



## Is This Her Fault or Mine?

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### **Abstract**

This essay presents contrasting psychosexual profiles of Shakespeare's heroines Isabella, in *Measure for Measure*, and Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Isabella, a classic Freudian hysteric, has no conscious awareness of her desire or her seductiveness, and protects her chastity. Cleopatra is fully cognizant of her powerful and playful sexuality, and joins her lover Antony in a passionate intersubjective relationship. We also look at the patriarchal social order in these two plays, as it affects comedic and tragic form, and raise the possibility that the assumption of sexual subjectivity in women may diminish the impact of misogyny.

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