

PREFIGURATION OF FREUDIAN CONCEPT OF OEDIPUS COMPLEX IN SHAKESPEARE'S *HAMLET THE PRINCE OF DENMARK*

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ABSTRACT: This research paper illuminates the Freudian concept of Oedipus complex in the play *Hamlet* which was written by Shakespeare; here the chief character Hamlet is suffered with an Oedipus complex. It is the concept in Psychoanalytic theory which was coined by Sigmund Freud, a finding father of psychoanalysis. Oedipus syndrome first identified as a kind of mental disorder. According to Freud, Oedipus complex refers to a sexual attraction of a boy child towards his mother and aggression towards his father. It is considered as a social or cultural problem. Oedipus complex occurs in the phallic stage, it driven by the pleasure principle of the Id which lies in the unconscious part of mind. This paper focuses on the character Prince Hamlet's attraction towards his mother and hatred towards his father. The way of exhibiting the concept of Oedipus complex in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is astonishing.

KEYWORDS: psychoanalysis, Oedipus complex, Id, Phallic stage, culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

Psychoanalytical theory prompts a person by hidden forces which are controlled by the conscious and the rational thoughts. Explaining the concept of psyche is psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud is known to be as the father of psychoanalysis. Oxford English dictionary states Psychoanalytic theory as

A therapeutic method, originated by Sigmund Freud, for treating mental disorders by Investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the patient's mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into the conscious mind, using techniques such as dream interpretation and free association. (SYMPSON, J.A and Weiner)

Sigmund Freud has divided the behavior of human into three parts, they are

- Id
- Ego
- Super ego

The primeval part of the human behavior is Id, which is motivated by basic drives and relevant needs for example starvation, thirst and the drive for sex. It is controlled by the principles of pleasure. Id is buried in the unconscious part of the mind. As Sigmund Freud stated, unconscious mind produce true feelings, emotions and thoughts of self. There are many psychoanalytical techniques such as hypnosis, free association and dream analysis which is used to understand and ingress the unconscious. Super Ego is driven by morality principles, which is primarily concerned on social or moral values. Super Ego is partially unconscious. Ego is motivated by the principle of reality. It is buried in the conscious part. Ego is responsible to maintain the balance between Id and Super ego. Psychoanalytic theory is used to interpret the hidden meaning within the text. It is also used to understand the author's concept.

Sigmund Freud has done the analysis in the series of psychosexual stages which occurs in the life of children, and it paves the way to reach the personality of adult. According to Freud, human personality is developed through series of stages, which is commonly known as psychosexual stages. These stages are controlled by Id, which is driven by the principles of pleasure and it mainly focuses on particular erogenous zone, which refers to the part of the body and it is specifically sensitive to stimulation. There are five psychosexual stages in human life such as oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital. Each stage combines with specific erogenous zone in order to give pleasure and satisfaction.

In psychosexual stages each stage has a conflict, which is used to develop the personality of human beings. Through resolving the conflict, the stage gets completed. If the stage gets completed the personality of the person becomes healthy. If the conflicts are unresolved at the particular stage fixation may occur because of this fixation individual gets stuck in the particular stage. Fixation mainly focuses on the pleasure seeking energy of the Id, which occurs from the birth. It is a reservoir for unconscious.

The primary series in psychosexual stage is Oral stage. It begins from child's delivery to 1 year. In Oral stage the primary source of interaction derives through the mouth. Infants get pleasure from oral stimulation and it satisfies themselves through the activities like slurping and savoring. In oral stage the infant fully depends on caretakers. The primary conflict which occurs in this stage is said to be as weaning. Pleasure is gained through sucking, biting, chewing and swallowing. The second stage is Anal stage, it occurs from one year to three years of the child's age, here the primary conflict is toilet training, in this stage pleasure centers on bowel and bladder control. Freud states that the primary concern of the libido was controlling the movement of bowel and bladder. Third stage is called as Phallic stage, which begins from the child's age of three to six. In this stage child starts identifying the difference between male and female. Karen Henry says that the emergence of the womb envy and penis envy starts to grow in phallic stage. The emergence of Oedipus complex also appears in the phallic stage. "both males and females aged 13 or older would prefer masculine shapes due to the male-orientation of our culture while the choices of children in the phallic stage, who were assumed ignorant of our culture's male-orientation, would be determined by opposite-sex attraction." (P. Cameron) The fourth stage is the Latent period, which starts from the age of six to puberty. Sexual feelings are inactive in latent period. The last stage is the Genital stage, which begins from the puberty till death.

The psychoanalytical concept of Oedipus complex was introduced by Sigmund Freud in his work *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). Oedipus complex, a term refers to a child's attraction towards the parent of opposite sex and the aggression towards the parent of same sex. According to Freud, Oedipus complex only fits for male child. The concept for girl child is applied in the term called Electra complex which was coined by Carl Jung, the term Electra complex describes about the girl child's infatuation towards the parent of opposite sex, and the aggression towards the parent of same sex. Freud states that the term Electra complex can also be called as Negative Oedipus Complex. Karen Henry states that the concept of Oedipus complex is a term which describes the womb envy and penis envy. According to Muller, "the Oedipal resolution brings about a transition from the imaginary identification with the phallus and the dual relation with the mother to the symbolic identification with the father's name in a pluralized relation with a place in a structured kin network" (Muller).

Greek myth Oedipus is the protagonist of the novel *Oedipus Rex* which was written by Sophocles. He is the son of Thebes' king Laius and queen Jocasta. Oedipus was born with a curse that he would kill his father and shares his bed with his mother that was learned by the king Laius from the oracle so, he ordered his wife to kill the baby, but she refused to do it. Jocasta handover the baby to his servant and ordered him to kill the baby. The baby's legs were bound together tightly and the servant decided to throw the baby from the top of the hill, feeling pity over the child, he gave the child to a shepherd from Corinth, who gave it to Polybos the king, as the king had no children.

Oedipus grew up as the prince of Corinth. Later he came to know the truth that he was not a biological son of the king and queen of Corinth through a drunken person. He was in a confused state so he moved to Delphi, where Apollo reveals about his birth curse. Oedipus became much dejected and he decided to run away from Corinth to escape from the curse. He moved to Thebes, in the middle of his journey to Thebes he killed king Laius unknowingly, by thinking Laius was a traveller who tried to kill him, then he solved the riddle of sphinx, a monster with a lion's appearance then he entered into Thebes. He married queen Jocasta and he had four children. At the end of the story, he came to know the truth and he blinded himself and Jocasta had committed suicide and died.

According to Sigmund Freud, it is normal for children to have sexual desire for their parent of the opposite sex and to have feeling of hatred for the parent of same sex. Children experience these feelings between the ages of three to five. But for few individual, it becomes deeply suppressed. When these feelings are carried to their adulthood, it is considered as an oedipal complex or oedipal syndrome.

This paper focuses on the chief character named Hamlet in the Shakespeare's play *Hamlet the prince of Denmark*. This paper have discussed about the protagonist of the play Hamlet, who carries oedipal feelings into his adulthood. "It is difficult to abandon the emotion to our mothers, a psychological fear of failure, afraid to lose his mother, subsequently arise the antipathy to her" (Liu). The first symptom of the complex is child's hatred towards the parent the same sex. In this play the prince Hamlet displays hatred to his real father as well as his uncle Claudius, who turned to be his step father after king Hamlet's death. Hamlet says, "That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet, King, Father, royal Dane."(1.1.47-48) (Shakespeare and Loffelt). This shows that for prince Hamlet his father is primarily king than his father. He might have hatred towards his father and subconsciously he wanted to kill him but he never done it, because he was aware that thought of his is against the moral code. Throughout this play prince hamlet had never worried about his father's death and he never tried whole heartedly to take revenge against his uncle Claudius who killed his father for his crown and Gertrude

queen of Denmark. Hamlet dragged his feet to kill Claudius and he gave silly reasons for that. Hatred for Claudius is seen more clearly in Hamlet. Hamlet denied killing him while he is praying; He feels that if he killed Claudius when he was in prayer, he would go to heaven. Hamlet states that Claudius wanted to go to hell. Hamlet wanted to do but something he couldn't do. Because of his Oedipus complex Hamlet had a feeling of guilt against killing Claudius. He thought that killing Claudius would be killing his own self, Hamlet totally identified that Claudius had achieved all of what prince Hamlet wished to do.

Hamlet behaved like a jealous lover rather than a son, he also asked his mother Gertrude that how could she stand near Claudius and allow him to touch her.

HAMLET

It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
 Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
 Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven,
 Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,
 And do not spread the compost on the weeds

To make them ranker. (3.4.168-173). (Shakespeare and Loffelt)

Also he told not to have sex with Claudius. These words are against nature and this conversation doesn't seem to be as it is between mother and son.

HAMLET

Nay, but to live
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
 Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love
 Over the nasty sty! (3.4.103-106). (Shakespeare and Loffelt)

None of the normal person wanted to discuss such things to his mother. "Yes, and you lie in the sweaty stench of your dirty sheets, wet with corruption, making love" (Shakespeare and Loffelt). Thus these incidents had shown clearly how Hamlet had suffered from Oedipus complex. "Hamlet is angry with his mother as he emphatically proclaims: Frailty, thy name is woman" (E. Cameron). He became very upset and he can't understand why he was behaving like this to his mother. At the end of the play Gertrude unwittingly drank poisoned cup of wine and finally she died. Very soon, after the death of Gertrude Hamlet's Oedipus complex is resolved. At the end, Hamlet killed Claudius at his death throes.

II. WORKS CITED

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