When Desdemona's pity softens Othello's disguised self-pity, we find Iago's "curse of service" explained. Iago cannot disguise himself to himself, and so he has to disguise himself to the world. Othello's royal lineage with its traditional pride combines with his superior gifts serviceable in war and supports him and gives him the illusion of self-sufficience, but what should the disillusioned intelligence of labouring Iago aspire for in the midst of his "unhoused" condition except for satisfactions of his bodily needs which are the bare reality of existence before they are meaningfully employed? His is a motiveless malignity only in that he is too harshly pressed by the pitiless struggle for survival to notice that what he is really after is security through service for brotherhood.

For 'tis a damned slave.
(5. 2. 243)

It is not mine to decide what this simple expression of honest disgust meant to the audience of Shakespeare's theatre or what it ought to mean to the aesthetic sensibilities of my fellow men. I cannot bring myself into believing that our poet was aiming at a tragical-satirical-domestic denomination with a tender-hearted woman punished for infilial indecency, a noble-hearted man punished for credulous jealousy, and a revengeful rogue punished for causeless hate. Othello, Desdemona, Brabantio, Cassio, and Iago, together, represent one and the same humanity, driven by one and the same aspiration and trapped in one and the same blindness. That is why each one of them ought to be understood as an individual integration of heart and mind, and not as a casual compound of theatrical possibilities.

〔August 1977〕

allows him access to the society of quality, and his "unhoused" "flinty" soul awakes to the graceful bounty in the polite society, which in fact exploits him. The soldier suffers under its yoke and the lover appreciates its comfort. For some time, he finds himself fulfilled, and acts according to the custom to which Desdemona was born, provided his sense of self-assurance remains unhurt.

"The epithets of war" with which Othello defends his choice of "my officer" and which annoy the gentlemen suiting for Iago's sake in fact defend his preference of civility to coarseness. On one hand, the thought of Iago with his outrageous and down-to-earth jokes ready on tongue running errands with romantic and secret correspondences hidden in his lined pocket will make us laugh. On the other, all the "proof" Iago can produce for himself is his "soldiership." Because Othello has "seen the proof" (1. 1. 28) he finds his ancient insufficient to be ***his*** officer whose additional tacit commission it is to mediate between Othello's soldiership and his good-will to the world of "quality." Without any sense of partiality on his own part and refusing the personal suitors with his principle of rectitude, the commander chooses the best qualified one. He appoints the educated and civilized Florentine, that is, "by letter and affection."

The manner in which Othello later names the "honest" Iago for his lieutenant shows a magnified picture of the extent to which the commander can unconsciously employ his power to satisfy his own needs. It is this hidden inequity innate in the proud commandership of the noble spirit that offends the "duteous and knee-crooking knave" (45). Won over to the camp of civility, honest Othello deserts the labouring Iago with his flag of "soldiership".

Before Othello comes to feel miserably betrayed by his "affection" represented by Desdemona and Cassio and find in "honest Iago" the fellowship which his hurt soul now badly needs in his old world, he for once is happily conveyed from the "flinty and stone couch" of war furnished him by the state to the softening embrace of the "gentle" woman, and he will not be his old self again. For, when he chose Cassio, he hoisted his own flag of human unity at the expense of the ancient flag of war.

to the make-believe world of "wanton dullness" and tries to fill up his captain's unemployed days. Symbolically, it is he who brings the summons from the court to Othello. He lives on this side and on that side at once. And from what we have discussed about the true nature of this trick, we can see that this young man with his gallant kisses is so characterized that he proves most susceptible to Iago's notion of Desdemona dominating her husband. Cassio is trapped because he belongs gracefully to Iago's shameful world where desire defeats order. Iago can trap him because he knows that desire has to defeat order furtively. When Othello appears, Cassio runs. Not that he desires for Desdemona forbiddenly but he unconsciously attempts to make his captain let his desire curb his order.

In form, Othello is doing the same thing when he asks the duke to let the lady have her voice, but he does it innocently, proudly, and frankly. Othello and Desdemona do not run. Their defiant marriage defies Cassio's notion of courtship. And yet they do this unconsicously, even following Cassio's lead and trusting his fidelity. They naively adapt themselves to the natural aspiration which finds satisfaction in the furtive religion of love, and their sincere acceptance of each other has no sense of guiltiness in it.

This admirable self-confidence of theirs is possible under one peculiar condition: they have to be a king and a queen, without necessity, without envy, and without arrogance. Their spirits are uncircumscribed, unconfined, and independent. Since their eyes are not troubled by secondary necessities, they recognize what they really need, the indispensable combination of strength and sympathy. Their mutual affection explains the structure of heaven: true love can flower only where fear is driven out. Their marriage, then, is their salvation and gives us an image of ultimate fulfilment. It is brought about not by any sudden favour from a supernatural fortune or deity but by the accumulated human struggles in which Othellos have protected Desdemonas. This last, essential fact, however, escapes the lovers' eyes.

As he is, Othello bestrides the two worlds of soldiership and civility, the love of Brabantio and the charm of Desdemona enabling him to believe in their unity. His high estimation as a peerless soldier

Behind Othello's false notion, we recognize the truth, because self-contained contradictions are their own mirror. The truth is a simple one: life is not for anything other than itself. It must be nourished, it must be protected, only because it is joy in itself if properly nourished and properly protected. The soldier would not do without the saucepan prepared by the domestic wife whom he protects. His frailty must be also protected by the helmet, and the armament has no reason at all to claim any superiority to the pan. What is essential is their unity. But now the soldier, with his speculative instruments too corrupted and tainted by his office to recognize their proper business, makes head against the due estimation of women and therefore of the joy of life. And yet, nature rules through men's follies. A proclamation of soldierly duty is, if honest, invariably one of love, just as the helmet and the saucepan are of one material.

8

The clandestine nature of the courtly tradition or any mode of love under a suppressive social order leads us back to our first scene where we left Iago deserted with his proof of soldiership and confronted by the danger of losing his free access to Roderigo's purse.

The most outstanding respect of Othello's relationship with Desdemona is found in the fact that, in spite of the secret nature of their courtship and marriage which surprises Roderigo, Iago, and Brabantio, neither Othello nor Desdemona regrets being found out. They do not hesitate to justify their choice. That is, though the secrecy is a fact, they do not mean to be furtive. This character is just what we found in Othello's use of the terms of lady-worship to declare their mutual love in the open court.

In spite of the testimonies by Othello and Desdemon about Cassio's service in the course of courtship, he asks Iago to whom the captain is married (1. 2. 52). This must suggest that this mediator of love did not mean to unite them in a formal marriage and that he concealed his service from the world, although he highly respected the great warrior and the exquisite lady, a romantic combination. He belongs

men's suppressed needs for a life in love are driven to build a furtive religion, which is characterized by its absolute alienation from inconvenient social demands. The two religions cannot include one another, and yet, since servility and spontaneity are both necessary, men learn to forget their incompatibility, usually with some sense of guilt remaining at the cost of affection, with the result that "feather'd Cupid" becomes a make-believe pretext in behalf of "wanton dullness," which is no other then love disconnected from its proper employment. Now both Othello and Roderigo find the sham concord of discords ready to serve their turns, the one innocently and the other furtively.

Othello's use of the spiritual aura of the courtship tradition for the purpose of silencing the authority's loud refusal, made in his own voice, of "appetite" reveals the true nature of the rebellious god of love as he is worshipped by men of "young affects" driven by nature to seek "proper satisfaction." And the obvious conflict between the female supremacy represented by Othello's diction and his own lordship, under the state's supremacy in turn, represented by his sytax is concealed from his eyes by the transference of the virtue of bounty from the lady to himself. Here the relative positions of the lady and her supplicant are reversed. That is, Othello unconsciously represents the fundamental immorality of the society where men hold lordship and women are at their mercy whatever use men may make of them. "Housewives" suffer ignominy in sex as well as in class, and a "lady" is beautified by her sexual resources which are idolized only to justify the domination of "appetite" over a gallant.

Now the whole perspective is before us. The religion of love, which deifies women at will, is itself an illustration of male supremacy supported by proprietary right and armed power to retain it. The lady's bounty is a deceptive copy of the lord's power which allows him to gratify his appetite at her cost. That is now concretely instanced by Desdemona's pending staus, Othello's refusal of his own affective involvement, and Brabantio's refusal to shelter the disobedient daughter. All these implications of the self-contradictory nature of a power-driven society are packed in the sincerely spiritual speech of Othello's asking the duke to permit him to accompany his wife with him.

tion unasked and unanswered, "What is the business of love?".

7

"Let her have her voices," asks Othello. That nearly amounts to "She ought to rule us." And his reason amounts to, "because the virtue of free generosity commands me to renounce my right of voices altogether." "Voices" stand for will that affects social relationships and are distinguished from "desire" which is personal attachment. "Let her have what she wants," may refer to a beggar, who would never be conceived to have a voice in her. While the syntax portrays Desdemona as a beggar, the language regards her as a queen. This contradiction expresses the origin of the convention according to which Othello speaks, namely, the courtly tradition of courtship.

"To be free and bounteous" is the highest virtue of man, but it requires that the virtuous one should possess what his beneficiaries lack. Although Othello employs the notion to express his spiritual love, its implication demonstrates the proprietary origin of rulership. But, at the same time, it effectively conceals its unjustly unfair origin, decorating itself with the controlled satisfaction of those who eat from it through their servitude to it. With that hierarchy taken for granted, bouteousness is a genuine virtue springing from sympathy. In this sense Othello complacently refers to his generosity, but his use of that idea about himself reveals that this soldier in love, with nothing but himself to offer, shares with virtuous kings the insensibility to indebtedness. Seconding Desdemona's suit, Othello's language wrenches her words most violently and refuses her soul.

Desdemona's free and bounteous dedication of herself impresses Othello and causes him to ask the ruler to let her have her voice. And, since he is so honestly bound to his soldierly duty, this turns out to be the question of whether authority or love rules. Put into this dichotomous form, it becomes an insoluble dilemma, as is represented, anticipated, and explained by the fact that the terms of love which claim for its freedom imitate those of power that refuse it. Because the sanctified weight of the tight order of proprietary rights reigns,

(1. 3. 258) is characterized by the absence of any intention to distinguish the mind from the body. To her, "proper satisfaction" is just proper to conjugal grace. It is not so with Othello, who believes that the weight of his "serious and great business" ought to have all his "instruments" "officed" so that there must remain no room for "proper," that is, personal interest. And precisely because he has to deny the personal, he has to deny the appetitive aspect of sex particulary, and as a result, he dismisses from his idea of love the mutuality of satisfaction, which is Desdemona's theme and which is apparent in that grossly-conceived image of Iago's, "the beast with two backs." In this respect, Othello's spiritualism imitates Iago's animalism.

Othello's dogmatic preference of the "unhoused and free condition" to "circumscription and confine" now reveals its social implication for him. A "skillet" is mere nothing besides a "helm" because it is useless for a soldier, and just for the same reason "housewives" without any relationship with his "estimation" belong to "all indign and base adversities". While "housewives" are no good except for the "skillet" business to which they belong, "my disports" which may "corrupt and taint my business" smell of detachment from necessity, which is given the other-worldly metaphor of feathered levity. That is, Othello's language does not admit women in any meaningful relationship with life's necessity. He fails to ask what the "skillet" is for. Neither does he tell what Desdemona is coming with him for. He denies his appetite, he denies any proper "business" to women, and therefore he drives his affection away to a dream-land by the "light-wing'd" rhetorical words. For, while he promises his imaginary triumph over Cupid's rhetorical darts, the practical purpose of his plea is to justify, by every available figure of impressive rhetoric, his attachment to his newly-married wife which makes him violate his own sense of soldierly duty. To use Othello's own metaphor, Cupid's dart has pierced him.

Othello's sincere involvement shows that the story about love's "lightwing'd toys" is a false one. But clearly he is driven to regard his affection as "wanton dullness." And for that very reason love has to have recourse to its light-winged feat in revealing its domination through his denial of it. Behind all this, there remains a basic ques-

My speculative and officed instruments,
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm,
And all indign and base adversities
Make head against my estimation!
(1. 3. 261—275)

This is an innocent mass of anomalous contradictions, which derive from one root. They may tentatively be itemized as follows: Othello's utter unconsciousness of the flat irrelevance of "her voices" when she is at the mercy of the voices of her father, her husband, and the duke; his illusion of his disinterestedness; his lack of anxiety about his wife's unrelatedness to war which the duke fears after her father; his limitation of "proper satisfaction" to "appetite"; his irrelevant application of the courtship terms to his wife; his sharp distinction of "housewives" from his lady who wants to live with him; and his loud proclamation of the courtship tradition to which secrecy is essential.

Othello is declaring that he wants to let Desdemona accompany him for the single reason that she wants it, that he does not mean to indulge in sex, and that he will not scant his duty for it. We ought to believe that he believes himself. But, obviously, this is a special plea particularly for his wife, grounded on his personal relationship to her. The audience around him never believes that he is accompanying a woman to do nothing with her in Cyprus; they accept his high-sounding declamation as a decent way of claiming his "rites" (in Desdemona's word 1. 3. 258), that is, his rights. They take his verbal self-contradiction for granted; they know that his "instruments" cannot be "officed" entirely for battles. Only the speaker believes in his logical and moral integrity.

Othello fails to acknowledge and define the nature of his personal concern, but evades the question by equating female attraction with physical appetite which he does not much feel. This attitude of his toward sex makes a great contrast with Desdemona's. For, while she also talks admiringly of Othello, she does not hesitate to identify her love with her wish to live with her man, and never thinks it necessary to avoid a suspicion of her desire. "The rites for which I love him"

human being should keep on reexamining his or her accepted formalism of judgment.

The final failure of the intriguing Iago comes ironically through his utter trust in his wife's fidelity to him, that is, through his imperception of the domesticated woman's natural fidelity which cries louder than the daggar of the husband's authority. Angered by this betrayal, Iago stabs his wife. He might have wailed after Othello over his lost wife killed for the sake of justice. But the poor Iago knows more about the dark nature of his "justice" and like the disillusioned inhabitant of the cursed world he is, he knows all is lost to the forsaken man. Because he has never tasted self-satisfaction, he mirrors the vanity of Othello's wounded pride, which is combined with the sparkling sincerity of his love. Iago's misery is that he cannot comprehend his own desperate longing for mutual unitedness attested by his superb metaphor, an animal "with two backs."

6

As Desdemona's perception of Othello's manliness combines itself inseparably with her knowledge of his great reputation, so the warrior's appreciation of the woman's affection coexists with his admiration of her peerless ladyship. Through their mutual appreciation of each other's sincerity, there lurks unperceived the shadow of class distinction.

Othello's sense of duty tempered by the flint and stone of war does not well harmonize with his joy in his precious wife, and he has to justify his accompaniment of her to Cyprus by an uncalled-for proclamation of the former:

> Let her have her voices.
> Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not,
> To please the palate of my appetite,
> Nor to comply with heat—the young affects
> In me defunct—and proper satisfaction,
> But to be free and bounteous to her mind:
> And heaven defend your good souls, that you think
> I will your serious and great business scant
> For she is with me: no, when light-wing'd toys
> Of feather'd Cupid seel with wanton dullness

a malignant dog! That is "traducing" enough. Othello only outdid the Turk. His complacent faith in his Christianity only shows that a religion can so flagrantly traduce itself. We are still too far from the last scene to adequately explain that this heart-rending speech subtly mirrors how the same faith of Othello's in his proud justice costs Desdemona's life and his own. But that much may be mentioned here to suggest the dramatic integrity of the play's thematic structure.

The above observation seems to lead us to what may be our author's insight about the nature of kingship (or authority based on proprietary inequity) in relation to man's natural integrity. The crown aspires for fearless freedom only because it is the ultimate aspiration of frail and mortal humanity. Since the strongest can best rest on his power to secure freedom or self-assurance, the king is most glorious. Yet it is most difficult for a king to acknowledge that his authority is the sum total of his followers' strength integrated upon him for a casual set of reasons. Othello's sense of his royalty, detached from any demand for self-satisfaction with plunder, makes a respectable soldier of him, but the same sense prevents him from feeling the human need for brotherhood. He forgets that his great reputation is only the sum total of the services done by many mortal men who survived or died under his command. The necessity to risk and protect his own dear life in the "unhoused" condition agrees with the original status of kingship, because both are motivated by the universal necessity to escape the eternal "unhoused" condition of humanity.

When Desdemona appears before him, his nature declares that all his past dangers have been in search of what now he finds in her. Brabantio, when he loses his daughter, reveals through his death that all the pride and wealth of his life have been in pursuit of what the mutual affection between the father and the daughter represents. His tragedy lies in his inability to understant that it is his love and protection that have kept unmarred her natural independence. And in the same way Othello's self-reliance hinders him from noticing that soldiership is justified only when it is conscious of its duty to serve for the cause of brotherhood or mutual sympathy, which has nothing in it so abstract and authoritative as "justice" and "merit" but requires every

his contempt toward Othello when he thinks that Roderigo, the petty gentleman, would make a far better husband. And that contempt is most gloriously represented by the military flag Iago carries. Under the same flag, Othello has fought with his pride in his royal blood.

The overwhelming necessity of life would seem to explain the anomaly, but Iago is there to teach us that necessity does not prevent one from feeling neglected and cursed. If Othello had felt himself as a defeated king in disgrace, he would not have prized his "service" to Venice. His royal consciousness is quite severed from the sense of proprietary right it commonly stands for. With him, royalty is a personal virtue, which can be proudly manifested in whatever he does and whereever he exists. He represents the purest morality of ***noblesse oblige*** as it is detached from the utter self-centeredness of one who believes it his inborn right to be shielded by other men's blood. But he does this unconsciously through his conscious belief in his inborn virtue of royalty. Because Othello's royalty supports his loyalty, we can distinguish between the heroic and the mean aspects of "royalty" and understand that there is a more correct name for each and that royalty as "merit" is a deception. It is this deception combined with man's aspiration for freedom that protects the Moorish soldier from self-humiliation before the "signiory" of Venice. But it also accepts the class-interests of the signiory, in the name of the "state," conceals the misery of life forced upon him, and obliterates the wildness of his duty to kill every innocent claimant for other causes than those upheld by the Venetian flag.

At the last moment of his life, Othello describes one scene of his "service":

> In Aleppo once,
> Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
> I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
> And smote him, thus.
>
> (5. 2. 352—356)

Apart from his passionate sense of justice and heroism, there is neither justice nor heroism in the picture. If beaten, smite! If against Venice,

> Which, when I know that boasting is an honour,
> I shall promulgate—I fetch my life and being
> From men of royal siege, and my demerits
> May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune
> As this that I have reach'd.
>
> (1. 2. 17—24)

He means: his service deserves Desdemona, but he has another hidden merit, a royal descent, which alone would deserve as much. We ought to admire his self-reliance which is also decency. But, apart from his own self-respect, what does his "royal siege" amount to at all? We will consider this in three respects at once, namely, its effect on Othello's attitude to life, its social implication in the present state of things, and its connection to its original status as an absolute power. These aspects are not separated.

There is one thing which the unboasting Othello looks over and we too may look over with him: his disclosure of his royal lineage does not impress Iago at all. That is, Othello's hidden self-respect is a vain boasting in itself. He is fast possessed of a strong pride in his royal blood, which does not allow him to boast on it like a beggar who picks up a crown. Like a prince whose existence is grounded on his ability to keep and expand his territory, this landless prince has fought most royally to keep up with his inner pride, which cannot be satisfied with the money a mercenary receives. But a mercenary with a royal pride makes an absurd picture. Why does this obscure king of the Moors fight under the Venetian flag at all?

The cold fact is that Othello is not a master any longer and will never be. Working for the powerful and wealthy state, he represents the utter ignominy his tribe has suffered in the course of fierce battles and cunning machinations. What heed would Venice pay to the Moorish prince, unless he had stores of treasures to be exploited? Why would Venice need what little resources this stranger has in his frail body, if it were in any way so tender-hearted to try to restore independent glory to the Moors? In order to become what it is, Venice has been waging wars and disregarding whatever is foreign to its self-interests. Power takes its justice for granted. Brabantio does not hide

comparing Othello to "the thief," the duke smilingly steals from "the robb'd," and the father's grief made "bootless" by the duke's betrayal is to rob him of himself. The "Turk of Cyprus" really beguiles all the participants from the fact that Brabantio, who smilingly stole, now no longer can smile. The inevitable conflict of interests between the state and the father corresponds to the metamorphosis of the latter from the magnifico who "loved" (1. 2. 128) Othello to the father who hates him and to the neat jump of the court from its congratulation of Othello's fortune to its prompt dispatch of him to danger. Because Brabantio is the only one here that is anxious about the likely ill luck of a soldier's wife, though in terms of class consciousness, he has to be furthest from his daughter's sympathy with the Moor. He feels himself deserted by her because now he cannot see himself as he always did, that is, as a powerful and satisfied magnifico who does not need a woman's help, which he still is in Desdemona's eyes, especially as he peremptorily drives her away.

Othell's affection and Brabantio's are equally genuine, so genuine that they both will prove to value it more than their survival, but the whole movement of the tragedy makes it clear with self-contained repetitions that the forms in which they manifest their love contain such elements as annihilate and disable love. To the extent Brabantio fails to appreciate Othello's pains which makes it possible for the proud aristocrat to remain what he is, to that extent he fails to understand Desdemona. And, as Othello cannot understand his gratitude to Desdemona's sympathy, so he cannot see behind "the gentle Desdemona" the long years of her father's affectionate cares.

5

Othello's self-assurance, as far as his conscious relationship with Venice is concerned, is grounded on the great service he has done to the state:

> Let him do his spite;
> My service which I have done the signiory
> Shall out-tongue his complaints. 'Tis yet to know, —

as they may fascinate a romantic spinster, there is utterly no reason to hate him for that. The duke esteems him because he contributes to the welfare of the state which they, both of them, dutifully represent. But the fact is that no lady of "quality" has embraced the Moor in this way before Desdemona. Othello is not the hero of an adventure story, but a Moor who is allowed citizenship only owing to his soldiership, the most fearful of all professions, if one is ever so needy as to have to depend on one's labour for livelihood. No individual aristocrat of Venice would think of the Moor when he troubles his mind about his marriageable daughter, although no one would be so consciously ungrateful as to deny his right when it does not concern him.

Therefore, it is not a mere economy nor a mere device for complication that Brabantio's suit comes when Venice needs Othello badly. "By Janus" (1. 2. 33), the two represent the two faces of one and the same position of Venice. And the old father's complaint is not causeless:

> *Duke.* The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief;
> He robs himself that spends a bootless grief.
> *Bra.* So let the Turk of Cyprus us beguile;
> We lose it not, so long as we can smile.
> (1. 3. 208-211)

The grief of the father at the sight of his dear daughter fallen in a miserable fortune is genuine. But that very genuineness exposes the deep-ingrained egotism of Venice, illustrated by the most influential magnifico and senator being "beguiled" by his self-interest from the due concern he ought to pay to the state's danger, to expel which Othello is now summoned from his first and greatest joy in life.

Othello, on his own part, behaves as if Desdemona is a treasure which he has an unquestionable cause to claim as his. He does not regard the woman as a human being related with this complex world but interprets everything from his affection. As he cannot pity her father, so does he fail to sympathize with his wife's possible pain of double-allegiance. In the sense that the duke's political position and the captain's self-interest go hand in hand against the father's awareness of his daughter's misfortune, there takes place an unconscious deal between them about the transference of the treasure of quality. For,

in his mind" (1. 3. 253) and consecrates her soul and fortunes to "his honoures and his valiant parts" (254), she is talking about the human virtue of strenuous industry in terms of her personal sympathy as well as of his social reputation. But the two terms are identical only in her "mind" which is uncontaminated by the Venetian class-conscious concern with birth and job, that is, unconcerned with the fierce struggles for security and assurance among men. She should have said that she saw Othello's fierce visage in his honours and valiant parts and consecrated her soul to his mind that bravely suffers. But if she had known this, she would not have proved so amorous. Her very unconsciousness of her own pity towards her man attests her genuine consecration of her soul to his mind. Love is not a conscious attempt to be kind.

When Desdemona pities Othello's past life as none did before, he is deeply impressed in a revolutionary way. But the revolution takes place unnoticed just as Desdemona's pity influences unnoticed. These are not exactly the same thing, because while the woman dares her "downright violence" the man just lets himself be comforted. For, were he conscious of the pitiless nature of his duty and therefore of the soothing nature of the lady's attitude, he would find it difficult and even guilty to justify his love. His confusion protects his serene happiness. And all he thinks he has to do is to claim:

> my demerits
> May speak unbonneted to as proud a fortune
> As this that I have reach'd.
> (1. 2. 22-24)

Behind the word "reach," there is the vast stretch of his struggling life, and "fortune" conveys the precariousness of man's reward, but together they reveal his lack of words to express his gratitude to the "free and bounteous" nature of Desdemona's love.

Othello's claim is seconded by the duke, but their attitudes are different in an important respect. The duke sees that the time is come, as it has to come any time, when the great Moor claims his merited respect among the community he works for. He is so serviceable as to be vitally necessary, and if his "valiant part" attracts Desdemona,

My thrice-driven bed of down.
(1. 3. 231-232)

"The tyrant custom" (230) gives an unconscious inkling of his sense of past suffering, but it suggests the sort of tyranny with which he has had to identify himself so as to outdo his fellow soldiers without even having the petty sense of competition. It is Othello's proud attitude of transcending the cold and piercing nature of the soldier's life that makes him apply the metaphor "flinty" to describe himself. It is as if he were exempt from human frailty and mortality, which is barely warmed by little fires kindled with a flint and steel and has to be comforted in the evening by sleep after the exhaustion of the day.

Promotion, now, results from a series of successful actions in which numberless lives are exposed to peril, though it comes to this or that single man. Othello's merit as a warrior has distinguished him from his companions, but the service of the individual soldier, though a matter of life and death to himself, is not the state's concern. It may pay him with a petty part of the war-profit but it cannot restore a missing limb or revive breath that is gone, and it never takes to heart its utter inability to do so. In other words, the soldier's necessity represents and reflects the "flinty" nature of the state's commandment, and the glorious position of the commander Othello is founded on his art of obedience to his commanders as well as on the dangerous services done by the whole mass of soldiers under him. This is what his proud self-reliance shadows from his consciousness, and as a result the captain takes the soldier's necessity to obey without fail for the only moral rule he has to enforce. It is because Desdemona speaks in other terms than of military morality that Othello cannot intellectually understand her intervention with his dismissal of Cassio, which only repeats her intervention with his life of self-reliance.

4

Othello, Cassio, and Iago are all imprisoned in the same predicament. And they all have to resist it by means of their frail bodies and fiery spirits. When, therefore, Desdemona sees "Othello's visage

consciouness, just as Iago's pride distorts his sense of human nature into a secret treachery. In the last scene of the play, Othello's vain application of the term "the devil" to the treacherous Iago, suggesting his utter inability to comprehend either his responsibility or the evil one's cause, reveals how coherently our author handles the matter. How could the self-destroying Iago enlighten the confounded Othello and tell him that it is man's reluctance to find cruelty in the rigour of his justice that inexplicably torments him into destruction?

The cause of war forbids the fighters to fear and sympathize. A moment's scruple about the morality of killing one's enemy rushing at one would prove fatal, and any valid expression of fear would disorganize the action. If you are in a position to calculate what is to be gained against what you will lose and start and stop a war accordingly, you have to be conscious of the relativity of your claim in the wider world of politics. But within your rank and file there is no room for calculation; your choice is only between survival by killing and death by failing to kill. The "state" is only concerned with the sum-total of the gains and losses, not with the survival or death of an individual, because the state stands for the "order" which determines who calculates and who fights. And the rewards for a lucky survivor are salary, for which he labours but cannot influence, promotion, for which he can compete with his fellow fighters, and reputation, which makes him feel at peace with the world. These are but so many aspects of one effort for survival, and, since a promotion means an increase of salary and less degree of servitude, there grows among the soldiers a desperate rivalry for status, which is only concealed from their consciousness because it assimilates itself with its origin, the supreme law of their common servility to the cruel life. Othello is the very man who has attained the most admirable heights of "reputation".

His characterization as a fearless and stable man, however, differentiates him from other obscure soldiers seeking for petty reputation under him. Having been exposed to danger from childhood and having withstood it successfully, he cultivated a peculiar sensibility which

made the flinty and steel couch of war

customary courtesy. He does not line his pocket behind their suspicious backs. He has done the state great service and in reward he has achieved his great reputation. Here is an admirable man according to his own notion of himself. Just one episode, however, suffices to expose the kind of callousness needed to achieve that fame. Iago pretends he cannot believe that the general should ever be excited into anger:

> Can he be angry? I have seen the cannon,
> When it hath blown his ranks into the air,
> And, like the devil, from his very arm
> Puff'd his own brother:—and can he be angry?
> Something of moment then: I will go meet him:
> There's matter in't indeed, if he be angry.
> (3. 4. 134-139)

Iago means that Othello withstood the horror and loss bravely with composure. Actually the Moor described here and the Venetian describing him are assumed, as a matter of course, to expect reputation out of their utter insensibility to that horror. Iago's pretended admiration is in fact a true acknowledgement of Othello's soldiership.

Iago's allusion to "the devil" signifies that this cunning and brave ensign has a natural disgust at such a loss of friends and brothers and a natural fear of losing one's own life. But he applies the name of that wicked personification to the situation of horrible slaughter, without asking who shot the cannons. Humanity does not believe that it is capable of such wild pitilessness, and projects it into the supernatural plane where it remains intractable. By so doing, it can justify its flinty callousness.

But, no. Human nature cannot be so callous as to be unmoved by its own destruction. Iago means, when he alludes to the devil, that he is not it. He knows that his trick must have worked upon the general. Thus, both Othello and Iago prove to be devils unpersonified and humanized. The only distinction between "the devil" and these people is that the men are mortal and need comforts. As we have discussed, the very quality that Iago praises in Othello is what Desdemona cannot accept, and now the captain's profound disturbance shows how much he needs her. But his pride conceals his need from his

purchase desire, by robbing the conceited lieutenant of the position which will relieve an ancient of his discontentment, and by depriving the infatuated general of his fallacy of love.

Iago actually obeys the "curse of service" against which he pictures himself. Iago's professed philosophy of deception does not adequately explain why he should be so bitter about his unrealized promotion. He is wholly troubled with the "curse" and therefore utterly oblivious of the "service", which only can assure a man an acknowledgement among his fellow-men. What Iago cannot recognize is the fact that his "service" is a "curse" for no other reason than that his consciousness is alienated from his innate need for fellowship and acknowledgement, the only assurance of an unperturbed life in the cooperative community. This must be distinguished from the material value of money and other appetite-satisfiers. This is so fundamental a natural morality that the most arrogant or the most wretched among men will require his "merit" to be acknowledged. Iago's spiritual discontentment comes from this aspiration, which cannot be appeased by his acute but half-true philosophy that comes from his frustrating experiences as a man driven to the most perilous and unrewarding way of life by the necessity of life imposed on him with apparent iniquity.

Cassio's cry of grief over his lost "reputation" and Iago's criticism of it must not lead us to a hasty distinction between spirituality to be praised and materialism to be condemned. They stand for two inseparable requisites of life. Cassio cannot lose his reputation without also losing the means for his best possible livelihood. And, of course, Iago is on his determined way to self-assertion. The true distinction between them that is important for our understanding of the situation is that Cassio is a believer in the honourable halo of soldiership who unknowingly feels its cruelty, whereas Iago is a believer in the cruelty of his profession who unknowingly despises wholesomeness. And when we place Othello besides them, we will see that he is a believer in the justice of soldiership who unknowingly renounces fellowship.

Othello's proud mind singularly lacks discontentment. He can identify his self with the necessity of his profession. He has no conscious need to humiliate himself before men of superior ranks except in

which is his self-love. The desperate necessity of self-protection in the battle-field requires fearlessness, and fearlessness only avails when combined with pitilessness, though the latter is concealed under the sense of justice. Such is the bare reality of humanity at war, once one accepts the unavoidable necessity of struggles in which one either survives or is killed. To each man who happens to earn his livelihood from this perilous profession, the desperation in the field is by no means his whole concern in life. Mere survival does not satisfy him when he is perpetually threatened by death. And yet mere survival is the only thing he can possibly secure.

Alcohol allows Cassio to reveal his concealed desire to escape the cruel necessity and discontentment of his life as well as his knowledge of the only method to escape within the confine of his job:

> *Cassio.* For mine own part,—no offence to the general, nor any man of quality,—I hope to be saved.
> *Iago.* And so do I, too, lieutenant.
> *Cas.* Ay, but, by your leave, not before me; the lieutenant is to be saved before the ancient.
> (2. 3. 109—114)

Here is a combination of tender humanity and bleak reality. While no one is sure to escape the pains of life, men's striving for relief results in the rigorous hierachy where human sympathy, represented by "no offence" and "by your leave," is finally subjected to pitiless differentiation, symbolized by the class-consciousness which "the general," "man of quality," and "not before me" represent. Here, then, lies the secret cause of Iago's grudge and vengeance. Not that Cassio here gives him a just cause to hate him, but his words explain and illustrate the whole background of Iago's complaint. Nothing is fortuitous: if Cassio adds to the fire of Iago's hate, it is only because he belongs to that very condition of life which is shared by the ensign.

Iago would not envy his captain or desire promotion if the command and the higher rank meant more danger and less comfort. They mean a certain increase in felicity and self-assurance. And he tries to resist the pitiless hierarchy by cheating money out of Roderigo, the man of "quality" with money enough to allow him to imagine that he could

what her choice means. It must be in this sense only that she deserves the metaphor of "fair warrior." She does not pity herself for the sacrifices she has to make just as her warrior husband does not pity himself for the pains of his duty. But the metaphor is only metaphorically justified. It is justified only when the singular virtue of soldiership is believed in. For Desdemona, her sacrifice is her satisfaction, whereas Othello's pride has left his self-love unsatisfied. When Desdemona sympathizes with and admires the naked man devoting his mortal frailty to the virtue of valour, Othello cannot recognize how helpless she has made herself and what a great significance exists in this female body that loves. His consciousness ignores the fact that the tender woman is a precious "pearl" to him not because she is an exquisite piece of quality to be proudly and affectionately possessed but because his very "pearl" exits in her proud and affectionate and single-minded determination to be united with him body and soul.

3

Othello fails to appreciate the naked frailty of his wife, devoting herself to him and finding happiness in him, because he believes complacently in his special merit and regards his marriage as a precious addition to his life. He has done the state some service, and they know it. Desdemona acknowledges it. Her father cannot ignore it. Since Desdemona loves him for it, he has every right to refute her father's claim. Such is Othello's attitude and it is strangely devoid of sympathy.

When attacked by Brabantio in the middle of his happy talk to his love, Othello shows the characteristics of one who is perpetually in a state of war with the world. His proud composure derives from his utter confidence in his ability to protect himself. And his self-confidence is not unlike the father's confidence in the police forces. The irony is: without many an Othello, Brabantio would not have any power of justice to depend on, and without the sense of responsibility to protect many a Brabantio Othello would not be so confident in himself.

Othello's self-assertion betrays his deep concern for his frailty,

unmarried daughter of the loving father-king, Lear, Desdemona has not experienced the humiliation of envy nor the pride of wealth. She cannot perceive what amount of self-centered vigilance is needed before her father can assure his daughter an elegant and decent life. To put it differently, Brabantio's class-consciousness has successfully prevented Desdemona from having class-consciousness implanted in her. And, with her human eyes undistorted by arrogance or envy, she sees "Othello's visage in his mind" better than he understands himself. For he is pleased by her pity instead of being offended. But what is to become the true pity is that neither Othello nor Desdemona is conscious of what is going on between them, because neither correctly defines his or her relationship with the competitive world divided into poor serving men and wealthy masters.

When Desdemona's erotic potential is awakened at the sight of the suffering hero with an undauntable spirit, her father concludes that some witchcraft deceived her into believing the fearful man to be a comfortable sexual mate, because he cannot understand his daughter's imperception of his area of concern. But, if there is any "witchcraft" involved in the affair, there is a definite one and it is working everywhere unperceived. It exists in Brabantio's fatherly care which equates his interest with his daughter's so that she will not suffer the pains of life, in Desdemona's feminine sympathy which identifies her life with Othello's so that she can be of use to him, and in Othello's hidden sensibility that cannot help being attracted by her sympathy. This is a point which ought to call our partcular attention. According to what Shakespeare invariably suggests, happiness is not a sudden "fortune" but is grounded on an unseen concatenation of particular, individual, sympathetic relationships, each of which protects love against jealousy within its confine. And this is how the naive and moving love between the Venetian lady and the Moorish warrior comes about, although each participant may be imprisoned in his or her "confine" of consciousness.

Brabantio refuses to give further shelter to his daughter. But before he does so, she chooses to make use of herself rather than to be sheltered as a frail piece of treasure. And Othello's joy shows eloquently

appreciates. But he evades to define its immediate impact on him by distinguishing his pride which she loves from the dangers which she pities. Pitying the dangers is an absurd idea, and obviously Othello appreciates the idea because it really means pitying the man in danger. And that is what the woman meant as she

> swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
> 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful.
> (1. 3. 160—161)

The dangers are "strange" to her. She cannot take for granted such a "wondrous pitiful" life. Its cruelty surpasses her sense of normality. She sees his past life in the light of tender sympathy in which neither Othell himself nor any one he knew ever described it. A life thoroughly lacking in tenderness is something quite shocking to a young lady reared under the careful protection of her wealthy father. It is something quite moving because it is quite different from the kind of calm life she leads. It is also fantastic, "wonderous." Because she finds Othello's past life cruel, she pities it and admires his single-minded way of surmounting difficulties, and it excites her love.

But the whole picture which Othello draws about his life to please the gentle lady conceals the blots of blood he has shed to protect himself. Desdemona never dreams, even when she pleads for poor Cassio against her husband's discipline, that her pity implies an unconditional negation of the great captain's integrity. Otherwise, she would have feared him as her father expected her to. Here lies the subtle gulf between the father and the daughter. Desdemona loves Othello not because she does not share her father's aversion to the uncivil nature of his profession but because she does not identify the man with the bloodiness of his life and consequently takes it for a noble one.

Brabantio, on the other hand, cannot imagine how his intelligent daughter born high and grown elegant could with any judgment come to love the black mercenary fit only for bloody jobs. Othello says that Brabantio loved him, but he loved him as a master loves a slave who works hard. That is, the comforts which Desdemona and her father enjoy are plopped by such serving men as Othello. But, like the

trick of his mind to retain what has been his proud identity while letting himself enjoy what he has regarded as vain. He evades the demand of his soldierlike principle by calling Desdemona a special case to be valued more than all the treasures in the sea. And he speaks as if his marriage is a great favour extended from him to the gentle lady. Between the soldier's mentality and the lover's joy, his language suffers an illogical distortion.

We may smile at this trick of language which after all testifies Othello's affection more eloquently than he knows. Harmless as it sounds, however, its implication is sinister. For, though now the warrior's self-assertion and the lover's claim are happily combined by virtue of the overwhelming sense of inexpressible joy, his language shows that, because he believes in his proud identity as a free soldier, he cannot define his present relationship with the world. He does not seem to be aware that the same affair is to "the gentle Desdemona" "downright violence and storm of fortunes" (1. 3. 250). Once he should come to look on his married life in intellectual terms instead of overwhelmingly emotional ones, what should he find but that broken logic of his which does not define his wife's participation except as a transferable "pearl"?

Another striking instance of Othello's telltale trick of words presents itself in his justification of his courtship before the duke:

> She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
> And I loved her that she did pity them.
> This only is the witchcraft I have used.
> (1. 3. 167—169)

This shows us in what sort of "witchcraft" he is entangled. The dangers he has passed are his pride, and his integration depends on his attachment to the high value he finds in them. Now he declares that Desdemona loves him for the same reason as he is proud of himself. He interprets her motive in his customary terms. But the word "pity" signifies something else.

"Pity" cannot be among the soldier's stock of words. Othello himself distinguishes it as the very quality in Desdemona that he especially

tricks with which the ancient deprives his victim of the general's favour rather suggests Iago's practical superiority in tactics than Cassio's superior wisdom or self-possession. So long as the proof of soldiership is considered to be the test of merit, we have little reason to find causeless malignity in Iago.

The three great ones of the city have not much to tell. All they remember is the "epithets of war" (14) which horribly "stuffed" Othello's refusal of their suit. They seem to have found themselves strangers to Othello's uncivil self-determination and to his uncivil trade. But the "epithets of war" that refuse Iago make an unintelligible contrast with the "proof" of Iago's "soldiership." Why did the general choose Cassio who had "never set a squadron in the field" (22)? By "letter and affection"? What "affection" could it ever be when Desdemona is to criticize his lack of affection in his rigorous dismissal of him? Iago may be wrong in attributing the choice to Othello's lack of moral equity. Then, what is this unidentified factor in the Moor's mind that justifies his nomination of Cassio, which is beyond Iago's comprehension?

2

Othello is just entering a mode of life to which he has had no affinity since childhood. We hear him explain himself:

> But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
> I would not my unhoused free condition
> Put into circumscription and confine
> For the sea's worth.
>
> (1. 2. 25—28)

This may almost sound as if his great love has forced him to relinquish his dearest freedom and accept a despicable state of confinement. That, however, is not wholly true to his meaing. His delightful justification of his choice proves he is not feeling circumscribed. He does not desire to return to an unhoused freedom. And yet he makes no reference to the joy of married life which is his real theme here. Instead, he expresses his joy with those terms with which he has long depreciated domesticity as an unmarried proud soldier. This is an unconscious

1

At the very beginning of *Othello,* we find Iago thrown into a corner. Roderigo fiercely accuses him because he assumes that Iago has been acquainted with Othello's intention of marrying Desdemona while pretending to help Roderigo with his desire for her. However, the vengeful tone and subtle magic of Iago's reply only prove that he did not have the least idea of the marriage. This is a fact of central importance.

This surprise seconds another which has affected Iago's interests more immediately. His own complaint is against the commander Othello having destroyed his hope by failing to choose him as his lieutenant. Iago is not telling a lie when he asserts that he merits the post much better than Cassio. The "old gradation" (1. 1. 37)* once seemed to promise him the position because of the "proof" (28) of his soldiership which he knows his captain has seen in various battle-fields where they fought together. Iago interprets Othello's failure to observe the "old gradation" with the intellect of one who thought it fit to send "three great ones of the city" (8) to ensure his hope: he assumes that Cassio's preferment went "by letter and affection" (36). Iago's morality is not unconfused, but he does not fail to visualize for us his notion of the cursed world where desire competes with desire with every available trick and where an individual's sense of order exists only to be frustrated, and power allows the powerful to have his will. He believes that the only way for a poor serving man like himself to maintain his identity is to pretend to obey irresistible authority while protecting his own interests behind its back.

Iago has his natural sense of order upon which to base his thwarted claim, and we must turn to the great Moor for his reason for adopting Cassio. But we have no direct mention of the reason. If our dramatist meant to convince us that Othello chooses rightly and Iago complains causelessly, it woud not harm the play to show that the new lieutenant has much more soldiership than Iago thinks. But the repeated easy

*Quotations from the plays are from W.G. Clark & W.A. Wright ed., *The Works of William Shakespeare* (London, Macmillan & C.: 1949)

support him in his struggle for life.

The power of wealth which allows its personal holder the privilege of suppressing the weaker by threats and making them support him by assuring them subsistence perpetuates his danger, though royal believers usually sleep on their conquest. Lear offers land to his daughters as a great sign of paternal love, but why it can be a sign of love becomes clear when, offended by plain-speaking Kent, he banishes him from his land on pain of death. Once out of power, Lear finds himself betrayed by what he thought to be his natural right when in power. He feels betrayed because he feels less loved, but does not notice that the arrogance with which his powerful daughters treat him mirrors the righteousness with which he threatens vengeance on them. Clinging to his name as king, Lear does not know that the very name is to destroy his forsaken daughter. For Edmund, the illegitimate, must kill the last legal heir to Lear's title, whether she wants it or not, since in the rigid feudal system name is law. This is his inevitable course in life if he is to try to avoid the disgraceful obscurity to which a bastard is destined. All the participants in the tragedy are victims of one inhuman law, and they are all victims because in some way or other they are its confident agents.

With Shakespeare's tragic situations, it will be invariably wrong of us to adopt any one character's subjective dogma as our chief guide of interpretation. At the same time, however, it would be a fatal error not to notice in every one on stage the same suffering humanity coping with the pressure of life. We are watching men and women swayed by a monstrous pressure whose nature they do not recognize. With their desire to live in peace, with their partial intelligence about their situations, they exert their full intellect to understand the world and fail to understand one another. The pressure is unexplained because it has to be grasped. There is no solution because the problem is too fundamental to manipulate. It may well have been a nightmare that visited our dramatic poet after he had presented an exquisite fantasy of heavenly grace which, he knew so well, humanity could only imagine in human form.

sonable, unintellectual, and superstitious. But obstinate fears are there inside him. As his wife cannot kill her easy victim who happens to resemble her father in sleep, so he cannot kill the old king who has been kind to him and to whom he has been faithful. Macbeth views the world from two different angles: the witches' promise teaches him to accept a transcendental design which disregards men's personal likes and dislikes; and his association with his fellow individuals teaches him that to kill is to lose. Unable to solve the dilemma, Macbeth obtains the crown and loses friends. To say that Macbeth should have rejected the "supernatural solicitation" and should have proved as truthful to the king as ever, is just to disregard that terrible intensity of his fearful experience of inner conflict. A very faithful warrior who has consigned himself to his duty only can experience such conflict when his fixed vision of life is undermined. He sees as he has never seen. He cannot reject either of the two conflicting visions because both are firmly grounded in his past experiences of which he has always been proud. He cannot define his situation because he does not know that he is now discovering that what he has believed to be fair is grossly foul in part, and he is disquieted because he possesses the natural faculty to discriminate between good and evil, that is, between life and death. Duncan has been praising him for killing men for his sake, and Lady Macbeth loves him for killing and bringing fame and fortune. It is his honourable virtue to forget "the taste of fear" and create "strange images of death." His past peace of mind has been assured by his necessary belief in the justice of his cause and in his duty to risk his life for the king. For the first time, the witches' words bring to the surface of his controlled mind his desperate self-interest which has been powerfully integrated in his service to the king by the absolutism of royal awe. This absolutism crumbles. But, instead of disbelieving the fallacy of royal supremacy, he continues to believe in its felicity. He has to overcome his disgust at the necessity of killing his friends because of the manly virtue of his profession which rejects scruples as a sign of cowardice and infidelity. His accepted duty to kill in order to live is the simple secret of his disaster, but what makes the disaster a genuine tragedy is his natural need to have friends around him to

might give a systematic structure to the whole event. Not only would their opinions differ from one another but each one would feel contradictions within himself. The reason for this is simple: Hamlet accepts what his nature rejects, and since his "felicity" lies in the care-free state of death we will never find his identity in the history of the "purposes mistook."

Hamlet slips out of our grip as long as we try to define the play in terms of the protagonist's own painful definition of his life vis-a-vis to an "outrageous fortune" represented by the opposing mass of men and women of the court. The truth is that the prince cannot define himself and therefore has to be many things in turn and at once. He cannot define himself because the definition which he believes he must faithfully accept does not really cover his human relationship with the particular individuals in whom he cannot help being interested. And what is fatal is his inevitable failure to sympathize with the same failure in other people. The only integration he can possibly have comes through his inevitable acceptance of his relative position in a society which looms before him as absolute. Necessity of this kind only leads to a philosophy of the most meaningless nature, the acceptance of despair. This is true with Macbeth when, awakened from the false dream of magic protecion, he combats Macduff without hope, without ambition, without any idea of good whatever, obedient to the code of the warrior that he must be. The situation is just the same with King Lear as he calls to the void and laments his final loss that makes his life empty. After the exhaustion which results from his vain efforts to save and avenge his dear daughter with bare arms, there remains in the dying breath of the old man the undying yearning for the lost tenderness and the question, "Why lost?". It is impossible as well as heartless for us to try to find a philosophy that may reconcile them to their fortune.

Macbeth is at the mercy of his belief in the predetermined course of events which promises him the crown. And, so long as he believes this, he has intellectual integrity, no matter what irrelevant sensations make him shudder unreasonably. His killing his king is his obligation in order to obtain what time reserves for him; and his fears are unrea-

from the genuine recognition of human identity, that is, from the true possibility of human aspiration, he must forbid himself to resort to the commonplace codes of propriety which would make him acceptable socially. This is a dangerous position, if the writer lives in a world where a moral independence is a danger, and he has to do it subtly and equivocally, not because he is making fun of "the general" to please those who make precepts, but because he is asking if all the efforts of men, as they are now being enacted on the stage of the real world, are not a hopeless series of "jigs" mistaken for "caviare"; that is, failures mistaken for the best. Now he has to write without any conviction of being truly understood, although his insight reveals such a correct perception of men's conscious and unconscious motives that it does not fail to make us find ourselves mirrored there. With his unexpected and uncalled-for sympathy with general humanity which results in his reputation as a "myriad-minded" poet, our writer still has to believe that it is not the age but his art that will remain alive.

Suppose a Hamlet accepts his duty of revenge, renounces all the joyful things as his code of honour tells him to, but is still greatly troubled by his amorous concern, is involved in poisonous machinations, dies young after barely killing the murderer of his father, leaving the state masterless to be captured by the son of his father's old foe. There is no telling what the spectators would feel about this. Some may be impressed by the justice accomplished concerning the evil usurper. Some would rather be shocked at the helpless destruction of the Danish throne. Some may grieve at the young prince's inexplicable failure to attack once and for all before he is attacked. Some will even say that this youth does not deserve the name of a hero prince. Some may pity him for the ill luck which makes his purposes miscarry. Some may be impressed by his growth from irresolution to the final acceptance of his fate. Some may wonder at life's austere reality which makes it impossible for the prince's delicate sensibility to prove effective. Some may gravely declare that here is a Tragedy we must accept. And innumerably many other things may pass through the spectators' minds and each one should build some kind of picture of causality that

and equivocally lest the pit should resent being made fun of. Owing to the necessity of concealing his sneaking flattery at the expense of "the general," he faces the ironical danger of being rejected by the "judicious" snobs who find nothing but jigs in the play. That kind of author can share his intellectual ground, if any, with a small number of people, but he gives up the possibility of assimilating the aspirations of the various spectators into one universal vision of human life.

The second method can be employed merely as a mechanically clever one. But at least it requires that the writer should possess a double vision, which, if he can ever use his head for other things than "tyrannical claps" and partisan comments, will be found to be full of dramatic potential. I do not mean the sort of dramatic irony achieved at the cost of the dramatic persons who are so manipulated as to be silly enough to overlook what the audience can easily know. The writer's artistic self-possession requires a third view-point from which the "jigs" and the "caviare" hold relative importance. If he can detach himself from the anxiety of social reputation and regard his theatre as representing "the Globe," he may know that he is just copying his audience, who within their capacity and means try their best to fulfil their needs in their respective ways of self-realization, which though different in appearance, are of one meaning after all. That is, the author notices the identity between generous kings and needy beggars, between caviare and jigs. He understands them not because he accepts either of their contradictory attitudes but because he sympathizes with their needs which occupy them while living. As a natural result of his identification of the basic purpose of man's social efforts, he has to find unnatural the accepted discrepancy between the different classes of men living together with conflicting interests. With this consciousness, the writer no longer mechanically separates the jigs and the caviare only to integrate them cunningly but he finds the same significance in jigs that the "judicious" find in caviare, and the same ignorance in the caviare-lovers as in the jig-lovers. The writer's genuine insight, however, plunges him into an insoluble kind of artistic difficulty. Since it is now his task to show how men, with their desperately sincere or forced obedience to social rules, are estranged

person's notions about himself and his situation. Then, whether he knows it or not, the spectator is reexamining himself. Such a writer, on his own part, knows how firmly each man is locked within his own device for subsistence and survival which he evolves from his past life and calls orderly reasoning. And, declaring that the aim of drama at any time of man's history is to hold a mirror up to nature, he means that, since man does not commonly identify his nature, it is the judicious writer's task to awaken his audience to the unperceived difference between their needs and the forms in which they try to satisfy them, that is, between their universal nature and their definitions of it.

To make the matter simple, let us imagine that the pit cries for "jigs" and the balcony wants "caviare" and of course the playwight must satisfy them all. The simplest, mechanical solution is to let his play have the required elements in turn. "The judicious" may grieve at the jigs and "the general" may sleep before the subtlety, but after all the theatre may earn success. The temptation to do this will be great for a writer who dallies with his audience, pleasing them without instruction. He, as the maker of the theatrical world, neither shares the mentality and taste of his jig-lovers or caviare-addicts nor means to present his own principle of grasping things. In order to give the audience the undisturbed assurance of moral ease, he may at times refer to the standardized theory of morality and, when he is conscious that the sensation with which he pleases his customers overreaches the bound of decency, may complacently suggest them that they are just watching an unreal situation, that this is the world of art. In so doing, he exposes his share of the prevalent self-deception with which law-abiding people cover their fundamental lawlessness from their own eyes. For he does not attempt to define the actual disparity between sensual satisfaction and moral anxiety. He is only attempting unconsciously to extricate himself from the censure that he does not share the prevalent unconsciousness about the disquieting nature of the disparity. He obeys "the judicious" only because their quills cry.

A subtler method to satisfy the different demands is to present jigs all through and use the very scenes for another context of reasoning to be appreciated by the few connoisseurs. He must do this cunningly

action before he uses them, and that is what we mean when we say that the writer thinks when he writes. On the other hand, each spectator responds to each word, each phrase, each action on the stage through his own system of definition and judgment and comes to recognize there a certain set of causes and effects made visible only by virtue of his past experiences that give shapes and meanings to the things he sees.

Even in an imaginary situation where the impression aroused in the spectator duplicates the writer's vision, it goes without saying that the writer has put into his product far more thoughts and calculations than the audience is required to recognize. And this hidden area of his work-shop activity may be called his art, his secret, something quite apart from the play's 'meaning'. A writer, who should think of the theatrical sensation of his story as something disconnected from the conscious and unconscious complications of his own mental activity which gave a meaningful vision of causality to a sequence of human affairs, would not comprehend the significance of drama.

It is impossible for any writer to present his way of grasping things so that it will be accepted directly by the audience. He must depend on the spectator's own thoughtful response to his suggestion, which is only made by assembling a particular set of things and events together. He cannot teach what to think. If he tries to teach, he only brings to the surface the inevitable gap between his mind and the spectator's, only to suppress the latter forcibly rather than letting the latter create his own whole perception. If there is one common factor between the writer and the audience from which to expect agreement, it is the basic need of humanity that allows men to feel that they understand one another. It is not the writer's philosophical fixity nor the dramatic hero's character but human precariousness and anxiety that make a man comprehend and share the same precariousness and anxiety with the character who is so portrayed as to visualize the universal in a particular manner. Thus, if the writer's grip of man's fundamental, common needs is right, he can break through the spectator's customary way of reasoning and reach the utmost core of his sensitivity and leave his soul to reexamine the validity of the dramatic

does not believe in any, but that does not mean that he is confused about what he does. It only means that, when each spectator truly recognizes what he sees, then and only then does he begin to comprehend the presented predicament and salvation as his own problems.

A dramatic piece is commonly assumed to be a synthesized compound of passions, judgments, actions, and a conclusive interpretation of their causality which should be conveyed in that synthetic form into the spectator's mind, to be accepted there at least while he sits in the theatre. Everyone, after paying for his seat, has the right to feel that what he thinks he sees is that which the author means to show him and that what he thinks about it is that which the author expects him to. Nothing acquires any meaning before it takes a shape under the focusing lense of intellect which is the seer's system of judgment based on his past experiences. While the cognitive operation is equally necessary in the theatre as well as in real life, a dramatic exhibition, being a focused sight, is supposed to relieve the audience of that epistemological difficulty which in daily life each one has to go through at his own risk to avoid danger. Hence the affective fallacy that equates the spectator's impression with the author's intention. Indeed, in order to fix a possible meaning of this or that inexplicable phrase or scene, we may find ourselves imagining the psychology of a representative play-goer in the theatre of our mind following his waves of vacillations, but in fact following our preconceived interpretation. This fallacy leads to nowhere, because obviously the spectator's psychology is definitely independent of the writer's and because there can be no audience that may be treated like a single receptacle but each spectator has a different mind from that of any other.

A play is by no means a solid leaf of fixed meaning. The writer assembles in his unique manner various materials each of which has a peculiar significance to him which is related to his past experiences of confrontations and reconciliations with the world. Certain groups of ideas shape a unit of significance before they are embedded in the linguistic texture of the play, and their formation may or may not resemble that which takes place in any other mind. The writer passes his own judgment on each word, each phrase, each speech, and each

THE "NECESSARY QUESTION OF THE PLAY"

by Kei Maruta

CHAPTER III *OTHELLO*

INTRODUCTION

Two chapters on *King Lear* and *Macbeth* have gone before this under the same title, the present one is the third, but there is no definite plan in my mind. They are called chapters because they deal with one particular aspect of Shakespeare's dramatic art, which has been my greatest concern since, years ago, I detected a certain hidden viewpoint in *Hamlet* from which that riddle of a play presented a perfectly coherent, logical structure. I then began to discern almost at once the same viewpoint and a similar structure in every other work of this playwright's. But I have not yet fathomed the full significance of this hidden method nor discovered any adequate way to explain and represent it. Fully conscious of my incompetence and badly in need of help, I have only been trying to show that a certain systematical, self-contained analysis, though too complicated and new-fangled at first sight, can be possible about each play with which I have dealt. While I know I am not making clear the comprehensive artistic background in which to place Shakespeare's plays, to define their identical structure, I have at the same time felt compelled to describe the significance of the hidden technique in more or less abstract terms which happened to come to my mind in the form of the introduction attached to each chapter. And the following is another attempt of the same tentative nature.

My difficulty has much to do with the dramatist's subtle method of exploring his audience's cognitive possibility and leaving each spectator to the care of his own humanity which feels and therefore thinks on its own. He gives no ready-made set of precepts, possibly because he