

Summer 1939

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Recommended Citation

August Goll, Criminal Types in Shakespeare, 30 *Am. Inst. Crim. L. & Criminology* 22 (1939-1940)

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CRIMINAL TYPES IN SHAKESPEARE

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Translated from the Danish by Julius Moritzen, 4003 Foster Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. This is the third and concluding portion of Mr. Moritzen's translation. The first portion was published in No. 4 of this volume, November-December, 1938; the second in No. 5, January-February, 1939.—[Ed.]

RICHARD III

Herbert Spencer in his book on righteousness and justice declares their aim to be that state of society where each member, without relinquishing his individual liberty of action, nevertheless tolerates the bonds that the rights of others demand of him. In other words, the principle of mutual respect for the rights of others underlies the social formula to which he subscribes.

The criminal denies by his acts this ideal. But none of the criminals so far discussed are directly opposed to the fundamentals of this ideal state when judged by their actions. What they do is to have a wrong conception of what constitutes the rights of others, and circumstances usually drive them from that which in their innermost hearts they know to be the rights of others. They place their own interests, the interests of a smaller society, above those of a greater society. In this way they miss the real point in the difference between right and wrong.

This it is that distinguishes what we may term the born criminal, who in the place of the rights of others substitutes his own so-called right. This does not mean that he goes about committing crimes for the mere pleasure of doing so, but he refers his own egotistical desires to impulses that he believes to be his by right. That is what makes this criminal the arch-enemy of society. And just as Prospero says of Caliban that all his kindness and troubles are wasted on Caliban, so in the case of this criminal all means for influencing him prove ineffective.

This criminal germ, when permitted to develop and grow unhindered, is inimical to society, and leads to the destruction of the immense wealth in culture that has been accumulated generation after generation. It is therefore the right and the duty to protect against this poisonous microbe that threatens the well-being of so-

ciety. At the same time it is incumbent on society to seek light on the origin and growth of this element in human nature. It will not do to dismiss the matter by using such terms as wicked, depraved, cruel; the question must be, why are these things so?

Science in recent years has been able to answer some of the questions concerned here to degeneration, inherited diseases, insanity, neglected education, alcoholism, etc., and the nearer we approach the apparent reason for what we consider an individual's fall, the more are we inclined to excuse his failings, while conversely, the more ignorant we are as to his wickedness, the greater is our astonishment that one apparently so well-endowed could act in such and such a manner.

Whatever may be our preconception of the causes for a given crime, there is no doubt that in the case of the instinctive criminal we stand before one of the destructive animals that we must not only guard against for our own sake and the protection of others, but which by every means we must try to destroy. Richard III and Iago, two typical criminals that Shakespeare presents to view, must be considered from the above standpoint. If we follow Richard III closely we become convinced that here it is not the case of a fundamentally good person to be treated mercifully, but exactly a beast in human form to be crushed to earth.

If in considering Iago we must confess our inability to understand his malice, and must therefore limit ourselves to a dissecting of the elements whereof it consists, then we must not forget that if circumstances permitted us to follow him sufficiently far—what is not possible in his case or in the case of so many other Iagos in real life—then we still would have to reserve our judgment. What really matters is to seek protection against the serpent, not to seek revenge for its sting. That is the aim of society, and it is the same whether it concerns an Iago or a Richard.

Richard III, then, is a criminal of the first rank. Animated wholly by his insatiable personal ambition, his thirst for power and the crown, without a single spark of altruistic motives, without the least thought of realizing an ideal with this ascension to the throne, he attains his goal through cunning, lies, impudence and hypocrisy, and especially through a mass of the blackest crimes.

With him nothing is the result of the moment; all is the logical consequence of a cool and clearly thought-out calculation. That is why he views his own acts as he does, and himself measures the

depths to which he must descend in order to gain the heights to which he aspires.

It is not the crimes of Richard that interest us, nor the goal he pursues. In neither can we find any play of the human emotions. As it comes from the hands of Shakespeare, all is here plain and clearly defined. What does interest the investigator is the genesis of his criminal course, the psychological fundamental how such a monstrosity can have its being; a possible understanding of what causes the illimitable darkness of his soul, a darkness the human eye tries in vain to penetrate so long as the reason for it is not revealed. These are the things that weigh in the scale for a better knowledge of the true character of Richard III.

The science of embryology teaches us that there can be brought into the world individuals to appearances so deformed that they seem to be without any human characteristics, and yet a closer analysis shows them to be in possession of the very organs that characterize the normal person. In virtue, however, of certain sickly conditions the seed has not been allowed to develop normally; somewhere there has existed a pressure which either worked displacement, destroyed functions or resulted in such malformations of the body that the result became a hideous monstrosity which, had it not been for this pressure, could have developed normally.

It is this kind of analysis which must be made in the case of Richard III. What, then, is this pressure that has destroyed every good and natural inclination, where does it originate, how does it operate? Just as Henry V found himself unable to understand with regard to the treachery of Scroop how a devil, who gave no reason, could produce the work of such a miscreant, so we are not satisfied with the thought that Richard is evil because he is evil. We, too, want to know the devil's reasons.

First of all, Shakespeare's presentment of Richard is not without points of contact which are understood to be due to inherited traits. Henry V had the grandfather of Richard executed for treason against his king; a treason involving French money, but with the secret aim of placing his own relatives on the throne. The father of Richard spent his whole life plotting and intriguing in order to have his right to the throne acknowledged, and in which he finally succeeded until, after being taken prisoner at the battle of Sandal, he was killed by Henry VI.,'s queen, Margaret, and Clifford.

It is in line with the law of heredity that this greed for power, this intriguing and restless mind could descend on the son Richard

and appear there in a still more aggravated form. It may at least explain a certain disposition for him to commit crimes. His mother tells of Richard's growth and development,

A grievous burthen was thy birth to me;
Tetchy and wayward was thy infancy;
Thy school-days frightful, desperate wild and furious,
Thy prime of manhood daring, bold, and venturous,
Thy age confirm'd, proud, subtle, bloody, treacherous;
More mild, but yet more harmful, kind in hatred:
What comfortable hour canst thou name,
That ever graced me in thy company?

Must this entire development be charged to the account of heredity? That will hardly do. For while the law of heredity is whimsical and Proteus-like as Richard himself, it is scarcely to be believed that of the four sons only one should be burdened with the bad qualities mentioned by the Duchess of York. No, it must be Richard's own makeup that contains the impulses that brought about the conditions in question, and which has furnished the essentials for his disposition. In the second part of Henry VI these impulses are already revealed where Richard as a young man is presented by Shakespeare.

Before the decisive battle is fought between his father and Henry VI, Richard with his brother Edward, is called before their father during the latter's negotiations with Henry. Clifford greets the sons with the exclamation:

Why, what a brood of traitors have we here!

And scornfully he adds:

Are these thy bears? w'll bait thy bears to death,
And manacle the bear-ward in their chains,
If thou darest bring them to the battling place.

Richard replies with venomous jeering:

Oft have I seen a hot o'weening cur
Run back and bite, because he was withheld;
Who, being suffer'd with the bear's fell paw,
Hath clapp'd his tail between his leg and cried:
And such a service will you do,
If you oppose yourselves to match Lord Warwick.

And what does Clifford answer?

Hence, heap of wrath, foul undigested lump,
As crooked in thy manners as thy shape!

Here we are confronted with a main fact. Richard was a cripple, and Shakespeare frequently lets Richard explain himself and his aims because of this. For instance, we read in one place:

Why, love forswore me in my mother's womb:
And, for I should not deal in her soft laws,
She did corrupt frail nature with some bribe,
To shrink mine arm up like some wither'd shrub;
To make an envious mountain on my back,

to which he add,

I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
And, whiles I live, to account this world but hell,
Until my mis-shaped trunk that bears this head
By round impaled with a glorious crown.

As so often in the case of Shakespeare, his words have a double meaning. Since the real meaning is not given, it is for the reader to make his own discovery. But if we give close study to the above and similar citations we obtain a clearer, a more human picture of Richard that first impressions convey. Richard was born into the world with exactly the same needs for a mother's care, her tenderness and love, as are all other beings. It is a fact that in his younger days he had hankering after "love's sweet kingdom" with the same longings as other young people.

But what met him? Branded by nature from his mother's womb, from the very first hour he was a matter of grief to her each time she looked upon him. Merely to glance at his deformity among the other healthy boys caused her torments. As she says, he has never given her an hour's joy, and, as she says further, very quickly did defiance and malice enter his mind as a child; defiance of her, and malice towards his other and more favored brothers.

Wherever he turned it was the same thing. When with other boys he was never allowed to be as one with them. Who is not familiar with the refined cruelty of boys who show the deepest antipathy—almost disgust, when it concerns the deformed? Richard was forever pushed aside, overlooked, hated, despised, above all, scorned. Witticisms were said about him; the boys taunted him, tormented him.

With intense energy he at first strived to be like other boys, then to outshine them. His natural good head made it easy for him to surpass them in the matter of learning things in general, and he proved himself especially adept in the handling of weapons. From the very first when Richard enters the field of battle he is

the foremost among the combatants. Following the battle of St. Albans his father calls him the best of his sons. On horseback he is the equal of the best, and even his deadly enemy, Margaret, describes him as dashing forward like "the ferocious greyhound," when he is mounted. When it comes to bodily training he is as strong, as courageous, as dextrous as the next man.

What energy does not lie back of this when the wretched body is disciplined to not only rank with others normal in every way, but surpass them? What an iron will has not Richard's disability managed to instil in him through early practise to overcome this disability. What a capacity for understanding how to follow a given course, and of the essentials necessary for advancing, to become number one in spite of every obstacle.

The first weapon, then, that Richard fashions for himself as a protection against the curse that has been put upon his life is physical perfection. He believed naively enough in his early youth that if he could only become number one in all that his period demanded, then all his distresses would be relegated to the rear.

But this weapon did not prove sufficiently strong for his purpose. What is the use of trying to be what one is not when appearances do not bear it out? In spite of all his advantages, wherever Richard appears he is, as Clifford taunts him, the abortive creature whose mind is as hunchbacked as his figure, a deformed coward, as he says, notwithstanding all the courage that he possesses. The poisonous flow of words that Clifford pours over his head shows how easy it is to touch him on his tenderest spot.

It is true that these venomous outpourings far from leave Richard undeserving. He himself was active in causing them through the cutting disdain of the language he employed, but here, as almost always in the realm of the psychic, cause and effect constantly turn on each other. Richard's scorn leads to the scorn of others, and it is difficult to say just who was the instigator in the first place. But Richard's mocking derision is, in fact, his second means of self-defense. His physical shortcomings which, as he himself says, are so pronounced that even the dogs bark at him in the streets, naturally carry with them an extremely mental sensitiveness. He needs but to watch his own shadow to realize his miserable stature. So many big and little humiliations are concentrated in these bodily defects from his earliest childhood that nothing more distressing can be imagined.

Misshapen individuals like Richard may, perhaps, be gradually

able to let on as if their defects meant nothing to them; at times even poking fun at themselves, as Richard frequently does; and some may therefore get the impression from this that they can not be hurt by any allusion to their deformity. We must not forget, however, that the constant irritating of a wound at last becomes so painful that even the slightest touch drives the sufferer wellnigh insane with pain, and whatever of this pain is not given outward expression may turn its sting with double strength upon the sufferer himself. It is exactly when the deformed person makes sport of his own deficiency that he does so to prevent others from anticipating him with humiliations. He employs a lesser pain, so to speak, to obviate a greater. In spite of his amazing self-control it is this vulnerability which so frequently shows itself in Richard. None who touch that tender spot escape without a quick stab that penetrates deeply. Before the battle, he taunts young Clifford with the words:

Fie! charity, for shame! speak not in spite,
For you shall sup with Jesu Christ to-night.

Then young Clifford's enraged answer:

Foul stigmatic, that's more than you can tell.

And Richard's retort which is the consummation of hatefulness:

If not in heaven, you will surely sup in hell.

In the third part of Henry VI, in the passage of words between Queen Margaret and Richard occurs a mastery of mutual hatred:

Margaret—But thou are neither like thy sire nor dam,
But like a foul mis-shapen stigmatic,
Marked by the destinies to be avoided,
As venom toads, or lizards' dreadful stings.

The taunting words of Richard are almost an excess of malice:

Iron of Naples hid with English gilt,
Whose father bears the title of a king,—
As if a channel should be called a sea,—
Shamest thou not, knowing whence thou
art extraught,
To let thy tongue detect thy base-born heart?

It is only when the purpose he pursues makes it necessary to play a different tune—as in the courting scene with Princess Anne,—that he acts as if he never heard the taunting words, or else turns

them aside with some ironical witticism; swallows them, as it were, with a grimace. With his good head, clear brain and an eye for the defects in others—as viewed by his own shortcomings,—he forges his weapon: his ever-readiness to give battle with that sharp tongue of his and that scorn which at all times knows how to hit the most sensitive spot in others; a taunting that burns through the thickest armor.

As Richard gradually discovers his ability to attack or defend himself, and as he develops this capacity to circumvent the machinations of others, he also finds that he has a mastery of speech in controversies that constitutes another powerful element for his self-defense. Few are able to engage in a wordy battle with him. In order not to surrender to his sharp word attacks most persons avoid him entirely. Richard does not neglect a single opportunity to utilize the powerful instrument thus placed at his disposal by nature that otherwise passed him by. Whether it means delivering a blow, as in the case of the two Cliffords in the above mentioned scene, or in the Parliament scene, where the disheartened Henry is made still more miserable and dependent by Richard's taunting, the latter is prepared to give measure for measure, and more.

Then again, when it concerns making a confederate act more quickly than he is inclined to, Richard has just the right word for spurring him on. Warwick comes before the brothers Edward and Richard the picture of discouragement. But witness his intense activity as Richard utters the inciting words:

'Twas odds, belike, when valiant Warwick fled:
Oft have I heard his praises in pursuit,
But ne'er till now his scandal of retire.

But it is not alone in the little things of encouragement that Richard knows how to employ his power of dialectics. When it becomes necessary to convince one to do something dishonorable he can present the situation in such a light, that all doubts are dissipated forthwith, as when he succeeds in having his father violate his oath to Henry:

An oath is of no moment, being not took
Before a true and lawful magistrate,
That hath authority over him that swears:
Henry hath none, but did usurp the place;
Then, seeing 'twas he that made you to depose,
Your oath, my Lord, is vain and frivolous.
Therefore to arms!

Again, when he wants to achieve results that beforehand seem to run counter to every sound reason, Richard makes the impossible possible, as in the marvelous scene with Princess Anne where with his unlimited impudence and the shrewd use of his opponent's weaknesses he succeeds in winning the hand and heart of Anne, standing at the side of her husband's coffin;—the man whom Richard himself had murdered.

Richard's dialectics are simply irresistible. But such power naturally is of far-reaching consequences to a person's character. The ability to constantly gain one's end through the power of speech, no matter how despicable the purpose, weakens one's ability to distinguish between right and wrong, between what is good and bad, true or untrue, fine or ugly. Great dialecticians of this stamp who are able to turn everything upside down, who defend what is worst and attack that which is best, actually get to be that they believe nothing is either good or bad. As a matter of fact, they prefer to be on the side which has most against it, that is most objectionable, is most villainous. How much greater, then, the honor of successfully asserting one's opinion, the enjoyment of seeing others capitulate. The constant interplay of the concepts, finally makes sport of the concepts themselves. Wrongs inflicted, even crimes lose their repulsiveness. Perhaps the best method is to confess the crime audaciously, defend it and by a colorful blending of facts and fancies cast over it a sheen that both blinds and condones. With what success Richard employed this method before Princess Anne:

Nay, do not pause; for I did kill King Henry,
But 'twas thy beauty that provoked me.
Nay, now dispatch; 'twas I that stabbed young Edward,
But 'twas thy heavenly face that set me on.

And the subsequent monologue:

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
Was ever woman in this humour won? I,
That kill'd her husband and her father,
To take her in her heart's extremest hate.

Later, before Queen Elizabeth, he attempts something similar. But if circumstances should prevent such a standpoint, the dialectician may do just the contrary: lie, play the hypocrite, the honest man, while if all goes after his wish he will laugh to himself and applaud his own cleverness. In this way it amused Richard to play the devout man before the Grey family which at no time is not

convinced that it is his purpose to destroy them. In the same manner he is able to "mourn" for Clarence whom he has himself killed. At other times he cries out with trustworthiness that dupes everyone:

'Tis death to me to be at enmity;
I hate it, and desire all good men's love.

— — —
I do not know the Englishman alive
With whom my soul is any jot at odds,
More than the infant that is born to-night,
I thank my God for my humility.

And at the same time that his ironical dissimulation tries to conquer he turns the irony on the very art of dissimulation when he says to his fellow conspirator, Buckingham:

Come cousin, canst thou quake, and change thy colour,
Murder thy breath in middle of a word,
And then begin again, and stop again,
As if thou wert distraught and mad with terror?

Richard's startling ability to dissimulate both in word and deed create within him another characteristic that has momentous significance. The Richard who in his time aspired to stand first among his associates centered his whole energy on gaining that end. Then he wished to inspire respect for himself if possible. But when he made the discovery that respect for him was not possible, he became possessed of an inordinate contempt for mankind. What blockheads all of them are: by merely using a few words, some figures of speech, some gesture, he can get the best of all of them! What does their talk of right and justice, faithfulness and honor, truth and honesty amount to in the final analysis? He, Richard, can with the greatest ease make them acknowledge the very injustice, faithlessness and dishonesty that he advances. Would crime, then, be wrong before such weak minds? They deserve the treatment he metes out to them because of their stupidity, and if everything is cleverly arranged, they will applaud even the criminal himself. What are the limits to which such an individual may go? When such a person sets himself a goal he is, as Queen Margaret says of him, like a sharp and dangerous rock upon which every ship that tries to avoid it is helplessly wrecked.

The goal that Richard had set himself from his earliest youth was the crown. With his colossal energy he carried his family forward: he won the crown for his brother. This was but the

preliminary to placing it upon his own head. He knows his qualifications for that high office to be far superior to that of his effeminate and more lovable brother. It has become a passion with him,

Well, say there is no kingdom then for Richard;
What other pleasure can the world afford?

I, like one lost in a thorny wood
That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns,
Seeking a way and straying from the way;
Not knowing how to find the open air,
But toiling desperately to find it out,—
Torment myself to catch the English crown.

This passion of Richard's springs from the same deep source as the rest of his character. It is because of their abnormality that such deformed beings as Richard suffer from sickly thoughts of vanity. It appears to hypnotize them. They are only reconciled to their deformity when they make others bow before them. They deck themselves out in fineries that only makes their deformity the more conspicuous.

What position is more powerful and splendid than that of the King? To Richard the royal name is no foolish or vain dream. He is getting closer to the throne, but many lives are still between the goal and himself. The thought about the royal ermine was Richard's third means of defense against the world's opinion of him. What kind of existence, however, is that which is offered him; he, the superior, royal Richard, at the court of his brother? He whose mind is able to twist all these inferiors around his little finger, must he bear with an existence that every moment inflicts fresh wounds of humiliation?

Richard is in open warfare with everyone. And in war deeds of war are desperate. Edward's death is a welcome gain for Richard; this Edward beloved of women all his days, while he, Richard, is hated and abhorred, even by his own wife. For this reason Clarence must also fall,—is it for Richard to step aside for Clarence, the beloved Clarence who can speak so well for himself that he wins all hearts, even of the men sent to murder him, while with his hissing voice Richard only in that way succeeds in having them fall over Clarence like a pack of hungry dogs.

And what about the children of Edward? Have they not from their very infancy inherited the family's reserved contempt for Richard? And is it not just the little York who taunts him to

his very face and compares him to a hunchbacked bear on whose back York sits like the monkey on the bear-trainer?

They are all of them enemies of Richard. All of them, in one way or another, received more favored bodies than fell to him. Amid the curses of the family he sinks the vessels of their existence out of sight, while the citizenry is silenced, and the nobility puts on a good face. And with threats, violence, and hypocritical gestures Richard finally ascends the throne of England.

In a deeper sense, what does it now mean to be King? Richard is the representative of the social order of the nation, its chief protection, the one who shall conserve the welfare of society; stand as a barrier against all that tends to injure it.

What an insolvable contradiction! He, the most bitter enemy of society, the disclaimer of all that binds society together,—brotherhood, honesty, faithfulness,—Richard to appear as protector and the conservator of all those things on which the social order is built. But he has no eye for this contradiction. If he offers it a thought at all, they are merely concepts, words, manners of speech that he can dissolve into the atmosphere like so much vapor. To him the crown is victory and power.

And it is exactly because of his perverted idea of what power stands for that the royal throne which he occupies crashes to the ground and he with it. Where it was for him to bind together the scattered threads, there he only dissolves. Where he should be the protector, he only casts down. It was for him to establish peace, and he does everything to provoke war.

Richard has confidence in no living being, and now that he has use for the faithfulness and honesty of others he has lost faith in their value. Now that the mockery has been silenced, when only pleasant and respectful faces dare surround him, he naturally does not believe them. For Richard himself has not changed, and why should the others change? Their taunt was at least honest, so now their sweet words must be dishonest. Now that his dialectics have lost their erstwhile purpose, because there is no longer anything to fight for or to gain, these dialectics fall back on himself, makes him insecure as regards himself, causes uncertainty and loss of control.

The pale demon of suspicion seizes him. He dare not trust a single soul. His only friend and confidant, the scoundrel Buckingham, has the feeling that even his head sits no longer secure upon his shoulders. He takes to hurried flight and joins the enemies

of Richard. With his coarse insults, Richard makes an enemy of Catesby, and Stanley has to put up his own son as hostage in evidence of his supposed loyalty to Richard.

And now for the first time in his life Richard reckons without his host. He dares to do the insane thing of attempting to have the mother, the wife of the deceased Edward, deliver up the daughter to the executioners of her sons by playing on the word "advantage," and by the power of his speech trying to silence all her objections. But he can no longer find an oath by which to swear, because there is no longer anything so high and holy that he has not dishonored it. He succeeds in insulting the very fountain of human existence, the mother sentiment, to such a degree that he can be outwitted. Instead of gaining the decisive advantage that will make his power secure forever, the mother behind his back gives the daughter to his deadly enemy, Richmond. This makes an end to the destructive war between the Red and White Roses, and further gives Richmond the support of his claim that he had missed so far. Richard is now isolated.

It is, then, on the Field of Bosworth that we encounter a Richard not formerly known to us; a Richard who has reached a point where he doubts himself. In the deep shadows of the night there rise before him the ghosts of the departed, those whose blood is upon his head. They announce to him that they will fight on the side of his opponents. Richard begins to sense the coming revenge, the only power that he still respects, as at last he gives it voice:

a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale
And every tale condemns me for a villain,

He sees himself arraigned before the judge and views with terror,

All several sins, all used in each degree,
Throng to the bar, crying all 'Guilty! guilty!'

In the immense loneliness that has been his lot through life, but which in reality gave him all his strength, his hatred and his progress, he sees once more, as when a child, the curse of his existence:

I shall despair, There is no creature loves me,
And if I die, no soul will pity me:
Nay, wherefore should they—

And yet, with the break of day and the departing of all shadows

his whole power to act returns. With flaming words he bolsters up his people to do battle. He himself works wonders. But his legions have no longer faith in him. Richard's time has come. He falls in battle. But even in the hour of his death he is ready to perform new miracles of action and bravery, ever tireless, ever clear of thought, ever sharp seeing as to means and measures:

A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!

Iago

In Richard III we have a type of the criminal by instinct; a criminal whose character is sheer greed. It matters little whether this greed seeks its satisfaction in the securing of money or power. The decisive thing is that such a criminal aspires with the entire energy of his egoism to possess himself of whatever treasure he sees glittering in another's hand, and for its sake commits a crime.

In Iago we meet with a criminal of another stamp. The driving-wheel within him is the delight of destroying. He not only wants to possess himself of what another has, but to rob the owner of the enjoyment of his treasure; to kill whatever joy is within him.

Both of these criminals are beasts of prey within peaceful society. Richard, however, takes what he wants to still his own hunger for power. No matter how revolting his crimes, they are necessary to him in order to gain his end. Iago is as the tiger that sheds blood incontinently without any direct advantage from the destruction. He is like the volcanic powers which when once released become the most terrible enemy of man.

No ordinary human logic can explain Iago's criminality. He has no injury to avenge, or enmity to satisfy; no inferiority to excuse him. He is not one who, aspiring to advance, is deliberately set aside for others' preference. Those he destroys are his supposed comrades and friends, people who mean him well and have confidence in him. He is of their social circle and is respected by all.

To be sure, Iago does feel that he has been slighted; Cassio was advanced to the post of lieutenant. But this post could not be considered the goal for the labors and energy of a life-time; it is not something that another has snatched away from him. With his twenty-eight years and that good head of his Iago, considering also his good connection and reputation, could in a very short time have attained to a similar post.

Nor can it be said that he has been in love with Desdemona

and avenges himself because of being cast aside by her. There is only a single instance in the drama where he intimates that his mind has centered on Desdemona, and then he adds that it really does not play any decisive role with him. Nor need we attach any special weight to the particular motive he himself advances, namely, his suspicion that the Moor stood in intimate relation to his wife, Emilie. How could Iago have any thought like that? He knew the Moor better than did anyone else, and he himself must have felt the incongruity of such suspicion.

No, if we wish to get at Iago's real character we must look away from any normal motive. As Shakespeare presents him, we immediately are confronted with the contradiction how one while proving to be the meanest scoundrel imaginable enjoys the absolute confidence of his associates. There must, therefore, be two Iagos; an Iago who appears to be one thing, and another who is the directly opposite.

And yet, if we are to look upon him as an every-day individual and not a dramatic figure, these contrasts may, perhaps, complement themselves in a more complete entity.

In first considered Iago as he appears in the eyes of his surroundings we may be able to learn on what rests his ability to dissimulate. In the third scene of the second act we find a conversation between Iago and Cassio concerning Desdemona. For the moment there are no hidden thoughts back of his words; there is nothing special with which he wants to tempt Cassio in the ensuing dialogue. We are allowed the inference that his expression is normal. It is beyond his thinking to arouse in Cassio a passion for Desdemona. He knows the honest Cassio well enough to realize that the latter would never insult the wife of the Moor with even a thought.

Iago first makes the remark that the Moor has passed them by because he is in love with Desdemona, and he continues:

Let us therefore not blame; he
Had not yet made wanton the night with her, and
She is sport for Jove.

Cassio

She's a most exquisite lady.

Iago

And, I'll warrant her, full of game.

Cassio

Indeed she's a most refreshing and delicate creature.

Iago

What an eye she has! methinks it sounds a parley
to provocation.

Cassio

An inviting eye! and methinks right modest.

Iago

And when she speaks, is it not an alarum to love?

Cassio

She is indeed perfection.

Iago

Well, happiness to their sheets!

We perceive from this that to Cassio's respectful and somewhat poetic expressions about Desdemona Iago each time answers with a somewhat corresponding remark, but still it is clearly shown that he harbors a coarse sensual thought, and thereby reveals the standpoint from which he views woman, even one so fine and dignified as Desdemona. And yet his words, such as they are, do not pass the boundary where they can arouse suspicion or give offense.

Similar expressions, although shaded differently, Iago makes use of on other occasions; always cynical and coarsely veiled. This is especially so where the talk is about women, as for instance before Brabantio, Roderigo, his own wife, or even Desdemona herself.

In his conception of the relations between a man and a woman Iago is the cynic personified, and so also is his cynicism in evidence wherever it is a question of human conditions in general. Respectful courtesy extended a lady is to him "a prologue to the history of lust." A servant who knows how to look out for himself in his relations to his master is just the right sort. Praise of the good accomplished by others he calls sheer nonsense.

When such cynicism is backed by intelligence it contains something both right and wrong.

Iago belongs to those cynics who in their expression voice both right and wrong and thus usually find their public. In that interminable mass of half-truths, dissimulations and half-lies that society carries in its train, honest people find relief when now and then an individual appears to be incorruptible and has the courage to call things by their right names. Against all the imaginary virtue and modesty, false and lying ideals and sugar-sweet enthusiasm over that which is of slight importance, such an indi-

vidual sets his unvarnished talk which like magic shows things in their naked reality. People who are after the truth naturally listen to such a person. Here is a man, at last, who at any rate does not hide his heart; he is at least honest, he speaks his mind, and one should therefore give him a hearing, even though his opinion may now and then seem a little curious and exaggerated.

This is the sort of person that Iago appears to be in the eyes of his surroundings. To them he is the clever head that knows the world and who has a clear vision; the open-minded, honest friend, bold and unpolished. It is for this reason that all come to him, Desdemona, Cassio, Emilie, Roderigo.

When they thus come to him, and as long as there is no reason for Iago to act otherwise, he can actually do them important service, what with his worldly knowledge and clear-sightedness. It flatters his vanity to be of service; he feels his real superiority. It confirms him in his belief that his cynical view of life is the right one and has greatest stability. It is from this side of his character that his relations with Othello must be studied.

When such an individual as Iago is placed before a grand, high-minded and unsuspecting person like Othello, and when at the same time he has some personal interest in placing such a person under obligation to himself, he is very likely to take care of him with considerable enthusiasm. It is a real joy for him to open the other's eyes to all the humbug, deceit, egoism, sensuousness and meanness which is so conspicuous in a rich and super-refined society. He will show him the driving springs back of all this outward polish and sweetness, and, expose to him the emptiness and worse behind the glittering shell.

Shakespeare makes it very plain how in the false and intriguing Venice of that day Iago had numerous opportunities to open the eyes of Othello to the snares which lay in hiding, and of which the Moor knew nothing. He believed blindly the lies that Iago told him, unfamiliar as he was with European conditions. It is for this reason that he places full confidence in Iago and relies on his judgment:

And for I know thou'rt full of love and honesty
And weigh'st thy words before thou givest them breath,
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:

Or Othello says of him:

This fellow's of exceeding honesty.

And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit
Of human dealings.

Iago knows also how to make use of his worldly knowledge and local conditions whenever he finds the Moor to be in doubt:

I know our country's disposition well;
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.

But he is careful to add:

As, I confess, it is my nature's plague
To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
Shapes faults that are not—

It is just this suspicion of all that may possibly by mannerism, masquerading, or downright deceit,—a suspicion so deeprooted in the Moor's hatred of all that is counterfeit, and his fear of falling under its ban,—to which Iago owes his ability to instill confidence in Othello.

Let us now proceed from the Iago as he appears, to the Iago as in reality he is; from the outward showing to the inner man. From the cynic to the criminal may seem a considerable leap, and it is a fact that every cynic is not a criminal. But it is equally true that every criminal is at bottom a cynic. Let us not forget that there exist two kinds of cynics; one kind rests on sympathy, the other on antipathy. Both kinds detest borrowed feathers, for which reason they both sound so alike before unsuspecting people that they are often mistaken for each other. In spite of this they are totally unlike.

The sympathetic cynic has suffered so many disappointments in the market place that we term the world that he decides he is through with disappointments which were due to his humane disposition and because he had more faith in his fellowbeings than they deserved. That is what made him a cynic. He no longer believes in others but in reality he is the same as he was before. Nothing rejoices him more than to discover that he is actually wrong once in a while.

The antipathetic cynic is of an entirely different mold. In that icy heart of his there reigns only his own egoism. What he understands is the egoism in others. What he has no conception of is altruism. Since he does not understand it he disavows it, hates it because it is so diametrically opposed to his own character. Were

he to accept altruism he would have to hate himself, and this he could not do and remain the egoist that he is.

In that cold barren region of his heart there stands a tower where sits the Mephistofales of his egoism, staring with those burning eyes on the doing of mankind. Wherever he sees contention, hatred, anger at work, there his heart rejoices. Wherever he notices goodness, charity, love and happiness his heart shrinks within him, and if possible he cuts them down so that nothing of that sort shall flourish.

Such a cynic does not lust after the things themselves, for one does not want what one hates. The top-soil of culture has never spread itself over the stony ground of his heart. Hard and cold and dark stands the primeval rock of nature where only life in its lowest form can thrive. To him, therefore, that life only is genuine; true and unadulterated culture is to him a hated lie. And since he hates this culture, he hates all in man that maintains it. It is because of this that he is crime personified; its origin and source, its apotheosis.

Iago belongs to this class of criminals. To him the deep sympathetic tie between man and woman is nothing more than the expression of sensualism. Everything grand and exalted is nothing but affectation and lies. All and everything he drags down to the morass of his own vile thinking. Othello, whose fine description of how he won Desdemona all will remember, impressed her, Iago declares, by bragging and telling her fantastic lies. Othello's dignified faith and confidence in people results in him being "as tenderly . . . led by the nose as asses are." His unvarnished, forceful speech is

a bombast circumstance
Horrible stuffed with epithets of war;

Iago only mentions Desdemona to soil her good name. He scoffs at the relations between the Moor and Desdemona. His hatred of all human happiness he emphasizes strikingly when Desdemona and Othello meet in joyous reunion on Cyprus, after the dangers of the voyage are past. He soliloquizes:

O, you are well tuned now;
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.

The fact is that at no time has Iago been a friend of the Moor for the purpose of serving him well. In his eyes Othello is nothing

more than an ass which, as long as it permits him to lead it through its willingness to learn, and admiration for its guide,—flatters his vanity. As long as this is the case he harbors no real unfriendly feelings for Othello.

But the situation has now changed. The Moor gains the hand and heart of the most beautiful aristocratic lady of Venice and is honored with the highest army authority in the State. He has, as Roderigo remarks, won his own happiness and good fortune, and of course, Iago had no hand in either. The course of events forced him to assume command of Venice's power, and Othello won Desdemona through the relating of the many hardships encountered in the campaigns. The direct go-between was Cassio, not Iago.

Through the play of fate, Othello not only became powerful in the State, but what was worse yet to Iago, he became a happy man. Iago's star was on the decline. Cassio, the love messenger of the Moor, gets the post of lieutenant. This means that Iago is no longer number one. Othello, as the other sees it, can now stand on his own legs, he has found new and powerful friends who can benefit him much more than can Iago. Henceforth he can go his own way, proud and happy, without Iago as mentor.

Whatever of good-will he may have felt for the Moor, or rather, whatever lack of ill-will there has been, now went away as if by magic. As long as Iago could play the superior in the ways of the world he could afford to pass for a friend. The moment he becomes less important to Othello he turns into an implacable enemy. The Moor has gained the very top and anything so elevated must be brought low. Where human peace and happiness dwell it is for Iago to create dissension and unhappiness. That is his heart's chief desire; the happiness of Othello, therefore, must be crushed.

But to this more ordinary motive of envy and meanness there attaches another more special motive, that Shakespeare, it is true, has hidden deep down within the drama, but no deeper than that it can be found, and which points toward the extreme abysses of the human soul.

From the reading of the drama it is not difficult to understand why with his nature Iago wants to destroy the Moor. But Desdemona! There is no apparent reason why he should want to hate and persecute her. Even though she must share the fate of Othello in order for Iago's plans to succeed, there ought to be found a place for some charity toward her. Why, then, is he so gratuitously

malicious toward her, so bereft of every human feeling before this gentle, innocent woman? Why does he work with such appalling tenacity for her destruction—and such a destruction!

Here it is essential that we make clear to ourselves that Iago is of a decided erotic nature,—taking that word in its coarsest sense. Indirectly it is seen that he always imagines sexual outcroppings in others;—the impulse that rules him he takes for granted rules everybody else to the same extent and in the same manner. That is why common courtesy in woman in his eyes is nothing but “a prologue to the history of lust.” That is why the friendship that Othello and Cassio have shown for his brave wife is sufficient for Iago to make himself believe that they have stood in intimate relations with Emilie.

It is felt as a contradiction when Shakespeare shows us Iago as married and taking upon himself the responsibilities of wedlock. Iago as a husband is in contravention of his very nature. But then, he is brutal and inconsiderate. He shows it in the few scenes where he is together with Emilie, and his revolting and coarse manner before her leads her to exclaim:

But I do think it is their husbands' faults
If wives do fall; say that they lack their duties
And pour our treasures into foreign laps,
Or else break out in peevish jealousies,
Throwing restraint upon us, or say they strike us,
Or scant our former having in despite,
Why, we have galls.

But even the purely matrimonial duties Iago tries to evade; his unsatisfied sensuality constantly demands new subjects. About this Emilie says:

What is it that they do
When they change us for others? Is it sport?
I think it is: and doth affection breed it?
I think it doth: is't frailty that thus errs?
It is so too:

To keep up his many illicit relations Iago is in constant need of money. He cuts down Emilie's “having” and ruins the purse-limited Roderigo by living at his expense, by borrowing from him and finally by cheating him outright. Wherever the talk is about women or the feelings of men before women he relates his coarse, erotic experiences.

Observing Iago's expressions and his remarks to Roderigo and Desdemona in this light we notice again and again how he varies his theme: Desdemona's presupposed sensuality, inconstancy, desire to change the Moor for some other person more like herself, he voices so coarsely and ugly that the words would be an insult to even a woman of the street. All this points directly to the fact that an erotic instinct of cruelty bases Iago's desire to give hurt. He would like best of all, he says, to take her for himself. If this is not possible then he must find satisfaction in some other way, break through her good qualities, see her ruined mentally and mistreated bodily, himself the author of all her misery.

To this motive is joined Iago's envy of the Moor. Formerly he meant him ill because of his good luck and advancement, but now that Othello, the stupid, despised Moor, is the one to possess this woman his envy assumes the character of erotic jealousy which endows the envy with much greater energy because it finds nourishment near the roots that lies closest to his heart.

It is clear that the psychical machinery that motivates Iago, composed as it is of a deeply lying instincts and hazy feelings, operates far below conscious existence. The surface indications reveal the unrest and also some sort of hesitancy as:

The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,
Then again, when he says further that Othello,
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband.

But this is exactly what must be prevented. Here Iago reveals one motive after another. He begins to work for a definite purpose and starts with Cassio who is to be the unsuspecting means for creating Othello's jealousy. He first makes Cassio drunk, and with this he manages to arouse within Othello a doubt as to whether he has not been mistaken in the brave Cassio. The mischief apparently worked, for Cassio was removed from his position. If one may be making a mistake in the one thing, it is as likely that he may have made a mistake in other things. And Iago continues to play his game.

It is in the big scene where Iago gets Othello completely in his power that the abysmal soul of the former is revealed in all its subtle cruelty. He asks of Othello:

Did Michael Cassio, when you woo'd my lady
Know of your love?

Othello

He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?

Iago

But for a satisfaction of my thought;
No further harm.

Othello

What of thy thoughts, Iago?

Iago

I did not think he had been acquainted with her.

Othello

O, yes, and went between us very oft.

Iago

Indeed!

Othello

Indeed! ay, indeed! discern'st thou ought in that?
Is he not honest?

Iago

Honest, my lord!

Othello

Honest, ay, honest!

Iago

My lord, for aught I know.

Iago's "indeed" and Othello's replies presage the coming storm. Iago arouses the Moor's curiosity and with the created tensivity there is mixed a certain, indefinable fear. Does Iago know something that he, Othello does not know? And might it be something concerning what is closest to his mind, Dedemona?

Iago does that which is worst of all, namely, intimates what he does not say directly. But the poison is taking effect. Othello's flareup proves it:

By heaven he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown.

Iago uses the same method when casting suspicion on Desdemona. He does not attack her, does not accuse her. What he does is to smuggle suspicion into Othello's mind in such a way that the latter gets to thinking this suspicion is of his own making.

Iago praises the importance of a good name and reputation, which he says is

the immediate jewels of their souls:
Who steals my purse steals trash;
'Tis something, nothing.

— — —
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
But makes me poor indeed.

This general intimation that Cassio threatens the honor of Othello and Desdemona causes the Moor to exclaim:

By heaven, I'll know your thoughts.

With feigned pride Iago draws back:

You cannot if my heart were in your hand;
And shall not, whilst 'tis in my custody.

As might be expected, the Moor now becomes full of rage; a single expression shows that he is near the boiling point. Iago then acts as if he is fearful:

O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on.

But the word has been spoken. In his roundabout way Iago has managed to say what a few moments before might have cost him his life. He ventures to press the arrow in more firmly with the taunt:

that cuckold lives in bliss
Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;

Then more earnestly:

But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!

Othello shows by his answer that he has been hit on the vulnerable spot, yet he tries with characteristic dignity and pride to turn aside the suspicion:

exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufficate and bawn surmises,
Matching thy inference.

Even then he does not cast the suspicion back into the dirty

pool from whence it came. He asks for proofs and thereby furthers Iago's vile purpose:

No, Iago;
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And on the proof, there is no more than this,
Away at once with love and jealousy.

Iago quickly senses his gain:

I am glad of it; for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you.

And then he furnishes Othello a point of contact for any incipient doubt by saying what the Moor knows to be so:

She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,
She loved them most— — —
She that so young could give out such a seeming
To seal her father's eyes up close as oak—
He thought 'twas witchcraft—but I am much to blame;

With a feeling of depression, the Moor admits that Iago's suspicion may be right. His honest heart understands how very hard it is for Iago to convey this information and he thanks Iago for the friendly service he has rendered him:

I am bound to thee forever.

To a certain extent Iago has now reached the goal that he set himself; the Moor's jealousy and suspicion have been aroused. But he also discovered something that exceeded his expectations. Othello's doubt does not lead to terrible fits of anger or mistreatment of Desdemona, but a deep, immeasurable pain takes possession of him, and it is this that fills Iago with a joy beyond measure. It is the mental agony that sways Othello which tells Iago that he is close to victory.

Finding his scheme developing rapidly he aims at inflicting still greater pain by adding that it was nature's fault if Desdemona had obtained

a will most rank,
Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural.

Otherwise, he declares, she could hardly have said no to

many proposed matches
Of her own clime, complexion and degree.

Seeing the Moor's face contract with pain he adds one more poisonous sting:

But pardon me: I do not in position
Distinctly speak of her; though I may fear
Her will, recoiling to her better judgment
May fail to match you with her country forms,
And happily repent.

In the same breath that Othello breaks off the conversation with a hasty,

Farewell, farewell!

he shows to what low a level the machinations of Iago have brought him:

let me know more;
Set on thy wife to observe.

Then it is that chance puts the handkerchief in Iago's possession—this so "fearful" proof of Desdemona's guilt. What new sufferings, what new enjoyments for himself, does he not vision with this evidence in his hands. With ecstasies that remind of a cat's whiggling of its tail when it is sure of its prey he exclaims:

Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou owedst yesterday.

Cruelty is in his every word. In the scene following Iago revels in bringing it to bear. For the moment he holds back the decisive proof, the handkerchief. What is best is usually reserved to the last. As a preliminary he takes keen pleasure in considering how he can prove Cassio's relations to Desdemona so that there shall be no slip up. This furnishes him the occasion for a mass of cynical remarks each of which falls like a red-hot piece of lead on Othello's heart.

You would be satisfied?

Othello

Would! Nay I will.

Iago

And may; but how? how satisfied, my lord?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?
Behold her topped?

Othello

Death and damnation, O!

Iago

It were a tedious difficulty, I think
To bring them to that prospect: damn them then,
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster
More than their own! What then? how then?

In a similar spirit Iago now presents Cassio's dream, and, as if in a casual way, brings in about the handkerchief.

Now do I see 'tis true—

exclaims Othello in despair, and then shows that terrible anger of the primitive man that Iago has been waiting for so long:

Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate!

The monster in Othello has been awakened and cries out:

O' blood, blood, blood!

But now that Iago has set the torch on fire he is seized with the fear that the flame may be extinguished; that Othello, whose kind heart he knows only too well may change his mind, in that his love for Desdemona may get the upper hand. It is her sufferings that he now craves more than anything else. For this reason he replies at once to the Moor's wild ravings:

Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.

He begs of Othello "let her live"; all for the purpose of making retreat impossible and assure the murder of Desdemona. And yet he heaps proof upon proof. Where he tells the lie about Cassio's "confession" with regard to his relations with Desdemona, he shows an absolute indifference to Othello's fearful torments. He no longer finds any pleasure in witnessing his distress. It is Desdemona who occupies him:

Work on!
My medicine works! Thus credulous fools are caught!
And many worthy and chaste dames even thus
All guiltless, meet reproach.

Othello no longer asks whether Desdemona shall die, but only how, and proposes poison so as not to be compelled to lay hands on her beautiful body.

But this is not enough to satisfy Iago:

Strangle her—strangle her in her own bed!

And as if to justify his choice, he immediately adds:

Even the bed she had contaminated!

The Moor at once seizes upon the suggestion:

Good, good! the justice of it pleases: very good.

Iago's masterpiece of malice is completed!

Having followed Iago's motives to their inner source and having observed from what horrible a depth his crime has arisen, there remains to be seen the meaning of the crime in its larger aspect.

What is it then, that makes Othello stand out so great and dignified, the conspicuous general, the protector of the State, the hero without fear or blemish, the devoted husband, the truest of friends? In a word, it is the confidence he vests in others, the confidence that others have in him. Othello is not shortsighted or superficial, but trusting. What are the foundational pillars that bear up society? On what depends the justice that we term civilization? Confidence. That is why the innermost crime is the destruction of confidence. Whatever else their names, this want of confidence lies at the bottom of all crimes. It is this that characterizes the criminals herein described. Kill the ability in man to instill confidence and every human association is made impossible.

This is the crime that Iago commits against Othello. Put mankind in Othello's place and Iago becomes the world's worst criminal. It is not Desdemona's supposed duplicity,—in which he now believes as completely as formerly he believed in her innocence—that drives him to commit the terrible act out of mere jealousy. It is the offense against humankind itself which stirs him into revolt against the awful injustice that humankind has suffered:

If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself!
I'll not believe't,

But he has to believe it. Iago's many proofs allow him no escape from what appears to be. Therefore his soul is killed within him, and he exclaims:

O, now forever
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell,

Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
 The spirit, stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
 The royal banner and all quality,
 Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!

Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

But she, Desdemona, this creature miserable beyond words, shall she be permitted to live and stand for a saintly picture of the lie itself? No,

She must die, else she'll betray more men.

It is then he calls God to witness—God whom Desdemona has offended by killing the divine spark within Othello. He implores the all highest to see the justice of the punishment that he must visit on Desdemona. In that terrible death scene he is possessed of but one thought, one fear,—that Desdemona may yet be able to fascinate him, rob him of the only thing that he believes in: that is, that he can believe no one, now that even she is unworthy of confidence. It is therefore he cries out:

For to deny each article with oath
 Cannot remove nor chock the strong conception
 That I do groan withal.

Desdemona, whose every word should stand for truth, as pure as heaven itself,—not even the holiest oaths can now move him an inch: the spirit of confidence in him has been killed.

How, then, is the mask torn from the miserable wretch whose abuse of confidence has caused so great a loss? There is deep Shakespearean wisdom in the fact that it is Iago's own wife who works his destruction. Read the scene where after the murder Othello tries to explain his act to Emilie. Three times she exclaims on hearing Othello's account of what Iago has seen, what Iago has known, what Iago has said: "My husband!" We see how the abyss opens before her feet: my husband at whose side I have lived for these many years; whom I thought I knew in every respect, who in spite of all his fault was the honest, brave Iago—Has he done this? Is this possible?

Yes, it is possible. It is only popular fancy that makes the monster go about with claws and horns so all may recognize him. The difference between the Iago known to every one, and the Iago that no one knows, is no greater than that in real life the former appears more civilized. Set in motion the secret spring, and poison,

lies, crime inundate all things. Stop the driving power, and even an Iago can go through life as a brave man appearing as such both in the eyes of the world and those nearest him.

But when at last the mask is torn off before the one who is closer to the miscreant than any other person, then her mind becomes filled to the utmost with terror and disgust because she, as perhaps the only one in the whole world, sees the link connecting the Iago as he is and the Iago as he appeared to her. The wild beast has always been there, and she cries out:

Villany, villany, villany!
I think upon't: I think: I smell't. O, villany!
I thought so then: I'll kill myself for grief;
O, villany, villany!

When all this has been finally revealed then the whole offended humankind casts itself upon Iago. For a long time all has gone well, but one unsuccessful thrust, and the whole world is up against the evil doer.

This, then, should be both our consolation and our duty; as soon as possible to discover the criminal, and the better we know him the easier it is to discover him. From Brutus to Iago, from the one who meant well to all, to the one who craved the destruction of all we have passed a group of criminals illuminated by the immortal genius of Shakespeare. And what knowledge do we gain from this? Do criminals in a broader sense differ so greatly from others? May we not rather acknowledge the truth of Hamlet's words,

The dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal.

In order, then, to escape the criminal, the criminal round about us and in ourselves, it becomes our duty to guard carefully these grains of evil.