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**"Grace for Measure: Shakespeare and the Bible"**

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**Abstract:** This article examines the connection between Shakespeare and the Bible regarding Christian salvation focusing on one of the so-called Shakespeare's problem plays, namely *Measure for Measure*. Firstly, the readers are introduced to the plot and sources of the play, followed by an explanation setting forth the opposition between two systems of expiation seen in Christian theology: divine grace, the system ascribed to Protestants, and salvation by works, traditionally associated to Catholicism. This theoretical account is applied to *Measure for Measure* in order to raise awareness of the triumph of God's mercy at the end of the story. However, this fact does not prove Shakespeare's Protestantism. Rather, it can be considered as an attempt to lay out the political and religious controversies of the time.

**Keywords:** Bible, Shakespeare, Religion, *Measure for Measure*, Theology, Salvation, Grace, Justification by Works.

## Daniel MARTÍN GONZÁLEZ

### Grace for Measure: Shakespeare and the Bible

#### O. Introduction

As Linda Hillegass points out, there are two essential sources in order to understand English-speaking culture, namely, the Bible and Shakespeare (Hillegass 5). In this sense, this paper explores the connections between the two by looking at one of Shakespeare's plays, *Measure for Measure*. The very title already implies a link between the play and some Biblical verses: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Mathew 7:1-2). "And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given" (Mark 4:24).

In recent years, Shakespeare's literary criticism has broaden in its scope (Belsey 42), and there is no definite scholarly source that explains all the different issues and insights on the plays. The interpretation under study in this paper deals with religion and the never-ending discussion about salvation. Are people saved by their own works or by God's grace? Religious issues will be tackled in this paper. First, general aspects of the play will be covered, namely, its plot, the source of the plot and how it has been categorized in the literature, as a problem play. Secondly, I shall deal with the theological problem of salvation. To achieve this goal, a comparison and explanation of the systems of expiation within Christian theology will be carried out: the Protestant hypothesis of grace and the Catholic hypothesis of justification by works. Finally, I will comment on some important extracts of *Measure for Measure* where all these theoretical issues can be seen. Thus, I will attempt to raise awareness of the fact that *Measure for Measure* is a play that emphasizes the importance of divine grace over justification by human works with regard to achieving salvation, showing thus the triumph of Lutheran tenets on expiation of sins in the new Anglican England.

#### 1. *Measure for Measure*: Source, Plot and the Category of Problem Play

Shakespeare's company at the Court of James I performed *Measure for Measure* for the first time on December 26, 1604. The first version known of the play is included in Shakespeare's First Folio in 1623. This play revolves around a Duke, governor of Vienna. He dresses in disguise in order to visit the city unnoticed. He leaves a well-respected man of morals called Angelo in charge. The Duke is aware that the city is ruled under ancient laws that might need to be changed. Angelo rules the city following strict principle towards the citizens, showing no mercy for anyone. In this state of affairs, Claudio has been arrested following his affair with Juliet, a young woman who was to be his wife. Prior to the official marriage, this was considered a crime of fornication at the time, chiefly because no one in the play, except Julieta and Claudio, knew about this promise. This promise was taken as a valid argument to be defined as a married person at the time. The problem is that no one in the city is aware this promise had happened; thus, fornication could be applied in such case. Indeed, Angelo would like to close all brothels in the city; what provokes a consequent uproar by many of the citizens. Claudio has been sentenced to death by his alleged crime to be put as a scapegoat for the sake of the moral of the city; he will be taken as an example. Nevertheless, Claudio's young sister, Isabella, who is about to enter a nunnery, is told what her brother is facing and goes to talk to Angelo to speak on Claudio's behalf. Isabella stands up for the traditional Christian virtue of chastity and purity. She begs Angelo for mercy but he denies it; but after some quarrel about it, he proposes her to have sex with him in exchange for Claudio's freedom. She refuses to engage in sexual intercourse with Angelo, so she goes to visit her brother to announce him that there is no remedy for his sin; he will be

executed the following day. This is when the Duke intervenes, in disguise as a friar, counsels Isabella and comforts poor Claudio. On the one hand, the Duke tells Isabella of Angelo's former fiancée, Mariana, whom he left when she lost her dowry. They ask her to replace Isabella in the sexual intercourse, to what she agrees. The problem is that Angelo, after allegedly having sex with Isabella, does not forgive Claudio and asks an officer to kill him in secret. However, the friar also intervenes here and, asks an officer to send Angelo a head of a person who had already died that morning by natural death. Since Claudio is supposedly to be dead, Isabella, who does not acknowledge this to be true, goes to talk to Angelo along with Mariana to denounce him for immoral behavior. Finally, the Duke appears in his royal attire and takes control of the situation again. The Duke sentences Angelo to death by his immoral acts –measure for measure in the sense he sentenced Claudio to death because of a sin he had committed himself. However, both Mariana and Isabella plead for forgiveness towards Angelo. The Duke concedes it; Mariana marries Angelo, and the Duke proposes Isabella.

This intricate plot is not the outcome Shakespeare's own imagination. The plot is based on events happening in Milan in 1547. "A young wife prostituted herself to save her condemned husband. The magistrate who had forced the woman to yield to him proceeded to execute her husband. He was eventually made to marry the widow and was then put to death himself for his crime against her" (Hillegass 6). *Measure for Measure* is not even the first time in which we can read these events in literature; namely, the story of Epitia in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi* (1565), Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* (1578), and Lupton's *Too Good to Be True* (1581). The last case is of particular interest because in that story, the wife feels no compassion for her husband and sees him executed (Thomas 76). However, the regular case story is the one of forgiveness and happy ending. For instance, Thomas states, "Both Promos and Angelo seem to enjoy inflicting severe punishment and they are alike in the way in which they are suddenly overcome with passionate desire for a young woman" (Thomas 73). Promos confesses the crime before the king, and is sentenced to marry Cassandra, as happens with Angelo and Mariana. However, Cassandra does not ask for forgiveness because she is in love with her husband as in the case of Mariana but due to her duty as wife. There is a mark of final compassion and mercy in both Cinthio and Whetstone (Thomas 75). In summary, all the sources share the "necessity of good laws and justices of impeccable integrity who strive to strike the right balance in their treatment of offenders" (Thomas 77).

According to Harold Bloom, *Measure for Measure* marks the end of Shakespeare's comedies (429). It is a problem play or dark comedy, similar to *Troilus and Cressida* or *All's Well That Ends Well*. Problem plays are a "radical departure in Shakespeare's art; they present the serious and realistic treatment of a distressing complication in human life, but without a tragic outcome" (Thomas 5). Undoubtedly, "these plays raise questions about the relation between drama and life, of illusion to reality" (Thomas 11); they have a "crucial debate scene which focused sharply on the central themes" (Thomas 15). In this case, the central scene Act II, Scene II; where the matters of law and justice are treated; we will comment on it later on in a section devoted to close reading of the play. The dilemma in *Measure for Measure* is that "laws are made for human beings as they are, not as some authorities would like them to be. The removal of all vice is not possible" (Thomas 77).

## 2. Christian Theology: Divine Grace vs. Justification by Works

Now I turn to the explanation of the theological problem underlying the plot of this play. According to Harold Bloom, this play calls and avoids the Christian and moral faith at the same time (Bloom 430). However, calling rather than avoiding is intended here. Isabella asks Angelo for forgiveness and he denies it because he is ruling following strictly the rules, and the Duke applies this same "eye for an eye" rule when it comes to Angelo's judgement. However, on the other hand, what really triumphs in this play is mercy. The Duke concedes mercy to Claudio and Angelo, and asks all of them to apply mercy to forgive everyone's

faults. This play copes with the topic of guilt and punishment very thoroughly. At the end, all of the characters except one, who was caught insulting the Duke, are saved; they may have committed sins or faults but grace overcomes them. Shakespeare is indeed treating a very complex theological issue at the time. Shakespeare lives in an era of theological uncertainty: England was a Protestant country for a very short period at the time; and Anglicanism was not clearly different from Catholicism in terms of theology. The matter of salvation, which was the main reason of disagreement between Catholics and Protestants had still to be defined.

In October 31<sup>st</sup> 1517, Martin Luther wrote and published the famous *Ninety-Five Theses* protesting against the indulgences that were sold by the Catholic Church to its members. This was just the beginning, for Martin Luther had not yet published his studies on the books of Psalms, Hebrews, Romans and Galatians. This event set the bases for what has been called Luther's Theology of the Cross. This theological principle emphasizes that it is only by God's grace that man can finally be saved<sup>1</sup>. After a long time living a monastic life, Luther realizes that it is impossible to be justified by people's own works. Luther could not conceive a God who did not tolerate people's faults. He found in some extracts of the Old Testament the rhetoric of the angry God, which were revealed in a different manner in the New Testament. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them" (Romans 1:18-20). Paul's Epistle to the Romans was very insightful to Martin Luther, who arrives to the same conclusion than Paul in the epistle:

As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:10-20).

This passage is key to understand the relationship between grace and law. God provided His people with a divine law to be followed; but what is law for if we do not account it when judging our sins? What Paul concludes here is that law was given with a purpose: it tells people what is right and what is wrong. No one can be justified by his or her own works since all people are sinful and do not deserve to be saved. This same conclusion appears in many other passages of the Bible: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10). Our good works cannot justify us because it is the very God who had prepared us for them: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). All these verses lead to the understanding of Luther's tenet "sola gratia"; people can only be saved by God's grace and no other means whatsoever.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information, please see McGrath, A. *Luther's Theology of the Cross*. Blackwell Publishing, 1990.

To deny the principle of "sola gratia" or "sola fide" would mean to despise God's sacrifice. Protestant theology is mainly Biblical; thus, "sola scriptura" is essential to understand the idea of justification. Undoubtedly someone has to pay for the sin that has been committed: a scapegoat, namely, Jesus Christ. Justice is finally achieved by the means of punishment, but the one already taken on Christ. Protestant theology encourages their adepts to call on the punishment of the pure lamb sacrificed. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus [...] Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law [...] Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. (Romans 3:22-26, 28, 30).

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. [...] But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. [...] Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; ti the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. (Romans 4:3,5,16)

Therefore, being justified by faith, peace with God is achieved by means of Jesus Christ: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Romans 5:1,9) The justification by faith and sola gratia also appears in the following quotes:

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith [...] As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed (Romans 9:30,33).

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth [...] That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hat raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation (Romans 10:4, 9-10)<sup>2</sup>.

To conclude with this section, Christians are saved because they believe and they believe because it is God's work: "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29).

### **3. The Different Systems of Expiation in *Measure for Measure***

First, let's turn to the event that makes the play possible: Angelo is left in power. "For you must know, we have with special soul/ Elected him our absence to supply;/Lent hum our

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<sup>2</sup> To see more about the idea of justification by faith and sola gratia, please check Galatians 2:16,21; 3:5-6, 8, 14, 22, 24; Ephesians 1:13; 2:8; Philippians 3:9; 1 Timothy 1:16.

terror, drest him with our love,/And given his deputation all the organs /Of our own power" (I.i. 17-21). This idea must be accounted as Biblical, Christ is also given the power to rule by the major authority.

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psalms 2: 6-9)

With regards to the matter of fornication that works as the leitmotiv in the play. Angelo, as a strict ruler, has proclaimed that "all houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down" (I.ii. 85-89). Angelo attempts to stop fornication in the city, and this is the reason why Claudio is put into jail: it is for getting Madam Julietta with child" (I.ii. 66-67) but nobody knows they are already married by promise. "Thus stands it with me: upon a true contract/ I got possession of Julietta's bed./ You know the lady; she is fast my wife, / Save that we do the denunciation lack/ Of outward order. This we came not to/ Only for propagation of a dower/ Remaining in the coffer of her friends, / From whom we thought it meet to hide our love/ The stealth of our most mutual entertainment/ With character too gross is writ on Juliet" (I.ii.134-143). The reason why the Duke claims that these laws are old-fashioned. "We have strict statues and most biting laws, [...]so our decrees, Dead to infliction, to themlseves are dead,/And Liberty plucks Justice by the nose,/The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart/Goes all decorum". (I.iii. 19-31). This is the very same idea we read in Romans, the laws of the Old Testament have now been replaced by the law of grace. The purpose of these ancient laws are, as Paul claims in Romans, to tell people what is right and wrong: "It is the law, not I, condemn your brother" (I.ii.80-81). However, justice is just and cannot be defied. "Thus can the demi-god, Authority,/ Make us pay down for our offence by weight./ The words of heaven; on whom it will, it will;/ On whom it will no, so; yet still 'tis just" (I.ii. 112-115). The problem of complying with such exigent laws can be seen even in the life of the strict judge, who realizes how corrupt he is after proposing to have sex with Claudio's sister: "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" (II.ii. 165-168). After sin is committed, how do people expiate their souls? In the following paragraphs, I propose two different solutions.

The first solution is the most ancient one: if you commit a sin, you must pay for it. Angelo implies that the only solution to get expiation is by means of sacrifice: giving a virgin and pure body. By claiming that a scapegoat is needed to expiate the sins; he is also appointing to the sacrifice of the Lamb. "[...] And that there were/ No earthly mean to save him, but that either/ You must lay down the treasures of your body/To this suppos'd, or else to le him suffer: / What would you do?" (II.iv. 94-98). However, Isabella dislikes assuming that role; even after her brother asks her to do so: "Sweet sister, let me live./ What sin you do to save a brother's life,/ Nature dispenses with the deed so far/ That it becomes a virtue" (III.i. 132-136). Thus, the importance of the verses mentioned in the introduction arises (Mathew 7:1-2; Mark 4:24): measure for measure, eye for eye. Neither Mariana nor Julietta has committed any sin because they were already married by the promise of word:

Nor, gentle daughter, fear you not at all./ He is your husband on a pre-contract:/ To bring you thus together 'tis no sin,/ Sith that the justice of your title him/ Doth flourish the deceit. –Come, let us go;/ Our corn's to reap, for yet our tithe's to sow. (IV. ii. 71-76)

However, if there is someone who must pay his sin with his life is Angelo, who being left in charge, has imposed on other what he did not dare to bear. Angelo is like the Pharisees denounced by Christ:

He who the sword of heaven will bear /Should be as holy as severe:/ Pattern in himself to know,/ Grace to stand, and virtue, go:/More nor less to others paying/ Than by self-offences weighing./ Shame to him whose cruel striking/ Kills for faults of his own liking!/ Twice treble shame on Angelo,/ To weed my vice, and let his grow!/ O, what may man within him hide,/ Though angel on the outward side!/ How many likeness made in crimes,/ Making practice on the times/ To draw with idle spider's strings/ Most ponderous and substantial things!/ Craft against vice I must apply./ With Angelo tonight shall lie/ His old betrothed, but despised:/ So disguised shall by th' disguised/ pay with falsehood false exacting,/ And perform an old contracting (III. ii. 254-275).

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation (Matthew 23:13-14).

Claudio remains as the type of such system of hypocrisy in which rulers force citizens to do what they do not do themselves. Angelo's name may have been given after the fallen angel rather than the Chosen representing God: "... 'This not impossible/ But one, the wicked'st caitiff on the ground,/ May seem as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute,/ As Angelo; even so may Angelo,/ In all his dressings, caracts, titles, forms,/ Be and arch-villain" (V.i.55-60). Therefore, Angelo must die; he condemned Claudio to death by the same crime. "He dies for Claudio's death" (V.i. 441).

'An Angelo for Claudio; death for death./ Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;/ Like doth quit like, and Measure for Measure,/' Then, Angelo, thy fault's thus manifested,/ Which, though thou would'st deny, denies thee vantage./ We do condemn thee to the very block/ Where Claudio stoop'd to death, and with like haste./ Away with him". (V.i. 407-413).

Another theological aspect that can be seen in this play are the reactions of offenders to their judgment. It was already Martin Luther who described the dichotomy between those who follow God because they love Him and those who follow Him because they fear His judgment. For example, in the case of Julietta, she fears her judgment as a Christian person:

'This meet so, daughter; but lest you do repent, / As that the sin hath brought you to this shame, / Which sorrow is always towards ourselves, not heaven, / Showing we would not spare heaven as we love it,/ But as we stand in fear (II.iii. 30-34).

After admitting his sin, Angelo also fears judgment to the extent he would like to be dead. "But let my trial be mine own confession. / Immediate sentence, then, and sequent death,/ Is all the grace I beg." (V.i.370-372). "That I crave death more willingly than mercy;/ 'Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it". (V.i.474-475) This idea is also seen in the Book of Revelation, where it is said that the kings and great men would hide before the judgment begging for death.

And the kings of earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the

dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Revelations 6: 15-17).

Why do people not attempt to avoid committing those sins if they fear the judgment to that extent? This has much to do with the very nature of people, namely, what has been called cognitive dissonance. This concept in psychology, created by the social psychologist Leon Festinger (1957), refers to a mental state of discomfort provoked by the dichotomy between what the person would like to do and what he or she actually does. The Bible already deals with this concept in the person of Paul: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:19). This is the same that happens in Angelo's life after attempting to engage in sexual intercourse with Isabella: "Alack, when once our grace we have forgot,/ Nothing goes right; we would, and we would not". (IV.iv.31-32). Paul does not blame this cognitive dissonance on himself but on the sin that dwells in him (Romans 7:20). Thus, on the one hand we are not pure enough to be saved, and our works cannot justify us before the Lord. On the other hand, the merit of the good works that we do is God's merit, and our sins cannot be fully blamed on us. A system of grace is then needed. Isabella asks Angelo to take this into account when she says, "I have a brother is condemned to die;/ I do beseech you, let it be his fault, /And not my brother" (II.ii.34-36). What she asks Angelo to do is the same what Christ does in the Gospel: "Go to your bosom,/ Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know/ That's like my brother's fault" (II.ii. 137-139). "So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7). Isabella is clearly appealing to the new system of grace, the second solution to the problem of expiation.

Alas, alas! Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once, And He that might the vantage best have took/ Found out the remedy. How would you be/ If He, which is the top of judgment, should/ But judge you as you are? O, think on that, / And mercy then will breathe within your lips, /Like man new made (II.ii. 72-78).

This is the system that triumphs at the end of the play, the Duke pays bad works with good works. "Thou'rt condemn'd;/ But, for those earthly faults, I quit them all,/ And pray thee take this mercy to provide/ For better times to come" (V.i.480-483). The Duke is thus invoking the spirit of the New Testament: "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals on fire on his head" (Romans 12:20). The last speech we find in this play is the one of forgiveness to everyone; all must forgive each other; what remind the reader of the Bible of the words of Christ: "She, Claudio, that you wrong'd, look you restore./ Joy to you, Mariana! Love her, Angelo:/ I have confess'd her and I know her virtue./ [...] Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home/The head of Ragozine for Claudio's: the offence pardons itself" (V.i.522-531). "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25); "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

#### 4. Conclusion

*Measure for Measure* is pervaded with Biblical references; even characters are named for abstractions like Isabella –consecrated to God- or Angelo –messenger of God (Marx 79). For example, it is quite interesting the case of the Duke. We may fall into the trap of associating Angelo with Christ because both represent the figure of the Chosen who know rules. However, it is more likely on the light of the Bible, to allegorically interpret Angelo as the fallen angel and the Duke, also called Vicentio (the one who overcomes), as Jesus Christ. He is a Christ-like figure in many senses: he comforts and releases captives in jail like Claudio



(Luke 4:18); the mediator between sinful creatures and the strict rule that condemns them (1 John 2:1; Romans 5:10; 1 Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 7:25; 9:24); the judge and establisher of the system of grace; and the one who will marry His virtuous church. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). This idea is very interesting because at the end of the play, although it is a happy ending, we do not read that Isabella has married the Duke.

Dear Isabel,/ I have a motion much imports your good;/ Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,/ What's mine is yours and what is yours is mine./ So, bring us to our palace; where we'll show/ What's yet behind, that's meet you all should know (V.i. 531-536).

In the same manner, at the end of the Bible, Christ has not married His church yet; but as in *Measure for Measure*, we assume that this will happen in due time. *Measure for Measure* is indeed a play that ends with the lesson of forgiveness implied in its title and taught by parables (Marx 79). It is the triumph of the system of grace over the system of justification by works; the one of Lutheran ideology regarding expiation of sins over the tradition of Catholic theology in England. This same idea of justice appears in some other Shakespeare's plays like *The Merchant of Venice*. At the end of such play, Antonio "graciously asks mercy for the condemned Jew with the proviso that he convert to Christianity, pay a fine, a give half his fortune to Antonio for use during his lifetime and the other half to Jessica upon his death" (Marx 109). As a conclusion, both stories are about "judgment, redemption and mercy; the supersession in human history of the grim four thousand years of unalleviated justice by era of love and mercy." (Marx 110). Finally, this idea must not be accounted to support some arguments, like for example that fact that Shakespeare might have indeed profess the Anglican or the Protestant faiths, attempting to evangelize his audience through his plays. This is so because Catholic ideas seem to be defended in other plays as well. According to Harold Bloom, he can be claimed to belong to Protestantism, Catholicism or nihilism (Bloom 36). What might finally cautiously be concluded is rather that Shakespeare just sheds light on the political and religious controversies of the time. He just portrays in this play the attainment of the arrival of the Theology of the Cross to the English citizens of the time, struggling with my initial inquiry: to what extent we are to be blame on our own faults and how universal justice as human beings will be eventually judge us.

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**Perfil del autor:** Daniel Martín González tiene un Grado en Estudios Ingleses en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Durante sus estudios fue representante de alumnos de grado y también es becario de colaboración del departamento de Filología Inglesa I, combinando estos estudios y tareas con otro Grado en Psicología en la Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia UNED. Daniel ha recibido varios premios a lo largo de su trayectoria académica, entre ellos el Premio al Rendimiento Académico de Bachillerato, y dos Becas de Excelencia de la Comunidad de Madrid en los cursos (2011-12 y 2012-13). Combinó también sus estudios de Bachillerato con los de Teología en el seminario protestante UEBE en Madrid. Por ello, en 2011 fue invitado a participar en un seminario sobre Miguel Servet para hablar sobre su vida en relación con la teología. Su investigación se centra en la psicolingüística, la adquisición de lenguas (inglés y español) y en su metodología en la enseñanza. De aquí su participación como estudiante en cursos como Enseñanza del Español como Lengua Extranjera o en la conferencia para estudiantes sobre diferencias en la enseñanza de inglés entre profesores nativos y no nativos. En el próximo curso 2014/2015, Daniel participará en el Congreso de Jóvenes Lingüistas en la Universidad de Murcia con una comunicación sobre el conexionismo como una aproximación a la adquisición de una lengua extranjera.

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**Bioprofile of the author:** Daniel Martín González holds a Grade in English Studies from Universidad Complutense Madrid (UCM). During his studies he was also a Graduate Students Representative and enjoyed an assistantship in the department of English Philology I. He combined these studies and tasks with studies of the Degree in Psychology at National University of Distance Education UNED. He has been awarded with two prizes for his academic excellence by Comunidad de Madrid (academic years 2011-12 and 2012-13). While in High School, he combined his studies with research in theology at the Protestant seminar UEBE in Madrid. In 2011, he was invited to take part in a seminar about Miguel Servet's life and his relationship to theology. Daniel's research is oriented towards psycholinguistics, language acquisition (English and Spanish) and language teaching methodology. For this reason, he studied a course in Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language and got involved in a Student Seminar dealing with differences in the way of teaching of English in native and non-native teachers. In 2014/2015, Daniel will participate at the Young Linguists Association at University of Murcia with work on connectionism as an approach to foreign language acquisition.

At the moment Daniel enjoys an International Exchange Program Scholarship for a Master degree at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (Israel).

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