

Shakespeare in the City of Freud *

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Abstract

Measure for Measure which is among Shakespeare's spectacular works of art, leaps to the eyes of audiences with its striking themes including morality and justice and plot in Vienna that is the city of Freud. The play is set in the 15th century that is long before Freud lives; however, it consists of various scenes which can be analysed with Freud's outstanding theory 'Psychoanalysis'. When the whole plot of the play and the behaviours of the characters are considered, his theory is cut out for examining regarding to sexuality and related to this, morality which are the main elements of the play. From beginning to end, one can witness hidden desires of human beings and psychological effects which are made up of these hidden desires that reveal themselves throughout the scenes and the attitudes of the characters. We come across the keystones of 'Psychoanalysis'; id, ego, superego at all the doors that we open in the play and we encounter how they take form in human beings' behaviours and their inevitable outcomes.

Keywords: *Sexuality, Sexual Desires, Freud and Psychoanalysis, Id-Ego-Superego*

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Freud'un Şhrinde Shakespeare

Öz

Shakespeare'in dahiyane sanat eserlerinden biri olan *Measure for Measure*, ahlak ve adalet içeren, dikkat çeken temaları ve Freud'un şehri olan Viyana'da geçen olay örgüsü ile göze çarpar. Oyun 15. Yüzyılı yani Freud yaşamadan çok önceyi anlatır fakat Freud'un öne çıkan Psikanaliz teorisi ile analiz edilebilen birçok sahneden oluşmaktadır. Oyunun tüm olay örgüsü ve karakterlerin davranışları göz önüne bulundurulduğunda, Freud'un bu teorisi oyunun başlıca unsurlarından olan cinsellik ve bununla alakalı olarak erdem ile ilişkili olarak oyunu analiz etmek için biçilmiş kaftandır. Shakespeare'in bu oyununda, baştan sona, insanoğlunun saklı kalmış arzularına ve oyundaki sahneler ile karakterlerin davranışlarında kendini ele veren bu arzuların meydana getirdiği psikolojik etkilerine tanık olabiliriz. Oyunda açtığımız her kapıda, Psikanalizin temel taşları olan alt benlik, benlik, üst benlik' e ve bunların insan davranışlarında şekillenmiş halleri ile kaçınılmaz sonlarına rastlarız.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Cinsellik, Cinsel arzular, Freud ve Psikanaliz, Alt benlik- Benlik- Üst benlik.*

Introduction

Measure for Measure is one of the comedies of Shakespeare which includes sexual relations of a group of people who live in Vienna. At the first glance, the story reminds of a scene from 'Sin City' because Shakespeare's Vienna suffers from fornication and the city is full of law breakers. The play is problematic, and it consists of conflicts of the characters. Throughout the play, audiences witness the characters' sexual desires and their actions which are outcomes of these sexual desires. At this exact point, someone can find oneself thinking about Freud while analysing the play. "Freud's ideas seem to have touched everyone from the juvenile delinquent on the corner to the scholar in his study. Biography, history, literary criticism, and, not least, the study of Shakespeare, psychoanalysis has affected them all." (Holland,1960, p.163) It is so surprising that Shakespeare processes his characters with the themes which Freud works on many years after Shakespeare, in the city of Freud. "We inhabit psychoanalysis, living with

it, in it, around it, or beside it” so, it is inevitable to find Freudian characters in the works which were written even many years ago.(Bartolovich, Hillman & Howard, 2012, p. 100) Especially, Shakespeare’s plays may be tied with Freud’s writings in the sense of dream or its “constituent” materials; thus, we can say that Shakespeare’s plays include important raw materials which Freud works on and calls as ‘psychoanalysis’.(Bartolovich et al.,2012,p. 100) Surely, “it wouldn’t be correct to declare that Freud takes on Shakespeare; it would be more accurate to say that he analyses the elements such as; lines, characters, scenes, and uses these to progress and support his study about psychoanalytic understanding.”(Bartolovich et al.,2012,p. 104)

Freud himself mentions about Shakespeare in his letter to Arnold Zweig:

“It is quite inconceivable to me that Shakespeare should have got everything Secondhand — Hamlet’s neurosis, Lear’s madness, Macbeth’s defiance and the character of Lady Macbeth, Othello’s jealousy, etc. It almost irritates me that you should support the notion.” (Bartolovich et al.,2012, p. 105)

Measure for Measure is one of the good examples which convey Freudian elements as the story centrally proceeds with “the incompatibility of libidinal desire and the constraints of civilization” (Bartolovich et al.,2012, p. 107) In addition, it displays how “the sexual behaviour of a human being often lays down the pattern for all his other modes of reacting to life”. (Bartolovich et al.,2012, p. 107)

In Shakespeare’s Vienna, it is forbidden to have a sexual intercourse before marriage according to the law. However, the city is full of brothels which are called as red-light district in the play, and the numbers of illegitimate children have been increasing. This situation shows that prohibitions not only make the people repress their sexual desires but also create conflicts in the society. In other words, “lurking in every corner of the play, the sexuality, furthermore, is “not quick and fresh,” to use Richard Wheeler’s words, but fetid and sick”. (as cited in Brown, 1986, p. 140) Thus, Shakespeare takes hold of these conflicts and draws a picture for us to show how their sick sexual behaviours give birth to a result.

The Fate of Claudio

The play centers on the fate of Claudio who impregnates an unmarried woman, Juliette, before the legal marriage takes place. We are informed at the beginning of the play in a scene which his friend, Lucio has a conversation with Mistress Overdone that he is arrested. He is sentenced to death for “groping for trouts in a peculiar river”. (Shakespeare,1996, I.II.67-108) In other words, he breaks the law and fornicates. Thus, we can say that he is found guilty due to his desire for Juliette. He isn't able to hinder himself from desiring Juliette sexually; he fulfils what his inner feelings require from him. Shakespeare displays what a desire can cause and how it affects through his character, Claudio and his sentences:

From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty:
As surfeit is the father of much fast,
So every scope by the immoderate us
Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue,
Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,
A thirsty evil; and when we drink we die. (Shakespeare,1996, I. II.
109-152)

Claudio tries to express himself that his actions come from his nature and he is going to be punished since he goes too far, and he cannot stop to follow his intense feeling which is inside his mind. Like every excess in every area of the life, surplus of desire ends in restraining as a result. Shakespeare gives us a lesson through his character by stating that desire is something which can be found in our nature but, it is a potential danger at the same time. It is like dynamite and it brings about huge destructions when its wick is ignited. Claudio is stimulated by his prurience and in consequence, he obeys neither the law nor the religious rules. Therefore, he is accused by the governor for expiation for his sins. Besides, all the characters are affected by his guilt either directly or implicitly. The fate of Claudio is in the centre of the play. However, the outcome of his sexual desire changes the fates of all significant characters in the play; it also triggers some characters' desires to show up.

Hypocrisy of Lord Angelo

Lord Angelo who is assigned to be the temporary leader by Vincentio, the Duke, is “a blank in metaphorical terms in the beginning of the play”. (Pearlman, 1972, p. 230) He seems that he is a decent man who is very firm and uncompassionate and, he obeys the laws and rules the city very strictly. He doesn't relent to Claudio and he believes that the guilty has to be punished even it is himself and he expresses his thought with these sentences in the play:

...
For I have had such faults; but rather tell me,
When I, that censure him, do so offend,
Let mine own judgement pattern out my death,
And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die. (Shakespeare,1996,
II.I.43-87)

Yet, we witness how he becomes hypocrite since he is defeated by his unconscious desire for Isabella who is Claudio's sister. He is unable to escape from his instinctual feeling which is a part of human psychology; in Freudian language, his 'id' doesn't get off his tail. After Isabella exists the room, he confesses himself about his desire for her:

...
That I desire to hear her speak again,
And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?
O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,
With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous
Is that temptation that doth goad us on
To sin in loving virtue: never could the strumpet,
With all her double vigour, art and nature,
Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid
Subdues me quite:-ever till now,
When men were fond, I smiled, and wonder'd
how (Shakespeare,1996, II.II.144-185)

From these lines in the play, to comprehend him and his feelings becomes obvious since he himself uses the word 'desire' to verbalise his sense. Furthermore, he compels Isabella to have sex with him in exchange for her brother's evacuation. So, his desire goes out of his mind and turns into an evil action.

On the other hand, he is described as a man who is blinded by his new power and tries to make his name by Claudio and Lucio:

Unhappily, even so.
And the new deputy now for the duke—
Whether it be the fault and glimpse of newness,
Or whether that the body public be
A horse whereon the governor doth ride,
Who, newly in the seat, that it may know
He can command, lets it straight feel the spur;
Whether the tyranny be in his place,
Or in his emmence that fills it up,
I stagger in:—but this new governor
Awakes me all the enrolled penalties
Which have, like unscour'd armour, hung by the wall
So long that nineteen zodiacs have gone round
And none of them been worn; and, for a name,
Now puts the drowsy and neglected act
Freshly on me: 'tis surely for a name. (Shakespeare, 1996, I.II. 153-III.8)

Thus, we can say that he has another desire except from the one which is sexual. He wants to govern, and he wants to be obeyed that these characteristics also come from his 'id'. He puts into force even very old penalties to punish Claudio because of this reason and to oblige Isabella to be with him.

In addition, we have the knowledge that he has left his former fiancée, Mariana because she has lost her dowry in a shipwreck. Due regard being had to, we may allege that Lord Angelo is one of the characters whom Shakespeare shows us the evil side of 'id' because he not only becomes

insane due to his desires but also, damages the people. Thus, he receives some measure for measure, and he is forced to marry Mariana as a punishment at the end of the play.

The Conflict Between Lucio and Vincentio

“Most notorious of the characters who indulge habitually in slanderous judgments is, of course, Lucio” whom Shakespeare calls him as a fantastic, is the friend of Claudio. (Gless, 1983, 364) He is one of the interesting characters of the play. He is able to achieve to attract the audiences with his characteristic posture and gestures. Besides, there should be a reason why Shakespeare calls him as a fantastic. “In the first two acts he is certainly not a fellow whose morals to be admired, but he has strong redeeming traits”. (Lawrence, 1958, p. 443) In some acts, he offends the eye with his statements and dirty jokes, but in another act, he stands in front of the audience with his honesty and helpfulness. The first scene that we encounter Lucio is one of the brothels of Vienna and it can be understood that he commits a crime by fornicating because he also has sexual desires. However, he seems that he is careless of this situation unlike the other characters. He even makes jokes about this issue because he doesn't care about chastity and actually, he seems that he criticizes the understanding of grace. He states his idea in a conversation with First Gentleman in the play:

Ay, why not? Grace is grace, despite of all
controversy: as, for example, -thou thyself art a
wicked villain, despite of all grace. (Shakespeare, 1996, I. II. 24-66)

He criticizes the wrong side of the society's point of view. He tries to express that grace doesn't belong to only ones who restrict themselves from having sexual intercourse. He criticizes the people who think that they are graceful but, indeed they are everything but graceful. According to his point of view, these kinds of people blame others as being guilty because of their sexuality but, they are the real criminals. Because of this reason, he rushes to help his friend without a shadow of doubt and fear even he also fornicates, and he knows that he can be accused as well. From this point of view, we can say that he isn't disturbed by following his 'id' since he believes that it is one of the parts of human nature. For

him, significant thing is not losing the virginity but the honesty. Lucio is a character who brings a new perspective to the play that may not be looked with favour at that time. Therefore, he is ahead of his time with his opinions and Shakespeare may use his character to express his own opinions and criticism since he himself also is ahead of his time. Due to this reason, he may give Lucio “poetic lines to speak”. (Lawrence, 1958, p. 443) That’s why, he may be seen as an irritating character at the beginning of the play because of his statements but, he starts to be loved by the audiences thanks to his redeeming behaviours.

On the other hand, he is also guilty according to the rules of the government of Vienna not just because he fornicates, but he impregnates a woman and he is punished at the end of the play. As a matter of fact, he has sexual intercourse by reason of his desire like Claudio or other male characters in the play; however, Claudio is released after he stews in his own justice while Lucio is sentenced by the Duke, Vincentio for his sin. This situation annoys the audiences and it can be one of the reasons why the play is problematic since he is evaluated as equal as Lord Angelo who is actually a rotten egg. Additionally, this can be the reason why the audiences start to love Lucio.

In other respects; Vincentio- the Duke who disguises to observe the society in his absence, has desires which are caused by both his ‘ego’ and ‘id’. Throughout the play, he can be seen nearly in every scene because he actually has desire to keep the power to manage. He assigns Lord Angelo as a temporary leader but in fact, he isn’t willing to leave his authority. Therefore, he tries to solve the problems even though he disguises just to observe at the beginning. His ‘ego’ leads the way firstly but, his ‘id’ takes over the job mostly. This is because, the Duke, Vincentio may appear as a decent man, who is in possession of morality and grace; however, he wouldn’t compel Isabella by his decision of marriage if he had morality and grace. He acts with his ‘id’ without thinking others. He may be the most dangerous character since he doesn’t show his sexual desire which he has for Isabella until the end of the play. On the contrary, he seems that he helps Isabella to get rid of Angelo. The audiences can comprehend his intention at the end of the play when they witness his judgement. His

judgement may seem that he decides with his ‘super ego’ by paying regard to each character’s rights and he may seem that he acts fairly since he sets Claudio free whose story is mainly centralized in the play. Yet, he deceives everyone including the audiences from the beginning of the play. He shows himself as a disguised friar, in fact his incognito can be a symbol of a hypocrite man who doesn’t reflect his real intention. With his judgement which shows up at the end, Vincentio does not give a chance to Isabella to respond the marriage proposal of him. In addition, with his judgement about Lucio, Vincentio punishes him because he makes love once as a result of his sexual desire. However, Vincentio himself has sexual desires like Lucio that we can infer this from his decision of marriage with Isabella and also, Lucio tells about his secret sexual intercourses with prostitutes even if Vincentio who disguises as a friar, refutes his assertions. Vincentio rewards himself while punishing others thanks to his authority. Besides, Lucio may be Shakespeare’s intermediary to display the Duke’s dark side since only he is brave enough to tell about Vincentio’s hidden secrets. Considering Lucio’s sense of grace, he tries to demonstrate the Duke’s evil side and what his ‘ego’ and ‘id’ cause. This conflict between Lucio and Vincentio makes the audiences annoyed and it also makes the play problematic. Lucio receives a measure for measure for what he does but, Vincentio does not even if he deserves.

Isabella’s Desire

Desire isn’t a thing which belongs to just men. The female characters in the play also have sexual desires although it seems that their desire isn’t a matter of fact according to authorities. Isabella who is Claudio’s sister as the main character in the play, wants to become a nun to be safe from the male attention and she looks for a protection from the corrupted society of Vienna. At the first glance, she seems that she doesn’t have sexual desires because she is very virtuous and chaste woman preferring to isolate herself from other people. However, being virtuous and chaste or hiding from the society doesn’t mean that she does not have sexual desires. Shakespeare’s Isabella may be a woman character whom Freud refers as hysteric woman in the 19th century long after Shakespeare. According to Freud; “these ‘hysterical’ women had in common included repressed sexual desire for forbidden ‘objects’, unconscious shame and guilt in response to forbidden

erotic longings and subsequent need for atonement and punishment because of these desires and urges, and tendencies to behave seductively while simultaneously denying sexual desire.” (Vogel & Schwartz, 2014, p. 2) From this point of view, Isabella tries to hide her sexual desires since she thinks that it is a forbidden thing and it is a sin which cannot be committed. Furthermore, she rejects any emotions such as ‘love’ since it brings along ‘desire’. That’s why, “Isabella interprets Angelo’s “I love you” as a form of extortion that entails rape. Therefore, she opposes and alters the desire rather than endorsing it”. (Burkhardt, 1995, p. 238) Because of this reason, she decides to go to a nunnery called Saint Claire to become a nun; in reality to get rid of her sexual desires which lead her to the low road. In addition, she agrees with Lord Angelo about punishing the people who commit this sin, but she wants to help her by convincing Lord Angelo because of her love for her brother. Also, she decides to help her brother not just because of her love but her feeling inside her mind about his situation. She says that there should be more strict rules for fornication yet, she makes an effort to survive her brother. If she thought in the same the way that she says, she would be stricter about her brother’s situation and she wouldn’t help him. Moreover, her dilemma about this issue can be seen in her lines in many scenes. Actually, her paradoxical lines start in the scene which she shows up in a conversation between her and Francisca, a nun just before she learns from Lucio that Claudio, her brother is in prison due to fornication:

ISABELLA

And have you nuns no farther privileges?

FRANCISCA

Are not these large enough?

ISABELLA

Yes, truly; I speak not as desiring more;

But rather wishing a more strict restraint

Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare. (Shakespeare, 1996, I. III. 9-IV. 3)

First, she makes a comment about the restriction on having a chat or meeting with men. Then, she takes steps backward when she gets reaction from the nun. She declares herself by saying that she does not desire more freedom; on the contrary, she desires more strict rules in the nunnery. She

represses her feelings and her thoughts when she thinks that she can be condemned by the nun and her withdrawing reflects on her statements. Considering her other statements, her dilemma and the repression of her sexual desires can be witnessed throughout the play:

...
That is, were I under the terms of death,
Th'impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death as to a bed
That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame. (Shakespeare, 1996, II. IV. 77-123)

I am come to know your pleasure. (Shakespeare, 1996, II. III. 35- IV. 33)

Especially, when she goes to Lord Angelo's room to convince him to save her brother, "the repressed libido in her occasionally surfaces, as during meeting with Angelo, in the form of seductive language and vivid depictions of sexuality". (Brown, 1986, p.67) She represses herself so much that she has difficulties to comprehend Lord Angelo's impudent statements which he uses while offering her indecent proposal for a measure for measure to save her brother.

On the other hand, she thinks that this situation is created by men who try to take advantage of women. When Angelo alleges that "women are frail too", she expresses herself clearly with these lines: (Shakespeare, 1996, II. IV. 124-170)

Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves;
Which are as easy broke as they make forms.
Women! Help Heaven! men their creation mar
In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times
frail;
For we are soft as our complexions are,
And credulous to false prints. (Shakespeare, 1996, II. IV. 124-170)

She should protect herself as a woman because of men and according to the authority which is governed by men. She needs to become a nun and isolate herself to escape from men and their authority. She cannot show her sexual desire because her sexual desire is ignored by them or it is not given importance as much as men's. In fact, it's her choice not to actualise her id's wishes; she chooses her 'ego' to think and her 'superego' to decide. She may be shown as a modern woman prototype who desires for her independence of sexuality by Shakespeare who always picks up on something significant in society. With his foresight ability, he discusses woman's role in society in terms of sexuality and sexual desires even in those ages and he defends women's rights by showing woman characters that are oppressed or depressed by men. Surely, he does not give out his opinions evidently; he makes the people think and find the truth by themselves. That's why; Isabella is forced to marry with Vincentio. She is punished by marrying him even if she is innocent and she isn't even condescended to respond Vincentio's proposal just because she is a woman. From this aspect as well, *Measure for Measure* is called a problematic play since injustice which Isabella experiences irritates the audiences.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, we can assume that *Measure for Measure* mostly takes its shape around the characters' sexual behaviours which are affected by their 'id' and it also displays some characters' 'ego' that emerges from obscurity time to time and little pieces of some characters' 'superego' glimpse even if just a smidgen. From this perspective, Shakespeare makes a psychological analysis long before Freud by reflecting hidden feelings of human kinds that they can be found in human nature. He attracts the audiences by demonstrating the hidden desire which every human can experience in their lives through his characters. He caresses their head and straighten them out as if he tries to say what they come through is as normal as breathing or other humanitarian needs. On the other hand, he holds a mirror for them to show what can happen if they estrays. Besides, he touches on the society's double standard thoughts in terms of woman's sexuality. In one sense, he criticizes the male dominance on women's sexuality since the play ends with a male decision on a marriage with a woman without her approval. *Measure for Measure* is one of magnificent plays of him to travel in his mind, his thoughts since he is aware of human nature even at that age. In *Measure for Measure*, he depicts several psychological elements

which come from human nature that are identified years after him and the sociological effects of these elements. For that matter, he not only depicts them in the play through his characters and their actions, but also presents a community to exemplify the possible outcomes when these elements are over the line.

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