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A MACHIAVELLIAN PERSPECTIVE AND CHARACTER PSYCHOANALYSIS- IN REFERENCE TO THE FREUDIAN ARGUMENT FOR THE INSANITY OF HAMLET AND THE TEMPEST

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the famous plays and dramas of the renowned English playwright and poet, William Shakespeare. *The Tempest* and *Hamlet*, with such iconic and complex characters, explore the themes of morality, insanity, and madness throughout the course. Shakespeare is well known for his power of creation and imagination; he has a keen knowledge of human relationships and their needs and desires. He is widely known for the use of psychological and supernatural elements. This study will help us to understand the deep, dramatic composition of Shakespeare's works. He picks the characters from different boxes of life, they could be 'the most foolish king. Or the wisest fool in the king's court. His works generally depict the exaggerated understanding of humans and human nature. This article also examines Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* through a dual lens of Machiavellian strategy and Freudian psychoanalysis, unraveling the complex interplay between feigned insanity, morality, and human behavior. Freudian theories of the psyche—the Id, Ego, and Superego—explore the protagonists' moral dilemmas and psychological struggles of their actions. Shakespeare dramatizes the internal and external conflicts that provide fertile ground for understanding the intricate balance. It navigates the protagonists' struggles with strategy and emotions that reflect the bounded human conflict and ethics.

Keywords: Machiavellianism, Psychoanalysis, Shakespeare, Hamlet, The Tempest, Freudian Theory, Supernatural, Insanity, Id, Ego, Superego, Morality, Dilemma, Human Conflict, Ethics.

INTRODUCTION

Works of William Shakespeare stand far above their historical and cultural contexts, dealing with eternal themes of ambition, morality, madness, and the human psyche. *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* contain a juxtaposition between the calculatedness of power and the psychology behind whether it is feigned or real insanity. The ultimate goal of the paper is that of an analysis of what these two works have in common: the frameworks of Machiavellian pragmatism and Freudian psychoanalysis. These provide a thorough understanding of the motives and moral dilemmas of both Hamlet and Prospero—their choice between

the greater necessity for strategy versus utmost morality. The ghost of King Hamlet urges the young Prince of Denmark to take revenge on his uncle for having murdered him. Hamlet pretends to be mad; he contemplates life and death, with vengeance on his mind. Scared for his life, the King hatches plots to kill Hamlet as well. In the end, a duel occurs in which the King, Queen, Hamlet's opponent, and Hamlet are all slain. While in *The Tempest*, Prospero is a well-learned magician who raises a tempest and causes distress for the survivors of the ruined ship, whose party includes the King of Naples and Prospero's treacherous brother, Antonio. The fallible Caliban plots against his master with the help of the spirit Ariel. The son of the King, Ferdinand, is declared dead; yet along comes Miranda, Prospero's daughter, and the two fall in love. Thus, the celebration ends abruptly when he confronts his brother with the knowledge that he is the Duke of Milan, who was unjustly deposed. The families are reconciled, and peace reigns. Prospero grants his spirit, Ariel, freedom and prepares himself to leave his island.

Drama and Play as Two Genres

Drama as a genre of literature provides an intense and lifelike representation of human conflicts and emotions, making it a good ground for examining psychological and philosophical themes. Drama, an act that traces its origin to the ancient Greek theatre through the Renaissance, witnessed Shakespeare as its most prominent figure. His plays are largely characterized by a fusion of tragedy, comedy, and historical narrative, supported by characters of great depth and thematic complexity. It is by employing soliloquies, dramatic irony, and symbolic imagery that madness has its enlarged place in drama for analyzing the human condition. Play is a sub-category of drama and emphasizes the performance of the drama and interaction among characters, thereby dramatizing narratives of literary text. A statistical hierarchy of various genres in plays includes tragedies, comedies, farces, and experimental plays through which such interpretations of theme and character interaction can vary widely. Shakespeare was able to bring the performance of such popular plays into exact alignment with all the dialogues, staging, and audience engagement with the theme and emotion of the narrative. This simultaneous emphasis on the text and the performance gives rise to each drama and play as immortal forms of the art of storytelling.

About the Author and His Writing Style

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), better known as the Bard of Avon, remains an unrivaled icon in literature. In his prolific career, he managed to pen 39 plays, 154 sonnets, and two long narrative poems. His writing style is marked by a masterful exercise in language use within the context of iambic pentameter, rich imagery, and the innovative utilization of soliloquies. The universal themes of love, power, and issues of existence, rendered in nuanced characterizations, propel his plays beyond their historical timeframe and into significant international discourses. Shakespeare has earned his place in the

annals of fiction as a master storyteller for the weaving of great human truths into the very fabric of his narratives.

The Psychoanalytic Approach

The psychoanalytic approach, developed by Sigmund Freud, investigates human behavior through the gaze of the unconscious. Freud's theory of personality structure includes the Id (that basic instinctual desire), Ego (that rational self), and Superego (that moral conscience) (Freud 19). From this point of view, one could interpret the characters' motivations and conflicts. This approach has been extensively applied to literature for divulging the lower psychological layers of a narrative. Psychoanalysis, by looking into some of the themes like repression, trauma, and desire, thus offers a better understanding of the characters' actions and the symbolic meanings of their experiences. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* are very deep plays in psychological terms, which makes them highly suited for psychoanalytic interpretation. Hamlet expresses the deliberate pretension of insanity in a way very akin to an inner battle, moral paralysis concerning the issues of avenging his father's murder. From a Freudian view of analysis, he struggled with the primal urges of the Id, the rationalizing plans of the Ego, and the moral self-prohibition of the Superego (Freud 19). In *The Tempest*, however, Prospero's demand for control is an outward manifestation of inner psychological concern, which particularly encompasses reconciling vengeance with forgiveness. By examining these characters through Freudian lenses, we find that all actions are complex manifestations of a conflict between conscious and unconscious forces (Freud 19).

Thematic Analysis of Pretended Madness and Morality

Both plays use pretend madness as a highly effective narrative device. The pretended insanity of Hamlet is a ruse to enable him to traverse the treacherous waters of Elsinore without ever revealing his hand. The 'antic disposition' involves worries about the morality of deception and the psychological toll of duplicity (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 1.5.172). In *The Tempest*, Prospero is setting the stage for performing mind games that have been staged with the use of Ariel, and one could see that as a form of staged insanity, with others drawing the line between reality of artifice. Such illustrations would bring to light some moral quandaries that go with the demand to manipulate both power and deception to satisfy one's ends. "What dreams may come when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, must give us pause" (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 3.1.65).

The Id, Ego, and Superego in Freud's Personality Structure

The Id symbolizes the instinctual, primal aspect of personality that functions on the principle of pleasure and desire. In *Hamlet*, the Id appears in Hamlet's impulsive and violent reactions due to betrayal or injustice, for instance, his unquenchable rage toward Claudius and Ophelia (Freud 19). In *The Tempest*, it is Caliban who represents the Id, an embodiment of base instincts and uncontrolled desires. These

characteristics serve as examples of the raw and untamed forces behind human actions, often putting them in opposition to civilized conduct.

The Ego mediates between the Id's motivated desires and the Superego's moral appraisals, looking to create a balance. The Ego of Hamlet is brought out in his wise scheming to unmask Claudius as the guilty one by way of a play-within-a-play, giving him great strategic capability (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 3.2.233). Prospero's Ego is realized in his capacity to control his feelings and actions, striking a balance between aching to get revenge and hoping for harmony to govern (Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 5.1.50).

The Superego, within the conscious formation of moral utilities, often in conflict with the instinctual features of the Id, we find the Superego. In *Hamlet*, the Superego comes alive in Hamlet's existential reflections; for instance, when he contemplates the question of God and existence during the "To be or not to be" soliloquy (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 3.1.56). As for Prospero, the Superego within the conscious formation of moral utilities, often in conflict with the instinctual features of the Id, we find the Superego. In *Hamlet*, the Superego comes alive in Hamlet's existential reflections; for instance, when he contemplates the question of God and existence during the "To be or not to be" soliloquy (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 3.1.56). As for Prospero, within the Superego live the traits of careful forgiveness, which place his moral considerations above mere vengeance (Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 5.1.50). These offer glimpses into the inner conflicts experienced by each character early on in determining an ethical course of action.

CONCLUSION

In *Hamlet*, the eponymous hero traverses a world filled with political manipulation and moral corruption. Hamlet's pseudo-madness serves as a Machiavellian trick, allowing him to uncover the truth about King Claudius's commission of murder. Cunning and deception are salient forms of Machiavellian disposition in the play, whereby Hamlet's "antic disposition" allows him the chance to hide his true rationale (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 1.5.172). Claudius, a clear representation of a Machiavellian ruler, consolidates authority by trickery and ruthlessness, revealing calculated maneuverings through his soliloquies. The moral ambivalence of the play-in-hesitation of Hamlet before avenging the death of his father naturally brings to light the inherent conflict between moral conduct and pragmatic action.

The Tempest ostensibly reveals Machiavellian philosophy through the way Prospero initiates a series of events on the island, and underlines subtlety as his genius, the use of magic and cunning strategies. The machinations of Prospero correlate with, among other things, Machiavelli's proposition that knowledge is the instrument of power (Machiavelli 23). He skillfully exploits the avarice and privations of Caliban, Ariel, and Ferdinand. The ongoing quest of Prospero to regain his dukedom augurs a very Machiavellian quest for power and legitimacy.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory offers a new way to examine Hamlet's descent, focusing primarily on the Oedipus complex and its effects on Hamlet's psyche (Freud 19). Hamlet's fixation with Gertrude's relationship with Claudius tells of repressed desires and conflicts left unresolved. He is crazier and argues with Ophelia; this is an internal struggle between what is conscious and that which he does not know he has within him. The pretended madness of Hamlet then starts to turn into actual insanity, revealing the super-ego and the id hijacking the ego, as Freud would put it (Freud 19).

While madness in *The Tempest* manifests through characters like Caliban and Prospero that contain such Freudian conflicts as these, Caliban embodies the id, ungoverned by reason for its instinctual desires and bitterness against the authority that Prospero represents. Prospero, an image of authority and the only character in charge, embodies the superego. Miranda's illusion of innocence is that ego, is neither tainted nor complete by the judgment of Prospero's authority nor by Caliban's rebellion. Madness serves not just as poor psychology but as propaganda. Hamlet's madness coincides with a calculated struggle to effectively challenge Claudius. On the other extreme, Prospero manipulates others like any well-trained Machiavellian ruler. The struggle between sense and madness signifies the effort between conscious strategies and unconscious desires. Freud's theory makes it clear that whatever is repressed is that which is driving a Machiavellian approach, and characterizations like Hamlet and Prospero emerge, mediating between ambition and moral responsibility.

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* masterfully blend Machiavellian principles with Freudian psychoanalysis, offering a nuanced exploration of power, morality, and madness. This paper thus examined the strategic cunning of Hamlet and Prospero in conjunction with their psychological struggles. Such an examination accents Shakespeare's continuing relevance in grasping the intricacies of dealing with human behavior. It is the intersection of Machiavellianism and Freudian lunacy that not only deepens our comprehension of these characters but also invites reflection on the consequentiality of ambition and mental turmoil in the field of literature and life.

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