

# The Satirical Effect of the Catholic Elements in Measure for Measure

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<b>Author</b>	Sugii, Masashi
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## The Satirical Effect of the Catholic Elements in *Measure for Measure*

SUGII Masashi

Three Catholic factors that are not derived from its source, *Promos and Cassandra*, appear in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. The setting is transferred to Vienna, then famous as a Catholic city, and the protagonist Duke disguises himself as a Catholic friar when he visits his subjects *incognito*, while the heroine Isabella is a novice in the Order of Saint Clare. This article examines the effect these Catholic factors have on the play. As is evident from its title, the play has a moral framework by which the Duke inculcates a preference for mercy over justice in his subjects. However, in three scenes, a satirical view of the Duke's behaviour is evoked: that in which the Duke waits for Claudio's pardon from Angelo; that just after the Duke arranged the bed-trick; and the last, in which the problems are solved, though with much confusion. In this article, I examine the effect the Catholic factors produce given such a satirical viewpoint, taking into consideration the anti-fraternal tradition of the Elizabethan age and the recent theory that Shakespeare was in reality a Catholic. I counter those Catholic theories by concluding that the play strengthens the audience's satirical view of the Duke and Isabella.

Vincentio, the Duke of Vienna, is the hero of William Shakespeare's comedy *Measure for Measure*. The plot of this 'problem play' is as follows. Vincentio disappears from court, claiming the desire to travel, and leaves the government in the hands of Angelo, a subject known for his moral strictness. However, disguised as a Catholic friar named Lodowick, the Duke spies on Angelo's handling of the city's affairs. As a deputy of the Duke, Angelo rigorously enforces the law against moral corruption, which carries the death penalty. A young gentleman named Claudio is convicted under this law and receives a death sentence for illicit intercourse with a girl named Juliet, who became pregnant before marriage. Claudio's sister Isabella, a novice nun of Saint Clare, visits Angelo to help her brother. Fascinated by her beauty, Angelo offers her a deal: Angelo will spare Claudio's life if Isabella yields her virginity to him. Isabella refuses the offer at first, but is persuaded to accept the offer of a rendezvous by the Duke, who has been spying on his dukedom *incognito*. The Duke intends to help Claudio and Isabella by arranging a bed-trick: he orders Isabella to send word to Angelo that she has decided to submit to him, but places a woman previously abandoned by Angelo, Mariana, in the bed instead. Despite the trick, Angelo fails to keep his promise to

Isabella and sends a message to the prison provost to execute Claudio. In return, the Duke saves Claudio's life by persuading the provost to send Angelo the head of a Ragozine, who is of similar appearance and had just died of fever in the prison. Following this, the Duke sends a letter to Angelo informing him of his own return to court, and appears in public. Before the Duke, Isabella files suit against Angelo, and the tyrant is sentenced to death for the severe sentence he gave Claudio. Eventually, it is revealed that Claudio is still alive; the device of the bed-trick is revealed; Angelo and the other subjects are all forgiven; and the play ends happily.

The play's title, *Measure for Measure*, derives from the Sermon on the Mount:

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged:  
and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (Matt.7.1-2)

As described above, Angelo sentenced Claudio to death, but later, Angelo himself is condemned to death by the Duke. The plot reflects the moral of the Sermon on the Mount, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged'. The Duke as a deputy of God can be regarded as expounding the importance of mercy to his subjects. As implied by its title, the play shows how the Duke strives to inculcate a preference for mercy over justice. Despite such a moral framework, there are at least three scenes where the audience is seemingly invited to doubt the Duke's behaviour. In this paper, I would first like to confirm this tendency of the play and then examine how it relates to the Catholic factors that Shakespeare introduced into this plot. Historical studies of *Measure for Measure* by Peter Milward, Darryl Gless, Paul Voss, David Beauregard, David Scott Kastan, and others have linked the play to Catholicism. However, these critics either regarded the play as anti-fraternal or in contrast noted the positive portrayal of the Catholic friars and nuns in the play (Milward 1996, Gless 1971, Voss 1993, 3-6, Beauregard 2003, 311-35, Kastan 2014). As no scholar seems to have examined the audience's satirical view of the Duke when analysing the scenes with the friar, my approach to the anti-friar tradition of Shakespeare's plays will be original.

## 1

First, I will confirm that, in three separate scenes, a satirical view of the Duke's conduct can be inferred. The first is Act 4, Scene 2. To save the lives of Claudio and his sister, the Duke forces Isabella and Mariana to play a bed-trick. However, to our surprise, Angelo, who

was presumably able to gratify his carnal desire, breaks his agreement with Isabella and orders Claudio's execution. The audience learns of this oddly. In Act 4, Scene 2, the disguised Duke and the provost are waiting for the letter of pardon for Claudio, acquired at the cost of Isabella's virginity (although the audience is aware that Angelo's real bed-fellow is in fact Mariana, and Isabella's chastity was not sacrificed). When the messenger arrives, the Duke misunderstands it as Claudio's pardon and states his view of sin and authority, generalising Angelo's case. The speech's style is very formal, written in rhymed couplets:

This is his pardon, purchas'd by such sin  
For which the pardoner himself is in.  
Hence hath offence his quick celerity,  
When it is borne in high authority. (4.2.106-9)

However, the messenger brings instead a letter urging the provost to execute Claudio. Angelo thus shows he has no mind to keep his agreement with Isabella. Tetsuo Kishi points out the irony of this scene as follows (Sugii, 2010, 121):

The Duke visits the provost and tells him that the order to cancel Claudio's execution was issued. The provost answers that such an order was not issued. At length, Angelo's messenger comes with a warrant. The Duke, convinced that it is Angelo's pardon, delivers a plausible statement about mercy. But what the provost reads aloud turns out to be a message urging Claudio's execution. No matter how critics may defend the Duke's conduct, this is a comical scene if we view the scene as it really is. If the adjective 'comical' is going too far, we can say that, according to Brecht, in this scene, a *distancing effect* is created about the character Vincentio. As the fact that Angelo did not act as the Duke planned is shown just after the Duke's speech full of self-confidence, the audience is forced to watch the Duke's discomfiture with an indifferent look. (Kishi 157)<sup>1)</sup>

As Kishi points out, a distancing effect (what Brecht called *Verfremdungseffekt*) is created here and the audience is placed in doubt of the Duke's conduct and capability. The deceived Duke appears all the more idiotic to the audience because he anticipated his plan's success with his sententious soliloquy. In this way, in Act 4, Scene 2, a satirical view of the Duke is evidently created.

The second scene is the opening of Act 3, Scene 2. A constable, Elbow, suggests this:

Nay, if there be no remedy for it, but that you will needs buy and sell men and women like beasts, we shall have all the world drink brown and white bastard. (3.2.1-4)

While, as with most of the scenes in the play, the speech reveals the common people's indecent lives, it serves another purpose as well. It is delivered just after the scene in which the Duke and Isabella arrange the bed-trick. In the previous scene, the Duke eavesdrops on the conversation between Claudio and Isabella and discovers Angelo's illicit offer of a rendezvous with Isabella. Then, in order to save her brother's life and help Mariana, the Duke persuades Isabella to 'answer his requiring with a plausible obedience' (3.1.243-44) and begins the preparations for the bed-trick. The Duke claims the merit of this device thus:

If you think well to carry this as you may, the doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from the reproof. (3.1.257-59)

However, the audience might feel that the trick being planned by the Duke is all the more questionable because he deliberately refers to its merit or pleads for 'the deceit'. The scene in which the bed-trick is prepared is followed directly by Elbow's speech above. As the speech occurs just after the Duke's proposal, it naturally influences the audience's view of the bed-trick itself. It is evident that the audience will have a suspicion that the trick serves only to 'buy and sell men and women like beasts' and to cross a man and woman without regard for their feelings, and that the Duke and Isabella are nothing but 'bawds' (as suggested by Elbow).

The third such scene in which the audience might take a satirical view of the Duke's conduct is the denouement. In the last scene, the Duke first returns in his original form, undisguised, and makes Isabella file a suit against Angelo. Isabella and Mariana fail to recognise that the Duke is the friar Lodowick who advised them to carry out the trick. The Duke scolds Isabella, repeating that such a suit is nonsense and Isabella must be mad, till he orders his officer, 'to prison with her!' (5.1.124) The Duke leaves the stage temporarily, and reappears—this time disguised as friar Lodowick. At that moment, Lucio pulls off the friar's hood and unmasks the Duke's identity. Without this interruption by Lucio, the Duke would have continued in his disguise before revealing himself as the Duke, exposing Angelo's wrongdoing. Though his identity is unveiled, the Duke, on the pretext of saving Mariana's

honour, forces Angelo and Mariana to solemnise a wedding and, to the audience's surprise, sentences Angelo to death. In conclusion, he informs the subjects that Claudio is still alive, and judges that all should be forgiven, including Angelo. The Duke's trick is in the form of a play designed to educate his subjects, whereby he makes himself, Isabella, Mariana, and a friar named Peter appear as actors and actresses. Mutsumi Nozaki's comment that 'the process to the final pardon given by the Duke is a series of twists and turns and is unnecessarily complicated' (Nozaki 1977, 173), is, we may surmise, the impression of most of the audience as well. Furthermore, one character expresses a similar dissatisfaction. When Isabella is ordered to take part in the trick in the denouement devised by the Duke, she complains: 'To speak so indirectly I am loth; / I would say the truth' (4.6.1-4). It is obvious that the audience cannot sympathise with the Duke's conduct because in keeping the fates of Claudio and Angelo ambiguous, he causes anxiety and confusion in his subjects, who are ignorant of his strategy, though he himself pleads that he pays attention to the welfare of those around him.

As the analysis above shows, we can conclude that in at least three scenes a satirical viewpoint is created which makes it difficult for the audience to readily accept the Duke's moral scenario.

## 2

Next, I examine how such a view of the audience relates to the Catholic elements within the play. The Catholic factors introduced into this play by Shakespeare are as follows:

- (1) the shift of setting into Vienna, the main city of the Holy Roman Empire;
- (2) the choice of disguise as a Catholic friar adopted by the Duke; and
- (3) the change of Isabella's character into a novice nun of the Order of Saint Clare.

These factors are alterations made by Shakespeare to the original source. I would like to examine first the fact that the playwright changed the setting to Vienna. The moral corruption evident in the play hints at London, specifically the area of Southwark, where the Globe was situated; yet, the setting is clearly Vienna. In the main source for the play, *Promos and Cassandra* by George Whetstone, the setting is Julio, a city under the reign of the king of Hungary and Bohemia (Bullough 1977). Shakespeare shifted the setting from Julio to Vienna, a stronghold of the Holy Roman Empire, circa 1604 (thought to be the year when

*Measure for Measure* was written), and a pivot of the resolute Catholic Holy League opposing England (Ishizuka 2014, 44). At the same time, Vienna was famous as a Christian bridgehead opposing the Ottoman Empire. In the second part of Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, the King of Natolia, Orcanes, gives an order relating this town to Sigismund, King of Hungary:

Stay, *Sigismund*, forgetst thou I am he  
That with the Cannon shook *Vienna* walls,  
And made it dance upon the Continent, (*Tamburlaine the Great II*, 1.2.9-11)

Though the attack referred to here may not have been the one made at the time of the first performance of *Measure for Measure* but one made much earlier, the above-cited speech at least corroborates that Vienna was symbolic as a forward base in the battle with Islam in the early part of the Jacobean age.

On the other hand, in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Lucio refers to the peace negotiation between Vienna and Hungary: 'If the Duke, with other dukes, comes not to composition with the King of Hungary, why then all the dukes fall upon the king' (*MM*, 1.2.1-3). In those days, the King of Hungary was a Protestant leader who raised a powerful revolt against the Catholic House of Hapsburg that ruled the Holy Roman Empire. The Protestants, standing in with the Ottoman Turks, confronted the Catholics. Therefore, the setting of Vienna symbolises the Catholic background of the play.

Hereafter I examine the scenes during which the disguise of the Duke as a friar begins and in which his conduct with respect to the disguise plays an important part.

In Act 1, Scene 3, the Duke visits a Catholic friar's cell in order to disguise himself as a Catholic friar in the Franciscan order. The Duke entreats Friar Thomas to lodge himself for the night and asks Thomas to '[s]upply me with the habit, and instruct me / How I may formally in person bear / Like a true friar' (1.3.45-48). However, the very first speech that the Duke delivers in the scene of friar Thomas's cell is an entreaty that surprises the audience:

No. Holy father, throw away that thought;  
Believe not that the dribbling dart of love  
Can pierce a complete bosom. Why I desire thee  
To give me secret harbour hath a purpose  
More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends



Of burning youth. (1.3.1-6)

It can be surmised that there was a conversation before the above-cited speech because the speech begins with the response 'No'. Thomas may be worried that the Duke will misuse the disguise as a friar for a mere tryst. The Duke explains that he will not abuse his disguise like imprudent young men charmed by the 'dribbling dart of love'. This scene surprises the audience, who would imagine that, as it is set in a friar's cell, a less secular conversation would take place.

As the play uses the framework of Christian doctrine, it is natural that the Duke takes the disguise of a clergyman. In prison, the disguised Duke visits, comforts, and advises Claudio (sentenced to death), his sister Isabella, and Claudio's fiancée Juliet. As a confessor, the Duke prepares Claudio for death—'this friar hath been with him, and advised him for th'entertainment of death' (3.2.206-07)—and gives directions to repent of Juliet's sin of conceiving a child before a formal wedding and persuades Barnadine to be executed instead of Claudio.

In these scenes, the Duke is well aware that he himself performs the part of a Catholic friar, and this awareness is demonstrated by both his habit and the speeches he delivers. The Duke talks to Escalus, who is ignorant of his disguise: 'I am a brother /Of gracious order, late come from the See/In special business from his Holiness' (3.2.212-14). '[T]he See' refers to the Curia Romana, and 'his Holiness' refers to the Pope: these references demonstrate that he consciously plays the part of a Catholic friar. At the time of this play's premiere, the Catholic Pope was Clement VIII, who desired the conversion of James I and hoped that England would return to her former faith, Catholicism. It can be concluded from the Duke's speech that he belongs to the holy orders and has a commission from the Pope himself, and that the Duke is proud to hold the position of a friar.

The Duke's predilection for Catholicism is apparent from his addresses to friar Thomas, from the frequent references to charity or the religious order, and the habit that he wears: 'holy Father' (1.3.1), 'holy sir' (1.3.7), 'pious sir' (1.3.16), 'my father' (1.3.39). With his '[B]ound by my charity, and my bless'd order, / I come to visit the afflicted spirits /Here in the prison' (2.3.3-5), the Duke desires admission into the prison from the provost. We can witness the Duke's pride in the 'habit' worn by the Catholic monk when he makes an excuse to meet Juliet: 'my mind promises with my habit no loss shall touch her by my company' (3.1.176-77). In Act 4, Scene 2, where he orders the provost to replace the head of Claudio with that of Barnadine, the Duke swears 'By the vow of mine order' (4.2.168) and 'by the saint whom

I profess' (4.2.179), and, in the scene where he persuades Barnadine to be executed, he refers also to charity: 'induced by my charity' (4.3.49).

The Duke not only takes advantage of the position of a friar as a means of his disguise, but also actively carries out the work of a confessor. He prepares Claudio for death—'Be absolute for death' (3.1.5)—and he also advises Claudio's fiancée, Juliet, who is morally to blame for her pregnancy, as follows:

DUKE. 'Tis meet so, daughter; but lest you do repent,  
As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,  
Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not heaven,  
Showing we would not spare heaven as we love it,  
But as we stand in fear—

JULIET. I do repent me as it is an evil,  
And take the shame with joy.

DUKE. There rest. (2.3.30-36)

As Juliet says just before the above-cited speech 'I do confess and repent it, father' (2.3.29), the Duke performs the two parts of confession, penitence and contrition, as a father confessor. Referring to this speech, Peter Milward points out that, as he visits Juliet, the Duke in the guise of Lodowick admonishes her that sincere repentance is not 'the fear of heaven', which is 'toward ourselves' (2.3), but the expression of regret, urged by the feeling of love. This admonition is a typical explanation used by Catholic moralists to distinguish between 'incomplete repentance' and 'complete repentance' (Milward 1996, 76).<sup>2)</sup> In contrast, the Protestants came to understand that confession was a completely private and interiorised exercise, not restricted to a certain mode or form. Therefore, it is evident that the Duke is aware of the two fine distinctions about Catholic repentance, and he sticks to it (Beauregard 2003, 325-26, Kastan 2014, 69).

As is evident from the above analysis, in the scenes where the Duke is disguised as a friar, he is very aware of Catholic manners, clothes, and doctrine, ignoring the fact that the disguise is only a means for helping Claudio, Isabella, Juliet, and Mariana.

Next, I examine the scenes in which the audience sees Isabella become a novice of a Catholic nunnery. As Claudio explains to Lucio: 'This day my sister should the cloister enter,/ And there receive her approbation' (1.2.167). Isabella is a probationer of the abbey seeking to enter a Catholic convent. A vestal virgin is a woman who makes vows of poverty,

chastity, and obedience and follows a communal life in a nunnery. In Act 1, Scene 4, at the nunnery, it is obvious from Isabella's own declaration, 'I speak not as desiring more,/ But rather wishing a more strict restraint / Upon the sisters stood, the votarists of Saint Clare' (1.4.3-5), that she is a novice nun belonging to the Order of Saint Clare, reputed for its strictness. This order was founded in the thirteenth century by the daughter of a rich nobleman, Claire, who had been deeply impressed by the teachings of Saint Francis of Assisi. Clare was a Catholic abbey following and obeying the instruction of poverty and chastity. The order is the second one of the Franciscans, who were more reputed for their vow of poverty than the Dominican Order. 'Isabella' has a connotative sense of 'a devoted adherent', and a record survives that in Wroxall Priory situated 12 miles north of Stratford-upon-Avon there lived a prioress named Isabella Shakespeare (Milward 1996, 79). Alternatively, as indicated by Darryl J. Gless, the heroine's name 'may even allude to the "Isabella Rule" that governed the ascetic branch of the Poor Clares' (Gless 1971, 102).

When Lucio visits the nunnery to find a means of saving Claudio's life by contacting his sister, Isabella, Francisca, already a sworn nun, strongly warns Isabella:

It is a man's voice! Gentle Isabella,  
Turn you the key, and know his business of him;  
You may, I may not; you are yet unsworn:  
When you have vow'd, you must not speak with men  
But in the presence of the prioress;  
Then, if you speak, you must not show your face;  
Or if you show your face, you must not speak. (1.4.7-13)

The name Francisca alludes to the Franciscans, the order founded by Saint Francis of Assisi. She is seized with panic and pays excessive attention to the rule of the nunnery: 'you must not speak with men/ But in the presence of the prioress'. In this way, the play reveals the strictness of the chastity required by the Catholic monastery. The libertine, Lucio, makes a satirical comment in response:

LUC. I hold you as a thing enskied and sainted  
By your renouncement, an immortal spirit,  
And to be talk'd with in sincerity,  
As with a saint.

ISAB. You do blaspheme the good, in mocking me. (1.4.34-38)

Shakespeare does not always present a favourable view of the monastic nun's life, cloistered from the real world. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the Duke of Athens, Theseus, expresses his view of monastic life, saying that a vestal virgin must wear the livery of a nun and be placed forever in the confinement of a shady cloister, living a sterile woman's life. He concludes that such a life is worse than married life (1.1.65-78). In the age of the Reformation, James I and the Protestants took objection to the confined life for the sake of religious belief. In *Genesis* 2:18, celibacy is criticised: 'It is not good that man should be alone'. In *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare seems sceptical of the self-righteous behaviour of Isabella, who is so devoted to chastity as to forego mercy towards others (Sugii 1993, 25).

Isabella's obsession with chastity is apparent in other scenes. In Act 2, Scene 2, when she visits Angelo to appeal for mercy for her brother, she broaches the plea with the following speech that shows her conflict over whether to help her brother or avoid a vice:

There is a vice that most I do abhor,  
And most desire should meet the blow of justice;  
For which I would not plead, but that I must;  
For which I must not plead, but that I am  
At war 'twixt will and will not. (2.2.29-33)

What Isabella means by 'a vice' is Claudio's indiscreet conduct in making his lover pregnant before a formal wedding. She is so obsessed by the devotion to chastity that she cannot utter the specific name of her brother's sin, 'Lechery' (1.2.129). Isabella's pride in being a novice nun of a strict order is also revealed in the following exchange with Angelo in the same scene: 'prayers from preserv'd souls, /From fasting maids whose minds are dedicate/To nothing temporal' (2.2.154-56). Her obsession sometimes assumes an air of Catholic masochism with a kind of martyr's elation, which also appears in her exchange with Angelo: 'were I under the terms of death,/ Th'impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,/And strip myself to death as to a bed/That longing have been sick for' (2.4.100-03). This speech reminds us that, in actuality, the sisters of the Order of Saint Clare employed whipping as a measure of austerity (Woods 2013, 106). The devotion to chastity sometimes gives the impression that she may be merciless. When Claudio complains of his own execution and asks his sister to accept Angelo's request, she refuses the proposal with a harsh affirmation: 'Mercy to thee

would prove itself a bawd; /'Tis best that thou diest quickly' (3.1.148-49). As stated above, though the religious order to which Isabella belongs maintains a strict discipline of which she is proud, she is so devoted to the discipline as to sometimes assume a cold-hearted attitude.

In the first section of this paper, it was argued that three scenes created a satirical viewpoint that made it difficult for the audience to readily accept the moralistic scenario planned by the Duke. The second section thus far has confirmed the same tendency in the Catholic elements introduced by Shakespeare into the original source, such as (1) the shift of setting to Vienna in the Holy Roman Empire, (2) the disguise adopted by the Duke as a Catholic friar, and (3) Isabella's part as a novice nun belonging to the Order of Saint Clare. Both the Duke and Isabella devote themselves to their roles as a Catholic friar or a nun, and both evince great pride in their rigorous Catholic values. In the rest of this section, I would like to examine what effect these Catholic factors create in the play, taking the above conclusion of the two sections into consideration.

In the first place, the status of a friar adopted by the Duke enables him as a confessor by the authority of the church to know his subjects' worries or to advise them, and enables him to intervene in their private affairs. Furthermore, his adopted status as a Catholic friar allows him to inculcate a preference for mercy over justice in his subjects. Owing to the fact that Isabella is a Catholic nun, her mental conflict becomes more acute regarding the question of whether to save her brother's life or to live a chaste life by refusing Angelo's offer. The assumption of the role of a clergyman or clergywoman endows the play with a psychological depth separate from the play's secularity and vulgarity—these remain characteristics of the public, such as Lucio's circle. The setting in Vienna, a Catholic bridgehead, is also suitable for the Duke and Isabella to act as a clergyman and a clergywoman. However, it may be conjectured that these factors create nothing but an ironic effect in the circumstances where the audience's satirical view of Duke is being formed. In other words, the Duke's and Isabella's adherence to Catholicism inevitably appears comical. Immediately following the opening scene, a libertine, Lucio, and his companions enjoy exchanges with jokes about 'saying prayers':

- 2 GENT No? A dozen times at least.  
1 GENT What, in metre?  
LUCIO In any proportion, or in any language.  
1 GENT I think, or in any religion. (1.2.20-23)

According to J.W. Lever, 'language' implies Latin and 'religion' implies Catholicism: thus, we can interpret the above-cited speeches of Lucio and the first Gentleman as mockery of the second Gentleman's belief in Catholicism. Though the exchange seems to be only shallow 'small talk', we can at least see the play's basic tendency to view the religion of Catholicism satirically. Therefore, the Catholic factors adapted from the original source to this newer play by Shakespeare reveal the Duke and/or Isabella's unnecessary adherence to the Catholic profession: 'I am a brother /Of gracious order, late come from the See/In special business from his Holiness' (3.2.212-14). These factors reveal their defective personalities, and they tend to strengthen the audience's satirical view of the conduct of these two characters.

When the Second Folio of Shakespeare's plays (published in 1632) was censored by the Society of Jesus in the University of Valladolid in Spain in the 1640s, only this play, *Measure for Measure*, was completely expurgated as an unsuitable literary work. Although this was presumably due to explicit sexual scenes in the play, it can also be assumed that the censor, Father William Sankey, found fault with the satirical viewpoint of Catholicism implied in the play and censored it for this reason (Milward 1996, 74-75).

### 3

Next, I give an account of the anti-fraternal tradition or circumstances in England that form the foundation for my argument that the Catholic elements strengthen the satirical presentation of the Duke and Isabella. In the preceding section, I referred to the Duke's request in Act 1, Scene 3 to Friar Thomas that the latter provide the former with lodging in the friar's cell. In this scene, the Duke states that Thomas need not be worried that the Duke should abuse his disguise as a friar to arrange a tryst for young lovers. From this speech, we can gather that there is a mischievous agenda at work in taking advantage of a friar's habit. J.W. Lever, the editor of the second Arden edition of this play, also comments: 'The Duke is denying an off-stage suggestion that he has come to arrange a lover's rendezvous' (Lever 1967, 19). In the Elizabethan age, Catholic friars were regarded as conniving at such arrangements, and were mocked by the Protestants as bawds.

Throughout the medieval age and the Elizabethan age, there existed a negative association of friars with sexually immoral Catholic convents. In the early part of the Reformation, the player clothed as a friar committed mischievous conduct on stage. Referring to such instances, Beauregard cites one scene in George Chapman's *May-Day* (1611) and indicates that such an immoral friar is one stereotype in the drama (Beauregard 2003, 314):

Out upon't, that disguise [of a 'friar's weed'] is worn threadbare upon every stage, and so much villainy committed under that habit that 'tis grown as suspicious as the vilest. (2.4.146-48)<sup>3)</sup>

*An Heptameron of Civill Discourses* (1582), which is another alleged source of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, includes an episode of Friar Inganno. 'Inganno' carries the significance of the word 'fraud'. Friar Inganno tells Dame Farina that St. Francis intends to visit her at night as Friar Inganno. However, her parish priest sees through Friar Inganno's deceit when he is informed of this visit. As a countermeasure, the priest arranges that an ugly maid named Leayda should sleep with Inganno instead of Farina. The trick is the same bed-trick that the Duke employs in *Measure for Measure*: Inganno leaps into bed, unaware of the trick. There, the parish priest and others enter with candles and torches and berate him, singing, 'Salve, Saincte Francisce'. They bind and strip him, lay him in a bundle of nettles, and cover him with honey so that he is bitten by bees and flies. Thus, the Franciscan friar's lewd attempt ends in punishment and laughter (Beauregard 2003, 324). The trope of the hypocritical friar appeared in *Fals-Semblant* in Geoffrey Chaucer's translation of *Roman de la Rose*, in the 'Summoner's Tale' in *The Canterbury Tales*, and in the literary works of Edmund Spenser and John Webster (Gless 1971, 72).

Paul Voss comments on the anti-fraternal tradition in England: 'Anti-fraternal writings flourished during the Middle Ages in the writing of Chaucer, Langland, and Archbishop Richard Fitzralph' (Voss 1993, 3). This tendency continued in the English Renaissance and 'the friar as a literary character remained [...] to stand for things greedy, lustful, immoral and even satanic', and 'when an immoral or lecherous character was called for, he would often be dressed in a friar's habit' (Voss 1993, 4).

This negative dramatic depiction was brought to the attention of Queen Elizabeth by the Spanish Ambassador shortly after her accession to the throne in 1588. She issued stern proclamations in April and May ordering local magistrates to forbid the licensing of any plays which derided aspects of the Catholic religion, of the mass, and of the saints. Yet the negative characterization of the friar went largely unabated. (Voss 1993, 4)

In the Elizabethan age, for instance, in *Doctor Faustus*, Christopher Marlowe associated a Franciscan friar with the devil. Faustus orders Mephistophiles as follows:

I charge thee to return, and change thy shape,  
Thou art too ugly to attend on me:  
Go and return an old Franciscan friar,  
That holy shape becomes the devil best. (1.3.23-26)

Also in *The Jew of Malta*, Friar Barnadine explains the rules that the friars must observe:

Know that confession must not be reveal'd  
That canon law forbids it, and the priest  
That makes it known, being degraded first,  
Shall be condemned and then set to fire. (3.6.33-36)

Barnadine, however, threatens the play's hero, Barabas, with the secret information that two youths fought a duel, urged on by a forged letter of defiance, information acquired through that very auricular confession. Marlowe represents both Friar Barnadine and Friar Jacomo as worldly impostors and blackmailers (Voss 5-6).

However, it is worth remembering, as pointed out by Beauregard or Kastan, that some friars in Shakespeare's plays, such as Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet* or Friar Francis in *Much Ado About Nothing*, are crucial allies of the heroes and heroines. Therefore, the friars in Shakespearean plays are themselves not consistently given tyrannical characterisations along the lines of Lucio in *Measure for Measure*, nor are they always guilty of immoral conduct or crimes like those of the Chaucerian and Marlovian friars. The friars in *Measure for Measure*, including the Duke, are also kind characters. Yet, the bed-trick arranged by the Duke, the too-complicated trick and scenario also arranged by him in the denouement, and his adherence to the Catholic friar's habit or doctrine are in subtle contradiction to his assumed sacred character as a friar. The English anti-fraternalism is reflected in the characterisation of the Duke and Isabella, but the reflection is mild rather than explicit. Though not directly anti-Catholic, *Measure of Measure* is a play that has the potential to create anti-Catholic sentiment.

#### 4

In this section, I discuss the relationship between my conclusion that Catholic elements in the play strengthen the satirical view of the conduct of the Duke or Isabella and the



recently propounded theory that Shakespeare was in reality a secret Catholic. The question arises, is my conclusion incompatible with the recent theory associating Shakespeare with Catholicism? To decide whether or not Shakespeare was a Catholic is a difficult task because it requires superior skills in investigating and analysing a vast quantity of historical data. Nonetheless, I would like to consider the relationship between my conclusion and the theory that Shakespeare was a Church Papist. Takanori Togo makes the following comment on this theory:

From the late 1990s appeared a growing number of research papers asserting that Shakespeare was in reality a Catholic. At the present time, in 2005, many scholars and biographers had come to publish a view that agrees that Shakespeare at least was brought up as a Catholic. The theory that Shakespeare was a Catholic at least up to adolescence can be roughly classified into three arguments. The first is that his family, that is to say, his father, mother, and daughter, most likely embraced the Catholic faith. The second is that the teachers of the grammar school in Stratford-upon-Avon, where Shakespeare was supposed to be educated, were all Catholic graduates from Oxford University. The third is that there are some signs of Shakespeare having worked as a resident tutor-cum-actor at a Catholic gentry's mansion in Lancashire after graduating from the school. (Togo 2005, 6)

As supplementary evidence regarding Shakespeare's family's faith in the first argument, we can cite the fact that a Catholic 'Spiritual Testament', marked with the sign of John Shakespeare on five pamphlets, was discovered by chance during roof repairs on his house in 1757. In the testament, William's father John confessed a Catholic faith. We also know that three of William's children, Susanna, Judith, and Hamnet, were on the list of recusants. The fact that his father and children were recusants shows the possibility of Shakespeare himself having embraced the Catholic faith (Gunji 2011, 85-92).

As an example of the second argument, we might mention John Cottam, who was a schoolmaster at King's New School, Shakespeare's grammar school in Stratford-upon-Avon. He worked at the school during the years that Shakespeare was in attendance there. He was a member of a famous Catholic family in Lancashire, and his younger brother Thomas was a friend of Edmund Campion. Thomas was arrested, tortured, and executed at Tyburn in 1582. John Cottam returned from Stratford to Lancashire and proclaimed himself a Catholic. Some scholars insist that he brought Shakespeare to Lancashire (Bryson 2007).<sup>4)</sup>

The Catholic land owner in the third argument is Alexander Hoghton of Lea in Lancashire. He left a will dated 3 August 1581 with a provision addressed to his brother-in-law, Thomas Hoghton: 'if he [Thomas Hoghton] will not keep & maintain players, then it is my mind & will that Sir Thomas Hesketh knight shall have the same instruments & play clothes. And I most heartily require the said Sir Thomas to be friendly unto Fulk Gillom & William Shakeshafte now dwelling with me & either to take them unto his service or else to help them to some good master'. (Honigmann 1985, 136). The Hoghtons were also famous Catholics and lived only 16 km from the Cottams. According to one of the 'Lancashire Shakespeare' theories, Shakespeare won patronage from the Heskeths with the support of the Hoghtons, as stated in the above-cited will, and there met a theatrical company, the Earl of Derby's Men. This connection enabled him to begin his theatrical career in London (Bryson 2007).

There are objections to the 'Lancashire Shakespeare' theory. William Shakeshafte was rewarded as high as two pounds a year by Hoghton's will. Such a reward would have been too high for the young William Shakespeare, then still 17 years old. There is also a problem with the name. 'Shakeshafte' was a common name in Lancashire. A record of the shire written in 1582 shows that there were seven Shakeshafte families and that, among them, at least three families had a member named William. Therefore, we cannot identify this William Shakeshafte as William Shakespeare from Stratford. There were many Catholics in William Shakespeare's family; the grammar school that William was supposed to attend employed Catholic schoolmasters, and he was brought up influenced by Catholicism. These seem to be established facts; yet the connection between young Shakespeare and Lancastrian Catholicism cannot be fully confirmed.

Protestant reform in Stratford and Warwickshire lagged that in many other areas of England. The atmosphere was also more tolerant toward Catholicism. The situation of Shakespeare's youth was religiously hybridised and religious difference was accepted, despite the legislative acts designed to enforce a new Protestant conformity. It is natural that Shakespeare had Catholic tendencies growing up in such a milieu. There is no doubt that he had an attachment to English Catholic culture. He was attached to the cultural heritage and to certain ceremonies and doctrines associated with his country's Catholic past, although he may have assumed an outward conformity to the official governmental religion. Those Catholics who outwardly conformed (insincerely) to the established Protestant Church were called 'Church Papists', meaning Catholics who attended the services of the Protestant Church (Milward 1996, 9). Shakespeare as well may have been such a papist attached to Catholicism.

However, the religious majority, whether Catholic or Protestant, opposed both hard-line Counter-Reformation Catholicism and Puritanism. Even most hard-line Catholics were patriotic Englishmen opposed to foreign invasions. Therefore, whatever Shakespeare's beliefs or religious or emotional attachments and inclinations may have been, like the vast majority of his compatriots, he was a loyalist. If such an arbitrary view is dangerous, we can at least say that he was a man who offered no public disagreement with James I's regime. And Shakespeare's religious politics were both nationalist and irenic. It is evident from such of his plays as *King John* and *Henry VIII* that he had a strong patriotic attachment to the Protestant nation.

Admittedly, Shakespeare may have been brought up under the strong influence of Catholicism, and he may have had Catholic instruction at home from his parents and been influenced by his Catholic schoolmasters at the King's New School, but it is certain that he also attended church services, read the Geneva Bible and used it for academic translation exercises, absorbed the language and content of the official Book of Homilies, and was regularly catechised (Marotti 2003, 218-41). Therefore, we can conclude that, although Shakespeare was brought up in a Catholicised milieu, he was a man malleable enough to attune himself to the new regime of the Reformation.

Finally, let me revert to the original question of whether my argument about *Measure for Measure* might contradict the theory that Shakespeare was in reality a Catholic. It can be conjectured that even though Shakespeare may have been a Catholic, he was not a hard-line Counter-Reformist and was doctrinally malleable enough to employ such anti-Catholic codes as were circulated in Marlowe's plays. He had no hesitation at turning a satirical eye on the Catholic attitudes of the Duke and Isabella if it would create a comical effect. Kastan also points out a sceptical view of the Duke's conduct: 'this is a play about a duke disguising himself as a friar with the help of vowed clergy, hearing confessions, arranging a sexual encounter for an unmarried couple, and proposing to a young woman in a novitiate's habit, willfully ignoring her commitment to celibacy' (Kastan 2014, 67). It is impossible that Shakespeare would not have realised that the bed-trick in the play created subtle irony through the Catholic elements that were not derived from its source, *Promos and Cassandra*. The fact that the government of King James, who was supposed to view the play, had adopted Protestantism as the official religion of its realm may be the reason why Shakespeare created such anti-Catholic sentiment in his play. Though not directly anti-Catholic, *Measure of Measure* is a play that has the potential of creating anti-Catholic sentiment.

### Notes

- 1) The articles by Tetsuo Kishi, Mutsumi Nozaki, and Takanori Togo are in Japanese. The citations from these articles are my translations.
- 2) I was unable to use Milward's original text. Instead, I use my re-translation from the Japanese translation by Nakayama and Yasuda.
- 3) The citation is from Beauregard's article.
- 4) As Bill Bryson's argument is in the style of CD, I don't add paginations.

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