

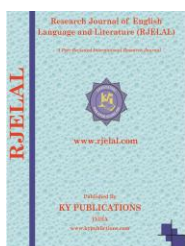


THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN NATURE IN THE PLAY MEASURE FOR MEASURE BY W. SHAKESPEARE

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Abstract

A person is not born vicious or virtuous, but neutral, like a clean sheet, but all virtues and vices are acquired throughout life. Another thing is that the vices are acquired easily, and the virtues require the efforts of the will. It is also important to remember that there are no ideal people, but human must always strive to become the worthy person that follows moral principles. This paper is aimed at providing analysis of the play Measure for Measure by William Shakespeare, taking into consideration such aspects as human nature. Analyzing this play through Freud's psychoanalysis, will show characteristics of the main characters and clear up the issue who is considered to be good and who is considered to be evil.

Keywords: lesson, society, spiritual and moral education, psychoanalysis, human nature

Introduction

For centuries, the question of the real nature of humanity played an important role in people's lives. A person is on the border of the spiritual and material worlds. The soul is drawn to the spiritual world while the body to the material one. The spiritual is the area of God's responsibility, the body is the area of influence of devil. It all depends on what the person pays more attention to; body or soul. The devil can even be presented in the bodies of saints, because even they cannot completely free themselves from the influence of the body. It is important to find and maintain a balance between soul and body. Shakespeare also raised this topic in his *Measure for Measure* which can be closely connected with Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Moreover, the characters of the play should be analyzed from the psychoanalytical point of view.

Writers, like psychiatrists, study the human consciousness and the human soul and Shakespeare is not an exception. He did not create classifications and did not give precise definitions, but thanks to the strength of his brilliant talent, he managed to see what no one else had seen before him and to go where no human gaze reached. There is no reason to doubt that his works allowed humanity to take another step towards understanding how human nature looks like.

Many eminent scholars and philosophers not only read Shakespeare's plays, but studied them carefully. Among them was the founder of psychoanalysis, the famous S. Freud, who paid the characters of the plays of the great playwrights no less attention than his real patients. William Siegfried Dawson is a psychiatrist; he analyzed Sigmund Freud who believed that there are three essential parts of human personality: the id, ego, and superego. The id represents sexual and aggressive

instincts, seeking satisfaction from its drives in external reality. The ego contributes to the adaptation of the individual to reality, stores information about the world in a person's mind in the interests of his life and self-preservation. The superego is a repository of moral norms, prohibitions, and rewards of man and serves as a person's conscience. Norms are assimilated by a person unconsciously in the process of upbringing and therefore manifest themselves as feelings of fear, guilt, and remorse. Thus, the inability of unconscious energy to freely release instincts leads to a conflict between a person and the environment. (Siegfried, 2014). According to this theory, someone can conclude that Angelo loses the balance between these parts and his id comes to the fore. The lust wakes up in Angelo. Absolute power is the best aphrodisiac. Angelo, having entered into power, is similar to those desperate intellectuals who at first do not want so much to serve the law as to correct the human race. Ironically, the passion seizes him to the prisoner's sister Isabella. Having felt his power, a person begins to think, feel and act differently from those who consider themselves to be powerless. Power weakens internal prohibitions and increases egocentrism, that is, a person puts his needs above the needs of other people. At the very beginning of the play, Angelo makes a good impression even the Duke trusts him. Escalus also agrees with it, he tells:

If any in Vienna be of worth
To undergo such ample grace and honour,
It is Lord Angelo. (Shakespeare,1863,I.i 8-20)

Angelo is an intelligent and well-educated person. He knows exactly how to make Vienna better (punishing people for adultery), but he is the man who wears a mask. People always change their faces like clothes and sometimes it is completely impossible to find out what lies behind the masks. The true essence of Angelo appears only after the appearance of Isabella. An ardent fighter against adultery cannot resist temptation. It is difficult to feel pity for him, to sympathize with the fact that at the end of the play he is broken.

People can say that love is the main motivation that drives Angelo's actions. It makes people do stupid things, sometimes abominations,

or it makes human soul more beautiful. Love can rip the mask off a person; destroy her/his walls that are built over the years. As it is seen, Angelo does not love Isabella; it is just a desire that goes into a conflict between sexual instincts and his moral values:

From thee, even from thy virtue!
What's this, what's this? Is this her fault or mine?
The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?
Ha!
Not she: nor doth she tempt: but it is I
That, lying by the violet in the sun,
Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,
Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be
That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness? Having waste
ground enough,
Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary
And pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie!
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?
Dost thou desire her foully for those things
That make her good? O, let her brother live!
Thieves for their robbery have authority
When judges steal themselves. What, do I
love 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. Even till now,
When men were fond, I smiled and wonder'd
how. (Shakespeare,1863,II,II,40/41-165)

It may seem that desire is always associated with love, but it is not. The words that are associated with love are the verbs to live, to breathe, to feel, while the desire is connected with the verb "want." Moreover, Sigmund Freud considered *all human behavior as motivated by the drives or instincts, which in turn are the neurological representations of*

physical needs.(<https://webpace.ship.edu>) Nevertheless, there is a difference between love and passion, or in other words 'lust'. These feelings are different from each other. Love does no harm to a neighbor tells Bible, but Angelo feels lustful, he cares only about himself and satisfying his needs (Romans 13:10).

Another essential point is that Angelo persistently gets down to business with the first (and main) victim which is libertines. Someone may wonder if there are other vices in Vienna, or does the Duke have a problem with libertines? It looks weird that he is ready to punish Claudio whose only sin is levity. After all, he repents and is ready to atone for sin. Angelo's conscience has a more terrible sin; he denies his own bride. Why does the strict moralist refuse the bride? Is it only because of a lost dowry, or because he truly considers any manifestations of feelings as sin?

It is the first time for Angelo to turn out that he is capable of insane destructive passion (this passion is awakened by a sample of Isabella's chastity), even when Isabella is replaced with Marianne, he cannot refuse this passion. Moreover, self-knowledge is a dangerous thing. It is even more dangerous to let the demons out and indulge them. It is difficult for him to struggle with his feelings, even when most of them are derived from his lust that does not have any positive connotation. Sigmund Freud claims: "the subject's passions are ultimately reduced to sexual and aggressive drives and drive-related affects and fantasies together with their various combinations" (Carveth,2007) Moreover, Angelo is fighting his own passions but is the hardest conflict that he has. Especially when these passions are destructive, and the temptation is strong. Angelo's plans are unnatural and hypocritical, and a woman is to expose the lies. His hatred of bright feelings is not a conceited whim, but a political calculation and the struggle with such a person is incomparably difficult and dangerous. He is opposed by a woman full of worldly wisdom and thoughtful analysis. The life and death of her beloved brother is her torment.

Meanwhile, it is incredibly difficult to forgive a person who enters cruelly and unworthily

especially if he or she does this to another person. A person needs to react calmly and detachedly. Isabella is definitely not a weak character. She has all the virtues that are traditionally attributed to the 'real man'; bold, consistent and generous, while Angelo is petty, cunning, unsure of himself and inconsistent and the Duke who escapes from responsibilities and that makes him weak, touchy and vindictive. Angelo is just an ordinary person who acts according to circumstances. Isabella with her clear inner understanding of what is good and what is bad, what edge cannot be crossed, she is stuck out like a sore thumb among the characters of the play. She has no place in the world, so her departure to a monastery is a natural and logical decision. According to Marcia Riefer:

When we judge Isabella, we must consider, as Wheeler does, that she is surrounded by "the threat of sexual degradation"- a threat which in this play, is" moved to the very center of the comic action," while in the festive comedies that threat is "deflected by wit and subordinated to the larger movements" of those plays. (Riefer,1984)

Unfortunately, the decline of morals that is still relevant today cannot lead to any good ending. Isabella makes Angelo survive the brutal struggle of inborn human infirmity with the attempts of vanity and egoism, and the essence of mortal nature with ostentatious power and impeccability. This is a truly magnificent lesson in a moral and common sense. True, in order to accomplish it, the poet creates an omniscient good providence in the person of the Duke who performs various mysterious roles. This technique achieves a happy ending, but it does not in the least destroys the main meaning of the drama, it does not harm the integrity and psychological interest of the character's personality, or it does not diminish the meaning of one of the most instructive story of Angelo. In the end, Isabela and Mariana even are asked to spare Angelo, and the pardon bestowed on him allows the reader to speak of at least the potential possibility of his repentance and spiritual resurrection. Thus, having avoided the physical death, Angelo gets the opportunity to embark on the path of spiritual rebirth. So Isabella, addressing the Duke with a plea, finds extenuating

circumstances injustice, which Angelo shows in the past:

Look, if it please you, on this man
condemn'd,
As if my brother lived: I partly think
A due sincerity govern'd his deeds,
Till he did look on me: since it is so,
Let him not die. My brother had but justice,
In that he did the thing for which he died:
For Angelo,
His act did not o'ertake his bad intent,
And must be buried but as an intent
That perish'd by the way: thoughts are no
subjects;
Intentions but merely thoughts.

(Shakespeare,1863,V.i 108-445)

"The ability to forgive is a property of the strong. The weak never forgive, " so thought Mahatma Gandhi. (Goodnet.org.) To be afraid to forgive someone, thinking that because of this a person can 'lose face', is nothing, but a manifestation of weakness and self-doubt. Resentment and revenge destroy people. People have no right to judge. There is no need to keep heavy thoughts in the heart, only bright, noble feelings should settle there. Forgiveness is generosity.

Furthermore, it is undeniable that Vincentio plays a significant role in the fate of Angelo. The Duke seems to be a positive character or at least a fair person, but he is rather weak and not completely honest; he wants obedience, but he is afraid of being known as a tyrant, and therefore he throws responsibilities and difficult decisions at Angelo. The Duke temporarily leaves his post, but there is nothing noble in the transfer of power. Vincentio only proves that he is a weak man who cannot handle things. It seems that he has a lack of endurance, firmness, and to some extent the cruelty that the ruler needs.

Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them
For what I bid them do; for we bid this be
done,
When evil deeds have their permissive pass

And not the punishment. Therefore, indeed,
my father,
I have on Angelo impos'd the office;
Who may, in th' ambush of my name, strike
home,
And yet my nature never in the fight
To do in slander. (Shakespeare,1863,I.III,18
35)

He is not better than Angelo who wants to engage in sexual intercourse with Isabella. The Duke also knows that Isabella lives only for God, but despite this guides by his selfishness, he does propose to her. Throughout the play, the Duke does not show his feelings; they surfaces quite suddenly at the end of the play. It seems that Isabella is stronger and more rational character than Vincentio or Angelo. Isabella is not a hypocrite because she refuses to sacrifice her virginity for the sake of Claudio's life. The vow of chastity implies a commitment to God, and to fulfill a commitment to God is the most important thing for her. Nowadays, it is difficult for people to understand this thought. Isabella is ready to save her brother, but she cannot betray God.

One feels that Shakespeare himself was inspired by this story. Joseph Hebert claims that it is not by chance that Shakespeare chooses the paraphrase of the biblical commandment as the title of the play: "For with whatever judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with whatever measure you measure, it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:1) Angelo begins with the thought that the law against fornication is a good law, good for himself and for others. It seems to the rest that it is easy for him to comply with this law since Angelo is impassive. All of them are mistaken; Angelo has a special relationship to the law. He wants to remain unmarried, but there is a difference between the desire for celibacy for him and for Isabella. She is eager to take a vow of chastity in the name of love for God and neighbor; Angelo seeks celibacy out of pride, out of an unwillingness to be like the weak Lucio. He is overtaken by a terrible revenge. He admires chastity aesthetically; he envies Isabella as a stronger person and longs for her, in order to embellish her, to devour her chastity. Angelo shows the difference between "Super-ego" and conscience. He possesses

the first, but not the second. He wants to show the supreme power, speaking as a judge of others, and he himself is drawn into the story of Isabella, in which he becomes the source of conscious, intentional evil. So, an imperious person can demand from others only what he himself professes and does. Human nature is certainly complicated and too confusing and it is undoubtedly that the importance of forgiveness plays a significant role in a person's life.

Claudio already starts to set himself up for death, but it comes to Isabella to tell him about the possibility of being saved, his moods change. The monologue of Claudio about the horror of death is one of the most successful fragments of the play. In the beginning, it reminds the monologue "To be or not to be," but then it gets closer to the description of Hell in Dante's Divine Comedy as considers Dr. Michael Delahoyde (public.wsu.edu). However, Claudio's reflections transcend Christian notions of Hell:

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling region of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than
worst
Of those that lawless and incertain thought
Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment
Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death.
(Shakespeare,1863,III.156-115)

Claudio suddenly realizes that his life is at stake and wants his sister to feel his despair. He is terribly scared, it ousts all his rationality. Claudio thinks only of himself, he is not worried and or afraid to sacrifice his sister. People are selfish by nature, especially in critical situations. According to Collin's dictionary, "self-preservation is the action of keeping yourself safe or alive in a dangerous

situation, often without thinking about what you are doing." (collinsdictionary.com). It is certainly a dog-eat-dog world. Frightened by death, Claudio wants to save his body while his sister wants to save her soul. People often reproach Isabella for cruelty, but they must not forget that she is ready to give her life for her brother, but she cannot sacrifice honor. Claudio is ready to save his life by sacrificing the honor of his sister. Shakespeare puts the question here: what is more important for a person life or honor? He puts it not for the first time and very often answers in the same way: honor is more important for a person.

In *Measure for Measure* with the figure of 'comforter' can be compared the Duke who is dressed as a monk and says for Claudio the famous monologue, condemning life, urging to reject its fleeting values and not to fear death, that is, he teaches Claudio how to die.

A breath thou art,
Servile to all the skyey influences,
That dost this habitation, where thou keep'st,
Hourly afflict: merely, thou art death's fool;
For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun
And yet runn'st toward him still. Thou art not
noble;
For all the accommodations that thou bear'st
Are nursed by baseness. Thou'rt by no means
valiant;
For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork
Of a poor worm. Thy best of rest is sleep,
And that thou oft provokest; yet grossly
fear'st
Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not
thyself;
For thou exist'st on many a thousand grains
That issue out of dust
(Shakespeare,1863,iii.i 51/52- 5).

Claudio perceives these words, it would seem with calmness and gratitude, but his calmness only seems to be such that the words of his sister and her inflexibility again quickly lead Claudio into despair. Claudio thinks about the torment of the soul, separated from the body and suffering in Hell.

Conclusion

All in all, *Measure For Measure* is one of the best works of Shakespeare, very tentatively related to the genre of 'comedy'. It is rather a drama; it rises so serious and unrelated questions to particular era. In the final analysis, it can be said this play empathizes that our world is a balance of light and darkness, good and evil. Perhaps, such spiritual values as moral norms, ideals, and a sense of duty (superego) can help people to find the right path. Shakespeare does not call on people to curb their destructive and dark passions, such as self-love, aggressiveness, revenge, ambition which bring misfortunes to the bearer of passion and to the people around. It seems that he wants to show humanity that all people are different from each other. People are born in families with different cultural backgrounds, read different books, grow in different conditions. Moreover, according to Sigmund Freud, everyone has his\her own addictions and habits and it's absolutely a normal phenomenon. (<https://webpace.ship.edu>)

Analyzing this play, it can conclude that not one of the main characters is neither bad nor good. Each of them contains a huge range of qualities, both positive and negative. William Shakespeare clearly saw the destructive power of the actions of the passions on human soul, as well as the fact that such feelings like Angelo's are a threat to society, but he described what happened from the standpoint of an artist not a moralist or a preacher. Nevertheless, Sigmund Freud considers, that all people have passions that even are life instincts. (<https://webpace.ship.edu>) Hundreds of years after the appearance of his plays, people still look at the world through the eyes of the great playwright and see around the images which he created. Moreover, looking inside ourselves, it can be seen as a mirror, reflections of the passions with which Shakespeare's characters are obsessed with.

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