Angelo in Measure for Measure: Psychological Probability of His Repentance

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ANGELO IN MEASURE FOR MEASURE:
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBABILITY
OF HIS REPENTANCE

by
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LIFE

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION, INCLUDING PRINCIPLES OF ARTISTIC PROBABILITY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature and origin of the problem--History of criticism of the play--Specific purpose of the thesis--Demonstrate the 'probability' of Angelo's fall and repentance--Aristotelian notions of probability as a foundation for thesis--The method of approach to problem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. CHARACTER OF ANGELO BEFORE THE TEMPTATION</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of establishing his character--The method employed to establish character--Duke's opinion of Angelo and evaluation of testimony--Escalus' opinion--Lucio's testimony--Isabella's opinion--References of minor characters to the Duke--Self manifestation of character by Angelo--His words and deeds--Treatise on Elizabethan betrothal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. TEMPTATION AND FALL</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters involved contrasted--The meeting--Disintegration of Angelo's virtue--Psychology of a temptation--Elements of temptation--Intellectual faculties concerned--Their inter-relation--Verification in Angelo's case.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE REPENTANCE</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem--To prove sincerity--Critical Opinions--The psychology of repentance--Verification of elements in present case--Conclusion of probability.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSION .................................. 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of paper—Admission of textual flaws—Denial of Psychological flaws—Evaluation of Angelo from artistic viewpoint.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................. 37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION, INCLUDING SOME PRINCIPLES OF ARTISTIC PROBABILITY

How interpret Measure For Measure? The search for an answer to this question has provided Shakespearian critics with more than ample material for their leisure-hour musings. To give a full and accurate interpretation of the play is a task which is capable of taxing even the most profound and most penetrating critical sense. So true is this statement that the play is usually listed among the so-called 'problem' plays. In this category we find, together with Measure For Measure, All's Well That Ends Well, and Troilus and Cressida. Some critics include Hamlet in this group, but the majority of critics exclude it.

A glance at the history of Shakespearian criticism will reveal the controversial nature of the play and the diversity of opinions about its literary merits.¹ The play has, so to speak,

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¹ August Ralli, A History of Shakespearian Criticism, London, 1932. Since this work treats of the critics of the whole literary world, we have limited ourselves to English critics. No particular references have been made here. To do so would have entailed needless quotations. A cursory glance at the work will verify the diversity of opinions.

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run the gamut of criticism, varying from the highest praise to the most severe opprobrium. Coleridge's remark that in his estimation *Measure For Measure* was Shakespeare's 'only painful play' released an avalanche of opinions regarding the merits and demerits of the play. In his work *Shakespeare's Problem Plays*, Professor Tillyard gives us a rather accurate description of the critical history of the play.

*Measure For Measure* has been singularly apt to provoke its critics to excess; and in the most different manners. Earlier critics vented their excesses on two of the main characters, Isabella and the Duke. Later critics have, in reaction to the earlier, gone to two different extremes. Some . . . have refused to see any fault in the play at all; others, rightly recognising a strong religious tone, have sought to give the play an allegorical and religious explanation. This is not to say that the above critics have not written well of the play.²

Perhaps the greatest amount of criticism leveled at the play is that which condemns it on the score of its improbability. As an example of this type of criticism, that is, of its improbability, we might consider the following passage:

It is conceded even by defenders of the play that there are apparent moral inconsistencies which need to be resolved, that many questionable actions must be accounted for if the Duke and Isabella are to be saved as completely 'good' characters. For example, attention is frequently called to the shifty delays and intrigues of the Duke, to Isabella's self-righteous prudery which would at once sacrifice a brother and sanction the substitution of Marianna for herself. Also, there is some question whether the play conforms to a legitimate dramatic genre.

Shakespeare has been charged with taking the stuff of tragedy and forcing it into the mold of comedy by asking his audience to accept Angelo's last-minute repentance and marriage to Marianna. Finally, there are certain apparent inconsistencies in the dramatic action, which suggest to some commentators a possible corruption of the text. For example, at the beginning of the play the Duke characterizes Angelo as without blemish; yet later he reveals that Angelo wrongly deserted Marianna before the start of the action. Similarly, Marianna states that she has often been comforted by Friar Lodowick, although we know that the Duke has just adopted this disguise.3

This is not the place to attempt a refutation of these charges. The purpose of the present section of the paper is to unfold the state of the question, hence, the charges may stand for the time being. Among the points mentioned by the critics are the improbabilities linked with the three main characters, Angelo, the Duke and Isabella. But how improbable are these three characters? Are they so improbable as to ruin the play? Are the characters nothing more than puppets in the hand of a master? It should be noted here that in discussing probability the writer is not a follower of the Stoll theory where the probability of any given character is subordinated to the plausibility of the plot, and the audience is brought to consider the play as a whole rather than the consistency of individual characters. Stoll's theory

may be summed up briefly as follows:

The human figures certainly are not, as a recent writer has declared them to be, "copied with little alteration from the population of the world"; and thank Heaven that they are not. Still less are they examples or illustrations of our psychology. But they are not always even perfect copies of the inner vision, that "higher reality" which, as Goethe observes, great art represents. . . . It is not reality, or even perfect consistency, but an illusion, and, above all, an illusion whereby the spirit of man shall be moved. The greatest of dramatists is careful, not so much for the single character, as for the drama; indeed, he observes not so much the probabilities of the action, or the psychology of the character as the psychology of the audience. . . .

It will be clear to the reader as the paper progresses that the writer follows the Bradley school concerning the probability of the character. For the most part, this is the same as Aristotle, although Bradley did imbibe some of his doctrine from the teachings of Hegel.

In order that the paper might have a specific purpose it will be necessary to limit its scope to the consideration of one character. For our purposes here, then, we have chosen the character of Angelo, the deputy appointed by the Duke of Vienna. That his character is the subject of controversy is evident from the following:

Today, Measure For Measure is a puzzling, repulsive play,

both because of its Elizabethan ethics and its characters. . . . In his desire to emphasize Angelo's severity in applying a law against fornication to true lovers . . . . and to save his heroine, Isabella, from submitting to the dishonorable advances of the deputy, Shakespeare introduced a substitute in Marianna, the jilted betrothed of Angelo. . . . The parallelism afforded by the Claudio-Juliet and Angelo-Marianna situations is attractive and very dramatic, but at the same time it produces an unlucky inconsistency in the character of Angelo. First portrayed as an austere, virtuous character who believed himself strong enough to withstand any temptation, Angelo is shown, after the beginning of Act III, to have been a blackguard and a hypocritical opportunist who had cast aside a devoted lady merely because she had lost her dowry. What is worse, all this was known by the Duke Vincentio at the time he selected Angelo as his deputy to enforce the laws of Vienna. Structurally superior to its original, Measure For Measure is, nevertheless, one of Shakespeare's few artistic failures. 5

The object, then, of this paper will be to establish the psychological probability of Angelo's last-minute repentance. It was Coleridge who gave rise to the question of Angelo's being able to repent when he reprehended the play on the score that "cruelty, with lust and damnable baseness, cannot be forgiven, because we cannot conceive them as being morally repented of." 6 In the opinion of this writer, it can be shown that Angelo's repentance for his violation of the city law, in this case an act of fornication, is dramatically probable, and hence, psychologically probable.


6 Samuel Coleridge, as quoted in H.N. Hudson, Shakespeare: His Life, Art and Character, Boston, 1872, 416.
To better understand the explicit purpose of the thesis, a bit of explanation will be helpful. First, an important distinction must be made between the probability of repentance and the sincerity of repentance. The thesis will attempt to establish the probability of Angelo's repentance. If the dramatic probability is established, then the repentance will be psychologically probable. The sincerity of the repentance should logically follow from the proof of the thesis. Secondly, the reason for Angelo's repentance must be clarified. In the thesis the writer is trying to establish that Angelo is repentant for his violation of objective law. Considered from a different angle, Angelo is repentant for that act by which he violated the statute against fornication. The motive for his sorrow is the violation of justice. The writer does not deny that there is an element of sorrow for having been caught; he does not deny that there is an element of self-pity in Angelo's case. But the point to be noted is that the writer is trying to establish that Angelo's repentance is motivated by his sorrow for having committed a crime, and that this is the main source of his sorrow. This dominant motive, sorrow for a violation of justice with the intention of not offending again, is the writer's concept of repentance. The secondary motives, since they contain an element of selfishness, can be termed remorse. Therefore, the reader may accept the following as the statement of the thesis: Angelo in Measure For Measure: the Psychological Probab-
bility of His Repentance.

The method of procedure in the thesis will be the following. Since it is our purpose to establish the probability of one of Angelo's actions, we must first examine the character himself to determine whether or not he is probable, working on the philosophical axiom that a given individual will act according to his nature (ager sequitur esse). If Angelo can be shown to be dramatically probable, it can be logically deduced that his actions will be probable in a dramatic sense, and hence psychologically probable.

We must, first of all, have some norms by which to judge dramatic probability, and for this purpose we have chosen to use the Aristotelian norms. To judge whether his sorrow is repentance or merely remorse (in the sense of the words as defined above), we must judge from Angelo's habitual manner of action. Both of these requirements demand that we establish the true character of Angelo, and that we compare his character with the norms of probability and repentance.

To establish Angelo's true character we must analyze whatever he says and does, knowing that there is nothing more intimate than a man's thoughts, and that the manifestation of his thoughts in his actions will reveal his character to us. But, we must not be content to investigate only what the character tells us about himself. We must go a step further and investigate what
the other characters in the play say about the subject of the study. One's fellows are his best critics, not the person himself. An impassioned man, for example, may often hurt us by his unrestrained outbursts, but the reason we are hurt is because we realize that there is some truth in what our antagonist is saying. Thus, we can learn much from Angelo's enemies in the play, regardless of whether their comments be favorable or unfavorable. Concerning the objective value of character testimony it seems good to mention the canon of interpretation propounded by Professor Schuckling as understood by John Middleton Murray:

... he [W.W. Lawrence] offends against another valuable canon of interpretation, propounded by Professor Schuckling and used with discrimination by Professor Stoll—namely, that descriptions of one character given by another are generally to be taken at their face value. They are to give information to the audience rather about the character described than about the character uttering them.7

Having established the character of Angelo we will proceed to an examination of the temptation scene in order to examine his actions in the concluding scene of the play, where, when his deceit and lecherous conduct come to the knowledge of the Duke and the court, he repents. In a concluding chapter we will collate our findings and draw our conclusions.

Before proceeding to the establishing of the Aristotel-
ian norms of probability it will be useful to indicate the importance of the present study. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, commenting on the play, writes that Shakespeare's treatment of Angelo, "has indicated . . . a true soul's tragedy,"

8 but, unfortunately, this view is not universally accepted. To find Angelo listed in the gallery of Shakespeare's great portrayals would be a revelation.

W.W. Lawrence, in his discussion of the play, asks:

Did Shakespeare mean Angelo to be regarded as a good, though narrow man, suddenly gone wrong through an over-mastering sexual temptation? . . . Or was he a villain from the start, who deceived the Duke as to his real character?

There are many critics who do not believe that such a perfect line may be drawn to distinguish the character of Angelo. It was in reply to the passage just cited that W.M.T. Dodds wrote:

Either attitude is fatal to the true interpretation of Angelo's character. If he is seen either as a dissembler or a prig he cannot be seen at the same time as a man whose soul is large enough to experience tragic intensity of suffering. 10

It is clear from these two passages that on the one hand Lawrence is unsettled in his opinion, while Dodds regards Angelo,

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8 Measure For Measure, edited by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and J.Dover Wilson, Cambridge, 1922, xlii.


10 W.M.T. Dodds, "The Character of Angelo in Measure For Measure", Modern Language Review, XLVI, April, 1946, 246.
at the very least, as human. If Angelo is a man capable of suffering in the dramatic sense, he must perforce be an artistically probable character. From this it would follow that his actions, if he is to be consistent, should be probable.

Angelo, in the words of the Duke, is 'a finely touched character', and the importance of this observation is highlighted by the following:

More is at stake than the mere interpretation of one character. Angelo’s part in the dramatic economy of Measure for Measure is an important one: he typifies strict justice . . . and Shakespeare has taken great care to show that Angelo, is a man whose ideals of abstract justice are clear, and to be revered, whatever his practice as a 'justicer' may be. To dismiss these ideals as narrow, priggish, pharisaical, is to destroy the dramatic antithesis on which the argument turns. . . . It is a Christian commonplace to think of justice giving place to mercy, but it is un-Christian to decry justice itself.11

This will suffice for an introduction to the disputed nature of the problem. Finally, in this concluding section of the chapter, we will posit our norms for judging a character's dramatic probability, using Aristotle’s Poetics as a source.

The importance of determining Angelo’s probability is obvious, for upon the resolution of this problem rests the remainder of the thesis. If the character is not probable there is little reason for his actions to be probable.

11 Ibid., 165.
As a preliminary notion and quasi-basis for the establishment of our notions of probability the great difference between the historian and the poet should be recalled:

It is not the function of the poet to relate what has happened, but what may happen—what is possible according to the laws of probability or necessity. The poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or prose... The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. 12

From this passage the universal aspect of poetry becomes more evident. History, on the one hand, is characterized by its reference to individual events of the past. The difference between the two is the difference between possibility and actuality; the difference between a promise made and a promise fulfilled. Again, "... poetry exhibits a more rigorous connection of events; cause and event are linked together in 'probable or necessary sequence'." 13 Professor Butcher makes the observation that this rigid connection of events is true not only in the establishment of a plot's probability, but also in the internal working of a single character. Because of the relevancy of this passage to the thesis it seems good to give it in full:

Not only in the development of the plot but also in the internal working of character, the drama observes a


13 Ibid., 165
stricter and more logical order than that of actual experience. The rule of Probability which Aristotle enjoins is not the narrow \textit{vraisemblance} which it was understood to mean by many of the older French critics, which would shut the poet out from the higher regions of the imagination and confine him to the trivial round of immediate reality.\footnote{Ibid.}

The closing words of the passage are quite important for the problem at hand, pointing out as they do the need of a causal link. Aristotle, according to Butcher, demands a connection between a character's actions in the beginning of the play and his actions at the end. The character must be consistent. He must act from a motive, not from any unmotivated whim. Butcher goes on to develop this idea of probability.

The 'probable' is not determined by a numerical average of instances; it is not a condensed expression for what meets us in the common course of things. \ldots The empirically usual is derived from an observed sequence of facts, and denotes what is normal and regular in its occurrence, the rule, not the exception. But the rule of experience cannot be the law that governs art. The higher creations of poetry move in another plane. The incidents of the drama and the epic are not those of ordinary life. \ldots The 'probable' law of their conduct cannot be deduced from commonplace experience. \ldots \footnote{Ibid., 166.}

The point of the passage is clear. In a word, it may be summed up as follows: "[b]ut we do not think of measuring the intrinsic probability of what they [the characters] say or do by the probability of meeting their counterpart in the actual
Aristotle, in effect, says that *actuality* is not the criterion of probability, but *logicality, possibility* and *consistency*.

One might ask: If daily experience is not the norm for artistic probability, what is the norm to be followed in judging whether a given incident is apt material for dramatic purposes? Although Aristotle did not make a formal distinction between the kinds of improbabilities, he did insist that those incidents which violate or contradict nature were not suitable matter for the drama. He insisted on a logico-ideal sequence of events, although the events themselves may transcend experience.17

Butcher brings this point out quite well:

Poetry ... is not concerned with fact, but with what transcends fact; it represents things which are not, and never can be in actual experience; it gives us 'the ought to be'; the form that answers to the true idea. The characters of Sophocles, the ideal forms of Zeuxus, are unreal only in the sense that they surpass reality. They are not untrue to the principles of nature or to her ideal tendencies.18

The notions treated here apply principally to the drama. When we turn to comedy one might reasonably expect that different rules would apply; the opposite is the case. Butcher

16 Ibid., 167.

17 This is the doctrine of Imitation, for which see the chapter on Imitation in Butcher's work. Chapter III, 163-193.

18 Ibid., 168.
poses this same question and refutes it as follows:

It has been held by some modern writers, that comedy differs from tragedy in representing a world of chance, where law is suspended and the will of the individual reigns supreme. But this is not in accord with the Poetics. The incidents of comedy—^at least of such comedy as Aristotle approves—are 'framed on the lines of probability.' The connection of events is, no doubt, looser than in tragedy; the more rigorous rule of 'probability' or 'necessity' is not prescribed: and the variations of phrase appears to be not without design. Yet the plot even of comedy is far removed from the play of accident.\(^\text{19}\)

Hence, although comedy and tragedy are of different types, the same general rules apply. There may not have to be that strict interpretation of logical sequence that tragedy demands, but the irrational or contradictory to nature is entirely foreign to comedy as well as to tragedy. This brief notion of dramatic probability might be summed up in Professor Butcher's words:

The whole tenor and purpose of the Poetics makes it abundantly clear that poetry is not a mere reproduction of empirical fact. . . . The world of the possible which poetry creates is more intelligible than the world of experience. . . . Poetic truth passes the bounds of reality, but does not wantonly violate the laws which make the real world rational.\(^\text{20}\)

With these notions regarding probability, we may now turn to the study of Angelo's character to determine if we can its conformity to or difformity from these norms of probability.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 183-184.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
CHAPTER II

THE CHARACTER OF ANGELO BEFORE THE TEMPTATION

Would you know a man? Give him power. History sometimes seems little else than an extended comment on that ancient maxim. . . . Measure For Measure might have been expressly written to drive home its truth. It is little wonder, then, that the play of Shakespeare in which the word 'authority' occurs more often than in any other should have an extraordinary pertinence for a century in which the word 'authoritarian' is on so many lips. The central male figure of the drama is one of the most searching studies ever made on the effect of power upon character.  

The above quotation points up the effect of power or authority on a man's character. In order to see the change effected it is necessary to know the person involved as he or she was before they gained power. Hence the connection between this chapter and the quotation. In this play the character of Angelo has been selected as the object of study, but before coming to any fixed conclusions regarding the consistency or lack of consistency it is imperative that we draw as complete a picture as possible for our background. Once the background is filled in, the character of Angelo will be more clearly perceived in the

course of the paper. In order that we might have a glimpse of the social conditions in which Angelo lived we turn to a description of Vienna as painted by Professor Gervinus. The scene is Vienna, where moral corruption

... boils and bubbles till it o'erruns; society is destroyed by it, and all decorum is lost. We cast a glance into the prisons and brothels, which allows us to estimate the extent and the shamelessness of the prevailing licentiousness; in the street we see dissolute fellows who make full use of the freedom with which low manners may evade the law. Debauchery has become a common custom. Every mind seems occupied with transactions and matters of this kind. ... Existing restraints are cast down; unbridled liberty plucks justice by the nose; law, like an unused rod to a child, is rather mocked than feared.2

It is, then, into such a milieu that Angelo is called by the Duke. Vincentio (the Duke's Christian name), who has allowed established laws "to be more mocked than feared," decides that an overall reformation of the city is needed. Although he provides the critics with a choice target by doing so, Shakespeare has the Duke appoint a deputy to carry out the course he has determined upon.

The reasons for this course of action and the choice of Angelo as the deputy are gradually brought out during the Duke's

conversation with the Friar:

... Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,  
'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them  
For what I have bid them do; for we bid this be done,  
When evil deeds have their permissive pass,  
And not the punishment. Therefore, indeed, my father,  
I have on Angelo imposed the office;  
Who may, in the ambush of my name, strike home.  
And yet my nature never in the fight to do in slander.3

From the passage just cited it is quite easy to begin  
drawing some notions about the character of the Duke. This will  
not only be helpful in that it aids our understanding of the  
meaning behind the Duke's remarks, but is is absolutely necessary  
if we hope to penetrate the problems of the play. It is neces­  
sary, too, if we entertain any hope of conducting an objective  
study, to believe the Duke sincere in the reasons he gives for  
his wanting to transfer the burden of enforcing long dormant laws  
from his own shoulders to those of a younger man. He realizes  
that in any reformation a 'new broom' is needed. Once discipline  
has been relaxed it is restored only with the greatest difficulty.  
People grow accustomed to their leaders' weaknesses and capita­  
lize on them. Although the leader might change, the people still  
look on him as he was. Hence, Vincentio's change of policy would  
never have been effective in Vienna. An outsider could step in  
and from the very beginning impose the laws, thus training the

3 Measure For Measure, I,iii, 36-44, The Works of  
noted, all references will be to this edition of the play.
people anew. If the old encumbent were to try to change the mores of the city there would be great strife. The Duke's plea that he 'loves the life removed' would seem to be sufficient reason for wanting to avoid this inevitable strife.

Clearly, then, the Duke does begin to tell us much about himself. First, he reveals his sensitive nature by his hesitation. He is afraid to act in accordance with established law because he is liable to incur the hatred of the people. Secondly, he asks that any reformer be of the same degree of virtue that the people are called on to exhibit. Finally, he gives us the first hint that Angelo may not be all that his name implies, so that, despite his outward mien, there is something amiss. Shakespeare's technique of suggestion is clearly shown here. By way of illustrating this technique, the reader is reminded of the scene in Othello wherein Brabantio says of Othello, "I therefore vouch again, That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood, Or with some dram conjured to this effect He wrought upon her." The seed of suspicion about Othello has been sown in the minds of his hearers, and the reader feels the air of suspicion permeating the scene. It is the same here in Angelo's case. Suspicion is cast on the deputy, but there is no definite accusation. The Duke stirs the Friar's imagination when he says:

Moe reasons for this action
At our more leisure shall I render you;
Only, this one: Lord Angelo is precise;
Stands at guard with envy; scarce confesses
That his blood flows, or that his appetite
Is more to bread than stone; hence we shall see
If power change purpose, what our seemers be.5

The situation is as follows. The town is wholly cor-
rupt and the Duke wants to restore law. Hesitant about underta-
taking the reform himself, deeming that such an action would be
 tyrannical since he has allowed conditions to come to such a pass,
the Duke appoints Angelo, a man of known virtue, as his deputy.
Yet, despite this reputation, the Duke is not convinced that
Angelo is quite the 'angel' he is supposed to be. Humanly sus-
picious of a man who is a professedly self-made man, and aware of
a past deed that may not have been very complimentary, the Duke
appoints Angelo both to put him to the test and to bring about
the reform of the city.

It is perfectly allowable to make the supposition that
the Duke would know of any misdeed in Angelo's past. In one
place the Duke makes the fact known that the licentious condi-
tions of the city have existed for fourteen years (although Lucio
puts it at nineteen). It would seem perfectly logical that
Angelo would have been in attendance at the court of Duke
Vincentio for a good part of this time. In fact, Angelo boasts

5 Measure For Measure, I, iii, 48-54.
of the fact that he made a study of the political life. This being true, Angelo would have perforce been about the court for quite a while, and the Duke would have had ample opportunity to study the character of the man he intended to appoint as his deputy. Had there been any reason to suspect Angelo, Vincentio could hardly have been ignorant of it.

Our first meeting with the Duke is in the opening scene of the first act, and it is here that we learn the Duke's opinion of Angelo. From his words it is quite evident that Vincentio's choice has not been a hasty one, but rather the result of long thinking and based on weighty reasons. "For you must know, we have with special soul elected him our absence to supply." The importance of this statement will become much clearer at a later point in the paper where it will be recalled to bring out the probability of the Duke being well-informed about the character of his deputy. This statement of the Duke, made to Escalus, is presently reiterated when the Duke puts off Angelo's protestations of being unworthy of the proffered office. "No more evasion: we have with leavened and prepared choice proceded to you. Therefore take your honors."  

6 Ibid., II, iv, 7.  
7 Ibid., I, i, 18-19.  
8 Ibid., I, i, 52-54.
The fact that the Duke, in appointing two men to guide the city in his absence, names Angelo as holding the supreme power seems to argue that he did have faith in Angelo's judgment. Yet, despite this seeming manifestation of faith in Angelo, there is an inkling that the Duke might have some doubts about the absolute goodness of his deputy. In a passage replete with dramatic irony he says, "Angelo, there is a kind of character in thy life that to the observer doth thy history fully unfold," and later in the same scene, "Our haste from here is of so quick condition that it prefers itself and leaves unquestioned matters of needful value."

Quite evidently, there is something the Duke knows, but does not consider it here and now to constitute an impediment to Angelo's ruling the city well. Whatever the defect might be, the Duke probably thought that Angelo could not make the condition of the city any worse. If the condition of the city was as bad as has been pictured, a man with a character such as Angelo's, even with a closeted skeleton, would be a rara avis. In a city teeming with wastrels and blackguards, a 'seeming' angel would certainly be a welcome addition.

At this point the Duke excuses himself, nor do we meet

9 M.M., I, 1, 27-29.
10 Ibid., 56-57.
him again until his appearance at the convent. Explaining his appearance to the Friar, the Duke tells of Angelo's appointment. "I have delivered to Lord Angelo, a man of strict virtue and firm abstinence, my absolute power and place here in Vienna."\(^{11}\) Here is another admission of Angelo's virtue by the Duke. It is only when the Friar questions him that the Duke suggests there is a flaw in Angelo's character.

An analysis of this passage affords some slight insight into Angelo's character. The Duke says that Angelo is 'precise'. The word had the same connotation then as it does now: Puritanical, over-nice, and extreme fastidiousness. Angelo carries his virtue to an extreme, with the result that he appears to be little more than a mere automaton—not a flesh and blood person. Hudson, in commenting on the Duke's words, ". . . hence we shall see if power change purpose what our seemers be,"\(^{12}\) says, that the passage "clearly infers that his [the] Duke's main purpose in assuming the disguise of the monk is to unmask the deputy, and demonstrate to others what has long been known to himself."\(^{13}\)

The next scene in which the Duke removes another veil from the mysterious Angelo's character is the first scene of the third act. Isabella is telling the Duke about the proposition.

\(^{11}\) Measure For Measure, I, iii, 11-12.
\(^{12}\) Ibid., 53-54.
\(^{13}\) H. N. Hudson, Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Character, 4th ed., I, Boston, 1872, 410.
made by Angelo. The Duke's reaction reveals to some extent the shrewdness of Angelo. "That shall not be much amiss: yet, as the matter now stands, he will avoid your accusation; he made trial of you only."14 Angelo's crime amounts to little more than a mere suggestion, and because of his reputation for virtue in the past it is clear that he will be able to get around Isabella's accusation. A close reading of the lines in this section, where Vincentio lays his plans for the bed trick, will bear out this implication.

The Duke's final description of Angelo comes when he relates to Isabella the circumstances of Angelo's desertion of Marianna:

She should this Angelo have married; was affianced to her by oath and the nuptial appointed: between which time of the contract and limit of the solemnity, her brother Frederick was wrecked at sea, having in that perished vessel the dowry of his sister. But mark how heavily this befell to the poor gentlewoman: there she lost a noble and renowned brother, in his love toward her ever most kind and natural; with him, the portion and sinew of her fortune, her marriage-dowry; with both, her combine husband, this well-seeming Angelo.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

He [1]eft her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort; swallowed his vows whole, pretending in her discoveries of dishonour: in few, bestowed her on her own lamentation, which she yet wears for his sake; and he, a marble to her tears, is washed with them, but relents not.15

14 M.M., III, 1, 198-200.
15 Ibid., 219-237.
It is important to note here another use of the Shakespearean technique of shadowed suggestion. The Duke never comes out and says exactly what the dishonor in Marianna's life was. Usually such words refer to sexual aberrations, but in the present case the audience is given a mere shadow of suspicion to work with.

From this point on until the closing of the play, the Duke is concerned with the exposition of Angelo's breach of faith and the imposition of a just punishment for his intrigue with Isabella. In the final act, which is chiefly concerned with the imposition of punishment on the guilty, we see the confirmation of the Duke's suspicions about Angelo. He is shown to be what the Duke had hinted at—a human like ourselves, fully subject to the weaknesses of the flesh.

In summing up the Duke's opinion of Angelo we might say that he is understandingly questioning Angelo's character. The Duke is wise enough and sufficiently acquainted with the foibles of human nature to realize that virtue carried to an extreme ceases to be real virtue. Although he trusts Angelo, there is something amiss. It is not a complete trust. From what the Duke said to the Friar at the convent it is evident that he 'feels' or 'senses' some defect in Angelo, though he cannot quite point out what it is. This is not surprising, for in one section Escalus speaks of the Duke as, "one that, above all other strifes,
contended especially to know himself." If the Duke had tried to become master of himself by self-knowledge it would be a reasonable deduction to say that he should have some degree of proficiency in character analysis. This being the case, it seems justifiable to say that the Duke would see through the veneer of Angelo's exterior and read his heart better than Angelo himself could. Just why this should tempt the Duke to say, "if power change purpose," does remain a mystery. This should suffice for the Duke's revelation of Angelo's character. We may now turn to Escalus in our attempt to delineate further the character of the deputy Angelo.

The instances in which Escalus hints about the character of Angelo are not too numerous. However, those hints which he does give are revealing and significant. Escalus, as he appears in the play, is a seasoned statesman. It is quite fitting that we weigh well any and every observation that he makes regarding the character of his co-ruler. As it turns out, Escalus is ignorant of Angelo's ill-fated betrothal. The Duke's suspicion hinges on his knowledge of this fact, but Escalus, ignorant of the deed, reveals Angelo's character from what he has observed in him during his court life. In other words, Escalus' testimony prescinds from any antecedent evidence, and we are fully justified

in accepting his testimony as objective. With this in mind, the remark Escalus makes to the Duke when he learns the Duke's plans is important: "If any in Vienna be of worth to undergo such ample grace and honor it is Lord Angelo."17 This is the only really significant reference to Angelo made by Escalus in the first act. He reappears, however, in the second act, reiterating what he said on the former occasion, but this time he seems to imply that there is a certain temerity and inhumaneness in Angelo's character.

Let us be keen, and rather cut a little,
Than fall, and bruise to death. Alas, this gentleman,
Whom I would save, had a most noble father!
Let but your honor know,
Whom I believe to be most straight in virtue,
That, in the working of your own affections,
Had time cohered with place or place with wishing,
Or that the resolute acting of your blood
Could have attain'd the effect of your own purpose,
Err'd in this point which you now censure him,
And pull'd the law upon you.18

From an analysis of this passage we do get a clear insight into the character of Angelo. It can be readily inferred that Angelo is highly prone to judge an act without weighing the attendant circumstances. The very fact that a law has been broken, is, for Angelo, sufficient reason for a judgment of guilt

17 M.M., I, i, 23-25.
18 Ibid., II, i, 5-16.
before law, and the imposition of punishment. This rashness is pointed up all the more by the sharp contrast with Escalus' desire to proceed cautiously and surely. Escalus' manner of bringing out the character of Angelo is excellently handled in the scene in which Elbow, Froth and Pompey carry on the comical inquisition which, to Angelo's impetuous nature, promises to "last out a night in Russia when nights are longest there." Escalus, however, is human enough to see the absurdity of the situation and goes along with their zany carryings on; Angelo, true to his impatient self, is quite disturbed by the incident, and is anxious to be on his way. When the mock trial is over Escalus dismisses the trio with a parting remark indicating the wisdom behind Angelo's severity. "It is but needful: Mercy is not itself that oft looks so; Pardon is still the nurse of second woe; But yet,—Poor Claudio." He pauses after this statement, and the, pause is a significant one. We can almost hear him wish aloud that Angelo would temper his justice with a little mercy. Escalus leaves the stage, leaving us to ponder his thoughts.

There are two more statements by Escalus referring to his 'brother justice' Angelo. Both instances, though exemplifying

19 Ibid., II, 1.
20 Ibid., 136-137.
21 Ibid., II, 1, 296-299.
the same virtue of the deputy, are found in his conversation with
the Provost, who has brought Mistress Overdone into him for judg-
ment. Escalus refers to Angelo's condemnation of Claudio when he
says, "If my brother wrought by my pity, it should not be so with
him," 22 and again, ". . . but my brother justice I found so se-
vere that he hath forced me to tell him that he is indeed Jus-
tice." 23 Escalus' meaning is clear. He has interceded, apparent-
ly on different occasions, with Angelo on behalf of Claudio, but
to no avail. The upshot of their conversations was Escalus tell-
ing Angelo that he was too strict, so incapable of tempering his
application of justice that he was Justice itself. We will treat
of this point in a later section of the paper when we investigate
this particular trait of Angelo, namely, his inability to see
past the breach in the law and judge the deed in the light of the
attendant circumstances.

Before leaving Escalus there are a few points that
might be made regarding Escalus' admonition to Angelo about the
advisability of tempering his justice with mercy. Escalus had
spontaneously praised Angelo's virtue when he was interceding for
Claudio. Shortly afterwards, however, immediately before Froth
and Pompey came in, Escalus, in an aside (and hence for the

22 Ibid., III, ii, 224.
23 Ibid., 268-270.
benefit of the audience), makes a statement that throws much light on the character of the deputy:

Well, heaven forgive him! and forgive us all!
Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall:
Some run from brakes of vice, and answer none:
And some condemned for a fault alone. 24

Escalus is clearly rebuking Angelo for punishing out of all proportion. With all the vice of Vienna going unsoathed, Claudio, for a single fall must pay with his life, Escalus clearly shows us the uncompromising character of Angelo.

This is all we can draw from the testimony of Escalus. What is its value? As indicated above, Escalus, as a courtier and as an intimate of the Duke, should speak with some authority. He has nothing to gain by praising Angelo, nor anything to lose if he is frank about the shortcomings of his co-ruler. He has told us that Angelo is of the highest character, indeed, the most worthy man in Vienna to receive the honor of being the Duke's deputy. Later he tells us that Angelo is unbending in his efforts to insure the application of justice to every crime, and that he is adamant in his decisions once made, although the decisions are rigid and untempered by mercy.

With this we turn to Lucio, the rogue of Vienna, in our attempt to fill out the character of Angelo. Lucio, as is evident in the play, is an habitue of the city's bawdy houses, and, as far

24 M.M., II, i, 37-40.
as we can determine, enjoys a rather unsavory reputation. However, despite this reputation, even the most casual reader will be struck by the strange wisdom of the man, worldly though it be. The following lines, addressed to Isabella, are an example of this wisdom:

Our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft might win
By fearing to attempt. Go to Lord Angelo,
And let him learn to know, when maidens sue,
Men give like gods; but when they weep and kneel,
All their petitions are as freely theirs
As they themselves would owe them.25

The knowledge of human nature shown by his words hardly needs pointing out. Lucio seems to be well acquainted with the ways of maids suing for favors from the so-called 'superior' sex. He calls on his experience and lets Isabella profit by that experience. He will also use that experience in reading and commenting on the character of Angelo. He gives us a basis for this statement when he first meets Isabella and tells of his respect for her:

It is true.
I would not — though 'tis my familiar sin
With maids to seem the lapwing, and to jest,
Tongue far from my heart — play with all virgins so:
I hold you as a thing ensky'd and saints;
By your renouncement, an immortal spirit;
And to be talk'd with in sincerity, as with a saint.26

25 M.M., I, iv, 77-83.
26 Ibid., 30-38.
Here is human nature speaking. It is the response of the goodness in a man's soul to the perception of good in another. It is important to note the responses of both men to this goodness, for from the reactions we learn what Isabella must be. She is definitely superior to the average woman of Vienna. If Lucio, slave as he is to carnal desires and pleasures, reacts to the purity and chastity of Isabella in such wise, that purity of soul must be eminent. The reason behind this last statement is basically the notion of connatural

27 According to this principle, a man is prone to perceive those virtues in another which he himself possesses. By the fact that he has the virtues, he has a certain pre-disposition for them. When he meets them in another he is aware of their presence. Accordingly, he will also notice the lack of the traits which he himself possessed, namely, sensuality or frivolity. Instead, he noticed the purity of Isabella. Transferring our attention to Angelo for a moment and applying the principle of connatural

27 For the notion of connatural here mentioned see J. Maritain, The Degrees of Knowledge, trans. B. Wall, Scribner & Son, New York, 1938, 346. Also, S.T. II-II, q. 45, q. 2, c., or Nich. Ethics, Books VIII and IX.
reasons for telling her the truth:

Upon his place,
And with full line of his authority,
Govern Lord Angelo; a man whose blood
Is very snow broth; one who never feels
The wanton stings and motions of the sense,
But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge
With profits of the mind, study, and fast. 28

Lucio's impression of Angelo has been formed, not from one act, but from his observation of Angelo reaching back through the many years that Angelo and Lucio have frequented the court of the Duke. This point is substantiated by the words "... [b]ut doth rebate and blunt his natural edge with profits of the mind, study, and fast." 29 It is clear what Lucio intends. He is saying that by a life of self-repression, intellectual labor and corporal austerity Angelo has quieted the passions of his body to such a degree that he can look with disdain on the falls of his less 'angelic' brethren. That Angelo is determined, or adamant when he has once made a decision, might be implied from Lucio's closing words that perhaps Isabella can melt Angelo by her prayers.

Our next meeting with Lucio is in the second act of the play where he witnesses the meeting of Isabella and Angelo. 30 Here, too, we see his knowledge of human nature manifested as he prompts Isabella in her suit. That he is well acquainted with

28 M.M., I, iv, 55-61.
29 Ibid.
30 M.M., II, ii.
the workings of the heart is clear from his stressing the need of a passionate insistence in her pleadings. It is well to note the advice he gives the maid, for example, "Give not o'er . . . to him again . . . entreat him; kneel down before him . . . hang on his gown."31

Lucio tries to persuade Isabella that Angelo will yield if she presses her suit—that it is natural for a man to yield to the long-continued pleas and tears of a suppliant woman. Immediately afterwards Lucio stresses the need of passion and warmth in her prayers and petitions. All through the course of this meeting Lucio's commentaries on the progress of her suit betray his knowledge of the human heart. It is, then, with some authority that he speaks when he interprets the character of the deputy. Lucio's testimony should be true and safe; consequently, what he tells us about the deputy should aid us in our search to find the true Angelo.

In the third act, where the Duke and Lucio meet, more of Lucio's thoughts regarding Angelo come to light. Though not exactly in the nicest language, Lucio reveals his thoughts as follows:

They say this Angelo was not made
By man and woman after the downright way of
Creation: is it true, think you? . . .
Some report a sea-maid spawned him; some

31 Ibid., 43-45.
That he was begot between two stock-fishes. But it is certain that, when he makes water, his urine is congealed ice; that I know to be true . . . . 32

This is the last place from which we can draw any help from Lucio. He appears later, but that is in the resolution of the plot where what he says has little to do with the character of Angelo. Lucio, then, has no love for Angelo. He looks on the new ruler as an inhuman automaton, far removed from the feelings of the ordinary man, and capable of normal feelings only in a potential sense.

There is another point of view to be considered, namely, a consideration of the minor characters in the play. There is little to be gotten from them directly since a good portion of the dialogue pertains more to Angelo's foolish actions than to his character. Perhaps the only really pertinent reference is the Provost's remark to the effect that Angelo is acting in an un­wonted manner in sending him the note demanding that he execute Claudio. 33 We do not, of course, see or hear about all the events in the life of the deputy. Doubtlessly, in a real life situation, the Provost would have many tasks to perform. That the ruler should send a special note implies that he had been accustomed to merely pass judgment and then let the Provost carry out his decrees at the appointed time. Any action to the contrary might

32 Ibid., III, ii, 110-120.
33 Ibid., IV, ii, 120.
argue that the monarch had a special reason for this peculiar case. There seems to be justification in arguing that after his temptation and supposed seduction of Isabella (whose place had been taken by Marianna), Angelo returned to his former policy of meting out justice to every crime that was brought before him. There are some indirect references to Angelo, most of which deal with his actions, not his character.

Marianna's only direct reference to Angelo is fraught with difficulties. Late in the final act Marianna, in begging the Duke not to 'mock her with a husband', says, "O my dear Lord, I crave no other nor no better man." How should this be interpreted? Is it to be understood that Marianna will settle for any man? This would hardly be a compliment to a person who is supposed to have some quality. When Angelo first courted her she must have offered him more than money, despite the fact that it was a mariage de convenance. That rank must have been included is evidenced by the Duke's having referred to her as a gentlewoman. Arguing from this it is not hard to advance the theory that Marianna would have considered as a husband a man who would be of the same, or practically the same, social position. From this it follows that the interpretation to be accorded the passage is that Marianna was actually deep in love with the man and

34 Ibid., V, i, 225.
35 Ibid., III, i, 225.
that she is really sincere in saying that she wants no one if not Angelo. It has, of course, been argued that Marianna is a completely colorless character, or a doltish sort of an individual, if she were willing to accept the man who had rejected her.36

In reply to this argument, however strange it may seem that Marianna was willing to receive Angelo back, there is good reason for her actions. The play is centered in Vienna at a time when Catholicism was the only religion. As will be brought out later, betrothal was of such a nature that when once agreed upon neither partner was free to marry any other person. Marianna, then, was merely seeking to be rejoined to her husband. Though it may seem strange, the union must have been acceptable earlier to both parties. To Marianna, because she loved; to Angelo, because, in his selfish pride, he would have the social rank he thought fitting, money plentiful enough to live comfortably, and profitable social contacts. The situation is not an infrequent one and is met even in the present day. A partner's shortcomings are readily accepted because of the advantages to be gained.

This is not an attempt to whitewash Angelo. It is, rather, an attempt to establish the credulity of Marianna and to argue from that to the character of Angelo. Isabella's comment on Marianna substantiates the remarks of the Duke about her. When

the Duke tells Isabella the name of the proposed substitute she replies, "I have heard of the lady, and good words went with her name." To Isabella, Marianna is practically an unknown character, yet, when the Duke mentions her name Isabella recalls having heard good things said of her. Isabella's knowledge of Marianna is mere hearsay. Human nature being what it is, it seems logical to infer that Marianna would not have a good reputation unless it were true—especially in Vienna. All things considered, her affection for and devotion to Angelo does seem to warrant our ranking her as more than a dolt. Then, too, we might have recourse to the idea of connaturality which was brought up in the discussion of Lucio's testimony regarding Angelo.  

Turning now to Isabella, the last external source of information about Angelo's character, we are concerned with the object of Angelo's lustful desires. Here we will consider Isabella in her dealings with the other characters of the play, meanwhile passing over her meeting with Angelo.

Isabella's first appearance is in the fourth scene of the first act when Lucio comes to the convent to beg her help in saving Claudio. Almost immediately her character begins to stand out: "Yes, truly; I speak not as desiring more [liberty]; But rather wishing a more strict restraint upon the sisterhood, the

38 See page 28.
votaries of Saint Clare." Unknowingly, Isabella exemplifies the mind of a person newly-received into the religious life. She is swept away by her initial fervor to the extent that she would have a more severe discipline for the nuns. The time-tested veterans of life in religion learn by experience the strictness of the laws when their observance has been stretched over a number of years. The novice, full of enthusiasm and generosity, sees only the present moment and deems the laws 'not too strict.'

The humility of the maid becomes clear during the course of her conversation with Lucio. She is convinced of her inability to dissuade Angelo from his determined course. Lucio finally prevails on her and she does agree to go to Angelo. On her second visit to the deputy Angelo makes his lecherous proposal. Isabella, scandalized by the proposal, flees to the imprisoned Claudio and tells him of the option. She gives us a good picture of her character when she says to Claudio, "I have spirit to do anything that appears not foul in the truth of my spirit." All that she says here is that sin or manifest evil is the limit beyond which she will not venture in her attempt to free Claudio. When she tells Friar Ludowick, The Duke in disguise, "O how much is the good Duke deceived in Angelo," we may be sure that her

39 M.M., I, iv, 3-5.
40 Ibid., III, i, 210-212.
41 Ibid., 194-195.
opinion of Angelo is quite bad. It is shortly after this scene, while she discusses Marianna's plight, that she remarks of Angelo: "What corruption in this life that it will let this man live." What sort of man is Angelo in Isabella's opinion? The answer is given in the words of Isabella to the Duke, and it leaves no doubt in our mind:

Most strange, but yet most truly, will I speak: That Angelo's forsworn; is it not strange? That Angelo's a murderer; is't not strange? That Angelo is an adulterous thief, An hypocrite, a virgin violator . . . .

Yet, violent as her accusation is, Isabella later intercedes for Angelo before the Duke. Does this argue inconsistency on her part? Not necessarily. In her desire to win Claudio's freedom, Isabella would have done anything to attain that goal. What she said about Angelo was true, but it was also exaggerated. When the truth about Claudio comes out, she manifests the same mercy that she so ardently sought of Angelo a while before. She is motivated by the conviction that Angelo was sincere, but that he succumbed to a temptation.

In summation, Isabella's impression of Angelo is that he is sincere, but a victim of self deception. He is good, but not quite the angel he would like to think himself.

42 Ibid., 239-240.
43 Ibid., V, i, 37-42.
Finally, what does Angelo tell us about himself? It will be necessary to examine his lines in the play. His dealings with Isabella are treated in another part of the paper. His dealings with the minor characters are to be examined here. In the very opening scene of the play Angelo's humility comes to the fore when he says to the Duke, who is giving him the rule of the city, "Now, good my Lord, Let there be some more test made of my metal, Before so great and so noble a figure be stamped upon it." There is an air of humility about Angelo as he makes this proposal, but there is also an air of irony as he chooses the means of his downfall. It is not until the second act, however, that Angelo's true self begins to unfold. His ideas on the rigid application of justice, regardless of attendant circumstances, are clearly stated in the opening scene:

_Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus, _
Another thing to fall. I not deny, _
The jury, passing on the prisoner's life, _
May in the sworn twelve have a thief or two _
Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to justice, _
That justice seizes: what know the laws _
That thieves do pass on thieves? Tis very pregnant, _
The jewel that we find, we stoop and take't, _
Because we see it; but what we do not see _
We tread upon, and never think of it. _
You may not so extenuate his offence _
For I have had such faults; but rather tell me, _
When I, that censure him, do so offend,_

44 _Ibid_.., I, 1, 48-51.
Let mine own judgment pattern out my death,  
And nothing come in partial. Sir he must die. 45

Angelo is unyielding. He maintains that every perceived offence must be paid. It makes no difference that some men commit the same crime and go unpunished simply because they were not seen. The law is objective; it does not allow for individual cases. So adamant is Angelo that he would permit no exception—a determination that will eventually seal his own death.

After his declaration, Angelo applies justice in the form of permitting Claudio to confess. This is Claudio's right under the Christian ideal of preparing a man for his eternal judgment. It is not a concession motivated by mercy. The rest of this scene is an elucidation of Angelo's notions on the autonomy of justice, the impossibility of compromise with crime and the absolute necessity of punishing an offender, regardless of rank. The mind of Angelo is well described by K. J. Spalding:

To the rigid mind of Angelo man is rather made for moral law than moral law for man. A "categorical imperative," morality is a thing to be obeyed by man without condition, mercy or remorse. "Sharp occasions" furnish no excuse to "lay it by;" and, though no harm to any may follow its breach, no unruly "exception" to it is to be willed by the good man. 46

It is clear to the reader of the play that Angelo has simply failed to find the solution to the problem facing every human


judge: that of reconciling objective civil law with a subjective conscience. It is so universal a practice for a human law-giver to interpret a law to allow for individual cases, or weigh the concomitant circumstances of a law's violation that one might wonder whether Angelo can be really sincere in following so rigorous a course. The answer to this question is given by Mr. Spalding:

A man like Angelo of "fast and study" might sincerely (5. 1. 451) thrust from him a mercy which man's unphilosophical mildness may venture at times to prefer to an extreme of "justice" (2.1.4). Feel however as men may, a sufficient surgeon of the State must sometimes use the surgeon's knife, and Angelo might have escaped the general censure had he continued constant to the moral principle propounded by him.47

Angelo preaches a hard doctrine, but it is because he is ruled by a desire to reform the city that he does so. He is not impervious to the needs of men simply because they have committed a crime. His charity may be cold, but it is there. When Angelo commits Juliet to prison he orders the Provost "See you the fornicatress be removed: let her have needful, but not lavish means."48 This act of providing her with the needed seclusion and care for a woman about to give birth to a child is entirely consonant with Angelo's character. It is, after all, only just that this care be provided by the state to those confined to its institutions.

There is another incident that should be investigated if

47 Ibid., 125.

Angelo's character is to be fully understood. As was mentioned earlier, the Duke tells Isabella about an incident in Angelo's past life that caused him to become suspicious of Angelo. It was the broken betrothal to Marianna. Angelo was affianced to Marianna. Marianna's brother was lost at sea when he was bringing her dowry to her. When Angelo learned of the lost dowry he left Marianna on the grounds that she had been guilty of some misconduct. The question to be considered is this: could Angelo legitimately leave Marianna, or was he bound to remain with her by virtue of the betrothal? If he was free, his later affair with Marianna was fornication; if he was not free, his leaving her was, at the very least, the deed of a small and petty character, and his punishment of Claudio (who was in the same marital state) hypocritical. To settle the question it will be necessary to investigate the mind of the Church and of Elizabethan society in the matter.

It should be kept in mind that the period during which the action of the play is supposed to have occurred was one of great confusion with regard to religious matters. There are records to prove that Shakespeare was baptized a Catholic. Yet, there are reasons to question that at this time he was a practicing Catholic. Most probably he went along with the general run of Elizabethan Catholics who merely stopped practicing their

49 Ibid., III, 1, 219-237.
faith under Elizabeth's rule. The audience who saw the play would certainly have had a Catholic background. They would have been conversant with the traditional teaching of Rome on the subject of betrothals, and with the different attitudes of their own day. Shakespeare was writing for an English audience despite the fact that the scene of the play is laid in Vienna, a most Catholic town at the time. Hence, the ideas on marriage and betrothal will reflect the teaching of the Church before Trent, since the Tridentine laws could not be sufficiently promulgated in post-reformation England.

The mind of the Church in the matter of betrothals will be considered First. Without going into a full historical study of the subject, the teaching of the Church may be summed up briefly.

Until the tenth century there had been various interpretations of the effects of betrothal. The Paris School, distinguishing between betrothals per verba de praesenti and per verba de futuro maintained that neither type constituted an indissoluble marriage. Popes Alexander III and his successor Lucius III both rendered decisions that a promise under oath does not effect a marriage. Much confusion on the effects of betrothal had come from an early decree of Justinian, but it is generally conceded by theologians that the true interpretation of Justinian's decree was given in the Petri Exceptiones Legum Romanorum composed about 1050 A.D. Commenting on Justinian's decree, the author says that
if a man swears to a woman that he will marry (ducere) her, the oath is a promise, and does not form a marriage; but if he swears that he will hold (habere) her as his wife, the marriage is an accomplished fact. 50

The distinction is quite similar to that of the Paris School. "To marry" (ducere) implies a future time; 'to hold' (habere) implies here and now. According to a decree of Innocent III, the latter promise forms an indissoluble union, while the former does not and may be dissolved by the one party if the other is guilty of unfaithfulness. It should be recalled here that this is the pretext on which Angelo justifies his leaving of Marianna. It is very probable that Angelo, who had devoted a good bit of study to the law of the time, should be aware of this fact, namely, that unfaithfulness was a legal ground for separation. It is clear from the context that the agreement of Marianna and Angelo must have been de futuro since there was a question of waiting for the arrival of the dowry and there is mention of a pré-contract; "Gentle daughter, fear you not at all. He is your husband on a pré-contract..."51 It is clear that a betrothal per verba de futuro did not grant marital rights. Father Joyce notes that both Innocent III and Gregory IX declared that if copulation took place the sponsalia de futuro is understood to have been


51 M.M., IV, i, 72-74.
implemented by consent per verba de praesenti, and hence a permanent union was established. It is very significant to note that Father Joyce points out the very case of Angelo and Marianna as an illustration of this decree. It should be clear then, that Angelo, by his nocturnal meeting with Marianna was merely complementing his former agreement de futuro with an agreement de praesenti. The two did not commit sin, but merely consummated their marriage. It cannot be denied, however, that Angelo's pretension of dishonor in Marianna was a petty deed.

Before leaving this consideration of the Church's attitude, Claudio's case should be investigated. Was he married to Juliet or wasn't he? The answer will determine the nature of Angelo's committing him to prison as hypocritical or as just application of a law. Once again the Church's mind is made clear by Father Joyce. Quoting from the Manuale Sarisburiense, he makes the illegality of Claudio's action clear:

Clandestine marriages are forbidden for two reasons: first, lest the expectation of marriage lead to fornication; and secondly, lest those who are really married be unjustly separated. For in secret marriages it often happens that one of the parties alters his mind, and sends the other away destitute of all evidence and powerless to obtain remedy for the wrong.

It is clear, then, that the union of Juliet and Claudio was wrong, and that Angelo was justified in committing him to

52 Joyce, Christian Marriage, 88.
53 Ibid, 111-112.
prison and death for the violation. It was not a hypocritical deed, but the application of a most biting law.

This should suffice for an exposition of the Church's mind in the matter. Next to be considered is the attitude of the Elizabethan public and the way in which Shakespeare's audience would have looked on the matter. As was indicated earlier, the practice of the people is likely to have been different than the conduct prescribed by the Church due to the suppression of the Roman Church. The mind of society in the matter is shown in the following:

Marriage required no ceremony for its validity, although the omission of it was an offence. The only essential was verba de praesenti (as distinguished from a promise to marry at a future date), the man and woman saying to each other, 'I receive you as mine.' No ceremony, no priest, no physical consummation was required; so that after such a pre-contract (as it was called) neither party could marry any other person. If either of them purported to do so, the second marriage was bigamous and voidable and the issue of it bastards.54

Another passage reflects the mind of the people:

Although social disapproval attached to the cohabitation of lovers in advance of a regular church wedding, the practice was viewed in a separate light from casual indulgence. For couples regularly betrothed, the sexual act itself completed a legal civil marriage.


Thus, it would seem that despite the Church's ruling the people did acknowledge that the *verba de praesenti* betrothal did give the marital rights. In the eyes of the people, therefore, Angelo might seem tyrannical in condemning Claudio, but Angelo was within his rights and did not act tyrannically. This is a fine example of a typical Shakespearian trick. He plays both sides of the story. For those still steeped in Catholic tradition Angelo was right; for those no longer adhering to the teaching of Rome he was wrong. Fr. Joyce points out the fact that since the Tridentine decrees revoking the legitimacy of *sponsalia par verba de praesenti* could not be promulgated, the betrothals still had the effect of constituting a marriage, conditioned on the wording of the contract.56

This, then, is the picture of Angelo before the temptation. We have tried to make our picture as full and detailed as possible in order to understand his actions during and following the temptation. Without repeating ourselves too much we might sum up the results of our study thus far. All of the characters attribute a certain quality of fineness to Angelo. Lucio, Isabella, Marianna, the Duke—all admit that he does possess some fine qualities, but they hasten to add that he is also overweening in his pride and self-complacency. All point up the lack of

56 Joyce, *Christian Marriage*, 137.
balance between the law as he sees it and the law as he applies it to particular instances. Angelo, by his own confession, has trained himself to rise above the ordinary feelings of men. The Duke, cognizant of Angelo's untested virtue, admires what he sees, but wants to show Angelo that true virtue is positive, not a mere retreat or withdrawal from the conditions of everyday living. Thus, it seems that Angelo's character is probable in the sense we have defined at the beginning of the paper. He has faults, but aside from these he is artistically probable. His faults are those of a normal person, not faults which contradict nature.
CHAPTER III

THE TEMPTATION AND FALL

A pendulum is ascending. It reaches the limit gravity will permit and instantly it is descending. A ball is sailing through the air. It touches the bound interposed by a wall and it is sailing in the opposite direction. And even when the reaction is not instantaneous the same principle holds: everything breeds within itself the seed of its contrary. Human passion is no exception to the rule. At the extremity, it too turns the other way round, upside down, or inside out.1

As the above quotation indicates, all things have a limit. In everything there is a certain point beyond which we begin to act irrationally. Just as the pendulum, raised to the extreme point of its arc, will, when finally released, swing to the opposite extreme, so man, reacting to an unnatural strain, runs to the opposite pole of his character. In the present case we see Angelo in the role of a human judge trying to apply objective law to the miscreants of his society. Blinded by his rigid application of justice, he veers away from the mean toward the extreme of unmitigated rigor, both in his own life and in the

case of his fellow men. The result is inevitable—the pendulum must complete its arc.

In the preceding chapter we have tried to draw a complete picture of the deputy that we might better understand and interpret his actions in the course of the play. Now we come to the interpretation of what is probably the most important action as far as this paper is concerned—the temptation of Isabella by Angelo and the temptation of Angelo by Isabella. Once again, it is a problem relating to dramatic probability. We want to see if Angelo, in the vacillating moods of temptation, acted as a normal person would, or whether his actions are such that they are improbable in the sense we have defined. Let us turn, then, to the temptation scene to discover, if we can, if and to what degree Angelo manifests the signs of a 'probable' character.

Professor Moulton has given us a fine description of the characters involved in the temptation scene, contrasting as he does the two extremes of purity found in Angelo and Isabella.

Angelo is sincere in his devotion to purity, and Isabella in time comes to see this. But his devotion ... is not to a principle, but to a cause: Angelo is a partisan of purity. It has become a battlecry between parties; Angelo has taken his side ... illustrating how a man may strive on behalf of a principle which nevertheless has not entered deeply into his heart. ...

At an opposite point from this Angelo we have Isabella, in whom purity is a passion. Not only is her brother's crime 'the vice she most abhors and most
desires should meet the blow of justice,' but even legitimate passion she has renounced. . . .\(^2\)

Both of the characters are chaste if one considers chastity to consist in mere abstention from venereal pleasure. The attitudes of the two, however, are radically different. Angelo's purity is a negative thing. He is chaste because he considers sex and sexual desire evil. Isabella, on the other hand, has a more positive outlook. She has willingly renounced the right over her body by her entrance into the convent, but for the reason that she considers the celibate life more perfect than the married state. That she defended her virginity when assailed by Angelo has brought criticism from many quarters. Her actions have been interpreted as being those of a prude. But where, one might ask, is the prudence or lack of passion in defending one's purity to please God? Supposedly, the scene is laid in a Catholic region, in an age when Christ's principles of morality were not yet 'old-fashioned.' This attitude toward chastity is one of the fundamental points of contrast between the two. Angelo's virtue, because it is of his own making, is based on little more than pride. Isabella's virtue, on the other hand, is quickened by religious enthusiasm, cherished not for itself, but for the God she adores.

Walter Raleigh, in treating of Angelo's fall, makes the following observation:

... [H]is hypocrisy is self-deception, not cold and calculating wickedness. Like many another man, he has a lofty, fanciful idea of himself, and his public acts belong to this imaginary person. At a crisis, the real man surprises the play-actor, and pushes him aside. 3

Or, as Mr. Stauffer comments:

... [S]o extreme and inflexible is his thinking that, when at length he is shaken by inner convulsions to use his power to slake his own appetites, habit still holds him to an uncompromising course. Since his thought has known no temporizing or qualification, there is no choice but for the complete saint to become the complete villain. ... He has too little observed the mottlings and marblings of good and evil to make a compromise, and power itself has the instrument for enlarging both his aspirations and his degradation. 4

In Isabella there was a balanced attitude toward life which accentuated Angelo's lack of balance. In the final analysis it was this lack of a balanced outlook that brought about the ruin of Angelo.

The remainder of this chapter will be based mainly on an article of W. M. T. Doods which appeared in the Modern Language Quarterly. The brunt of this article is to show that Angelo was a 'real' character in the sense that we defined at the beginning of our paper, that is, probable to the extent that he is capable of a sincere repentance despite the heinous crimes he is guilty of.


As a first step in proving Angelo's true character, Mr. Dodds wrote as follows:

Christian experience has been that goodness carries no exception, in this life, from the fury of the Tempter; no man is guaranteed against a sudden fall from grace. It is this truth which is neglected when we argue that Angelo tempting Isabella is Angelo revealing his true nature, and that, therefore, the golden opinions he had won from the Duke were always unmerited.5

Angelo has yet to find out the 'cunning enemy' within himself which the Duke had long before perceived. Angelo is quite satisfied with himself, however, and his downfall is all the more certain because of this self-complacency. In the opening scene we hear him ask the Duke to make more test of his metal that he might be proven worthy of the honor about to be imposed. Angelo has schooled himself well in discipline of the mind and body, and as a result he has risen far above many temptations to which the common man is frequently subjected. Not that Angelo is absolutely immune. What is intended here is that he has been free from sexual temptations to such a degree that he no longer can understand how a man could degrade himself by yielding to carnal desires. His utopian existence is soon shattered, however, when he meets with the alluring purity of Isabella.

To bring out the character of Angelo a bit more as we go along, it will be well to start with the first meeting of Isabella and Angelo. One of the first things to come to our attention is the constancy, logicality and preciseness of Angelo. His logicality and precise thinking are pointed up by his frequent use of distinctions, for example:

Condemn the fault and not the actor of it?
Why, every fault's condemned 'ere it be done:
Mine were the very cipher of a function,
to fine the faults whose fine stands in record,
And let go by the actor.6

Angelo's consistency is illustrated by his frequently manifest adherence to two facts. The first, that justice is concerned with known facts; the second, that justice is impersonal and autonomous. Dodds observes this and comments,

...[b]oth these points may be easily illustrated, the first by the analogy of the jewel lying on the ground . . . and the second by the extreme case of partiality, that of a man for himself, and reflecting that even in that case justice is, ideally, so independent of its minister that Angelo condemning Angelo would be logical, whereas Angelo pardoning Claudio because Angelo is guilty, would be absurd.7

Angelo's resolute nature is repeatedly brought to our attention in this scene. Despite Isabella's importunity, Angelo parries with a reiteration of his fixed purpose. In quick

6 M.M., II, ii, 37-41.

7 Dodds, "The Character of Angelo in Measure for Measure," Modern Language Review, XLI, 249.
succession he counters her pleas with, "Look, what I will not, that I cannot do;" or, "He's sentenced; 'tis too late," and again, "Your brother is forfeit to the law, and you but waste your words." In all of these crisp and blunt denials, Angelo's adamant nature comes to the fore. He is acting as a civil official interpreting the law. He treats Isabella, not as a woman, but as a suppliant. The snow-brothed Angelo is oblivious of a man to woman relationship. For him, Isabella as a woman does not exist; he sees only the suppliant. Isabella, now convinced that an appeal to his pity is useless, changes her tactics and turns to the theme of Christ dying for sinners, and the Christian notion of forgiveness. Angelo shifts with her and counters with the words:

Be you content fair maid; It is the law, not I condemn your brother; Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son, It should be thus with him: he must die tomorrow.

Here again Angelo harks back to the autonomy of the law. Personal feelings must be put aside when it comes to a matter of an objective violation of the law. For Angelo, justice must be served.

8 M.M., II, 11, 53.
9 Ibid., 56.
10 Ibid., 71-72.
11 Ibid., 79-82.
Try as he might, Angelo is powerless to dissuade the maid from pleading for her brother, yet, his loyalty to a principle is as steadfast as her devotion to a brother. Even when Escalus intercedes for Claudio, Angelo is unbending. This would seem to indicate that he is an upright man, and master of his own mind, as Dodds points out:

It is typical of Angelo's mental habits that having stated a formed decision, he immediately sees it in terms of its issue in action: 'Sir, he must die.' This is the mark of effective thinking. . . . It is so in his treatment of Isabella. He attempts to persuade; it fails; he therefore proceeds to a plain statement of the alternatives and demands decision of her as he is accustomed to demand it of himself; 'Answer me tomorrow.' Disciplined and effective thought is not usually the concomitant of slavery to the lusts of the body. 12

Dodds traces this out in Angelo's dealings with Isabella. Angelo has decided that Claudio must die; at first he tried to persuade Isabella that the death sentence is irrevocable, but ends up trying to explain why he must carry out the decision he has rendered. Once stung by the dart of her attractiveness he makes his proposal and demands an unequivocal answer of her.

After this last desperate attempt to overwhelm Isabella, Angelo's weakness grows increasingly more patent. Isabella lands a telling blow by comparing Claudio's fate to that of other adulterers in the past. The effectiveness of this plea is attested to by Lucio's rallying cheer. Angelo, feeling the first stirrings of

desire, tries to escape by shifting to a quiet and restrained explanation of the necessity for punishing Claudio. Still undaunted, Isabella again appeals to his sense of pity. The reply made by Angelo is the first real indication of the crack in the wall of his defense:

I show it most of all when I show justice;  
For then I pity those I do not know,  
Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall;  
And do him right that, answering one foul wrong,  
Lives not to act another. Be satisfied  
Your brother dies tomorrow; be content.  

Angelo has kept to his purpose, but there is a note of the uncertain in his reply. The definite air is gone, and we begin to feel that he is no longer a judge looking on a suppliant, but a man endowed with human appetites looking on a woman and reacting to a sex instinct. The 'be content' seems to imply an apology to Isabella. Lucio, too, notices the change in Angelo's attitude almost immediately, for a few lines later, in an aside, he urges Isabella: "O, to him, to him, wench! he will relent; He's coming; I perceive it." Another brief exchange ensues, culminating in Angelo's question, "Why do you put these sayings to me?" Gone is the tone of the lord and master; for the first time Angelo is on the defensive and is looking for means to evade her pleas.

From the opening scene until the present the deputy has been adamant. There was no question about the fate of Claudio.

13 M.M., II, ii, 100-105 (italics not in original).  
14 Ibid., 124-125.
He was guilty and must die; clemency was out of the question. Due to the repeated efforts of Isabella, Angelo's resoluteness was soon worn down. Isabella pleaded, cajoled, wheedled and begged him until he shifted his position to that of a man on the defensive. Reflecting on personal experience it is easy to see how characteristic this is of men. When dealing with inferiors seeking the reversal of a decision, is the process any different? Superiors may have made their decisions known, but representation is made by an inferior advancing reasons against the stand taken. If the reasons be cogent, the superior must either admit them or act unreasonably. If he admits the arguments (at least to himself), he is liable to advance reasons of his own to defend his position. The whole situation has changed. The superior is on the defensive. This is precisely the case with Angelo, and it is easy to see that his actions are those of a normal person and of a dramatically probable character.

Now follows the famous speech in which Isabella drives the fatal wedge into the crumbling defenses of Angelo:

Go to your bosom;  
Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know  
That's like my brother's fault: if it confess  
A natural guiltiness such as his is,  
Let it not sound a thought on your tongue  
Against my brother's life.\(^{15}\)

This is an important passage for it marks the break in Angelo's resoluteness and Isabella's pleading. From this point forward, Angelo, torn between sexual desire and his ideal of duty, is on the defensive, and Isabella becomes the aggressor.

Once again the problem revolves about the question of a human lawgiver, cognizant of his own transgressions, passing sentence on a known violator of the law. Angelo's objectiveness and utter disregard for sentiment is put to the test—but, for the first time, weakens. So pertinent, and so strong is the admonition, that Angelo remarks to himself, "She speaks, and 'tis such sense that my sense breeds with it." The choice of the word breeds is strikingly artistic, bringing out as it does, the effectiveness of her admonition. Angelo senses that he is in danger, but as yet, is ignorant of just how great the danger is. To Isabella's suggestion that he reconsider his decision, Angelo reluctantly accedes, bidding her return on the morrow for the final decision. This is but a temporizing expedient for Angelo. The breach has been made in the rampart of his defenses and the impending ruin is becoming more certain. That the downfall is certain should be evident upon reflection. We know that, in our own lives, once we have reversed our field, fallen from the pinnacle of our ideals and retreated to the innermost court of our heart, the return to our original position of superiority is most

16 Ibid., 142.
difficult: "... Facilis descensus Averno ... sed revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras, hic opus, hic labor est."17

Angelo's imagination has begun to work on him and is further inflamed by Isabella's reply to his bidding her to return on the morrow.

Isabella: Hark how I'll bribe you: good my lord, turn back.

Angelo: How? Bribe me?

Isabella: Ay, with such gifts as that heaven shall share with you.18

What thoughts must have occurred to Angelo when he heard Isabella's reply? It is perfectly natural to color another's answer in a way favorable to our fixed ideas, even though the intention of the speaker was quite the contrary. Angelo, his mind teeming with the thought of Claudio's offence and the possibility of partaking of the forbidden pleasure, is convinced that Isabella is determined to purchase her brother's release at any cost. When she words her reply in such a way that she seems to agree to his proposition, the deputy is overcome with emotion. This misunderstanding is typical of men and women in affairs such as this. Because of their psychological differences, the male tends to misinterpret the honest affections of the female, taking them as an approval or acceptance of his advances, though they be of ill

17 The text of Virgil, ed. J. B. Greenough, Boston, 1881, VI, 125-127.
18 M.M., II, 11, 145-147.
intent. Angelo, then, is completely misled, and understands her virginal prayers as an offer of her body, and his error is complete when she explains her meaning. He is now on the precipice of sin, soon to be cast into the abyss in a headlong fall. His honor is lost and he has become a plaything of the devil.

Isabella leaves him, and Angelo is alone with his thoughts. "Amen; For I am going that way to temptation where prayers cross." Isabella had just said that she would pray the night through that heaven might see fit to move Angelo to mercy. Angelo, on the other hand, implies that his prayers are not directed heavenward, but rather to the Prince of Darkness, that he might succeed in his attempt to seduce Isabella. Their prayers cross: hers are directed upward for mercy; his downward for success in sin.

Angelo now gives utterance to his thoughts in a soliloquy which gives us an insight into his character:

...What's this, what's this? Is this her fault or mine? The tempter or the tempted, who sins most? Ha!
Not she: nor doth she tempt: but it is I
That, lying by the violet in the sun,
Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,
Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be
That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough,
Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary,
And pitch our evils there?20

19 Ibid., 156-158.
20 Ibid., 162-172.
Mr. Dodds, in commenting on the meaning of the passage, says:

His first thought is to apportion the moral responsibility: 'What's this, what's this? Is this her fault or mine?' He settles his own problems as decisively as he solves those of others. 'Not she; nor doth she tempt: but it is I.' The next question is typical of the reflective moralist; 'can it be that modesty may more betray our sense than woman's lightness?'

Clearly, Angelo is trying to put the blame on Isabella or her virtue. Seeing that she is not to blame he wants to put the fault on something outside of himself, and he settles for her unwonted virtue and modesty. One can almost hear the dialogue going on in his mind,

"It's her fault," he says; "But it can't be--she's too pure and holy." "Well, it must be her modesty that tempts me."

All through this temptation scene Angelo is trying to get rid of the thought that he, the 'angel', is at fault. His is a perfectly human reaction. One is so loath to accept the blame for any deed, and so ready to point an accusing finger at another. Angelo's deed does give us a revealing glimpse into his nobility when he tries to re-evaluate his character in the light of this new self-knowledge. He now sees himself as prone as other men to the urgings of the flesh. Mr. Dodds notices this new character revelation, and says of it:

Angelo, like any ordinary character in comedy, is made to see himself in a new light by an external accident—in his case, the accident of meeting Isabella. But, unlike the ordinary characters of comedy, he bears the marks of having been imagined intensely in all his capacity for suffering, just as Shakespeare's tragic characters are imagined. . . . It may be this departure from practice that has crippled the criticism of Measure for Measure. 22

Angelo is fully upset by his discovery. Now we see the hesitancy, the doubt and uncertainty of the mind in its attempt to find what is really good and true. Angelo realizes his predicament and is contemplating giving up his position to obtain the woman he desires, or, if not that, then the betrayal of his conscience.

It is one of the great touches of the play that Shakespeare makes Angelo so desperate in his longing to escape the temptation of Isabella's presence, that he is willing to abandon a position for which he contended in the argument with Escalus; faced with the alternative of betraying his conception of justice, or enduring again the compelling presence of Isabella, he weakens so far as to use almost the very instance that he had before dismissed as irrelevant. It is not sufficiently recognized that to Angelo the betrayal of his trust as a servant of justice was as grave a matter as was unchastity to Isabella, and the weakening on this point is evidence of the irresistible force of the temptation that Isabella put in his path (it was shown earlier in the play that the presence of Isabella was such as to silence and capture even Lucio, the most inveterate brothel-haunter of them all). And Angelo's next words show how swiftly the temptation had prevailed, for they reveal that he had (immediately after the thought of avoiding her) felt in prospect the pang of not seeing

22 Ibid., 255.
her again: 'What, do I love her, that I desire to hear her speak again, and feast upon her eyes?' This is more than lust of the body. ... 23

For the first time in his life Angelo has fallen victim to the dart of love, as is evidenced by the closing lines of the foregoing quotation. 24 It is an entirely new experience for the deputy and his confusion is complete. His words tell us how complete this confusion is:

... never could the strumpet,
With all her double vigour, art and nature,
Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid
Subdues me quite. Ever till now,
When men were fond, I smiled, and wonder'd how. 25

The opening lines of the fourth scene reveal the state of his soul perfectly. "... [Y]ea, my gravity, Wherein--let no man hear me--I take pride, Could I with boot change for an idle plume. ... ." 26 Immediately following this lament, Isabella's return is announced by a messenger, and Angelo's consternation is complete. Dodds analyzes this whole fourth scene as follows:

23 Ibid., 250.

24 The theory that Angelo's desire is more than lust is in full accord with the norm of Shakespearian love as set down in Shakespeare's Treatment of Love, (C.H. Hereford, London, 1921, 18). In this essay, Mr. Hereford maintains that Shakespeare's lovers meet and fall in love at first sight. This seems to be the case with Angelo, though perhaps not in the case of Isabella.


26 Ibid., II, iv, 9-11.
The realization in dramatic terms of a critical state of mind and soul, which follows this one, is one of the finest things in Shakespeare. Angelo's will is temporarily paralysed, it can not direct him to either of the opposed alternatives, since both are desired at once. And the confusion of his faculties is the more severe since both are hated at once. . . . He is thrown into an indescribable excitement and desperation, so extreme as to seem to him insupportable: 'Why does my blood thus muster to my heart, making it both unable for itself, and dispossessing all my other parts, of necessary fitness?'. . . The element of tender affection in Angelo's response to the physical presence of Isabella is merely suggested, but it is there; Shakespeare saw Angelo as humanly complex. . . .

With regard to the human complexity noted by Mr. Dodds it seems good to recall here some of the psychological elements involved in a temptation which pertain to the intellect and will. It is beyond the scope of this paper to treat of the point in detail, yet, some knowledge is necessary if the temptation is to be seen as that of a human person.

According to the scholastic system of philosophy, truth (veritas) is the formal object of the intellect, while goodness (bonum) is the formal object of the will. By the formal object is meant that particular note in an object which the faculty will perceive. In any temptation, then, the will is drawn to the object because it sees the object as something good. Whether the object is really good (per se) or only an apparent good is not considered. The will is blind; it apprehends an object because it

is drawn by the goodness of the object. It is the role of the intellect to judge whether the object is good in itself. The intellect, then, might be said to be the servant of the will. It must follow where the will commands, retaining however, its independence within its own sphere. The intellect obeys the will in this sense, that it allows itself to be applied to a particular study, but never obeys the will's command to believe what it sees to be false. E. Boyd Barrett gives a nice summation of the interrelation of the faculties:

The chief service that the intellect renders the will is to study and take mental possession of the end or bonum. It sees the value of this object and weighs its relations, its merits and deficiencies, . . . . It obeys the will inasmuch as it examines the favorable or unfavorable motives for the purpose of deliberation, which precedes the final choice of the will. 28

The intellect provides the motives on which the will's final choice is made. Before the actual choice there is a vacillating between the alternatives, and it is precisely this wavering, this oscillation, that constitutes the mental struggle in a temptation. The intellect holds out the motives for the will until the will issues its command to seek this or that good. When the decision has been made there is a consequent quiescence or peace in the mind.

When we apply these principles to Angelo we can readily see the lack of determination, the confusion and consternation raging in his mind.

0, fie, fie, fie,  
What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?  
Dost thou desire her foully for those things 
That make her good. 0, let her brother live:  

What, do I love her,  
That I desire to hear her speak again,  
And feast on her eyes? What is't I dream on?29

Mr. Dodds' observation above that here Angelo's mind was paralysed and could not direct him to either choice, duty or desire, is a fine analysis of Angelo's mental state, and the perfect description of a man in the throes of temptation. Angelo manifests his own state with the reflective lament "Alack, When once our grace we have forgot, Nothing goes aright."

Angelo's consternation and wonderment are obvious. Whereas he once smiled at men smitten by love, he now sees that he, too, is quite susceptible to the sting of the flesh, and his confusion at the discovery is complete.

Having considered these points about the psychology of a temptation, let us return to our consideration of Angelo. Once Isabella has come again into his presence Angelo's mental torment is renewed. This scene is a most powerful one, and as Mr. Dodds points out,

... [O]ne difficult to understand if the nature and predicament of Angelo have not been properly understood. This scene shows Angelo's will moving, in action, to one of its two poles; this it must show, for it is only in the passion of the spirit that irreconcilables can coexist. They struggle confusedly for existence in the first few interchanges of Angelo with Isabella, where one speech flatly contradicts the other. With consummate truth to the reality of the state of extreme indecision, Shakespeare has shown that the deciding element in the contention is Angelo's recoil from whichever alternative is uppermost in his mind. 30

As is intimated above, the meeting is marked by the grossest misunderstandings. Angelo puts the wrong interpretation on everything that Isabella says, and she in turn misconstrues his answers. This is a most natural thing for two persons, if they are fixed on ideas which are completely different. Angelo can stand the delay no longer, and gives utterance to his infamous proposal.

Say you so? then I shall pose you quickly. Which had you rather,—that the most just law
Now took your brother's life; or, to redeem him,
Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness
As she that he hath stained. 31

The choice of words in this passage is excellent. The words of Angelo, "sweet uncleanness," are a perfect indication of the state of his mind. 'Sweet' expresses the idea that he is already beginning to anticipate the venereal pleasure that might be

31 M.M., II, iv, 51-56.
had in case Isabella yields. On the other hand, the word 'uncleanness' indicates that he knows it is wrong to partake of these pleasures outside of marriage. The conflict in his mind, the struggle raging in his body between the call of the flesh and the dictates of his reason, is well expressed in the words he uses.

Perhaps one might ask, 'if Angelo fell in love with Isabella at first sight, would it not be quite unusual for him to propose such a scandalous course of action'? G. Wilson Knight, though not proposing this same question, makes a shrewd observation concerning this possibility:

Angelo is now quite adrift: all his old contacts are irrevocably severed. Sexual desire has long been anathema to him, so his warped idealism forbids any healthy love. Good and evil change places in his mind, since his passion is immediately recognized as good, yet, by every one of his stock judgments, condemned as evil. . . . Since sex has been synonymous with foulness in his mind, this new love, reft from the start of moral sanction in a man who 'scarce confesses that blood flows,' becomes swiftly a devouring and curbless lust. . . .32

Despite the bluntness of the proposition, Isabella still misunderstands Angelo's meaning and agrees with him when she replies, "Sir, believe this, I had rather give my body than my soul."33 Angelo, thinking he has convinced her, employs the cunning imagination of the seducer when he tries to assuage her

32 Knight, The Wheel of Fire, 87-88.
33 M.M., II, iv, 56-57.
conscience, saying, "... our compelled sins stand more for num-
ber than account."34 Alarmed at this turn of events, Isabella de-
mands to know the precise meaning of Angelo's words. Angelo, real-
izing that she has not been agreeing with him, so words the next
response that it is impossible to miss the meaning: "... either
you must lay down the treasures of your body ... or else let him
suffer; what would you do?"35 Isabella is undaunted by the hein-
ous proposition and gives Angelo just as unequivocal an answer:

As much for my poor brother as for myself:
That is, were I under the terms of death,
The impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death, as to a bed
That longing have been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame.36

That Angelo is unversed in the ways of sexual transgres-
sions is rather evident from the ensuing dialogue. He first de-
mands that Isabella surrender her virtue to him, and then, when
she refuses, he is a beaten man. He no longer demands, but now
pleads and begs that she surrender to him her body for 'sweet un-
cleanness.' This failing, Angelo makes an open profession of love
and pushes his suit on the grounds of his honor. All his life he
has been accustomed to have recourse to this honor to lead him in
the right path. Now, when recourse to that honor is a mockery,

34 Ibid., 57-58.
35 Ibid., 96-98.
36 Ibid., 99-104.
he is helpless. He is thwarted by Isabella pointing out the selfishness and hollowness of the deceiving honor, and so assumes the role of the domineering tyrant. He scoffs at her threat of exposing him to the Duke; says that no one will believe her since his reputation as a man of virtue is already established, and that the most her accusation will do is to deprive her of whatever respect she now commands in the city. The demand to surrender her chastity is repeated, this time as to a beast, not as to a lover. When she spurns his final attempt, all self-control is gone, as is evidenced by his cry

... I have begun;
And now I give my sensual race the rein;
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;
Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes,
That banish what they sue for; redeem thy brother
By yielding up thy body to my will;
Or else he must die not only the death,
But thy unkindliness shall draw his death out
To lingering sufferance. 37

Here again is another example of the shrewd cunning employed by Angelo in his attempt to persuade Isabella. He states the alternatives open to her. Either yield, or condemn your brother to a drawn out and lingering death. He seems to emphasize the fact that he will make Claudio's death as painful as possible if she does not yield. It is his cunning nature telling him how to force her surrender. It is Angelo's trump card. Mr. Dodds comments on the passage to show the force of Angelo's passion:

37 Ibid., 159-167.
The balance is now struck, and Angelo, who so far has hardly known whether he argues with Isabella or with himself, or whether he is in fact feeling his way to the beginnings of the seduction in the only way he knows, now enters in the struggle with Isabella and puts into it all the pent-up strength of will that recently in the struggle with himself could find no direction for its power. The veerings from pole to pole now cease, and the whole momentum of a powerful nature... flares up to the fuel of the occasion and consumes Isabella. There is exultation of release as well as the savagery of a desire which is the obverse of love in Angelo's words.38

The fall has taken place. Angelo has fallen a victim to the same vice he would condemn Claudio for, and indeed, his own fall is far more complete, for, as Mr. Stauffer points out:

Once his principles are shattered, Angelo's habitual intransigence leads him further in villainy than Lucio, for instance, could have conceived or executed. Angelo becomes the complete sensualist, using his authority to aid his depredations, and his good name to mask them. Murder, treachery, and perjury preserve the bright repute of which habitually he was so proud, and foster the lust which he realizes in horror he cannot control.39

Angelo is strikingly similar to Macbeth, who to further his own ends, did not stop at regicide once his ambition had been stirred.

Angelo has given Isabella until the following morning to answer his proposal, daring her to betray him to the Duke. When Angelo excuses himself, Isabella soliloquizes on the foulness of


39 Stauffer, Shakespeare's World of Images, 150.
hypocrisy, then walks off, certain that her brother will never permit her to save him at the expense of her virtue.

The temptation scene is over. In reflecting on the various scenes it should be evident that Angelo has shown himself to be a probable character. His reactions to all of the situations have been those we would have expected of a man who has always eschewed all dealing with matters of the flesh, and who now, for the first time, finds himself enmeshed in the iron grip of passion. Bewildered, he has plunged ahead unchecked until he is tottering on the precipice of ruin. His mental attitudes are those common to all men under the duress of mental anguish. Perhaps his acquiescence was rapid, but it is chiefly because Shakespeare has not taken time to spell out Angelo's fall. If we will but reflect and analyze the passage we will see that in these particular circumstances, this particular man, with his unique background, in the light of his character as drawn in an earlier section had to act as he did to be consistent. He is consistent and he is probable.
.. . . [B]ut if we look closely into Angelo's character shall we not see that the fact that his conversion, forced on him by outward circumstances, does not imply that the anguish for lost purity must necessarily have been lacking in him? He is a proud man with an enormous reverence for purity, and for himself whom he takes to be in a manner its impersonation. . . . When he finds that the Duke, like Power Divine, 'has looked upon his passes,' he prays that 'no longer session may be held upon his shame,' but that, without a trial, he may be condemned upon his own confession.

From what has already been said up to this point of the paper it should be evident that the above quotation is true of Angelo. The fact that he has undergone a severe temptation, and has been found woefully lacking in real principle does not militate against the possibility of his repenting. He is proud, certainly, but by his fall he has been humbled to the point where he can begin anew his ascent of the mount of virtue. He chooses otherwise. It is consonant with his past declarations of intention that he should seek full justice for his crime. To show

1 Emily Hickey, "Measure For Measure--A Study," The Catholic World, CV, April, 1917, 93.
that this is the case will be the burden of the present chapter.

As was indicated in the introductory chapter, the possibility of Angelo's repentance has been one of the major causes of contention among the critics. To show that a probable repentance is possible is now our task. Relevant to this problem, the words of Marianna are quite apt; "They say the best men are moulded out of faults, and, for the most, become more the better for being a little bad; so it is with my husband."2

There seems to be good reason to believe that this is the case with Angelo. Recall that once Isabella had rejected his offer, Angelo warned her that any attempt to denounce him to the returning Duke would be fruitless. True, Angelo merely wanted to conceal the attempted seduction. Had he been successful in his attempt he knew that Isabella's natural shame would have sufficed to keep the matter secret. She would not have dared to mention to Claudio that his life had been purchased by the surrender of her virtue. But now, due to the employment of the 'bed trick,' the affair is known to many people, and Angelo sees the impossibility of concealing it from the Duke. His plea that the death sentence be passed on his deed is, it would seem, an indication of his sorrow for the deed itself, not to mention the shame he has incurred. He has been completely chastened, albeit by external circumstances, and he is prepared to accept the due punishment: "Immediate

sentence, then, and sequent death, Is all the grace I beg."3

Miss Hickey's reaction to the repentance expressed here is that

...[t]he fact of discovery brought a great relief; henceforth no more concealment, no hiding of shame except in the bosom of death. He had not been ambitious of place: richly gifted as he was, he had shrunk from the unlimited power with which the Duke intended to invest him.... Nor was Angelo a self-deceiver: he saw wrong as wrong and made no attempt to veil it from his eyes....4

We cannot agree with this interpretation without some qualification. It seems clear that Angelo was a self-deceiver since his opinion of his own virtue was highly exaggerated beyond all logical bounds. We can and do agree with Miss Hickey in that Angelo saw his wrong for what it was. It seems to this writer that Angelo accepted his fate with mixed motives. Certainly, any man feels the humiliation that is connected with public manifestation of his faults, and for this reason he is sorry that he committed the deed. But over and above this sorrow, Angelo was the subject of an even greater sorrow. The sorrow for having transgressed against justice. It is because of this latter sorrow that he willingly and spontaneously begs that that sentence be passed on his deed. And this sorrow is what may be termed repentance in contrast to mere remorse. Angelo is repentant for having offended

3 Ibid., 377-378.

4 Hickey, "Measure For Measure--A Study," Catholic World, CV, 93.
the very law he was trying to enforce. He is sorry for the one transgression and to insure that it will never happen again he asks for death.

Professor Hudson makes the following observation:

But it seems to me hardly prudent or becoming thus to set bounds to the grace of repentance, or to say what amount of sin must necessarily render a man incapable of being reformed. All which may in some measure explain the Duke's severity to the smallest crime of Lucio, after his clemency to the greater one of Angelo.5

To investigate further the notion of repentance as distinguished from remorse, and to compare Angelo's actions with our findings, it will be of great benefit to turn to the philosophers once again.

We have already shown that Angelo was conscientious. Indeed, the whole play attacks this point of his character as an extreme one. Angelo sees the objective law, notes the violation of the law, then applies the law in all its rigor to the miscreant, regardless of his person. For Angelo, the law is something which admits of no exception.6 As the deputy ruler he feels conscience-bound to apply the law in all its rigor, for this was the charge laid on him by the Duke: "Hold therefore, Angelo:--

5 Hudson, Shakespeare, 418.
6 M.M., II, ii, 79-82.
In our remove be thou at full ourself. . . "7 The whole tenor of
the play points to this exactness on the part of Angelo, hence,
the fact should be readily accepted by all readers. In connection
with this fact, then, it will help to consider what Fr. Maher has
to say:

This consciousness of obligation is, moreover, universal
throughout mankind, although the influence of education
and the social environment may alter considerably the
classes of action to which it is affixed. The intellect
may doubt or even err in what particular conduct is
right; but that which it judges to be right each man
feels bound to do.8

This desire to live according to the dictates of one's
conscience is universal, stemming from man's nature, and its pres‐
ence in Angelo is a strong argument for his feeling some kind of
sorrow. Our task is to show that this sorrow is the type we have
termed repentance.

Again turning to the psychologist, we read:

Conscience leads us to reverence and awe, hope and fear,
especially fear. . . . No fear is felt by anyone who re‐
cognizes that his conduct has not been beautiful, though
he may be mortified at himself, if perhaps he has there‐
by forfeited some advantage; but if he has been betrayed
into some kind of immorality, he has a lively sense of
responsibility and guilt, though the act be no offence
against society,—of compunction and regret, though in

7 Ibid., I, i, 43-44.
8 Michael Maher, S. J., Psychology, London, 1933,
440-441.
itself it be most pleasurable--of confusion of face though it have no witnesses. 9

Father Maher goes on to indicate that these emotions do admit of degrees, depending on the individual's past.

These moral sentiments, however, be it remembered, are developed, refined, strengthened, and perfected, in proportion as man acts up to the dictates of his conscience: they can be weakened, perverted, all but extinguished by continuous violation and abuse. 10

The importance of this last passage is evident. Man's reaction will be proportioned to his delicacy of conscience. In Angelo's case, then, there should be a strong reaction since his whole life has been dedicated to the principle of following his conscience regardless of the criticism he might incur.

To be consistent, Angelo's reaction must be extremely strong. He has tried to observe justice in all situations, but now, where he has violated it, he will feel the strongest sense of guilt. Faced now with paying the penalty for his crime, Angelo's character is put to the test. If he is merely sorry that he was caught, sorry that his reputation has been shattered, he is remorseful; if, on the other hand, he is sorry for his violation against the law as such, he is repentant, since his sorrow will implicitly express his desire not to offend again.

9 Ibid., 441.
10 Ibid.
Remorse without repentance is quite a selfish thing. It is perfectly logical, too, for the selfish man to seek mercy for his offenses. Yet, what does Angelo do? He turns to Escalus, and says,

I am sorry that such sorrow I procure;  
And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart,  
That I crave death more willingly than mercy;  
'Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it.

This is not the cry of a selfish man. It is the cry of a man who recognizes his guilt, and aware of the penalty for his crime, asks for his just deserving.

In the light of this treatment of the psychological principles of conscience, and the difference between remorse and repentance, it seems clear to the writer that Angelo, if he is to be consistent in his actions, must be repentant in the sense we defined at the beginning of the paper. His outward actions are the manifestation of his interior feelings, hence his repentance is probable factually and psychologically. He shows the signs of a man who is truly sorry for having violated this law, and who now has the intention of never offending again—so much so that he willingly embraces death to prevent its recurrence. He has the psychological motivation for his repentance, both from his past habitual way of acting, and also from the universal manner in which conscience operates in man.

11 M.M., V, 1, 478-481.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The object of this final chapter is to review briefly the work of the individual chapters and to draw the results of our investigation to a focal point for the purpose of formulating our conclusions.

The general framework of the study is clear. The problem set before us was to establish the psychological probability of Angelo's repentance for his violation of justice. To do this the writer has proceeded by first setting down the Aristotelian norms of character probability. The necessity of this step is clear. The character under study must, first of all, be probable himself if he is to be the agent of dramatically probable deeds. Having set our norms of probability a thorough study of the character of Angelo was begun.

The method of studying Angelo's character was so plotted out that no possible allusion to his character by any of the other characters in the play was left unstudied. The first witness was the Duke himself. In his conversations with the Friar at the convent, with Escalus, with Angelo himself, and finally
with Isabella, we see that the Duke has confidence in Angelo, respects his reputation as a just and virtuous man, but, despite this confidence, entertains the slight doubt that Angelo's goodness might not be everything it is reputed to be.

After the Duke, the testimony of Escalus was collated. In the few references that Escalus does make, he indicates that Angelo is a virtuous man, but has at least the one fault of being unable to temper his application of justice by the balm of mercy. Just as the Duke represented the testimony of Angelo's superior, and Escalus provided that of a peer, so the testimony of Lucio is solicited as that of an inferior. Lucio's revelations about Angelo are quite different from the previous witnesses. In Lucio's estimation, Angelo was an inhuman automaton, insensible to the call of the flesh. This is the idea one might expect to get from Lucio, who, as a potential object of Angelo's ruthlessness, sees only the sword of the new master.

After Lucio, the testimony of Marianna, scant as it is, and that of the provost and the other minor characters was added, although they throw little additional light on the deputy's character. Isabella, too, was a source of information and it is her statement that, in her mind, Angelo was sincere, though a victim of a severe temptation that provides great weight to our argument for probability.
When the external sources of information had been delved, we examined Angelo himself as he manifested his character by his speeches and actions. In particular, the betrothal of Marianna to Angelo was examined to see if he could legitimately leave her. Though it was found that he could leave her this incident pointed up a degree of smallness in his character, though he was perfectly in the right, legally speaking.

In summation, we found that Angelo's character could be classified as probable. There was nothing that he himself or any of the witnesses brought to our knowledge that would serve to disqualify him as a probable character.

Having established his probability, we studied Angelo in his relations with Isabella, specifically, the temptation itself. The contrast in characters was brought out that the forces in conflict might be thoroughly understood. The mental attitudes of both parties was studied in order to illustrate the confusion and turmoil raging within Angelo. When Angelo's consternation was shown, we introduced the psychology of a temptation to show that Angelo's state and that of a normal person in the throes of temptation corresponded.

In the fourth chapter it was our purpose to show that Angelo was truly repentant for his crime. It was made clear that the sorrow Angelo felt was not mere remorse, or sorrow for his violation of justice because he was humiliated, but repentance, or
sorrow for his violation of justice as such. It was pointed out, 
 too, that his sorrow was such that it implied a determination not 
 to offend again, and to insure the carrying out of his intention 
 he begged that the just penalty—death—be inflicted. 

The psychology of conscience was introduced to show the 
 normal state of a good man who has acted contrary to the dictates 
 of his conscience. The psychology of conscience was not put in 
 for itself, but rather as a basis for the theory of remorse and 
 repentance. The conclusion of the chapter indicated that in the 
 estimation of the writer Angelo's actions, when reflecting on his 
 crime, were probable actions. Arguing from the probability of the 
 actions, one might logically conclude that they were also psychol­ 
 logically probable. 

This then must serve as the conclusion of our thesis. 
 Angelo has been shown to be a dramatically probable character ac­ 
 cording to the Aristotelian norms of probability. As such he is 
 capable of making a probable repentance. From the study of his 
 character, his habitual mode of acting, his actions during the 
 temptation, and his mental state after the temptation, to be con­ 
 sistent, his repentance must be probable. If his repentance is 
 probable in a dramatic sense, it is probable in a psychological 
 sense. 

Although not set up as the purpose of the paper, it is 
 of interest to note that a sincere repentance would be a corollary
of a psychologically probable repentance. It might be added, too, that there are other difficulties in the play that should be answered before the play will prove fully acceptable. However, as far as Angelo is concerned, a close study of his character will reveal that he is probable in a dramatic sense, and that an analysis of the elements involved will show that his repentance for his "cruelty, with lust and damnable baseness" can be probable from a psychological viewpoint.
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The thesis submitted by Mr. Joseph A. Diamond, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Oct. 10, 1955

Date

H. S. Hughes

Signature of Adviser