not to degrade her and to convince her to be part of the plot against Angelo. In this sense, he first wins her trust and asks: “*Do you persuade yourself that I respect you?*” (IV.i.53). On Mariana’s response, “*Good friar, I know you do, and so have found it*” (IV.i.54), he introduces her to Isabella so that they will organise the bed-trick: “*Take, then, this your company by the hand, / Who hath a story ready for your ear*” (IV.i.55-56). The audience/readers learn that “[*Mariana will*] *take the enterprise upon her [...]*” (IV.i.66) after Isabella and Mariana return from their brief walk. In a sense, Mariana’s ideas about the bed-trick are not given to the audience/readers in her own words. Unlike the detailed conversation between Isabella and the Duke about the nature and terms of the bed-trick, the talk between Mariana and Isabella is not presented. Hence, the audience/readers do not know how Mariana is persuaded by Isabella to take part in the plot, and whether she objects to any part of the plan and wants to change it. The Duke’s and Isabella’s ideas about the bed-trick and its consequences are heard whereas Mariana is silent while Isabella acts as her mouthpiece. According to Lewis, the Duke’s reviving the story of Angelo’s and Mariana’s broken relationship is also significant in terms of examining why the Duke, though he was fully aware of Angelo’s misconduct towards Mariana, chose Angelo as his deputy. In this respect, she says:

That the Duke should have left such a man in power becomes an increasingly unsettling source of curiosity to us, especially when we learn that, before giving Angelo his rule, the Duke has already known about Angelo’s perfidy toward Mariana. From one point of view, the Duke’s choice of exorcists seems completely rational: Angelo’s rigid adherence to the law appears to be the perfect physic for Vienna’s vice, as Escalus implies (I.i.22-24). And even if Angelo should eventually become a mere ‘seemer,’ as the Duke implicitly suspects (I.iii.54), the disguised ruler will be on hand to correct his deputy’s errors. Yet the fact that the Duke, despite his incipient misgivings, bestows his power on Angelo prevents us from completely accepting his perspective: if Vienna’s moral landscape is really as bleak as the Duke portrays it to Friar Thomas (I.iii. 19-31), then why should he entrust Vienna’s care to Angelo, who, in respect to his dealings with Mariana, reflects that landscape. (274).

With these lines, Lewis puts forth that since the very beginning the Duke has known about Angelo's immoral character, and he deliberately entrusted his country to a wicked ruler. Although he continuously monitors people and Angelo's practices, his departure from his country, which is already corrupted at the hands of a tyrant, makes the problem worse and shows that the Duke does his subjects wrong as he disregards their victimisation.

The other trick that the Duke plans to play in order to be involved in the action and to save Claudio's life is the head-trick. At the opening of IV.ii. the hints about the head-trick are given, and it is mentioned that along with Claudio, another prisoner, Barnardine will be executed: "*Tomorrow morning are to die Claudio and Barnardine*" (6). The Duke in disguise, who relies on the bed-trick to save Claudio and believes that "[t]here's some in hope" (75), is disappointed with the letter that commands the Provost to execute Claudio in the morning and Barnardine in the afternoon and continues as follows: "*For my better satisfaction, let me have Claudio's head sent me by five. [...] Thus fail not to do your office, as you will answer it at your peril*" (IV.ii.120; 124). Before the letter is read, the Duke believes that the bed-trick worked out, and "*[the letter] is [Claudio's] pardon, purchas'd by such sin / For which the pardon himself is in*" (IV.ii.106-107). Thus, an evil-doer forgives a wrongdoer because according to the agreement made between Angelo and Isabella, Angelo should free Claudio after he himself commits the crime of fornication, which is worse than the crime Claudio committed, and seemingly sleeps with Isabella out of wedlock. However, on hearing that Angelo orders Claudio's execution, the Duke understands that the bed-trick was not successful.

Reginald Foakes, in this regard, stresses the point that Angelo who is deceived by the Duke in the bed-trick now deceives others: "*[...] as now Angelo, having, as he thinks, possessed Isabella, fails to keep the promise he made, and sends an order for the execution instead of the pardon of Claudio*" (25). Lawrence Ross also lays emphasis on "*[t]he suspense so carefully built about the arrival of Claudio's pardon*" and asserts that not only does the Duke have expectations but also the audience/readers feel the same tension (108). With this, the Duke reveals the Provost the head-trick in the following words: "*By the vow of mine order, I warrant you, if my instructions may be your guide: let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo*" (IV.ii.168-171). He further sustains that the Provost may change Barnardine's cut head so that Angelo cannot differentiate between Angelo and Barnardine as "*death's a great disguiser; and [the*



*Provost] may add to it*" (IV.ii.174). Thus, the Provost will "[s]have the head, and tie the beard, and say it was the desire of the penitent to be so bared before his death" (IV.ii.175-177). The Duke's attitude towards Barnardine in the head-trick may be likened to his treatment of Mariana when he discloses the bed-trick to her. As the Duke neglects the indignity Mariana will suffer as a result of the bed-trick, he, now, does not care about Barnardine's life, and thinks that it can be sacrificed for the sake of his head-trick. However, the Duke's plan is interrupted when Barnardine refuses to be executed as he does not feel ready physically and mentally, and says that "[...] [he] will not die today for any man's persuasion" (IV.iii.59). Hence, unlike Mariana in the bed-trick, Barnardine enunciates his thoughts.

The Provost, the Duke's partner in the head-trick, however, comes up with a solution and offers to send Angelo the head of "[o]ne Ragozine, a most notorious pirate, / A man of Claudio's years; his beard and head / Just of his colour" (IV.iii.70-72) and "[t]here died this morning of a cruel fever" (IV.iii.69). By immediately accepting the offer saying that the death of this pirate is "[...] an accident that heaven provides" (IV.iii.76), the Duke gets the chance he longs for, which shows that he sees his subjects as an instrument for devising his plans. It may be argued that, in both tricks, the problem regarding the Duke's attitude is that he prefers to respond to Angelo's unjust practices and to be part of the action through tricks rather than intervening with Angelo's acts and directly avoiding injustice. Apart from Barnardine, the Duke also does Isabella wrong because he does not want to inform her about the head-trick and the fact that Claudio will be saved although he closely collaborated with her in the bed-trick. Having hidden the truth from Isabella for her own sake saying, "[b]ut I will keep her ignorant of her good, / To make her heavenly comforts of despair / When it is least expected" (IV.iii.108-110), he lies to Isabella completely disregarding her deep sorrow for Claudio's execution. Isabella remains ignorant of the fact that her brother is alive until the truth is revealed in V.i..

Furthermore, the Duke's injustice to Isabella is presented at the very end of the play where he declares his love to her and orders her to marry him with the following words: "*If he be like your brother, for his sake / Is he pardon'd; and for your lovely sake / Give me your hand and say you will be mine. / He is my brother too [...]*" (V.i.488-491). Therefore, Isabella will not live as a nun but as the Duke's wife. However, Isabella's response to the Duke's proposal is not presented to the audience/readers, which demonstrates that it is the Duke's demand to marry.

According to Gabriel Egan, Isabella's silence may be associated with her intent to return to the nunnery, and the Duke's purpose to declare love to Isabella is the same with that of Angelo's, that is to have sex with her:

The obvious question to ask is whether Isabella really wants to be a nun? If she does, and if she anticipates that once it is all over with Claudio's release she can get back to entering the nunnery, then the duke's proposal of marriage is especially awkward. She must be grateful to him for saving her brother, but she really wants a contemplative religious life without sex. Indeed, looking at all these events with a most cynical eye, you might say that Angelo tried one way to get sex with Isabella and failed, and the duke is trying another way and looks like he could succeed. Such a view of the duke would certainly make sense of all the unnecessary grief he puts Isabella through in deliberately making her think that Claudio had died, which is one of the play's real conundrums regarding motivation. (167).

Accordingly, the Duke implies that he wants to have sex with Isabella, which may correspond to the relationships of Claudio and Julietta and Angelo and Mariana, respectively, and says: "So bring us to our palace, where we'll show / What's yet behind that's meet you all should know" (V.i.535-536). However, it may be said that it is not openly presented whether the relationship of the Duke and Isabella will resemble that of Claudio and Julietta's or that of Angelo and Mariana's. In other words, it is not clearly put forth whether the Duke will leave Isabella after they have sexual intercourse or he truly wants to live in matrimony. The Duke's statement, "*but fitter time for that*" (491), shows that despite his proposal of marriage, he, in fact, postpones the ceremony and the celebrations. In this sense, the play ends posing a question in the minds of the audience/readers in terms of the relationship between the Duke and Isabella and Isabella's reaction to the Duke's proposal. For William Witherle Lawrence, though "*different solutions*" may be provided, "*the fundamental tragic complication remains the same*" (81).

In conclusion, *Measure for Measure*, which "*proves to be a difficult play*" (Scott 61) in terms of the issues it raises, poses questions about the abuse of justice, which results mainly from the strict enforcement of law without showing mercy or regard for one's subjects. Angelo not only imposes heavy punishments on lower-class people but also punishes Claudio with death penalty for a crime he himself committed in the past and is ready to commit with Isabella in the present.

In David Margolies's words, "[t]he emotion aroused by the threat to Claudio makes the state – his persecutor – into an oppressor without any explicit critique" (167). Thus, the audience/readers question the nature of law; whether the spirit of the law should be subordinate to the letter of the law, and whether a ruler with absolute power has the right to be above the law. Furthermore, Angelo's harsh treatment of petty crimes committed by lower-class people poses questions in the minds of the audience/readers on whether they are justly punished or whether they are plainly victims of Angelo's authoritarianism. The Duke's use of Isabella, Mariana and Barnardine in his bed-trick and head-trick is problematic because he exploits them in order to control the course of events, which violates their personal rights. His relationship with Lucio also demonstrates his abuse of justice because the reason why he angrily reacts to Lucio's criticism and punishes him in the end is not openly presented, which leaves the audience/readers confused. The reason for the Duke's sudden leave is not explained, and the fact that he still monitors the course of events through disguise delays justice and causes Claudio, Isabella, Mariana and Barnardine to suffer in different ways. Accordingly, the following question is left without answer: Why does the Duke not appear and prevent Angelo from abusing justice but instead prefer to stay in the background and direct his subjects and Angelo through his tricks? Therefore, it is possible to argue that the points mentioned above which raise doubts in the minds of the audience/readers about the issue of justice make *Measure for Measure* a problem play.

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