The Condemned Cell in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*

“The last chapters were to be written in the condemned cell . . . .”


Why did Dickens have to return to the criminal in the condemned cell, for the fourth time (after “A Visit to Newgate in *Sketches by Boz*, *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*”) in his career? How was it related to the tradition of English drama?
Dickens as Bobadill

*Every Man in His Humour*

Why Ben Jonson?

Dickens chose *Every Man in His Humour* for a benefit performance in 1845.

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**Some Plays by Ben Jonson**

- *Every Man In His Humour* (1598; printed 1601)
- *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599; printed 1600)
- *Eastward Ho*, (1605), a collaboration with John Marston and George Chapman
- *Volpone* (c. 1605–06; printed 1607)
- *Epicœne, or The Silent Woman* (1609; printed 1616)
- *The Alchemist* (1610; printed 1612)
- *Bartholomew Fair* (1614; printed 1631)
Every Man in His Humour was first performed by 1598, published in quarto in 1601, and revised by Jonson some time after that date for inclusion in the folio edition of 1616. In any case, subsequent stage history belongs entirely to the folio version.

The play did well in the Restoration period as an ‘old stock play’ allotted in 1669 to Thomas Killigrew’s company at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. David Garrick, at Drury Lane in 1751 and intermittently until 1776, excelled as Kitely in historic costume dress; the folio text was substantially cut and restructured into fewer scenes.

The play remained in the repertory of both Drury Lane and Covent Garden, with performances in 1825, 1828, and 1832. W. C. Macready played Kitely at Bath and Bristol in 1816, and eventually in London at the Haymarket in 1838.

Charles Dickens chose instead to play Bobadill with his company of literary amateurs at Miss Kelly’s Soho theatre in September 1845 and at Manchester and Liverpool in July 1847, . . . .

These alternatives in what was considered the leading role (Brainworm is another) suggest how well balanced the play is among nine or so significant male roles, originally written for an acting company of about that size.

Excerpts from:
Garrick’s adaptation would have been by far the easiest to appreciate for the Victorian audience, though Jonson’s asperity was much softened there. The script Dickens used may have been based on it.
Jonson’s comedy follows the basic framework of Roman New Comedy.

**Every Man in His Humour**

**The Persons of the Play (Folio version)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Knowell</td>
<td>An old gentleman (<em>senex</em> in New Comedy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Knowell</td>
<td>His son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainworm</td>
<td>The father’s man (servant, or slave in New Comedy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitivey</td>
<td>A merchant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Bobadill</td>
<td>A Paul’s-man (the type who loitered in the middle aisle of the earlier St. Paul’s cathedral: braggart soldier, <em>miles gloriosus</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Clement</td>
<td>An old merry magistrate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of Jonson’s plays, *EMIH, EMOH, The Alchemist, Epicæne, Volpone and Bartholomew Fair*, are set in contemporary London where eccentric (humorous) characters engage in various follies. They are typical City Comedies.
City Comedies

City Comedy
A kind of comic drama produced in the London theatres of the early 17th century, characterized by its contemporary urban subject-matter and its portrayal, often satirical, of middle-class life and manners. The principal examples are John Marston’s *The Dutch Courtezan* (1605), Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), and Thomas Middleton’s *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613).

*The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*

Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* (1599)
John Webster, *Westward Ho* (1604)
George Chapman, Ben Jonson, John Marston, *Eastward Ho* (1605)
Thomas Middleton, *The Roaring Girl* (1611)
Philip Massinger, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (c. 1621)
A Map of London around 1600

Ben Jonson was the playwright of the City.
Charles Dickens was the Novelist of the Metropolis
‘And your little boy—’ said Mr. Pickwick.
‘Bless his heart!’ interposed Mrs. Bardell, with a maternal sob.
‘He, too, will have a companion,’ resumed Mr. Pickwick, ‘a lively one, who’ll teach him, I’ll be bound, more tricks in a week than he would ever learn in a year.’ And Mr. Pickwick smiled placidly.
‘Oh, you dear—’ said Mrs. Bardell.
Mr. Pickwick started.
‘Oh, you kind, good, playful dear,’ said Mrs. Bardell; and without more ado, she rose from her chair, and flung her arms round Mr. Pickwick’s neck, with a cataract of tears and a chorus of sobs.
‘Bless my soul,’ cried the astonished Mr. Pickwick; ‘Mrs. Bardell, my good woman—dear me, what a situation—pray consider.—Mrs. Bardell, don’t—if anybody should come—’

‘Oh, let them come,’ exclaimed Mrs. Bardell frantically; ‘I’ll never leave you—dear, kind, good soul;’ and, with these words, Mrs. Bardell clung the tighter.

‘Mercy upon me,’ said Mr. Pickwick, struggling violently, ‘I hear somebody coming up the stairs. Don’t, don’t, there’s a good creature, don’t.’ But entreaty and remonstrance were alike unavailing; for Mrs. Bardell had fainted in Mr. Pickwick’s arms; and before he could gain time to deposit her on a chair, Master Bardell entered the room, ushering in Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass.

Mr. Pickwick was struck motionless and speechless. He stood with his lovely burden in his arms, gazing vacantly on the countenances of his friends, without the slightest attempt at recognition or explanation. They, in their turn, stared at him; and Master Bardell, in his turn, stared at everybody.
“Mr. Tupman was wrong. The fat boy, for once, had not been fast asleep. He was awake—wide awake—to what had been going forward.”

Chapter VIII

Chapter XXII. Mr. Pickwick Journeys to Ipswich and Meets with a Romantic Adventure with a Middle-Aged Lady in Yellow Curl-Papers

CHAPTER XVI.

The Unexpected ‘Breaking Up’ of the Seminary of Young Ladies

CHAPTER XVI.
Arguably the most famous “discovery scene” in English stage history.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The School for Scandal* (1777) Act IV. The screen falls and Lady Teazle is discovered.
Variations of similar dramatic situation
Eavesdropping scenes in Dickens’s novels

Oliver Twist

David Copperfield
Nicholas Nickleby

The most “theatrical” Dickens novel
Nicholas Nickleby

Chapter 41

... a large cucumber was seen to shoot up in the air with the velocity of a sky-rocket, whence it descended, tumbling over and over, until it fell at Mrs. Nickleby’s feet.

This remarkable appearance was succeeded by another of a precisely similar description; then a fine vegetable marrow, of unusually large dimensions, was seen to whirl aloft, and come toppling down; then, several cucumbers shot up together; and, finally, the air was darkened by a shower of onions, turnip-radishes, and other small vegetables, which fell rolling and scattering, and bumping about, in all directions.
As Kate rose from her seat, in some alarm, and caught her mother’s hand to run with her into the house, she felt herself rather retarded than assisted in her intention; and following the direction of Mrs. Nickleby’s eyes, was quite terrified by the apparition of an old black velvet cap, which, by slow degrees, as if its wearer were ascending a ladder or pair of steps, rose above the wall dividing their garden from that of the next cottage, (which, like their own, was a detached building,) and was gradually followed by a very large head, and an old face, in which were a pair of most extraordinary grey eyes: very wild, very wide open, and rolling in their sockets, with a dull, languishing, leering look, most ugly to behold.

‘Mama!’ cried Kate, really terrified for the moment, ‘why do you stop, why do you lose an instant? Mama, pray come in!’

‘Kate, my dear,’ returned her mother, still holding back, ‘how can you be so foolish? I’m ashamed of you. How do you suppose you are ever to get through life, if you’re such a coward as this? What do you want, sir?’ said Mrs. Nickleby, addressing the intruder with a sort of simpering displeasure. ‘How dare you look into this garden?’

‘Queen of my soul,’ replied the stranger, folding his hands together, ‘this goblet sip!’

‘Nonsense, sir,’ said Mrs. Nickleby. ‘Kate, my love, pray be quiet.’
‘What! Do you suppose this poor gentleman is out of his mind?’

‘Can anybody who sees him entertain any other opinion, mama?’

‘Why then, I just tell you this, Kate,’ returned Mrs. Nickleby, ‘that, he is nothing of the kind, and I am surprised you can be so imposed upon. It’s some plot of these people to possess themselves of his property—didn’t he say so himself? He may be a little odd and flighty, perhaps, many of us are that; but downright mad! and express himself as he does, respectfully, and in quite poetical language, and making offers with so much thought, and care, and prudence—not as if he ran into the streets, and went down upon his knees to the first chit of a girl he met, as a madman would! No, no, Kate, there’s a great deal too much method in his madness; depend upon that, my dear.’
Dickens first met Macready on June 16th, 1837.

“Forster came into my room with a gentleman, whom he introduced as Dickens, alias Boz—I was glad to see him.”

“Thus began a friendship of the happiest and most genial description that was only terminated by Dickens’s death, thirty-three years afterwards. Dickens was then not more than twenty-five, and had not yet published any of his novels, though the Sketches by Boz had brought him a good deal of reputation as a magazine contributor.”

Footnote by William Toynbee to Macready’s Diaries, 1912

Dickens published Sketches by Boz in February and August in 1836. The serial publication of The Pickwick Papers began in March 1836.
Macready’s restoration of Shakespeare’s *King Lear* as a tragedy in 1834 and 1838

Macready returned to the original text of Shakespeare, terminating the 150-year reign of Nahum Tate’s romantic version on the English stage.

“O, thou’lt come no more, Never, never, never, never, never!”

*King Lear*, Act 5, Scene 3
Nahum Tate, *The History of King Lear* (1681)

Tate’s *Lear* is not a tragedy but a romance, more like *King Leir* (1594), one of Shakespeare’s sources.

- Cordelia and Edgar are in love with each other
- Fool is absent
- A happy ending with Lear and Cordelia remaining alive

Until Macready’s return to the original text (though not fully reproduced) in 1834 and 1838, Tate’s adaptation had been the standard and very popular version on the English stage. George Colman (1768) erased the love interest between Edgar and Cordelia but had to retain the romantic ending. Edmund Kean was the first nineteenth-century actor to attempt a restoration of the original ending but his tragic *Lear* was not well received by the audience.
January 5th [1838]

Speaking to Willmott and Bartley about the part of the Fool in Lear, and mentioning my apprehensions that, with Meadows, we should be obliged to omit the part. I described the sort of fragile, hectic, beautiful-faced, half-idiot-looking boy that he should be, and stated my belief that it never could be acted. Bartley observed that a woman should play it. I caught at the idea, and instantly exclaimed: “Miss P. Horton is the very person.” I was delighted at the thought.

The Diaries of William Charles Macready 1833-1851

“. . . Miss P. Horton’s Fool as exquisite a performance as the stage has ever boasted.”

John Forster’s review of Macready’s Lear, February 4, 1838 (often wrongly attributed to Dickens)
There had been an old copy of *the Pilgrim’s Progress*, with strange plates, upon a shelf at home, over which she had often pored whole evenings, wondering whether it was true in every word, and where those distant countries with the curious names might be. As she looked back upon the place they had left, one part of it came strongly on her mind.

‘...I feel as if we were both Christian, and laid down on this grass all the cares and troubles we brought with us; never to take them up again.’ ”

Chapter 15
Dombey and Son

Little Dorrit

Lear and Cordelia

images in Dickens
Mr. Wopsle as Hamlet and the Ghost He Witnesses

*Great Expectations*

“On our arrival in Denmark, we found the king and queen of that country elevated in two arm-chairs on a kitchen-table, holding a Court. The whole of the Danish nobility were in attendance; consisting of a noble boy in the wash-leather boots of a gigantic ancestor, a venerable Peer with a dirty face who seemed to have risen from the people late in life, and the Danish chivalry with a comb in its hair and a pair of white silk legs, and presenting on the whole a feminine appearance. My gifted townsman stood gloomily apart, with folded arms, and I could have wished that his curls and forehead had been more probable.”

Chapter 31.

“I had a ridiculous fancy that he must be with you, Mr. Pip, till I saw that you were quite unconscious of him, sitting behind you there like a ghost.”

Chapter 47.
“Among the multitude of sights, we saw our pleasant little bud of a friend, Rose Chéri, play Clarissa Harlowe the other night. I believe she does it in London just now, and perhaps you may have seen it. A most charming, intelligent, modest, affecting piece of acting it is, with a Death, superior to anything I ever saw on the Stage, or can imagine, except Macready’s in Lear.”

**Rose Chéri** 1824–1861

Dickens’s Letter from Paris to Countess of Blessington, 24 January 1847
Samuel Richardson (1689-1761)

One of the forerunners of the English Novel, Richardson did not approve of drama. But the epistolary form of his novels had strong affinities with dramatic writing. Each character writing a letter can be regarded as assigned a part, as if listed in a *dramatis personae*. Only their lines are extremely long. Sometimes the writer of a letter engages in conversation with other characters in a letter, recording the tense situation minute by suspenseful minute.

Richardson’s career seems to have undeviatingly followed that of Francis Goodchild in Hogarth’s *Industry and Idleness*; an industrious apprentice rose to a partnership with his master, married his daughter, finally a master of his trade in his own right.

He published *The Apprentice’s Vade Mecum, or The Young Man’s Pocket Companion* in 1734.
William Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*
Plate 1
Samuel Richardson,
The Apprentice's Vade Mecum, or The Young Man's Pocket Companion (1734)
Pip and George Barnwell

“As I was loitering along the High Street, looking in disconsolately at the shop windows, and thinking what I would buy if I were a gentleman, who should come out of the bookshop but Mr. Wopsle. Mr. Wopsle had in his hand the affecting tragedy of George Barnwell, in which he had that moment invested sixpence, with the view of heaping every word of it on the head of Pumblechook, with whom he was going to drink tea. No sooner did he see me, than he appeared to consider that a special Providence had put a ’prentice in his way to be read at; and he laid hold of me and insisted on my accompanying him to the Pumblechookian parlour.”

Great Expectations, Ch. XV.

George Lillo, The London Merchant, or The History of George Barnwell (1731)
VI. GEORGE BARNWELL

The subject of this ballad is sufficiently popular from the modern play which is founded upon it. This was written by George Lillo, a jeweller of London, and first acted about 1730. As for the ballad, it was printed at least as early as the middle of the last century. It is here given from three old printed copies, which exhibit a strange intermixture of Roman and black-letter. . . . This tragical narrative seems to relate a real fact; but when it happened I have not been able to discover.

THE FIRST PART

ALL youths of fair England
That dwell both far and near,
Regard my story that I tell,
And to my song give ear.
A London lad I was,
A merchant’s prentice bound;
My name George Barnwell; that did spend
My master many a pound.

Take heed of harlots then,
And their enticing trains;
For by that means I have been brought
To hang alive in chains.

As I, upon a day,
Was walking through the street
About my master's business,
A wanton I did meet.
Barnwell and Millwood at an Entertainment.

Barn. To ease our present Anguish, by plunging into Guilt, is to buy a Moment’s Pleasure with an Age of Pain.

Mill. I should have thought the Joys of Love as lasting as they are great: If ours prove otherwise, ’tis your Inconstancy must make them so.

Barn. The Law of Heaven will not be revers’d; and that requires us to govern our Passions.

Mill. To give us Sense of Beauty and Desires, and yet forbid us to taste and be happy, is Cruelty, to Nature.—Have we Passions only to torment us!

Barn. To hear you talk, —tho’ in the Cause of Vice,— to gaze upon your Beauty,—press your Hand,—and see your Snow-white Bosom heave and fall,—enflames my Wishes; my Pulse beats high,—my Senses all are in a Hurry, and I am on the Rack of wild Desire; —yet for a Moment’s guilty Pleasure, shall I lose my Innocence, my Peace of Mind, and Hopes of solid Happiness?

Mill. Chimeras all,—Come on with me and prove No Joy like Woman kind, nor Heav’n like Love.

Barn. I wou’d not, —yet I must on.— Reluctant thus, the Merchant quits his Ease, And trusts to Rocks, and Sands, and stormy Seas; In Hopes some unknown golden Coast to find, Commits himself, tho’ doubtful, to the Wind Longs much for Joys to come, yet mourns those left behind.

[Exeunt.]
[V.x]

BARNWELL,

Tell 'em I'm ready . . . —Early my race of wickedness began and soon has reached the summit. Ere nature has finished her work and stamped me man, just at the time that others begin to stray, my course is finished. . . . Thus justice, in compassion to mankind, cuts off a wretch like me, by one such example to secure thousands from future ruin.

. . .

If any youth, like you [Trueman], in future times Shall mourn my fate, though he abhors my crimes, Or tender maid, like you [Maria], my tale shall hear And to my sorrows give a pitying tear,
To each such melting eye and throbbing heart,
Would gracious Heaven this benefit impart: Never to know my guilt, nor feel my pain.
Then must you own you ought not to complain, Since you nor weep, nor shall I die in vain.

[Exeunt]
Prisons are a familiar feature in eighteenth-century novels.

Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones* (1749)
Henry Fielding, *Amelia* (1751)
Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766)
M. G. Lewis, *The Monk* (1796)

In the theatre, *The Beggar’s Opera* (1728) by John Gay, a boldly innovative work, incorporated the Newgate Prison. It was obviously an offshoot from criminal biographies with a highly fashionable rake hero at the centre, as in Restoration comedies of manners. Only he was a gentleman of the heath, Macheath.
On the English stage, *The Beggar’s Opera* by John Gay was a boldly innovative play. However, it should be noted that its plot follows the basic sequence of crime, imprisonment and execution.
JAILOR. Four Women more, Captain, with a Child apiece! See, here they come.

[Enter Women and Children.

MACHEATH. What—four Wives more!—This is too much—Here—tell the Sheriff’s Officers I am ready.

[Exit Macheath guarded.

Scene 16.

To them, Enter Player and Beggar.

PLAYER. But, honest Friend, I hope you don’t intend that Macheath shall be really executed.

BEGGAR. Most certainly, Sir.—To make the Piece perfect, I was for doing strict poetical Justice—Macheath is to be hang’d; and for the other Personages of the Drama, the Audience must have suppos’d they were all either hang’d or transported.

PLAYER. Why then, Friend, this is a downright deep Tragedy; The Catastrophe is manifestly wrong, for an Opera must end happily.

BEGGAR. Your Objection, Sir, is very just, and is easily remov’d. For you must allow, that in this kind of Drama, ’tis no matter how absurdly things are brought about—So—you Rabble there—run and cry, A Reprieve!—let the Prisoner be brought back to his Wives in Triumph.

PLAYER. All this we must do, to comply with the Taste of the Town.

Begin Through the whole Piece now.
Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1747–48) which Dickens never read shares a significant feature with *The Pickwick Papers*, *David Copperfield*, and *Little Dorrit*: a debtors’ prison.

*Clarissa*, Third edition (1751) Richardson made revision trying to make Lovelace a blacker villain. Modern editions are usually based on this.
LETTER LXVI.
Mr. Belford, To Robert Lovelace, Esq;

Monday, July 17.

. . .

A horrid hole of a house, in an Alley they call a Court; stairs wretchedly narrow, even to the first-floor rooms: And into a den they led me, with broken walls, which had been papered, as I saw by a multitude of tacks, and some torn bits held on by the rusty heads.

The floor indeed was clean, but the ceiling was smoked with variety of figures, and initials of names, that had been the woful employment of wretches who had no other way to amuse themselves.

A bed at one corner, with coarse curtains tacked up at the feet to the ceiling; because the curtain-rings were broken off; but a coverlid upon it with a cleanish look, tho’ plaguily in tatters, and the corners tied up in tassels, that the rents in it might go no farther. . . .

And This, thou horrid Lovelace, was the bedchamber of the divine Clarissa!!!

Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady. Third Edition, pp. 272–73, 1751
Why is Clarissa imprisoned? Is she a criminal? Obviously not; however,

when placed in a wider perspective, a perspective extending from the middle of the 16th century to Charles Dickens, Clarissa’s predicament can be viewed as that of a middle-class citizen trapped in an increasingly repressive system of modern civilization. She has a fundamental affinity, a surprising kinship, with George Barnwell.
In stark contrast to Gay’s opera, Lillo’s *The London Merchant or George Barnwell* (1731) is a conventional play. Heavily sentimental and didactic, it was intended to give a moral lesson to young men, especially apprentices.

However, it can be seen as an offspring of a long-standing tradition of a dramatic sub-genre, the domestic tragedy.

Often based on real cases of crime, a domestic tragedy delineates the course of a young man or a woman of ordinary yeomanry or citizenry who commits murder and is executed.
Domestic Tragedies

Anonymous, Arden of Faversham (1592)
フェヴァーシャムの地主アーデンは妻とその不倫相手に殺される。犯人たちは捉えられて処刑。シェイクスピアの歴史劇のソースとして知られるHolinshedのChroniclesに記録されている事件を題材とする。

Anonymous, A Yorkshire Tragedy (1608)
ヨークシャーの地主William Calvereyが自分の子供二人を殺し、妻に重傷を負わせ、後に赤子を殺そうとして捉えられ、処刑された事件を扱ったもの。
George Wilkins, The Miseries of Enforced Marriage (1607)も同じ題材を扱っている。A Yorkshire Tragedyよりも詳細で長いが、散漫。テクストに大きな乱れがある。

Thomas Heywood, A Woman Killed with Kindness (1607)
不倫を犯した妻を夫は追放する。妻は絶食して死ぬ。夫の「優しさで殺された」妻の物語は、ヘイウッドの最高傑作とされる。後の時代の小説ジャンルの先駆とされることもある。
Crime Drama

Anonymous, *The Fair Maid of Bristow* (1604)
殺人犯として処刑されそうになった夫を妻が救う。happy endingなので、ロマンス劇的要素がある。

Anonymous, *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599)
ロンドンの商人が妻の不倫相手に殺される。犯人と共犯者とされた妻とが処刑される。実際にあった殺人事件を題材とする。

Robert Yarington, *Two Lamentable Tragedies* (1601)
ロンドンの商人トマス・メリーによる隣人のバラバラ殺人事件を扱う。なお、「二つの悲劇」とあるのは、伝統的なバラード“Babes in the Wood”を題材とした全く無関係の悲劇を合体しているため。
A criminal is brought to prison and finally executed. (Is Clarissa a criminal?)
Dramatic representations of similar situation go back, at the earliest, to the middle of the sixteenth century.

Anonymous, *Nice Wanton* (1560)

*A Preaty Interlude called, Nice Wanton*

Wherein ye may fee,
Three braunces of an yll tree,
The mother and her chyldren three,
Twoo naught, and one godlye.
Early sharpe, that wyll be thorne,
Soone yll, that wyll be naught:
To be naught, better vnborne,
Better vnfed, then naughtely taught.
Nice Wanton（放蕩兄妹）

Xantippeの3人の子供達、Barnabas、Ismael、Dalilahの物語。バーナバスは模範的な息子だが、母親に甘やかされてばかりいたイスマイルとダリラは学校での勉強を怠げ、Iniquityという悪い仲間に誘われて悪の道に入る。ダリラは売春婦に身を落として梅毒にかかり、病み衰えて放浪しているところをバーナバスに救われ、神の許しを求めつつ死ぬ。イスマイルは、仲間のイニクウィティのそそのかしで、強盗殺人を犯し、絞首刑となる。

道徳劇的色彩が強い。登場人物の階級が不明だが、市民的雰囲気に満ちている。美德ある隣人の女性Eulaliaがザンティピィにgossipと呼びかけるところ、イスマイル、ダリラ、イニクウィティの三人がさいころ賭博をする場面など。

怠惰から賭博、犯罪、刑死への道をたどるイスマイルは怠惰な徒弟Tom Idleの原型の一つ。裁判官Danielが登場して、死刑の宣告を下す場面があり、18世紀のジョージ・バーンウエルの悲劇にまで続く流れが、ここにすでに見られる。
Robert Yarington, *Two Lamentable Tragedies* (1601)

Two Lamentable Tragedies: The one, of the murther of Maiyster Beech a Chandler in Thames-freete, and his boye, done by Thomas Merry. The other of a young childe murthered in a Wood by two Ruffians, with the conent of his Vnkle.

By Rob. Yarington.

1601

A young shopkeeper, Thomas Merry, brutally kills a rich chandler, his neighbor, to rob him of his money.

The play, based on an actual murder case, is remarkable in its stark realism.

The senseless murder and dismemberment of the victim committed by a seemingly harmless, honest citizen are profoundly disturbing. His motive is scarcely convincing. It looks like a sudden, spasmodic revolt of a tamed beast against the burgeoning mercantile capitalism or civilization.
A peaceful London shop is transformed into a scene of dreadful nightmare

Beech. . . . boy looke you tend the flhoppe,
If any aske, come for me to the Bull;
I wonder who they are that aske for me.

Mer: I know not that, you shall see presentlie,
Goe vp those fltaires, your friends do fltay above,
Here is that friend shall shake you by the head,
And make you fltagger ere he flpeak to you.

    Then being in the upper Rome Merry fltrickes
    him in the head fifteeene times.
Now you are safe, I would the boy were so,
But wherefore with I, for he shall not liue.
For if he doe, I shall not liue my selfe.

    Merry wiped [wipes] his face from blood.

    Two Lamentable Tragedies, A3v

Last dying speech of Merry at the gallows

Enter Merry and Rachel to execution with Officers with Halberds, the Hangman with a ladder [ladder], etc.
. . . .
But I confesse the iustest man aliue
That beares aboue the frailtie of man,
Cannot excuse himselfe from daily finne,
In thought, in word, and deed, fuch was my life,
I never hated Beech in all my life,
Onely desire of money which he had,
And the inciting of that foe of man,
That greedie gulfe, that great Leuithan,
Did halle me on to these callamities,
For which, euen now my very foule dooth bleede:
God ftrengthen me with patience to endure,
This chaftifement, which I confesse too fmall
A punifhment for this my hainous finne:

    Two Lamentable Tragedies, K1v–K2r
“The last chapters were to be written in the condemned cell, to which his wickedness, all elaborately elicited from him as if told of another, had brought him. Discovery by the murderer of the utter needlessness of the murder for its object, was to follow hard upon commission of the deed; but all discovery of the murderer was to be baffled till towards the close, when, by means of a gold ring which had resisted the corrosive effects of the lime into which he had thrown the body, not only the person murdered was to be identified but the locality of the crime and the man who committed it.”

“I love you, love you, love you! If you were to cast me off now—but you will not—you would never be rid of me. No one should come between us. I would pursue you to the death.”  Chapter XIX
“Mr. Grewgious saw the ghastly figure throw back its head, clutch its hair with its hands, and turn with a writhing action from him.

‘I have now said all I have to say: except that this young couple parted, firmly, though not without tears and sorrow, on the evening when you last saw them together.’

Mr. Grewgious heard a terrible shriek, and saw no ghastly figure, sitting or standing; saw nothing but a heap of torn and miry clothes upon the floor.”

Chapter XV
The Development of Bourgeois Society and Civilization, 16 to 19th centuries

Crime Drama → Criminal Biography → English Novel

Rebellion against repression by increasingly civilized, systematized society
= an unchanging, permanent subject matter of Modern Literature
When we start considering this possibility, we come upon a contention which is so astonishing that we must dwell upon it. This contention holds that what we call our civilization is largely responsible for our misery, and that we should be much happier if we gave it up and returned to primitive conditions. I call this contention astonishing because, in whatever way we may define the concept of civilization, it is a certain fact that all the things with which we seek to protect ourselves against the threats that emanate from the sources of suffering are part of that very civilization.

How has it happened that so many people have come to take up this strange altitude of hostility to civilization? I believe that the basis of it was a deep and long-standing dissatisfaction with the then existing state of civilization and that on that basis a condemnation of it was built up, occasioned by certain specific historical events.

Sigmund Freud, Das Unbehagen in Kultur. Translated by James Strachey

Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents

この可能性に取り組んでゆくと耳にするひとつの主張は、実に驚くべきもので、しばらくこれについて検討しておきたい。この主張によると、われわれの悲惨な状態の大半は、われわれのいわゆる文明のせいであり、もしわれわれが文明を放棄し未開の状態に戻るなら、遥かに幸福になるのだそうだ。私がこれを驚くべきというのは、文明の概念をどう規定するにせよ、苦しみの源泉に由来する脅威に対して、われわれが自分の身を守ろうとする際の手立てはすべて、間違いなく、当の文明に属するからである。

いったいどういうわけで、これだけ多くの人たちが文明を敵視するこの奇怪な見地に立ち至ったのだろうか。思うに、それぞれの文明の状態に対し長期にわたって深い不満が鬱積し、その地盤の上にやがて何らかの歴史的な機縁があってこのような弾劾の声が上がったのである。

嶺秀樹・高田珠樹訳『文化の中の居心地悪さ』（『フロイト全集 20』）p. 94

※「文化」を「文明」に置換。ドイツ語のKulturは、英訳版のように、civilizationと訳すのが適切だろう。
In the third place, finally, and this seems the most important of all, it is impossible to overlook the extent to which civilization is built up upon a renunciation of instinct, how much it presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction (by suppression, repression or some other means?) of powerful instincts. This ‘cultural frustration’ dominates the large field of social relationships between human beings. As we already know, it is the cause of the hostility against which all civilizations have to struggle.

Sigmund Freud, 
Das Unbehagen in Kultur. 
Translated by James Strachey
The element of truth behind all this, which people are so ready to disavow, is that men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. *Homo homini lupus* [“Man is a wolf to man”]. Who, in the face of all his experience of life and of history, will have the courage to dispute this assertion?

*Das Unbehagen in Kultur*
Translated by James Strachey

これらすぺての背後には、あまり認めたくない一片の事実が潜んでいる。人間とは、誰からも愛されることを求める温和地区生き物などではなく、生まれ持った欲動の相当部分が攻撃的傾向だと見て間違いない存在なのだ。そのために、人にとって隣人は、ときに助っ人や性的対象ともなる存在であるだけではなく、こちらの攻撃性を満足させるように誘惑する存在でもある。隣人を見ると、人はつい見返りもなしにその労働力を搾取し、同意も得ぬまま性的に利用する、その所有物を奪い取り、侮辱し、苦痛を与え、虐待し、殺したくなるのである。《人間は人間にとって狼である》[*Homo homini lupus*]。人生と歴史で各種の経験をした後でなお、どこの誰にこの命題を否定してかかる勇気があるだろうか。嶺秀樹・高田珠樹訳『文化の中の居心地悪さ』（『フロイト全集 20』）p. 122
George Cruikshank, *Fagin in the Condemned Cell*, 1839
How can civilization deal with the ultimate despair of Fagin or Saturn (or Jasper)?

Francisco Goya, *Saturn Devouring His Son*, c. 1819–1823
ご静聴、ありがとうございました