

## Procrastination in 'Hamlet' and 'Kusum': A Psychoanalysis

Critical Essay

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This article presents brief psychoanalysis of the similarities between the protagonist of the famous tragedy *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare and the protagonist of the tragic Bengali novel *Srabon Megher Din* by Humayun Ahmed. Both authors imbue their characters with universally human aspirations and values in their depictions of those individuals. Shakespeare and Ahmed typically investigate subjects such as the human mind, psychological characteristics, spirit, morality, and immorality in their respective works of literature. When we compare these two authors, the first and foremost thing that blows our minds is the level of awareness they have of human nature and the internal struggles that people go through. The emotional anguish that they inflict upon the readers in such a way makes it seem as though the readers themselves had experienced the specific traumatic event. The fact that readers can identify with the characters and find common ground with them is the primary reason that those characters are still around. Humayun and Shakespeare have so many similarities that Mahmud (2020) considered that "Humayun Ahmed became the Shakespeare of Bangladesh" regarding story-telling, facing criticism, portraying characters, and mapping human minds.

Shakespeare studied human nature and depict it beautifully through his characters. He provided a deep analysis of the human mind in the character of Hamlet. Firouzjaee and Pourkalhor (2014) mentioned that Shakespeare examined the human spirit's struggle out of the darkness of errors and sin to discover truth and wisdom. The most mysterious character in English literature is Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'. It is a matter of significant research of Hamlet's psyche for the world's psychologists; it is so because it is tough to identify the flow of his thought. He is meek and gentle, but sometimes, it is considered his weakness. His procrastination in taking revenge for his father's murder raises a question of his courage.

Though actually, it is not the cowardness that makes him do the procrastination but the complex psyche he has when he tries to take revenge on Claudius and his mother. We cannot figure out why he is doing the delay in taking revenge when everything is crystal clear before him as his father's ghost told everything to him. Here comes the dilemma he is facing "To be or not to be, that is the question." We forget that he is in a very vulnerable position and on the edge of his mental instability as his father had been murdered by his uncle and his mother is involved with this murder. If we probe into his mind, it would be difficult to define his mental health's devastating condition. He should be in trance as his relatives and mother had murdered his blood. How difficult it was for him to think of his mother as guilty. If we believe in this way, we will be able to understand a little about his

confusion about taking revenge and analyzing his character, giving a more in-depth meaning to this character's actions. "Human being can do so many works during his survival and even can take so many actions to control his life, but they do not have any control over time and fate." (Mahbub-ul-Alam et al., 2015). Here, life is an adventure based on the situation or atmosphere where:

"Our wills and fates do so contrary run  
That our devices still are overthrown.

Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own." (*Hamlet*, 221-223)

It surely describes the mental instability of Hamlet. His subconscious mind is haunting him to accept the truth that his mother and uncle are guilty but his conscious mind refuses to accept it because of the family fact. To Hamlet, his mother's greater crime is her marriage and about this marriage, Hamlet's comment is:

"I am the man whose mother married his uncle who murdered his father." (Bloom, 1998)

The magic of Ahmed we can find in his several novels where the characters are taken from real life and the reader can identify themselves with these characters. Islam (2020) talked about Humayun Ahmed and another aspect of him that captivates me in terms of communication is his ability to influence people's psyche or his motivational power. Kabir and Mondol (2018) say that he rather incites the potential, makes them flourish, explores "the unexcavated parts of a personality, and shows the way to make life worth living".

Kusum is a sorcerer character of untold agony in Humayun Ahmed's *Srabon Megher Din*. The character is odd and sweet. Humayun Ahmed's plain, unadorned speech touches readers' emotions. Through Kusum, he reveals the mind's fundamental afflictions. Ahmed's character Kusum is complex. Denial is Kusum's bubble. She admires Mati but never expresses it. She hides her affection for Mati. She never shows Mati her feelings. Sometimes she acts as though Mati's feelings don't matter. Her harsh comments hurt Mati. Surprisingly, she sheds tears while injuring Mati. She visits Mati at night without hesitation to observe a full Moon with her. She is unmoved by how society views her. Mati considers Kusum a delusion. He thinks she's dumb. Mati is nonchalant when Kusum initially announces her wish to spend her life with him. He denied Kusum's idea as crazy. Kusum never seeks acceptance but struggles to express herself. She rejected the denial.

It is impossible to compare William Shakespeare's and Humayun Ahmed's approaches to the art of narrative telling one another. Their circumstances and histories are unrelated to one another in virtually every imaginable way. On the other hand, the portrayal of some of their characters is very similar. These two characters suffer from mental tension, even though one of them is a noble-born prince and the other is a simple rural girl. On the other hand, Kusum appears to be a forceful, courageous, and self-assured character, unlike Hamlet, who is very meek, soft, and easy to get. Readers might find Kusum worried, uncertain, or angry, but they will never find her wallowing in self-pity and that's a trait of her personality makes her such a beautiful character. In later chapters, the readers realize that she is just as fragile as Hamlet. It is clear from the outset right up until the very end that Hamlet appears vulnerable, and this perception is warranted. Because his entire existence has consisted of one disaster after another. His readership is left with the impression that his sufferings are bottomless and that his losses never seem to add up. Both Hamlet and Kusum are entirely focused on themselves throughout their entire lives. They were accused of being self-centered because they never considered anyone but themselves from the beginning to the finish. They were so wrapped up in their thoughts that they could miss other people's joy. Hamlet could think of his mother's happiness based on her relationship with his uncle. He was able to forget about the situation and think that with Ophelia, together, they could have a happier life. But he ruined not only his own life but also the life of his beloved Ophelia.

Kusum might have given up her love for Mati to help him. Mati always talks about how much he loves singing and how, in his opinion, to be a better singer, you have to be single. She should get

married to Suruj instead of killing herself to make her parents happy. At least for her parents' sake, if not for Mati's. If the readers looked at their love lives, they might have concluded that they both failed at love. They always keep their feelings, thoughts, and feelings to themselves. They wrapped up their ideas in a bubble where no one could get to them. They never told their loved ones how they felt or how much their heart hurt. Because of this, their relationship never worked out at all.

The fact that these two people are mentally imbalanced, or perhaps a better word would be "disturbed," is still another key similarity that can be seen between the two of them. Kusum's family members, particularly her mother and sister, believe that she is crazy since her statements are never clear and are often confusing. It is Kusum; she admitted that she is not normal because some apparition usually accompanies her. She tries to break the engagement telling Suruj that she's unstable. Because she's possessed by a spirit (*jinn*). Suruj doesn't trust her and acts normal.

However, it is unclear whether she is a maniac or pretends. The same goes for Hamlet; the Kingsman always talks behind him about his madness. They gossip about whether he is actually mad or he only acts. In speaking to the King and Queen, Polonius says, "I will be brief. Your son is mad."

Given that there must be at least one tragic character in every tragedy and that every character must have some sad faults, it stands to reason that Kusum and Hamlet have similar flaws. In this particular instance, both of them suffer from the same kind of tragic defect: procrastination. If they don't put things off and do whatever has to be done immediately, they can avoid this awful outcome and save themselves some trouble. Both characters wind up passing away in the end, leaving the reader feeling both sad and horrified about the situation.

The study demonstrates how effectively the authors have utilized their pen to delightfully portray the characters and issues with which everyone can identify. They acted as psychologists to influence people's cognitive processes to achieve their goals. They can successfully bring out the inherent turbulence in the human psyche, hence providing light on the issues concerning the character's mental health from the perspective of a psychotherapist. However, there are enough points related to the protagonists' psychology yet to be explored. Their psychological analysis deserves a broad-spectrum study.

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