



UNCONSCIOUS WAS DISCOVERED BY SHAKESPEARE EVEN BEFORE SIGMUND FREUD

Md. Sajib Miah

M.A in English Studies (MAPW) at Jahangirnagar University. Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Email: Sajibalshad@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Epilepsy (a neurological disorder marked by sudden recurrent of sensory disturbance, loss of consciousness, or convulsions, associated with abnormal electrical activity in the brain), psychiatric breakdown, sleep disorders, rage, high ambition, sexual and aggressive desires and dysfunctional utopia in the psyche for taking blood from enemies illustrate a surprising amount of modern psychological details in Shakespeare's renowned characters. Sigmund Freud stated in his works on psychoanalysis "The poets and Philosophers before me discovered the unconscious" which the world famous literary critic Harold Bloom of Yale University thinks refers to Shakespeare. Indeed, Bloom also contends that what we think of as the Freudian map of the mind is in fact Shakespeare's and he "invented" the human. By this he means that while all the various character traits that are in Shakespeare existed before, few before Shakespeare written down in such details, inspiring generations to be more reflective when considering their own behaviours. Whether one agrees with Bloom or not, Shakespeare's influence on understanding of unconscious of the mind seems undeniable. This paper is going to delve into the evil force or unconscious state of mind of the major renowned characters of Shakespeare specially Hamlet, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Othello and unpleasant and creepy Shylock by applying Freud's theory of unconscious who went through Shakespeare as a child and was influenced by the psychology of his characters.

Key words: disturbance, ambition, dysfunctional, Bloom, unpleasant, unconscious.

INTRODUCTION

Dystopian psyche for taking retaliation, rage, aspirations and sexual and aggressive desires are pervasive in Shakespeare's comedies as well as tragedies. King Hamlet always runs after killing his father's enemy and also wants to subjugate his father's kingdom by finding out the real murderer while Macbeth betrays with King Duncan for power and reputations. Lady Macbeth extremely supports her husband to commit such iniquity to murder God like King Duncan. However, Othello is not beyond untenable in the inner behaviours because he also commits some outrageous inhuman activities which are most probably became concealed until a certain period. Last but not the least, the unpleasant and creepy Shylock wants blood instead of leading some amount of money which are nothing but Freudian unconscious in the modern conceptions which were discovered hundreds of years back even before Sigmund Freud for what Bloom claims the map of Freudian unconscious has some pertinent to Shakespeare's unconsciously discovery of unconscious and his characters are the impeccable example of containing such departments which are nothing but unconscious in the psyche, divulging at times and outweighs the conscious part of the mind.

Freudian Interpretation of the Unconscious

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis is one of the finest and most effective ways to explain human conduct and psychology. Along with considering human conduct and psychology, psychoanalysis also has been always a vital tool in conceiving Shakespeare's characters in the plays. Freud the father of psychoanalytic theory of mind divided human psyche into three layers as conscious, unconscious and subconscious. He explains in his works on psychoanalysis that conscious mind contains "active thoughts" while the unconscious part of mind contains hidden instinct thoughts, feelings and memories beyond our awareness. Freud defines the unconscious as "a reservoir of thoughts, wishes, feelings and memories that are concealed outside of our conscious awareness". Bulk of the contents of the unconscious are unpleasant like fears, pain, unacceptable sexual desires, violent motives, irrational wishes, immoral urges, selfish needs and finally shameful and traumatic experiences. Freud thinks that unconscious places major part of human psyche. He compares the mind to an "Iceberg" where he claims that conscious mind is the upper part of "Iceberg" and there are the thoughts and feelings where our psyche is aware of. The submerged part of "Iceberg" compares to the "unconscious" where our desires and memories keep sleep and we are not aware of these which are sometimes very unpleasant. Hamlet's revenge against his uncle Claudius, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's high ambitions for power, Othello's doubt about his beloved and creepy Shylock's desire for enemies flash vividly match the Freudian theory of unconscious in their psyche.

Hamlet

Sigmund Freud spent a huge amount of time and energy examining the conscious and unconscious psyche of human, which is apt to Hamlet. Anyone can easily understand and come to end about Hamlet even without looking into the actual cause of being insane, but applying Freudian psychoanalytic lens can provide the readers a better and deep conceiving of Hamlet's madness. The readers raise a very pertinent question why did he not kill Claudius earlier, why did he procrastinate in the play? Some critics think that he is religious and a man of inaction, but while delving through the psychological lens it is evident that Hamlet cannot kill Claudius until Gertrude is dead. Kendra Cherry the psychological rehabilitation specialist and also the author of "What is an Oedipal Complex" provides a very simple understanding of the Oedipal Complex and states "According to Freud, the boy (Hamlet) wishes to possess his mother and replace his father, who the child views as a rival for the mother's affections". This reference illustrates that Hamlet's activities are motivated by Oedipal Complex and his unconscious forces and hidden desires in the psyche. All over the play, he thrives his concealed angers and rage over his girlfriend, to some extent his own mother and says:

"Get thee to a nunnery:
 Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?
 But yet I could accuse me of such things
 I am myself indifferent honest;
 That it were better my mother had no better me!
 I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious,
 With more offenses at my back than I
 Have thoughts to put them in,
 Imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in.
 What should such follows as I do wrong between earth and heaven?
 We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us.
 Go thy ways to a nunnery"(Act III, Scene I.114-121).

Here he himself claims as proud, revengeful, ambitious being which are undoubtedly as the part of his unconscious mind. He suggests Ophelia to go nunnery to remain chaste so that she

cannot give birth “Arrant Knaves” (complete villain) like him. Hamlet might be tender to her but becomes more aggressive which indicates the symptoms of his bipolar disorder or mental breakdown according to the latest edition of (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder) for what his swings and rage comes out from the unconscious mind. Farah Karim Copper, the scholar at Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre in London explains “You can see evidence of his mind swings and rage in his chamber with his mother and exchanges with Ophelia”. That suggests the unconscious part of Hamlet’s psyche contains rage and anger which pitches over his mother, girlfriend and paternal Uncle Claudius. Hamlet’s conscious and unconscious mind play over him after knowing about his father’s murderer till end. In a soliloquy he says:

“To be or not to be, that is the question:-
Whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing, end him”. (Act III, Scene I.55-87).

This soliloquy exposes his dilemma of killing his father’s murderer Claudius. His unconscious aggressive desires want to take revenge against Claudius but his subconscious mind creates barrier at times for what he has to procrastinate in taking actions. He wants to take arms against “the sea of troubles” but his subconscious mind or religious daunting hinders for committing this but finally he breaks down the subconscious barriers and take revenge which drives from his unconscious part of psyche. However, it can be said that Hamlet’s Oedipal Complex towards mother, taking revenge against his uncle Claudius and rage and misbehaviours to his beloved Ophelia match to Freudian interpretation of unconscious in Hamlet’s psyche which are hidden in his unconscious part of the mind as like as ‘iceberg’ in water.

Macbeth

“I am settled and bend up
Each corporal agent to his terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest slow;
False face must hide what the false heart doth know” (Act I. Scene VII.91-94).

The above statement shows Macbeth’s hidden desires which nobody knows. He says that he has a “false heart” and therefore, he must wear a “false face” in order to conceal the false heart. Macbeth’s desire to kill King Duncan and take over power are nothing but unconscious part of his psyche which were hidden until the Witches’ prophecy. Following the 2nd apparition in Act IV, Scene i:

“Be bloody and bold and resolve
Lough to scorn the power of man,
For none of women shall harm Macbeth”

He becomes more arrogant and confident that nobody will be able to kill him. This loftiness is definitely the part of unconscious psyche of Macbeth. In the Act ii, Scene ii, he says “To know my deed, there best know myself”. This line reflects that he chooses to realise his ambition by unethical means which arises from unconscious mind and breaks down subconscious (the frontier between conscious and unconscious).

By scrutinizing the nature of Macbeth’s psyche, I have found a destructive evil in his mind which has slept in the unconscious and slipped out these annihilated desires by the time goes in the play *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare.

“It is a statement of evil” (Knight18)

“The whole play may be writ down as a wrestling of destruction with creation” (Knight 140).

“It contains the decisive orientation of Shakespearean good and evil” (Traversi 86).

The statements are given to prove that Macbeth is one of the deepest and mature characters who exposes his guilty and ambitious mind all over the play which leads him to commit not only the most heinous activities including the murder of King Duncan and Macduff for power but also affects the family, state and as well as the innocent universe. The Oxford professor A.C Bradley discusses about Macbeth in his book ‘Shakespearean Tragedy’ and states “Macbeth’s tragic flaw was ambition, as his lust for power, egged by Lady Macbeth, is what leads him to kill King Duncan and set into motion all of the other tragic events of the play”. This statement illustrates that Macbeth’s high ambition and lust for power are the hidden desires of the unconscious part of psyche. He is a man “full of the milk of human kindness” (Act I, Scene V. 17) and protects his kingdom by chivalric actions. When his desires started slipping out from unconscious mind, he started losing humanity and kindness. He claims himself as unnatural curse just after killing King Duncan and says

“I am in Blood steeped in so far that,

Should I wade no more?

Returning were as tedious ago over” (Act III. Scene IV. 136-38).

He says that he would not be able to come back from curse because this curse is instinct hidden in the unconscious of the mind which breaks the boundary (subconscious) as well as the ingrained eternal rules of the universe by involving unnatural killing. When unconscious in one’s psyche is let loose, he/she indulges in tyranny and oppression: “Each new morn
New windows bowl, new orphans cry,

New sorrows strike heaven on the face” (Act IV. Scene III.4-6).

However, Malcolm’s excerpt below serve to prove the instinct characteristics of Macbeth which drives out from his unconscious mind hidden as like as Freudian iceberg in water until the Witches prophesize him as the next king of Scotland:

“I grant him bloody,

Luxurious, avaricious, false,

Deceitful, Sudden, malicious” (Act IV. Scene III.58-60).

Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth is one of the Shakespeare’s persuasive, decisive, controlling and high ambitious woman characters who divulge her hidden malicious desires after hearing the prophecy about Macbeth that he is going to be the next king in Scotland. Undoubtedly, her activities match with the Freudian approach of unconscious. She illustrates her hidden side about herself when she is alone. She cannot squeeze and stop her inner instinct attitudes and says: “I may pour my spirits in thy ear” (Act I. Scene II. 43-44). This statements shows that she wants to share her heinous wishes with Macbeth which Freud explains as unconscious of human psyche but she does not expose these traits to public that means her traits are hidden in the unconscious even sometimes she is not aware about these. Her desire for power makes her crueller and she prays to Witches,

“Unsex me here and fill me from the crown,

To the toe, top- full of direst cruelty”. (Act I. Scene V.39-41).

Her instinct desires are so much powerful that she wants to forget the killing scene and tries to convince Macbeth to wipe out guilty feeling that they have done on Duncan. She asserts

“things without all remedy should be without reward, what’s done is done, can’t be undone”. Her negative desires are much stronger and obsessive than Macbeth. “She deliberately chooses evil, her choice being more deliberate than her husband” (Muir lxvii). The words ambition and illness are matter of praise for her while human kindness and holily are matter of blame. A.C Bradley explains “Moral distinctions do not in this exaltation exist for her; or rather they are inverted, good means to her the crown and whatever is required to obtain it, evil whatever stands in the way of its attainment”. This assertion is set to prove that her desires always against kindness and holily which are nothing but her hidden instinct violent desires of unconscious psyche. In her soliloquy, she says

“Yet do I fear thy nature
It is too full o’ the milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way, thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attained it, what thou wouldst wholly
Thou wouldst thou holily” (ActI. Scene V.16-21).

Lady Macbeth is conscious in the beginning about her deeds and her weakness is divulged when she says:

“Had he not resemblance
My father as he slept, I had don’t” (Act II. Scene II. 12-13).

However, her conscious being is superseded by her unconscious (hidden instinct desires) in the psyche. In the sleeping walking scene, we see that she is afflicted by all the negative powers that she possesses and makes her insane. Lady Macbeth’s inspiration and high ambition for killing King Duncan, subjugating Scotland, excessive desires for being queen were hidden in the unconscious mind until knowing about the Witches’ prophecy and finally break down the subconscious and cover conscious part which leads her to commit all the villainous activities all over the play.

Othello

Freudian approach of psychoanalysis is going to be used to bring out the unconscious activities from Othello’s hidden mind which are sparked by jealousy, inferiority complex, and Lago’s heinous persuasion over his mind. Othello’s these hidden activities are responsible for producing unhappiness in the form of disturbing personality traits. “These unconscious factors have the potential to produce unhappiness in the form of disturbing personality traits of disturbance in self-esteem” (American Psychoanalytic Association, 1998). Othello’s act of killing Desdemona from jealousy and feeling inferior for racial phenomena are not only the activities arise from unconscious but also Lago’s conspiracy sparks Othello’s diabolic attitudes from the unconscious part of his psyche. Coleridge states “Othello does not kill Desdemona in jealousy, but in conviction forced upon him by the almost superman art of Lago” (Qtd.in Xun Wu, 27) but the most interesting matter is that David Enoch a psychiatrist believes “Lago merely fanned the flame of jealousy, which was already embedded in Othello’s personality”(David 1991:38). By supporting David, Lokis54 Cero (2017) states “Murdering others is an outward projection of an unconscious desire to die”. The above references are more than enough to conceive the mind of Othello because every reagent like conspiracy, jealousy directly or indirectly shapes Othello’s behaviours and personality. From Freudian psychoanalytic approach, it is easily understood that Othello’s activities and personality is the ultimate consequence of the interaction among conscious, unconscious and subconscious. In his works on psychoanalysis (1949), Freud explains that id resides completely at the unconscious level of mind. It acts under the “pleasure principle” (Freud1956). Freud also explains that unconscious is the “primitive and instinctual” part of

psyche that contains “Sexual and aggressive desires” (Freud 1956). However, Othello’s revengeful mind and jealousy are the part of Freud’s aggressive desires hidden in the unconscious as like as iceberg in water. Othello’s inferiority complex changes his behaviour and raises unnecessary doubt and jealousy, sense of revenge and hatred in him which result in catastrophic. Undoubtedly, Othello undergoes Freudian theory of “inferiority complex” because he often says himself as “the Moor”(I.I.116), “the Barbary horse” (I.I-111), (Old Black ram” (I.I-8) and “Thick lips” (I.I.-66). His concern is that he lives in the white society but he is a black moor. He concerns his race, language and age at all outsider in a Venetia society:

“Rude am I in my speech more than;
Pertain to feats of broil and battle” (Act I. Scene I.81-82).

Othello’s inferiority complex drives out from his own unconscious mind because the white lady Desdemona does not treat him such way. His inferiority complex can be considered as his unconscious part of psyche which leads him to jealousy and committing murder of his own wife. He says “I am black, and have not those soft parts of conversation” (Act I. Scene II-268). This speech proves how he is extremely influenced by inferiority complex and loses his temper which create aggressive attitudes in his behaviours. In the final part of the play, Othello’s anger goes up to extreme level after knowing Lago’s treachery against him and gets frustrated,

“O Desdemona! Dead Desdemona!
Dead! Oh! Oh!” (V.II-282).

From his anger, he stabs Lago and also kills himself which is the expression of his unconscious (aggressive attitudes) of the psyche. Othello also calls Desdemona “Cunning Whore of Venice” (IV.II-91) from anger. Therefore, it is understood how jealousy and anger have affected his mind unconsciously which are absolutely Freudian Unconscious hidden in the mind as like as the bulk amount of ‘iceberg’ in water.

Shylock

Shylock is one of the most remarkable characters in the play *The Merchant of Venice*, arguably one of Shakespeare’s most remarkable, multi-faced and villainous characters.

“This kindness will show,
Go with me to a notary, seal me there,
Your single bond, and in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such day;
In such a place, such sum or sums as are.
Expressed in the condition, let me forfeit;
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut of and
In what part of your body pleased me” (Act I. Scene III. 135-145).

These lines illustrate Shylock’s villainous desires to take retaliation against Antonio which has resemblance to Freud’s “Aggressive desires” hidden in the unconscious but at times slips out by disrupting the subconscious in the psyche. “Shylock’s desire for flesh from a Christian is his instinct violence concealed by mask” (Bradley 349). Here, he tries to say that Shylock’s infernal desires have been hidden for a long time. When he wakes up for revenge against Antonio, his unconscious also arises with him. Shylock says that he has no compassion for Christians:

“I hate him for he is a Christian
But more, for that in low simplicity;

He lends out money gratis and brings down,
The rate of ounce here with us in Venice” (ActI. Scene III.30-35).

Shylock’s distasteful attitudes towards other religious group of people are very dangerous because religion deals with strong emotions. Religion itself is one kind of mask of the unconscious in human psyche. Shylock’s diabolic behaviours towards Christians naturally break down of the subconscious barrier by unconscious desires like hate, revenge and thirst for flesh.

“Thou calledst me a dog before,
Thou hadst a cause” (Act III. Scene III).
“To bait fish withal; it will feed nothing else,
It will feed my revenge” (Act III. Scene I.41-42)

The statements expose the apex level of rage for revenge against Christians which prove his possession of some violent traits in him but can’t realise until Antonio comes for lending money. His desires for revenge sleeps in his unconscious psyche as like as Freudian iceberg in water. Gratiano treats him as “O, be thou damned, inexorable dog!” However, a stony adversary, an inhuman wretch, a misbeliever, cut throat dog and a dog Jew adjectives are enough to prove him as bloodthirsty villain which Freud sees as aggressive instinct desires” of Shylock sleeps in the unconscious state of psyche.

FINDINGS

The consequence of my research paper over the five renowned characters of Shakespeare is that they all possess some outrageous instinct Freudian approach of unconscious in their psyche. The paper has proved Hamlet’s revengeful attitudes towards his uncle, sexual desires to his mother by referencing A.C Bradley’s ‘What is an Oedipal Complex’ text in “Oedipal Complex”. Macbeth’s high ambition for power and Kingship in Scotland, Lady Macbeth’s doubled faced hypocritical and equivocal characteristics to be queen in Scotland, Othello’s jealousy and inferiority complex in mind and finally unpleasant and creepy Shylock’s thirst for human flesh from a Christian are nothing but Freud’s “sexual and aggressive desires” (Freud 1856) hidden in the unconscious part of their psyche as like as Freudian iceberg in water.

CONCLUSION

Shakespeare’s above characters possess outrageous instinct desires for power, wealth, revenge and sex in the unconscious psyche which break out at a certain moment in their life and make more villainous. All the given characters’ sexual and aggressive desires are the impeccable example of Freudian unconscious in the psyche which usually become hidden as like as ‘iceberg’ in water but spark at times and break down Freudian subconscious which lead them to indulge in many disastrous activities over the passage of time in their life.

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