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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

BEDLAM, CHARITY, AND RENAISSANCE DRAMA: RECONFIGURING THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS IN HISTORY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY

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I am tremendously grateful to the Knocs of St. Larry's -- Carolyn, Lynn, Mick, Krug, Stinger, and Dupe -- for teaching me Protestant charity in a Catholic place, and to Rita and Athena for teaching me Catholic charity in a Protestant place. Above all else, this is for Pauline for knowing and understanding the pain involved in any charitable work.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv

Chapter

1. BEDLAM, PROTESTANT CITIZEN CHARITY, AND THE DRAMA 1

2. THE HONEST WHORE AND AMPLIFIED BEDLAM 49

3. JONSON AND THE DEFENSE OF THE “HUMOROUS” CITIZEN 65

4. JONSON, HUMORS, AND EXTENDING THE POETOMACHIA 97

5. ENFORCING AND EXCHANGING CHARITY: RECONFIGURING
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STAGE AND BEDLAM
IN *KING LEAR* 129

6. *THE CHANGELING*, *THE PILGRIM*, AND THE PROTESTANT
CRITIQUE OF CATHOLIC GOOD WORKS 161

7. CONCLUSION 179

WORKS CITED 182

Chapter 1

Bedlam, Protestant Citizen Charity, and the Drama

In *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century*

England, Michael MacDonald notes that “Bedlamites swarmed through the imaginations of Jacobean playwrights and pamphleteers, but the famous asylum was in truth a tiny hovel housing fewer than thirty patients”; MacDonald’s assessment, while far and away more correct than most accounts of historical Bedlam or Bethlem, still, I think, overstates and slightly misrepresents the case (MacDonald 4).¹ His language suggests a routine census at Bethlem was “fewer than thirty”: twenty-nine? twenty-eight? twenty-five, at the least? In fact, Bethlem’s census rarely reached those heights. At any given time in the early years of the seventeenth-century, when the hospital -- or, more precisely, its representation -- began appearing on the Renaissance stage, one would be more likely to find fifteen or sixteen patients.² Only in the 1620s does Bedlam’s population more than occasionally swell to twenty or thirty. Simply put, the number of “thirty” stands out, catches the reader’s eye as historical fact, and somewhat occludes the qualifying “fewer” which precedes it. MacDonald’s historical “truth” remains ensconced in the nuances of the language which reveals it.

Furthermore, MacDonald’s most spectacular rhetorical move in the sentence -- a dramatic contrast between the “swarm[ing]” Bedlamites of the playwrights’ imaginations and the “tiny hovel” of real Bethlem -- complicates his historical activity. In drawing a persuasive and interesting contrast between the broad expanse of the literary imagination and the more limited truth of historical reality, MacDonald wants the reader to consider the odd juxtaposition of Bedlamites doing all their swarming in a “tiny hovel”; he wants the reader to consider the clear and dramatic difference between a literary fiction and a historical

reality. The two are, his contrast implies, separate and incompatible, one false, one true. Yet, there is a sense in which MacDonald's historical tiny hovel depends on the playwright's swarm. The "hovel" is only "tiny" when one tries to fit a swarm into it. Indeed, it is only a "hovel" at all in contrast to an idea of something larger, something that could contain a swarm. MacDonald relies, in other words, on a literary fiction to construct an historical truth.

Now, is this not simply engaging in word games or playing at some sort of "soft-core" deconstruction? Certainly Bethlem exists as a place, a building, an institution long before the Jacobean create their drama (1247 to be precise)³ and, in light of that fact, real Bethlem precedes and exists independently of fictional "Bedlam." But, if we also note, for example, that the swarm of Bedlamites in the Jacobean imagination, while incongruous with the real Bethlem of 1604-22, more closely matches the real swarm inhabiting the expanded Bethlem (housing 140 patients) of 1676, our division between fact and fiction, drama and reality, becomes somewhat more problematic, the distance between the two closes; it might at least *appear* as if the real, expanded Restoration Bethlem grows out of the imaginations of Jacobean playwrights just as MacDonald's historical truth grows out of his rhetoric.⁴

MacDonald himself does not always draw such a clear distinction between drama and history: while he suggests that playwrights have distorted our sense of Bethlem's size, he, like most scholars, seems perfectly willing to accept their version of massive visitations to the institution. When MacDonald considers that this "hovel" was such a popular attraction -- "the longest running show in London" -- he does not pursue the possibility that Bethlem's visitors, like the Bedlamites themselves, swarmed only in the imaginations of Jacobean playwrights even though, as an earlier writer has put it, "in the drama . . . is found the most extensive evidence of the contemporary popularity of Bethlehem Hospital

as a place of amusement (Reed 23).”⁵ Fiction, in this case, constitutes the historical fact. And continues to do so despite recent studies which indicate that dramatic references to visitation are, like Jacobean representations of Bethlem’s size, more in line with Restoration and eighteenth century, rather than contemporary, reality.⁶

My point: when it comes to Bethlem, separating fact from fiction proves no easy task -- and with good reason. As a host of postrepresentational theories have taught us, drama, rhetoric, and literary fictions are not separate and incompatible from Bedlam’s real or material history, but a productive part of it. The drama that heretofore has been considered a representation of Bedlam is a separate “product” of the same historical, cultural matrix that produced actual Bethlem; the critical “trick,” then, to reconfiguring the relationship between Bethlem and the drama is not to separate fact from fiction, but to discover where in that matrix the cultural historical forces shaping Bethlem intersect with the cultural historical forces shaping dramas about madhouses. This study is largely an attempt to locate and describe one of those “intersections” in the complex and contradictory cultural pressures that constitute much of early modern charity; I will argue, specifically, that “charitable” pressures shape not only Bethlem in early modern London, but help shape some of the best known and influential plays about humors, madness, and madhouses: Dekker and Middleton’s *The Honest Whore*, Ben Jonson’s *Every Man in His Humor*, Middleton and Rowley’s *The Changeling*, Fletcher’s *The Pilgrim*, and Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. To put the thesis another way, Bethlem’s first appearances on the stage can be explained with unusual specificity -- not by struggling over metaphors of representation -- but by examining specific cultural and historical conditions related to charity. The critical assumptions here then are generally associated with the terms New Historicism or Cultural Poetics and the work of Stephen Greenblatt, in that the drama is seen as one cultural practice connecting and intersecting with other discursive and non-discursive cultural materials and practices. This study argues that the drama intersects with

Bethlem in that part of the cultural network that was producing the ideas and practices of early modern charity, and that that intersection explains Bethlem's appearance on the stage.

Now charity is probably not a word that one associates with Bethlem or, for example, a play like *The Changeling*. Certainly it will take some nimble New Historical manoeuvres to make the horrific scenes and images of *The Changeling* -- Deflores's ugliness, his presentation of Piracquo's severed finger and Diaphanta's charred body, the howling madmen, Lollo's whippings -- bed down with such an odd partner. Similarly, in that Bethlem has become something of a material and ideological house of horrors in the popular and academic imagination, some spectacular rhetorical moves must be pulled to make the famous asylum and charity more compatible. But, to paraphrase Alsemero and adopt his logic, these strange "tender" reconciliations between odd couples require no particular New Historical ingenuity at the outset, only the removal of a "visor" or mask of sorts. Bethlem only seems incompatible with charity because in order to "see" the relationship one must first see charity's relationship to early modern madness and, as Carol Thomas Neely has suggested, "madness" is a "black hole" for Renaissance scholars ("Recent Work" 779). There is very little empirical historical evidence available on the subject, no way to schematize its function in the culture, and no sophisticated way to understand its function in dramatic production. Neely points to Foucault and the influence of Madness and Civilization: "His traditional periodization (noted by Midelfort and others), his focus on institutional confinement, his insistence on epistemic breaks, and his idealization of the Middle Ages have the effect of both valorizing and occluding the Renaissance" (779). Charity's relationship to Bethlem only seems strange, I would contend, because Foucault's influence has obscured the fact that madhouses and mad hospitals were considered -- like all medieval and early modern hospitals -- charitable institutions, and mad people were considered (among and amongst other things) charitable objects. As Jonathan Andrews puts it

The charity of Bethlem provided both alms and medical treatment, both care and cure, and accepted both public and private cases. Historians, who have sought to delineate the ‘birth of the hospital’ in the genesis of modern diagnostics, therapeutics and professional structures, have applied an anachronistic methodology to early modern institutions, derided the inclusiveness of early modern charity, and erroneously presupposed a contradiction in terms between ‘a hospital [and] a charity’ (“Hardly a Hospital” 76).

And once one reconstructs this “charitable” historical context of the principal institution of madness, plays about humors, madness, and madhouses appear much different than they have in the past. Let me explain first the issues surrounding early modern charity which affect Bethlem and the drama before outlining the intersection of the two institutions at the end of the chapter.

Early modern charity became a more discriminating activity than it had been in the medieval world. The pressure to be charitable (to give to the poor, care for the sick, etc.) remained powerful, but, at the same time, a certain skepticism and even hostility toward charity developed.⁷ People had come to believe, for instance, that indiscriminate charity could be a disincentive to work (Hill 283-97). England established its first Acts against Beggars in 1495, but the 1531 act “Concerning Punishment of Beggars and Vagabonds,” contains the “provision for whipping able-bodied beggars” that articulates the principal feature distinguishing early modern charity from medieval alms-giving: some poor deserve charity while others (“the able-bodied”) do not.⁸ Finite resources always required, of course, some distinction between deserving and undeserving; but the “ideal” had always been that “no distinction be made between needy recipients” (Rubin 68). That ideal changed over time, as did the intensity of animosity toward “undeserving” poor, those

perceived as able to help themselves but unwilling to do so.⁹ To give indiscriminately was increasingly seen as sinful and wasteful.

Ben Jonson's Knowell, confronted by his servant Brainworm disguised and begging, expresses the sentiment which had grown across Europe, and across religious positions, since the late fourteenth century.

Believe me, I am taken with some wonder,
 To think a fellow of thy outward presence
 Should (in the frame and fashion of his mind)
 Be so degenerate and sordid-base!
 Art thou a man? And sham'st thou not to beg?
 To practice such a servile kind of life
 . . .
 Now, afore me, what e'er he be that should
 Relieve a person of thy quality
 While thou insist's in this loose desperate course,
 I would esteem the sin not thine, but his. (*Every Man in his Humour* 2.5.
 89-109)

This type of skepticism toward charity often has been presented as a result of the Protestant Reformation, a specifically Puritan attitude toward charity and work.¹⁰ According to Reformation principles (the argument usually goes), good works did not lead to salvation, so people were less obligated to be charitable. Christopher Hill has explained, for example, that “the Protestant ethic emphasized not the routine good work, but the motive behind it”: an ethic which when joined with other more Calvinist principles about predestination -- “humanitarianism was irrelevant to those who believed in fixed decrees” -- changed attitudes toward charity (287). But, as many recent studies have shown, skepticism towards charity (and the poor) began long before the Reformation and continued

apace -- in Protestant and Catholic countries -- afterwards; attitudes toward poor relief changed across Europe and were exemplified by “a more rationalized and laicized form of assistance to the poor”(Jones, *Charitable Imperative* 3).¹¹ In both Protestant and Catholic areas, more or less “indiscriminate” almsgiving and haphazard relief from religious orders gave way to more modern “discriminating” charitable institutions that were self-conscious about targets and long range goals.

Charity did not disappear, in other words, but refocused its attentions and, as a result, the range of charitable objects narrowed considerably. Only the truly needy, the demonstrably unfortunate -- like the mad of Bethlem -- were seen as legitimate objects of charity.¹² Indeed, charitable objects that demonstrated a true need had a certain cultural value. An institution like Bethlem survived because it was a place where the contradictory demands of charity could be reconciled: charity could be dispensed there while few could claim that the mad of Bethlem were undeserving. What we know of Bethlem’s early history supports this characterisation. Founded in 1247, Bethlem was born as part of what Miri Rubin has called an “enthusiastic period of donation in prosperous years of the early thirteenth century.”¹³ Hospitals -- places for charity -- founded by religious orders were “ubiquitous” (46). In the late fourteenth and fifteenth century, however, mounting suspicion towards charities and the diminished ability of elites to maintain them forced such organizations to shut down or transform themselves: in Rubin’s words, hospitals had to “adapt or perish” (53). Bethlem adapted by serving a specific group, a group with a demonstrable need. For all the notorious “ambiguity” of early modern madness, one certainty was that it was “the essence of lunacy to be visible, and known by its appearance” (Porter 35); these highly visible mad were more often than not singled out and identified as legitimate objects of charity rather than gathered together with “able-bodied” beggars believed to be shirking work.¹⁴

Similarly, in the sixteenth century, Bethlem survived the suppression of monastic institutions to become, along with St. Bartholomew's, St. Thomas, Christ's, and Bridewell, one of the five London royal hospitals.¹⁵ Each institution served a specific "deserving" charitable group. St. Bart's and St. Thomas's, two of the largest medieval hospitals, served the sick poor (St. Bart's reputation for serving the truly needy was almost universally acknowledged); Christ's served orphaned children; Bethlem served the mad; and, Bridewell, a new institution, satisfied the strictures of charity by serving as a correction house. "Charity" at Bridewell would not prove a disincentive to work. Worsening economic conditions precipitated the establishment of England's first long lasting and effective poor laws in 1598 and 1601 -- a matter of significant importance that I will turn to shortly -- designed to discriminate even more carefully the deserving from the undeserving poor: the institution of these laws coincided with the 1598 census at Bethlem, an investigation (the first of its kind in over forty years) primarily interested in determining who should be there and who should not (Allderidge, "Management" 151-54). Bethlem, like all charitable institutions and practices, was under intense scrutiny by a culture fearful of squandering its charitable resources.

Indeed, the apparent ease with which Bethlem and other monastic institutions became longstanding fixtures in London culture helps to dispel the myth that Protestants were uniquely hostile towards charity.¹⁶ In establishing such "discriminating" institutions, Protestant England seems not unlike Catholic Europe (Slack 10). But, if differences between Catholic and Protestant charity have been overstated, one does not wish to compensate for that by understating or effacing the importance of religious difference.¹⁷ Indeed, lacking any sociological explanations for "charity" -- such as the need of a culture to maintain social cohesion, peace, and order, by partially redistributing wealth¹⁸ -- early modern Europe relied primarily on religion, and religious discourse to explain, justify, and

manage its charitable practices.

Charity, in short, does not just involve good works, but an entire cultural belief system. Traditional Catholic medieval teaching had formulated its understanding of charity, its “interest” in the demonstrably unfortunate, around the Augustinian doctrine of love embodied in the term *caritas*. For much of Medieval Catholicism, *caritas*, love to God, was the principal commandment to all Christians; indeed, Augustine had subsumed “Christianity as a whole under the aspect of love.”¹⁹ God reveals his love to man -- in the figure of Christ -- in order for man to know better how to love God. The “pre-Augustinian” commandment to love one’s neighbor remains intact, but that love of neighbor must be enjoined first and foremost to the love of God. Anders Nygren explains: “the commandment of love to neighbor . . . has no independent place or meaning It is really included already in the commandment of love to God Augustine regards love to neighbour as fully legitimate only in so far as it can be referred ultimately, not to the neighbour, but to God Himself” (453). Such was the case with all forms of love, including marital; but the doctrine was particularly relevant to “charitable” love in that if all love came from and was directed back towards God, no individual, in theory, would be exempted from charitable love on the basis of physical or personal undesirability.²⁰ Christians across Europe were warned consistently that *caritas* could easily slip into a specific type of sin or perversion (*cupiditas*) if one loved someone (or self) for that object’s own sake rather than God’s. One was bound to “love” both the attractive and unattractive. In Catholic charity or *caritas*, the emphasis was on transcending the physical world and, accordingly, physical distinctions (Pullan, *Poverty in Europe* 29-30). Traditional medieval teaching consistently reinforced this doctrine, in part because it helped sustain charitable relations. Brian Pullan notes that “nearly two centuries before the Reformation,” the ugliness generally associated with poverty “had begun to breed a second official attitude to the poor, coexisting uneasily” with the ancient Christian demand to “love” the unfortunate,

Christ's representatives on earth, in charity (25).²¹ The sights, sounds, and smells of the early modern poor could easily repulse even the most charitably minded, but a belief in *caritas* enabled one to overcome such an "instinctual" response.

In Protestant England, however, the Augustinian doctrine of *caritas* was not only not sufficient to explain or justify charitable love, it was sinful in and of itself. Luther observed that the "whole of Catholic doctrine of love [*caritas*] displays an egocentric perversion," in that no matter how much Catholicism spoke of God's love in its desire for *caritas*, "the centre of gravity in our relation to God was nevertheless placed primarily in the love we owe God." The emphasis, in other words, was on man's love, not God's, and man's ability to move "upward" toward God to acquire the only right love: *caritas*. Against this "egocentric perversion" Luther "sets a thoroughly theocentric idea of love" (Nygren 683) whereby God's love came down to man in Christ but man had no possibility of *ascending upwards* to God in *caritas*. Man is so base and sinful that even his "love" or charity is polluted; to attempt to "seek fellowship" with God in *caritas* is doubly "polluted" in that it presumes in its underlying intention a commonality between God and man that does not exist.²² Luther could not obey the Catholic "commandment to love with all the heart" (Nygren 695). The psychic work necessary to participate sincerely in *caritas* (change one's very human and therefore sinful love into a holier form of love) was simply too demanding, a task only God could perform. For many besides Luther, presumably, the very human repulsion occasionally experienced when dealing with the demonstrably unfortunate suggested that one could not love perfectly.

Indeed, the concept of "Charity" became a doctrinal dilemma for Protestants, an issue Catholic propagandists could attack. Calvin finds himself having to refute those "impious persons who slanderously charge us with refusing good works when we condemn all pursuit of them by men . . . also with leading men away from zeal for good works when we teach they are not justified by works or merit salvation" (*Institutes*

3.16.1). Or he finds himself critiquing the doctrinal “subtlety” which places love above faith.²³ To those he argues, “It certainly is a matter of no little significance that faith has at the same time as companions hope and love. If these are utterly lacking, however learnedly and elaborately we may discuss faith, we are proved to have none. Not because faith is engendered in us from hope or love, but because it can in no way come to pass without hope and forever following faith”(3.2.9).

Convincing opponents that “we do not deny good works” but only insist “those that are good . . . [come] from God” was a primary focus of Calvin and many others. An explosion of charitable literature in Post Reformation England indicates that the populace had to be convinced that “works” --while not leading to salvation -- still mattered; the audiences of these sermons needed convincing both for fear that charity would diminish and to ease their concerns about Catholic challenges to their piety (Jordan 155). The matter of charity was, apparently, a point of anxiety for Protestants. Recusant Catholics, for example, recognized the doctrinal dilemma and found it rhetorically useful to appeal to Protestants on the grounds of charity.²⁴ And Londoners often took pride in contrasting their charity with Catholic charity, usually pointing out the value of their new long range attitude toward charity in contrast to the “older” Catholic almsgiving (Jordan 231-33.)

Part of the anxiety stems from the fact that, while Calvin could refute Catholic charges of being “anti-charity” in “one word,” others found the concept of charity in the Reformed faith more problematic. As W.K. Jordan remarks, quoting a sermon from John Donne

the obligations which the man of the reformed faith must shoulder are more difficult than those of the Roman Catholic, for he must understand that good works, abundant charity, are required of him, but ‘without relying upon them as meritorious.’ (189)

At the annual Spital Sermon in Front of St. Mary’s Hospital, Lancelot Andrews attempted

to reconcile the principle that “Good works” are still a “foundation” for Christianity even though Reformed doctrine stresses faith as the principal grounding of the religion: “So among the graces within us, faith is properly in the first sense said to be the foundation; yet in the second, do we not deny but, as the apostle calleth them, as the lowest row, next to faith, charity, and the works of charity may be foundations too”(49). The hortatory rhetoric was, in short, contradictory and complex. Told to be charitable, the early modern citizen was also told to discriminate *very* carefully between the deserving and the undeserving and base that charity on Reformation principles. Thomas Adams aptly expresses the potentially confusing chiasmic structure of these demands in a sermon exhorting Protestant charity: “There indeed may be a show of charity without faith, but there can be no show of faith without charity.”²⁵

How, then, did early modern England justify its charitable interest in the demonstrably unfortunate? Most often, they justified their interest in the demonstrably unfortunate by claiming or demonstrating what it was not: *caritas*.²⁶ Richard Hooker, after an eight hundred word explication of the Catholic doctrine of merit detailing its central precept that “workes of charitie pilgrimages fastes and suche like” move man closer to Grace, prepared his listener or reader for the place of charity in Protestant doctrine:

This mase the churche of Rome doth cause her followers to tread, when they aske her the way of justification. I cannott stand nowe to unripp this buyldinge and to sifte it peece by peece, onely I will sett a frame of Apostolicall erection by it in fewe wordes, that it maie be fall Babilon in presence of that which god hath buylded as it happened unto Dagan before the Ark. (Hooker 112)

The justification for Protestant charity almost always exists in a “fewe wordes” juxtaposed to a “Catholic mase” or “buyldinge” in part because the justification is almost impossible to

express *without* a critique of the Catholic position.²⁷ Nygren asks if Luther “succeeds in building up [an] other idea of love” or only in critiquing *caritas* (722). He answers that Luther fails mainly because the Protestant justification defies easy representation in language. To define another idea of love to replace the Catholic concept of *caritas* is to define God: “there is complete identity between God and love, love and God.” Luther implies that such a definition, if possible, could only be found in an “artistic” rendering: “If anyone would paint and aptly portray God, then he must draw a picture of pure love, as if the Divine nature were nothing but a furnace and fire of such love, which fills heaven and earth. And again, if it were possible to paint and picture love, we should have to make such a picture as would be not of works nor human, yea not of angels nor heavenly, but God himself.”²⁸ In Andrew Willett’s influential *Synopsis Papismi* (1634), the author valorizes Protestant religious motivation for charity by displaying, in catalogue form, London charities, and by comparison: “[Catholic charities] were done in the pride of their heart, in opinion of merit to purchase remission of sinnes . . . [Protestant charities were made to] serve as testimonies of our faith.”²⁹ It would seem that in frequently comparing Protestant “charity” to Catholic almsgiving, London preachers were not simply employing a rhetorical device: the Protestant doctrinal justification “exists” principally in its opposition to the Catholic position.

Every culture is a “heterogeneous and irreducibly plural social formation” (Mullaney, pg. XI), however, and not every Londoner felt the same animosity toward Rome and not every preacher could or would present the doctrinal subtlety that separated Protestant and Catholic “charity” with precision and clarity. John Squire, Vicar of St. Leonard Shoreditch, for example, simply glances over the dispute:

I dispute not the distinctions, whether good workes bee . . . *sacrificia impetrantia*, to beg a blessing upon our King and kingdome, upon families

and persons: or whether they be onely *sacrificia eucharistica*, the tribute of our thankfulnes . . . Buth this I know, [they are] sacrifices wherewith God is pleased.³⁰

The protestant justification for charity was certainly formed in opposition to Catholic charity but the intensity and sophistication of that “opposition” varied considerably. Consequently, much “Protestant” charity could seem “Catholic” in its underlying intention and, occasionally, meet with resistance from the more Puritan minded. If, in the process of exhorting charity, an English preacher spoke too much of a relationship between good works and grace -- either from ignorance, carelessness, economic desperation, or true Catholic sympathies -- someone would respond to the popish language.³¹ “Protestant” English charity was formed amidst this contested discourse.

The Reformation did not then shape or form a new distinctly “Protestant” charity. One could argue, as Nygren did, that a Protestant understanding of charity comparable to the Catholic conception of *caritas* never did take shape. But the Reformation certainly helped in the creation of a new “discursive field” in which the social phenonema of charity could be reconfigured (Wuthnow 15).³² Previously, Augustinian *caritas* and the Catholic church had bound the culture’s understanding within certain limits. The Reformation broadened or disrupted those limits, creating discursive space, one could say, analogous to the material space for “new” or reformed charity created by the dissolution of the monasteries in England.

One only has to note the dates of the major innovations in social welfare and poor relief to gain some sense of the role the Reformation must have played in allowing certain ideas and practices, certainly in existence prior to 1517, to develop.

Experiments in poor relief were initiated in Nuremberg in 1522, in Strasbourg and Leisnig in 1523-24, in Zurich, Mons and Ypres in 1525, in

Venice in 1528-29, In Lyons, Rouen and Geneva between 1531 and 1535, and in Paris, Madrid, Toledo and London in the 1540's. (Slack 8)³³

Generally, these innovations involved local governments taking control of charity from the church and large monastic institutions by implementing some sort of poor law system.

Under such poor law systems, overseers for the poor collected money for the truly needy and distributed it to them. Humanist ideas and growing urban bourgeois city governments had been challenging and competing with ecclesiastical authority for some two hundred years prior to the Reformation for control of charitable institutions, but only in the 1520's and 30's do major changes occur.³⁴

To reiterate, this is not to say that the ideas of Calvin and Luther shaped social welfare, although they were certainly influential, but that they disrupted discursive limits. Margo Todd has critiqued the historical tradition ranging from "Weber and Tawney to Hill and Walzer" which credits Protestant reformers with a "degree of originality of thought rarely attributed to and almost never deserved by any intellectual movement" (*Christian Humanism* 4). And my understanding of the Reformation's role in relation to charity and poor relief does not contradict her position. I differ with Todd only in that she understates the role the Reformation played in allowing the ideas of Catholic humanism to come to fruition. The ideas underlying new Reformation policies and experiments were by and large derived from "Catholic" humanists like Juan Luis Vives. It was Vives, for instance, who insisted that treatment of the mad play a *primary* role in poor relief, an influential suggestion which probably played a part in securing Bethlem's place in the London hospital plan. In his *De Subventionem Pauperum* (1526) he wrote

The cure of reason, man's most precious possession, is of first importance. When a person of unsound mind is brought to hospital, first ascertain if his insanity is congenital, or caused by some mishap; if there is chance of recovery, or not; nothing must be done to increase the insanity or cause it to

persist -- such as irritating or mocking the sufferer. How inhumane that is! Treatment suited to each individual case should be tried: for some, applications and diet; for some, gentle treatment; for some, teaching. Others may require coercion or bonds, but all should be done in a way likely to pacify them, and lead to recovery. (Salter 16)

The central institution disseminating charitable discourse, the church, had been disrupted and, consequently, discursive boundaries had become more permeable. What could be said or done about charity was not as strictly confined. Thus, for example, a radical plan for a very Lutheran and continental sort of charity could be introduced in England in the early 1530's even though the state's position on the Reformation was less than certain. It is with this document that we can begin to read the cultural pressures at work on Bethlem, pressures articulated and negotiated in part by the drama.³⁵

G.R. Elton points out that "at the outset" of this age of charitable reform "there stood, not the somewhat ineffectual Act of 1536, but a discarded draft of vastly greater scope, ingenuity, and originality . . . matter so revolutionary it was never put into practice"(138). This plan for poor relief, presumably written by William Marshall, suggested a vast scheme for public works which would outlaw the common dole and almsgiving, put all able-bodied men to work, provide free medical attention to the poor, elect parish overseers to determine those deserving of charity and those not, and implement a compulsory parish poor rate to pay for it all. Following the Reformation, such vast and innovative schemes could be at least considered by government officials. And, in principle, the ideas underlying this scheme were accepted. The poor law of 1536 emphasized, like Marshall's plan, public employment for the poor, regular parish collections for the poor, and a ban on both almsgiving and begging. But, as Elton argued, England did not have the institutional mechanisms, such as the parish overseers and public works administration, to make the plan work: the 1536 act took from the draft "all that was

new in its principles, but it dropped all the new machinery which alone gave reality to good intentions” (150). As important, though, in keeping Marshall’s plan from completely developing, was the strong resistance to compulsory national poor rates and the ban on common doles. The suggestion that individual almsgiving be banned and all alms placed in a common parish box was “too radical” for the English Parliament and several contradictory “provisos in defence” of almsgiving maimed “the act from the start” (Slack 118). The 1536 Act’s insistence that “Voluntary Alms” be collected by churchwardens expresses well the complex and oxymoronic quality of “charity” that Colin Jones has called the “Charitable Imperative.” We tend to think of charity as voluntaristic, an act of the free subject, but it is always culturally and historically determined.

The state had neither the institutional powers and mechanisms to fill the charitable “gap” created by the Reformation and, having just seen the church lose its hold on charity, no one had much interest in giving the state so much power and control over charity. We read in the 1536 Act itself the struggle to control charitable practices:

It is therefore enacted . . . that no manner of person or persons shall make or cause to be made any such common or open dole, or shall give any ready money in alms, otherwise than to the common boxes and common gatherings . . . upon pain to leese and forfeit ten times the value of all such ready money as shall be given in alms contrary to the tenor and purport of the same. . . . And that every person or persons of this realm . . . be bound or charged . . . to give or to distribute any ready money . . . unto such common boxes . . . (Salter 126)

The state wanted control over charity from a population unwilling to relinquish what was a personal and pious matter. Consequently, the ideas of Marshall and the 1536 “Act for Punishment of Beggars and Vagabonds” were put in abeyance until such time that the Tudor state did have the power and institutional mechanisms in place to control charity:

1598. As Slack remarks, while the act did not “survive” in practice, it did lay “down the guidelines” for future poor-relief, specifically the poor laws of 1598-1601(119). The 1536 Act’s emphasis on a poor rate, parish responsibility, and public labor for the poor would remain the foundation of England’s poor law legislation until the nineteenth century.

A document like Marshall’s could appear, influence legislation, but not be fully implemented. The state, and the language of social welfare and poor relief, would eventually reestablish firmer boundaries and control on matters of charity, but in the 1530’s the institutional mechanism of the Tudor state had not been sufficiently developed to enforce the strictures of the Marshall program or clear in its own understanding of charity to adapt such radical policy. Similar plans had succeeded on the continent, but only at the local or city level; England was the first country to try to establish a national plan (Salter 120-121). “For thirty years after 1536 the history of the poor law was one of false starts, parliamentary compromises and half-measures, in which it is often difficult to see the wood for the trees as statute succeeds statute”(122). To put the matter simply, charity had been loosened from its ecclesiastical moorings, but no “national” cultural institution or group could seize firm control of it.

The broader cultural significance or importance of this gap can be partially grasped if we consider charity, as many historians currently do, as a form of “gift-giving.” In the words of Miri Rubin, “Gift exchange maintains a society in a constant state of debt, criss crossed by a network of obligations and expectation of yet unfulfilled reciprocal gestures which bind it closely. Charity as a form of gift giving is similarly an act rich in meaning”(2). This anthropological or sociological approach to the study of charity has arisen in recent years largely because of the failure of other explanatory models to address the full complexity of charity as social phenonema (Cavallo 46-52). Charity is not simply an economic response to greater need nor is it merely a matter of religious expression. Charity, like gift-giving, is a powerful means of establishing social relations, implicated in

almost every aspect of the culture. As Robert Titmuss argued, “The forms and functions of giving embody moral, social, psychological, religious, legal, and aesthetic ideas”(73). In London, I am suggesting, “one of the main instruments of social organization” had been destabilized.

London merchants and citizens seized this opportunity to temporarily set the terms and practices of charitable gift-giving and form the London Hospitals.³⁶ As Slack puts it, they responded to “the social challenge and opportunity of the Reformation in a decisive manner” (119). This is no small matter, again, in that the “social relations set up by gift exchange are among the most powerful forces which bind a social group together” (Titmuss 73.) London citizens --particularly the “civic elite”(Slack 120) -- drew the social and geographical boundaries implicated in charitable gift-giving. London merchants and city government did what the state could not yet do: set and control charitable relations.³⁷ The City of London, for example, was able to enforce a “temporary” tax or compulsory poor rate on its citizens to pay for the hospitals (Slack 16); the city of London could extract the “voluntary alms” that the relatively contemporary Act of 1536 could not.³⁸ For some fifty years they would have the power of social organization implicit in charitable relations. They would control who was designated poor and in need and who was in a position to help. And, as Barry Schwartz writes, “Those to whom we give gifts are in some way different from those to whom no token of regard is given. The gift exchange, then, is a way of dramatizing group boundaries”(10). Control over charity provided London’s elite more than an opportunity to “accumulate social capital” (although that is no small matter itself), but a means of determining social organization and social relations in general.

London citizens (in cooperation with the crown) established in the hospitals a charitable network designed to satisfy the social welfare needs of *the whole city*. This last is important. Between 1544-1557, city governors could still so imagine an intact coherent

city -- something more like a medieval village than the large early modern urban center London was actually becoming -- that they planned to manage its charitable needs with only five hospitals. By the end of the century, in contrast, such an idea or conception was no longer operational in the formation of the poor laws whose planning suggest that, for many in parliament at least, England's social welfare challenges had grown beyond the means of any one city. The 1598 poor laws' insistence on parish responsibility demonstrates an understanding that a huge and complex problem was best addressed by breaking it down into manageable sections and best controlled by national authority. The ideas and systems formulated in 1536, most clearly articulated in Marshall's document, finally made their way into law and practice.

This social "vacuum"(Archer 161) that the London citizen occupied between the Reformation and the implementation of the poor laws -- the institutional and discursive space of charity -- can be seen, too, if we turn for a moment from the hospitals to another aspect of poor relief and charity: wills and the statutes of charitable "uses" or trusts.

It was customary for a good Christian citizen to leave something to charity in his will in order that he might die "in charity." But charitable trusts do not always determine exactly where the money goes. Like most modern states, most early modern cultures had some legal mechanism in place to insure that money from wills given to charity gets to the charitable object because it is a "peculiarity of charitable trusts" that the person (s) benefitting "are seldom in a position to originate measures affecting their government, and the disposition of disinterested persons to undertake such occasions cannot always be relied on" (Gareth Jones 20). Until the fifteenth century, it was the "Bishop or Ordinaries of every Diocese['s]" responsibility -- in other words, the church's and the ecclesiastical court's responsibility -- to determine that money left in wills actually ended up in the hands of the designated charitable recipients.³⁹ Sometime during the early fifteenth century, frustrated with the slow, ineffective, and often corrupt workings of the church courts,

people began to appeal to the Chancellor for help.

. . . there is a steady trickle of petitions asking him to compel an executor to carry out a private or charitable legacy. Fifty years later such petitions are common; and from this date at the latest the Chancellor's testamentary jurisdiction appears to be established. (Jones 6)

But, the Court of Chancery was less than effective itself in managing charitable trusts.

Appeals to the Court of Chancery apparently provided only a legal mechanism to circumvent the church courts' power and the Chancellor did not play a significant role in determining charitable relations. As Gareth Jones remarks, "in the Court of Chancery there was before 1597 no adequate procedure which enabled the Crown, the Ordinary's successor as the guardian angel of charity, to protect the charitable gift"(21). From the years immediately leading up to the Reformation until 1598, the church could no longer regulate charitable gift giving with the same authority, the state had yet to completely assume that authority, and, in the interim, charitable relations, in the case of trusts, were left primarily in the hands of individual executors.

This individual control is a historical fact similar and related to the historical and cultural fact that London citizens had increased control over charity when they founded the hospitals. In brief, from shortly before the Reformation until 1598 a charitable "gap" existed, and control of charity temporarily was in the hands of neither the Crown or the church but the individual and local government. Local governments had been slowly seizing control over charity for some two hundred years, but after the Reformation they had their firmest grasp.

Temporarily. For this institutional and discursive control I have been describing, while real and with real effects, was also, in one sense, illusory. Edward VI granted London's request for church hospitals and monastic properties to use for charitable purposes, for example, but that control and ownership was certainly not secure or

complete. It appears that Edward VI granted St. Bartholomew outright to the city in 1547. And, similarly, in 1553 a charter granted to the citizens of London the hospitals of St. Thomas, Christ and Bridewell. But “Mary hesitated to confirm the grant of Bridewell until February 1556 . . . and it was not until September 1557 that the hospitals were united and the system finally completed. . . The delay was partly a result of the uncertain status of monastic property at the beginning of the reign” (Slack “Social Policy” 111). As early as 1555, the London Hospitals came into conflict with Mary’s regime because “they stood as a reproach to good Catholics . . . for their very creation marked the loss of religious houses”(Brigden 622). In John Howes’s *Contemporary Account in Dialogue-form of the Foundation and Early History of Christ’s Hospital and of Bridewell and St. Thomas’ Hospital* (1889) the character of “Dignity” notes that “the city had much to do to keep them from suppressing”(Brigden 622). I should note here that while the hospitals were not strictly considered a Protestant innovation -- Catholics and Reformers alike joined in their creation -- the hospitals were more closely aligned with Reformers. The staunchly Protestant Edward VI played a large role in their creation and, in the case of Bethlem, the Lutheran martyr Robert Barnes was a keeper for a period of time.⁴⁰

Bethlem and the other hospitals were often sites of political and social struggles, largely between the Crown, the state sanctioned Church, and the City. As Brigden remarks, “The Hospitals were a perpetual reminder not only of lands lost to the Church but of power lost, for control of hospitals belonged to the City”(622). The City Government’s control over charities had been increasing since before the Reformation and was always a challenge to church authority, but the formation of the city hospitals marked an official usurpation of the church’s power. Bethlem, in particular, was a point of conflict. In contrast to the contested but outright grants of St. Bartholomew’s and the other hospitals, the crown retained ownership of Bethlem and that institution is therefore in a slightly “different position” than the other City’s Hospitals. Patricia Allderidge explains that “the

City became the governor, but not the possessor, of Bethlem, a position which was confirmed in a charter of Charles I in 1638" ("Management" 148). The Crown could, as we shall see in the reading of King James's activities in Bethlem's affairs and *The Changeling*, assert its authority when it wished. More importantly, we see here that Bethlem stands as a unique site of contestation in the struggle between the City and Crown for control of charitable gift-giving. It was a place where the City would seize control of charity, but not completely.

Similarly, the state and church courts could not actually control charitable uses and trusts, but they did not abandon jurisdiction any more than the Crown abandoned ownership of Bethlem. In 1598, the institutional mechanism, in the form of the new "charitable commission," was designed to allow the church the authority it previously had held only in theory. Under the "Charitable Uses Act" first developed in 1598 and perfected in 1601, each county was to have "at least five commissioners" to conduct inquiries into contested or controversial matters of charitable trusts: "the commissioners gave notice to the churchwardens and overseers for the poor of the parishes of the county, that they were authorised to inquire . . . whether property devoted to charitable uses had been employed according to the intent of the donors"(Jones 41). The statute provided some latitude for the composition of each commission: "'persons of good and sound behaviour' who, if not Justices of the Peace, were invariably gentlemen of the county"(40). But the statute did stipulate that "one of the commissioners had to be the Bishop of the diocese and his Chancellor." Jones notes that between 1400 and 1601 there were only 223 bills by the crown to enforce charitable uses; that is, there were only 223 instances in two hundred years of the state officially regulating that aspect of "charity." In contrast, "in the reign of James I alone as a result of the investigations of the charity commissioners the Chancellor made over one thousand decrees securing the proper application of charitable endowments and correcting the maladministration of charitable funds by individual feoffees"(19). One

must consider, as Jones's language suggests, the extent to which this is a more efficient and benevolent government rectifying charitable abuses; one must also consider, however, the enormous power usurped by the state and church here in terms of its drastically increased control over charitable gift-giving. The power of the fifteenth century "Ordinary" was restored in the figure of the Bishop seated on each charitable commission.

For this study, it should be becoming clear, 1598 is a watershed year. The massive legislation of that year reorganized charitable relations in England. To return to the hospitals, the *national* policy of the 1598 poor laws significantly reduced the prestige and significance of the hospitals, undercutting, in other words, the control of social organization by city government. The 1598 poor laws authorize the Justices of Peace and parish officers under their direction to determine need, method and giving in any parish. This significantly reduced the importance of the hospitals because parishes now retained their own alms (Slack 121) -- a process unofficially underway by the 1560's -- and under sanction of state law money formerly directed to the hospitals went elsewhere. England had finally established a national poor rate in 1572, but special provisions were made in that act to protect London hospitals and direct money toward them. The 1598 Acts made no such provisions. The Acts "destroyed what remained of central organization through the hospitals"(129). The state Acts undermined the hospitals and revealed the tenuous control London had over its charitable relations. More importantly, perhaps, the acts officially abandoned the idea of the coherent, whole city of London underlying the formation of the hospitals. London was now broken down into parishes.

And charitable gift-giving in general was, after 1598, securely in the hands of the state. In both matters of the poor law and the statutes of charitable uses, the Crown found an institutional mechanism through which it could effectively manage charitable relations: the Justices of Peace. Slack states that the first poor relief act "was the most important" generally in all the legislation passed in 1598 and I cite it here to demonstrate that act's

importance in facilitating the fundamental shift in power and social organization I am discussing here.

An Act for the Relief of the Poor

- 1 'Overseers of the poor' to be nominated in all parishes to employ the able poor, especially the young, and to administer relief;
- 2 Church wardens and overseers empowered to distrain the goods of any persons refusing to contribute to poor-rates;
- 3 The same officials to see that habitations are provided for the disabled on waste or common lands, with the agreement of lords of manors;
- 4 County treasurers to be appointed to administer funds for the relief of prisoners and soldiers and mariners passing through the county. (Beier 41)

The "overseers of the poor" were under direct supervision of the Justice of the Peace, a political and social alignment which gave the power of charitable gift-giving to a few members of each parish with direct ties to Tudor and Stuart bureaucracy. Rather than leaving charity in the hands of individuals and local governments, this legislative action nationalizes charity.

In short, two very different ideas or conceptions of charity were in flux during the latter part of the century -- one could be termed emergent, if not dominant, another residual and oppositional. On the one hand, there is the older or residual conception of charity embodied by the London hospitals: a utopic, centralized body of institutions governed by local authorities and sustained by citizens, suggesting in its very form a whole unfragmented community. Slack notes, for example, that the London hospitals were a way around the problem that some parishes are richer than others and that poor parishes could be ineffective in managing poor relief ("Social Policy" 45). On the other hand, there is the emergent concept of the poor laws: charity managed by a select few JP's, sanctioned by national policy and suggesting in its very form a fragmented, complicated modern

bureaucracy necessary to deal with complex economic problems. In the first conception, we see an idea of the city as a coherent whole, in the second we see the more realistic idea of an early modern city grown too large, requiring micromanagement at the parish level.

Slack notes that “many forces” ranged against the new forms of poor relief.

Traditional ideals of neighborly charity, even to strangers, and the tenacious social and religious ritual of almsgiving, without regard to its practical consequences, impeded change as much as the vested interests of property-owners, whether expressed in parliament or in local vestries. But the forces making for innovation were more powerful. (129)

Just as the poor laws of 1598 place a tremendous amount of responsibility and power in the hands of the JPs, the new 1598 and 1601 statutes of charitable uses place in the hands of charitable commissions, often composed of JPs, significant control of charitable gift-giving. Through the JPs and the state sanctioned church, the Crown was able to manage charitable relations as it had before. Slack suggests the poor law “was likely to reflect the interests of those who traditionally managed charitable distributions alongside the religious institutions and fraternities destroyed at the Reformation” (*Poor Laws* 20). Indeed it did. The massive social welfare legislation of 1598 and 1601 recaptured control over charitable gift-giving that had temporarily been in the hands of local groups like London citizens. Slack noted that the hospitals were “initially” outside the “main stream of development of English poor relief”:

They were controlled not by justices of the peace but by a body of governors. They did not, at least at first, copy the parochial structure of English social welfare, but centralised relief for the whole capital. Most important of all, they were not designed to be dependent on a parochial poor-rate: the famous half-fifteenth raised for St. Bartholomew’s in 1547 was a once-for-all levy to found the hospital, and it was hoped, vainly at it turned

out, that charitable collections and endowments would take care of the future. (“Social Policy” 109)

Changing economic and social circumstances, and the 1598 poor laws, left the hospitals as a still functioning, but nostalgic remnant of a utopic idea and a symbol of the City’s brief but substantial control over social relations.

This retaking control of charity and charitable relations was not without signs of resistance. Local governments and individuals had grown accustomed to certain privileges and, if unable to articulate it, certainly realized by virtue of their actions the value and social power inherent in control of charity. In the debates in and about the Parliaments of 1598 and 1601 there are several instances of individuals resisting the increased power of the JP’s and the state to regulate such matters as poor relief and there is a great deal of anxiety about church courts regaining power and jurisdiction that had been lost at the Reformation. Slack notes, for example, there were disputes about how poor rates were to be assessed and there was “some resistance still to the very principle of taxation”(127).

There was similar resistance to the statutes of charitable uses and the newly acquired power of the charitable commissions. The initial 1598 statute to form the commissions did not survive, for example, in part because it did not provide individuals the right to “challenge Jurors”(Jones 24, 43) in what were to be “highly inquisitorial” investigations. After some debate, the Charitable Uses Act was rewritten in 1601, but the extent of the charitable commission’s power was always to be in question: “whether the commissioners did or did not have jurisdiction over a particular charitable use was a question which appeared to arise relatively frequently after . . .1601”(33). There was great resistance to the church court’s jurisdiction over tithes and wills because they were “temporal” matters (Hill 303). Interestingly, the commission became much less effective during the Civil War and, despite an attempt to “resurrect it after the Restoration,” was supplanted by other legal mechanisms (Jones 25-26). Those skeptical of the charitable commission successfully

excluded certain “charities” from the commission’s jurisdiction in 1601. Most importantly for this study, any “Hospitall” governed by a “Citie or Towne Corporate,” like Bethlem, was outside the commission’s jurisdiction (Jones 37). In the struggle to reorganize charity and social welfare underway at the turn of the century, the London Hospitals stood apart and opposed to the newly forming national policy governed by Tudor JPs, commissions, and church courts.

There is a general tendency, I think, post -Foucault, to consider an institution like Bethlem as an instrument of the state -- a means of organizing and placing subjects. But Bethlem is a local city institution offering resistance to Tudor and Stuart absolutism -- until the Restoration. Bethlem was one of the institutions by and through which London citizens and officials would try to organize their own social, specifically charitable relations and stood as a place of opposition to the crown, ultimately made irrelevant by a system of national poor laws that undercut the charitable power of the citizen. If the single defining feature of French charity in the seventeenth century was the large institution, Slack argues (13-16), the single defining feature of English charity was the poor rate. To look to institutions like Bedlam as “state” operated means of control is to misread the institutions of power in England. As a modern institution Bedlam is essentially founded in the rather utopic space between the reformation and the institution of the poor laws when the city had substantial control over charitable gift-giving.

This point might need some clarification. Was not the program imagined in the Royal Hospitals with each parish contributing to a single fund a *centralized* program? And, accordingly, were not the poor laws and their emphasis on parish responsibility an example of “local” power or governance? One easily forgets or ignores in using terms like “central” and “local” in this context that the poor laws, despite their emphasis on the individual parish, were a nationalized plan, controlled by the Crown. In contrast, and to reiterate, the central London hospitals were a local plan which empowered the civic elite.

Slack situates the movement to reorganize charity and social welfare alongside the general “regulation of manners which is such a striking feature of parliamentary activity between 1580 and 1660”(103). There were, he suggests, “intensified” feelings of revulsion at the increase beggars, in disease, and in population generally (24). Ideas of charity which had once bound communities together, including beggars and vagrants, were changing: “There was the increasing use of the paradigm of the body politic, not to bind together a varied social whole, but to show the damage which untreated disease, disorder or decay in any one member might do to the rest: the diseased members should be cut off. We might point also to the growing interest in civility and refinement of manners which can be traced in the same period.” The cultural pressures at work here, in short, were not just affecting the poor. It was, as Slack suggests, as if, faced with a growing and increasingly uglier urban world, “social boundaries were being redrawn and proper, respectable society being newly and more tightly defined”(24). The “machinery of the poor law was not designed as an economic regulator, but as a moral, social and political one”(130).

The question was always who was going to set the terms for this social reorganization. When London citizens had control over the hospitals, they had substantial control over charitable gift-giving and the power of social organization implicit in giving. When, after 1598, London citizens lost control over charitable gift-giving, they lost a significant amount of power in the ongoing struggle to “redraw” respectable society. Power was now in the hands of the Justices of Peace and, consequently, Tudor and Stuart bureaucracy. And, again, there was much skepticism about the JPs ability to control and manage behavior. John Bond, a schoolmaster turned physician, asked during the 1601 parliament

Who, almost, are not grieved at the luxuriant authority of Justices of Peace?
 The poor commonality, whose strength and quietness of us all, he only
 shall be punished, be vexed, for will any that a Justice of Peace will contest

with as good a man as himself?(Neale 401)

Similarly, Hill notes that the Church courts were an “irritant for the industrious sort of people”(325). The Justices of Peace supervised the “overseers” of poor relief who had “considerable discretion in their use of the financial resources, powers of patronage, and opportunities for what we now call ‘social control’, that poor law gave them”(Slack, *Poor Laws* 28). This whole dynamic, and particularly those signs of resistance to the crown’s retaking control of charitable discourse and institutions, is realized in Bethlem’s history and the drama which is both part and record of that history.

Bethlem was a charitable city institution framed and shaped by citizens. Its significance and place in the culture is substantially altered by the instantiation of the 1598 poor laws and the struggle to reshape charity which ultimately dissipates the power of London citizens. It is no mere coincidence, I will argue then, that Bethlem, an institution recently dislodged from the center of the culture, *first* appears on the stage at this time in Dekker and Middleton’s *The Honest Whore* (1605). In other words, it seems highly probable within the logic of “Cultural Poetics” that an institution that had significant cultural meaning and symbolic power -- a place of London Protestant city charity -- would be transferred to the stage when that institution had lost some of its significance and the dominant cultural forces at work had an interest in diminishing (by theatricalizing) that institution’s social prominence. Bethlem was ripe, in the words of Stephen Greenblatt, for “symbolic acquisition” by the stage. After 1598, the state was fully engaged in enforcing its new system of charity and poor relief (the poor law system), driving an older form of charity and its institutions to the periphery of the culture: to be more precise, to the stage. Greenblatt eloquently expresses the logic of institutional exchange that I employ here in the case of Bethlem:

during the Reformation Catholic clerical garments . . . were sold to the players. . . The transmigration of a single ecclesiastical cloak from the

vestry to the wardrobe may stand as an emblem of the more complex and elusive institutional exchanges . . . What happens when the piece of cloth is passed from the church to the playhouse? A consecrated object is reclassified, assigned a cash value, transferred from a sacred to a profane setting, deemed suitable for the stage. The theater company is willing to pay for the object not because it contributes to naturalistic representation but because it still bears a symbolic value, however attenuated . . . And if for the theater the acquisition of clerical garments was a significant appropriation of symbolic power, why would the church part with that power? Because . . . the theater signifies the unscrupulous manipulation for profit of popular faith . . . the external and trivialized staging of what should be deeply inward; the tawdry triumph of spectacle over reason . . .” (*Negotiations* 112-13).

In the case of Bethlem, the symbolic power of an institution -- perhaps not “consecrated,” but central and significant to the culture -- is transferred to the stage at a time when the dominant forces no longer wish such an institution and the charitable system of which it is a part to have prominence.

The more traditionally “historical” research presented in the early part of this chapter should have suggested how and why Bethlem was ripe for symbolic acquisition in this way, but that section said nothing that might suggest why Dekker and Middleton specifically would choose or “acquire” it when they did. So far, I have only argued that Bethlem was available at this time for acquisition and have not argued why or in what dramatic context playwrights might use it; I have only described one interest in an institutional *exchange*, rather than the minimum of two. The dominant culture may have wanted Bethlem on the periphery of the culture, but why would dramatists take it and put the hospital on stage for the first time? The answers to this question are found by reading

closely the dynamics of a cultural struggle, a specifically literary and dramatic struggle called the Poets' War or poetomachia, which registers and participates in many of the issues involved in the larger struggle over charity. *The Honest Whore* and its depiction of Bethlem are part of the famous Poets' War in which Jonson, Marston, and Dekker used the stage as a vehicle to debate various personal and professional issues and, in the process, satirize one another. By noting the parallels and connections of that dispute to the cultural struggle over charity, we will be able to ascertain the point in the historical matrix where Bethlem intersects with (and ultimately appears on) the stage.

The poetomachia began in 1598 with Jonson's *Every Man in His Humor*. The "war" began primarily because Jonson's play claimed a new status for the poet and poetry that irritated Marston and Dekker who, in turn, mocked Jonson and what they perceived as his ostentation in *Histriomastix* (1599) and *Satiromastix* (1601). Jonson responded by mocking Dekker and Marston in *Every Man Out of His Humor* (1599) and *Poetaster* (1601).

While this was ostensibly a literary dispute, the poetomachia engaged issues outside the cultural realm of the theater. Jonson's plays antagonized Dekker (and others) not simply because of what he said about poetry, but because of the larger social vision of the city they presented. In brief, Jonson savaged the London citizen, most particularly the London merchant, generally depicting that figure or type as paranoid and jealous nearly to the point of insanity. He consistently made the citizen the dupe of more sophisticated, aristocratic figures who were able to play on the citizen's "humorous" or mad jealousy. In Jonson's plays it is the aristocratic gallants, such as Lorenzo and Prospero in *Every Man In*, who determine social relations. Moreover, in *Every Man In*, the gallants work hand in hand with the Justice of the Peace (Clement) to master the citizen figure Thorello and others in the play. In this alliance, Jonson's plays, particularly *Every Man In*, parallel and reinforce the newly dominant view of social relations also manifested in the 1598 poor

laws, which dictated that the social and charitable relations of London should be determined not by its citizens, but by more sophisticated and discriminating aristocratic figures able to discern and manage the needs of any particular parish. The dominant figures in Jonson's plays are very much like the gentry who comprised the late Tudor and early Stuart bureaucracy, including the Justices of the Peace (Fletcher; Gleason). The "City" in Jonson's "City Comedy" becomes the small, contained parish managed by a few representatives of a bureaucracy in contrast to the depiction of London almost as a medieval village suggested in Dekker's work. The political alliance between the aristocratic gallants and the Justices of the Peace acting for the good of all in *Every Man In* is not unlike the alliance between the Crown and the JPs operating in the poor law system. A system, again, often resisted by London citizens.

In the course of the poetomachia, Dekker and Middleton eventually resist Jonson's vision of the City and defend the character of the citizen from Jonson's charges of mad jealousy. In *The Honest Whore*, Dekker and Middleton depict a citizen figure, Candido, who is accused of madness. Candido is sent to Bethlem by the authorities, but the play eventually defends him by having the Duke release Candido and specifically say that he, of all people, has been incorrectly placed. In short, Bethlem first appears on stage as part of Dekker and Middleton's defense of London citizens from the satiric attacks levelled by Jonson. In dramatically defending the London citizen, Dekker and Middleton select an emblem outside and opposed to the view of the City manifested in Jonson's plays. They select an emblem which suggests London citizens had their own means and institutions of determining madness and social relations that are outside Jonson's aristocratic world of "humors." They select an emblem of Protestant citizen charity recently made available to the stage for symbolic acquisition.

This is not to argue that Dekker and Middleton's use of Bethlem, the first in stage history, is a conscious, or even particularly artful choice. In many ways, we shall see, the

selection is the product of the haphazard intersection of related cultural materials. It is to suggest the dramatic motivation for the institutional intersection or exchange that placed Bethlem on the stage. During a time when Bethlem's place in the culture was shifting and the charitable power of London was being challenged, Dekker and Middleton were engaged in a social struggle which also threatened to diminish the power of London citizens. In their specific struggle, they needed an emblem to refute satiric charges that London citizens were mad; that they chose Bethlem -- long a London symbol of the City's charity and ability to deal with madness -- is no coincidence. In short, in contrast to other studies that consider Bethlem in some detail (Reed; Salkeld; Carroll), not to mention countless, offhand references to the institution, I do not believe the cause of Bethlem's appearance should be dismissed by suggesting simply that the hospital is inherently theatrical or by pointing out generally that it symbolizes madness. Specific cultural and historical conditions, including theatrical historical conditions, can be traced that explain, perhaps with unusual specificity, the causes for Bethlem intersecting with the stage. There is, one could say, more than a touch of Logical Positivism in this brand of New Historicism.

The issues of the poetomachia, particularly its involvement in social competition between a London merchant class and a still powerful aristocracy, parallel and intersect with the issues involved in England's reconfiguration of its charitable system. Jonson's plays, in their focus on both "humors" or madness and the place of London citizens in contemporary social competitions, make the appearance of Bethlem, a London institution of madness and charity involved in a great moment of social reorganization, seem almost inevitable in retrospect. But the road from *Every Man In* (1598) to *The Honest Whore* (1605) is long and complicated and far from direct. The next three chapters of this study explore that road and, in an attempt to make it seem less winding than it might and more easily travelled, begin at the end. Chapter Two examines *The Honest Whore* and its use of Bethlem, demonstrating first that the play as a whole is a pseudo-legal, rhetorical defense

of the citizen figure Candido -- a reading which challenges most criticism of the play by arguing the traditional "main-plot" involving the reformed "whore" Bellafront is less significant than the "sub-plot" -- before moving on to demonstrate that the discrepancy in size between actual Bethlem and dramatic Bethlem discussed at the opening is a product of the play's dramaturgy. What "Bethlem" looks like in the play, I will show, is not the product of the playwrights' attempts to "represent" the real institution, but a product of a specific and identifiable cultural practice -- Renaissance rhetoric -- that, when examined, can provide access to other cultural practices and materials. We can see not a "poetic picture" of Bethlem, in other words, but something perhaps more valuable: the means by which Bethlem moves from one related and cultural sphere to another.

In Chapters Three and Four, then, I return to Jonson and the poetomachia to explain in full the dramatic motivation and context for the defense of Candido and Bethlem's first appearance; in these chapters I also explore in more detail how the social issues raised in the poetomachia parallel and relate to the social issues involved in the charitable shift. The poetomachia, in short, becomes entangled in many issues of social competition and social organization that eventually bring it into contact with the reorganization of charity. To put it another way, the poetomachia becomes discursively intertwined with the cultural material surrounding Bethlem, and those connections lead eventually to the intersection of Bethlem and the stage in *The Honest Whore*.

In addition, these chapters will stress the combative aspects of the Poets' War. That is, this study will consider the extent to which these plays were, as Jonathan Haynes suggests, social weapons. This is a literary struggle which logically registers larger cultural struggles. Importantly, too, the poetomachia is rife with satire. For no literary form encapsulates the contradictory and complex impulses of charitable gift giving like satire. Like charity, satire ostensibly originates from a "high-minded" impulse: the desire to help or reform fellow human beings. But also like charity, satire can quickly degenerate

into “something quite different”(Coombe, Intro). As Kirk Coombe writes, “punishment threatens to overtake reform as a basic motive for much satire”(77). Charity and satire both are cultural practices designed or intended to help or reform, but both also embody a colder or harder edge in their practice. Mary Douglas writes in the forward to Marcel Mauss’s *The Gift* that “Charity is still wounding for him who accepted it, and the whole tendency of our morality is to strive to do away with the unconscious and injurious patronage of the rich almsgiver.” It is no surprise, in other words, that Ben Jonson calls satire a “whip”(Test 16) at the same time moment in history when the whip is one of the principal instruments of “charity” in the English Poor Law. Nor is it any surprise that, at the moment the Crown seizes control of charitable practices in the 1598 poor laws and statutes of charitable uses, it bans verse satire (Kernan 82). “Reform” was now again officially the business of the state sanctioned church.

In the satire permeating the poetomachia we see the cultural parallels and connections to charity that are so important to this argument. The historical progression of satire in England indeed parallels the historical progression of charity. Alvin Kernan has argued that the medieval complaint of *Piers Plowman*, its gentle correction urging simple piety, humility, and social harmony, gave way to the harsher verse satire in the 1590’s and eventually the drama of Jonson. Analogously, “charity” in England progresses from the gentler correction and vision of social harmony envisioned in the London Hospitals to the harsher and more discriminating poor laws.

Neither literary or social shift takes place, again, without a struggle. Jonson’s satiric comedy instigates the poet’s war, prompting playwrights like Dekker and Middleton to respond to Jonson’s harshness and ostentation. The playwrights react to and resist Jonson’s vision of the city, his valorization of “poetic” gallants able to manage (or dupe) the rest of the city population. In response, they present a nostalgic vision of the city. They depict a communal setting, where older institutions, like Bethlem, determine social

boundaries. In response to Jonson's harsher and newer form of satire Dekker and Middleton respond with a gentler form of satire much more similar to the medieval complaint. Brian Gibbon noted similarly in his attempt to describe the genre of City Comedy that Jonson and others (including the later Middleton) "had self-consciously, sometimes aggressively, forged the new form, City Comedy, and the mood for their plays was notably hostile to the earlier tradition of non-satiric, Popular, often sentimental London comedies such as Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*" (15) or, we might add, *The Honest Whore*. Dekker, we note as well, often displayed a hostility toward JPs. In the pamphlet *Lantern and Candlelight*, he attacks those who participate in the new administrative workings of poor relief:

their pens, the bones of unconscionable Brokers and hard-hearted Creditors
that have made Dice of other men's bones, or else of perjured Executors
and blind Overseers that have eaten up widow and Orphan to the bare
bones. (Kinney 222)

And, in *The Wonderful Yeare*, Dekker mocks the Justices of Peace as an institution of the country gentry, unhelpful and antagonistic to the needs of Londoners (84).

Chapter Five, on Shakespeare's *King Lear*, continues to explore the early part of the century when Bedlam was dislodged from the center of the culture's charitable network by the 1598 poor laws and, as I have said, made ripe for the stage for "symbolic acquisition." Dekker and Middleton were not the only playwrights to bring Bedlam to the stage in 1605. *King Lear* participates in the transition between two charitable systems, the intermediate system organized around the hospitals, and the long lasting system organized around the poor laws, by appropriating Bedlam's spectacular qualities when the former system was dislodged from the center of the culture by the latter. Shakespeare does in *King Lear* what Bedlam had done: show madness and its cure to elicit charitable -- using that word in its broadest sense -- feelings. If Dekker and Middleton's contemporaneous

appropriation of Bethlem was less than artful, Shakespeare's appropriation is perhaps the most sophisticated and artful borrowing in all of dramatic literature. This borrowing or "exchange" had the concurrent effect of endowing *King Lear* with a sense of tragic pain present at a real early modern charity while theatricalizing that charity and its practices. The visits to Bedlam discussed at the beginning of this chapter were initially "charitable," but with the refinement of charity that came about with the poor laws and the drama's appropriation of such spectacle, such visits came to be seen not so much as charity, but as recreation. The practice degenerated as charity changed.

King Lear is a uniquely powerful borrowing of Bedlam and in no way satirical. Yet it can still be said that if the "historical" context of Bethlem is charity, the "literary" context is satire. When madhouse dramas again become prominent in the late teens and early twenties it is again in a satiric context. In 1622, Middleton and Rowley produce *The Changeling* and Fletcher produces *The Pilgrim*. *The Changeling* is a satiric Protestant response to the good works or Catholic charity valorized in *The Pilgrim*. Some twenty years after Middleton collaborated with Dekker in choosing Bethlem as a symbol of citizen charity, he responds satirically to Fletcher's positive depiction of a Catholic madhouse and madhouse keeper. Bethlem was still considered a London Protestant institution and, at the time of the two plays, a pro-Catholic King had seized control over it, placing one of his own physicians in charge. What had once been part of a utopic vision of a reformed city had now been, from the perspective of Protestant puritan playwrights, thoroughly perverted. When Bedlam burns down in 1666 and is rebuilt by Robert Hooke, under the guidance of Christopher Wren, it is completely controlled by the crown. Interestingly and appropriately, the only mad house play which captures the attention of restoration playwrights is *The Pilgrim*, which is adapted by Sir John Vanbrugh.

Notes

1. I begin with a quote from MacDonald -- not to take him to task -- but to demonstrate that, even in the work of one of the most sophisticated and influential historians working on early modern madness, drama's function in history (and in historicism) presents particular problems. I see my work as a specialized "literary" branch of the larger socio-historical work presently refiguring early modern madness in a "post-Foucault" era. For a discussion of new work being done on early modern madness and the literary scholar's role in that project see Carol Thomas Neely's "Recent Work in Renaissance: Psychology Did Madness Have a Renaissance?" I should note here at the outset that there is no clear distinction in usage between "Bedlam" and Bethlem in most of the literature. Generally, I use Bedlam when referring to dramatic representations and Bethlem when talking about the actual institution.

2. Although the 1598 census indicates 20 patients, one can not look closely at the hospital's history and take that as any kind of average. The 1598 census, for example, includes "new arrivals" which suggests a high turnover rate. A more complete historical picture is available if, in conjunction with MacDonald, one reads Patricia Allderidge's "Management and mismanagement at Bedlam" and "Bedlam: fact or fantasy?", Robert Reed's *Bedlam on the Jacobean Stage*, and Jonathan Andrews' "A History of Bethlem Hospital." All these works indicate that Bedlam's census was small and sporadic and that, even given Renaissance London's tendency to overcrowd small places, "thirty" was a maximum capacity figure.

3. Bethlehem hospital, originally known as St. Mary of Bethlehem, was founded as a priory in 1247 by the religious order operating under the name "Our Lady of Bethlehem,"

often referred to as “Bethlehemites.” Technically owned and supervised by the Bishop of Clamecy in France, the establishment was seized by Edward III as an alien priory.

Evidence of its specific care for the insane starts around 1350. See Allderidge, Reed, Andrews, and David Knowles & N. Neville Hadcock’s *Medieval and Religious Houses: England and Wales* (250, 286).

4. On a related issue, Roy Porter, in *Mind-forg’d Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency*, points out that Hogarth’s work in the eighteenth century set the standard for representations of Bethlem -- not reality: “Art commented on art not life” (37).

5. Neither Reed nor MacDonald consider the possibility that a smaller Bedlam would seem to compromise its notorious function as spectacle. Reed, however, does make an interesting observation: “if said house [Bedlam] was actually as revolting as this report [the 1598 commission] shows, we are led to wonder why the hospital and its madfolk were considered one of the chief amusements”(16). MacDonald notes, too, that “the offal that shocked inspectors did not deter the public from coming to gawk at the small company of lunatics”(121). One can more easily understand visitations of the sort MacDonald and Reed discuss after 1666; MacDonald’s “tiny hovel” -- having undergone only small improvements and enlargement in the 1640s -- burns down in the great fire. In a biography of Bethlem’s Restoration architect, Robert Hooke, Margaret Espinasse states that Bethlem was one of Hooke’s “most admired buildings”; she recounts that Ned Ward called it a “magnificent edifice” and Tom Brown compared it to the Louvre (56).

6. See Patricia Allderidge (“Fact or Fantasy?”) for a powerful and entertaining critique of Bedlam myths. Her primary target is Robert Reed’s oft cited calculation that 96,000 visited Bedlam per year in the eighteenth century and thirty percent of that number visited

per year in the preceding century. Allderidge destroys those figures, suggesting that visitation was much less in both periods. Given her argument, one could question whether the practice of visitation as generally understood had even been established in the early seventeenth century. In critiquing Reed's numbers, Allderidge is, in one literal sense, critiquing Foucault in that Foucault cites Reed's "96,000" figure, but does not cite Reed. Apparently, Foucault generated the same figure from Ned Ward's comment in the *London Spy* that admission was two pence. See *Folie et Deraison. Histoire de la folie a l'age classique*, pg. 179, n. #3. For a broader view of Foucault's problematic influence see *Rewriting the History of Madness: Studies in Foucault's Histoire de la folie*, eds. Arthur Still and Irving Velody.

7. See in particular on this generally accepted characterisation Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge*; Colin Jones, *The Charitable Imperative: Hospitals and Nursing in Ancien Regime and Revolutionary France*; W.K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England 1480-1660: A Study of the Changing Social Aspirations*; Christopher Hill *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* pp. 259-297; Lindsay Grandshaw & Roy Porter, eds., *The Hospital in History*; Paul Slack *Poverty & Policy in Tudor & Stuart England*. Rubin argues, for example, that twelfth century prosperity for land owners inspired a great deal of charitable activity, but in the following centuries during economic decline for this group "a long process of disenchantment both with the poor and with workers, who in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were better off and more socially mobile, led to a decline in the trust in poverty's virtue The forms of charitable activity responded to these changes in circumstances of life and in social relations"(98).

8. A.L.Beir gives a concise history of poor laws in *The Problem of the Poor in Tudor and Early Stuart England*.

9. Thomas Riis offers another general summary about changing attitudes to the poor: “The discrimination against able-bodied migrants and beggars had several roots. The principle of the obligation to work emphasized in certain countries in the wake of the Black death, and which spread to the rest of Europe; the need to do something efficient in order to cope with the serious problems of the sixteenth century; the protomercantilist belief that begging by able-bodied persons was a waste of resources; and, the recognition that begging and vagrancy were incompatible with a well governed polity, not the least because of the fear of the spread of disease”(194).

10. This argument has its most famous and wide reaching roots in R.H. Tawney’s *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*; see Beier for a concise summary and, also, Slack *Poverty and Policy* (1-13).

11. See also Brian Pullan *Poverty and Charity: Europe, Italy, Venice 1400-1700* ; Riis; and Slack who argues that we need to “push the sources of welfare reform back beyond Protestantism . . . to humanism and the urban environment”(*Poverty and Policy* 10).

12. Jordan notes that the first Henrician statutes about poor relief singled out the ‘witless’ as a group deserving help (115). MacDonald notes that after 1601 “the government obliged parishes to treat impoverished madman as ‘deserving poor’, people who, like orphans and cripples, were unable to work through no fault of their own”(6). Geoffrey Oxley , in *Poor Relief in England and Wales 1601-1834* , observes that “The mentally sick had been a burden on the poor rates from the earliest days and had always proved a singularly difficult group of paupers. Many were helpless and required the constant attention and assistance of others, which made them expensive to maintain”(69).

13. Miri Rubin's "Development and Change in English Hospitals, 100-1500" in *The History of Hospitals*, pg. 48. Citations in this paragraph come from Rubin's article, but see her *Charity and Community* for a more complete analysis.

14. Occluding this point has been Foucault's argument about the "ambiguity" and "great confinement" of madness; he suggests all sorts of social undesirables were gathered together in one institutional setting. This argument is currently undergoing some revision in France (see Porter, *Mind Forged Manacles* (7-8), who suggests the number of "confined" in France has been exaggerated) and certainly, although there is a tendency to see a version of the "great confinement" model working in England (see Stephen Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England*, 71-72), the number of social undesirables confined in England was minimal (Porter, "Foucault's Great Confinement" in *Rewriting the History of Madness*, 121). Moreover, these social groups, when confined, were not gathered together. Bridewell and Bethlem were ostensibly under the same governorship but concerted efforts were made to distinguish the mad from the poor. As Porter remarks, "France lumps; England splits" ("Foucault's Great Confinement," 121).

15. See, in particular, Slack (*Poverty and Policy* 118-121) and Carole Rawcliffe "The Hospitals of Later Medieval London."

16. Jordan makes this point in his massive trilogy on charity in England. I should acknowledge, though, that Jordan's work on philanthropy in England has undergone substantial critique. See, for example, J.A.F. Thomson "Piety and Charity in Late

Medieval London.” In particular, Jordan inadequately accounted for inflation and thus overstated the amount Protestants gave to charity. In general, though, his description of shifts in charitable practices holds true and is still cited extensively. Moreover, he offers an excellent reading and survey of “charitable” sermons which, if he mistook as indicators of unusual Protestant generosity, is still very useful for understanding the cultural pressures surrounding the concept of charity. Unless otherwise indicated, references to Jordan refer to *Philanthropy in England*.

17. For contrast, see Slack, who does not wish to “exaggerate” the social importance of doctrinal difference (10), and Susan Brigden “Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth Century London,” who notes that Protestants were as obliged as Catholics to be “in charity” and that they made the same “communal” promises in liturgy: “Amend your lives and be in perfect charity with all men”(112). Brigden also makes the makes the point that “the dichotomy between charity animated by the old faith and the new cannot have been so marked, nor the inspiration so different; certainly they often seemed the same”(106). Unless otherwise indicated, references to Slack refer to *Poverty and Policy*.

18. See, for example, the language of Marco H.D. van Leewwen in “Logic of Charity: Poor Relief in Preindustrial Europe”: “Charity functioned at the same time as a control strategy for the elites and a survival strategy for the poor”(591).

19. The most influential work on this matter is Anders Nygren’s *Agape and Eros*. See for a contemporary discussion Garth L. Hallett, *Christian Neighbor-Love: An Assessment of Six Rival Versions* .

20. David Sanderlin writes that “in order to love others charitably, we must empty our will of desirous attachments to people for their attractive qualities, for with these attachments we

love them partly for our own sake, insofar as they please us with these qualities. As John points out, if we love some more for their attractive qualities (Ascent 3.22.2), we are likely to love others less who lack such qualities. With such a self-centered eros, we tend to love and sometimes even idolize beautiful, talented people . . . while caring less for downtrodden, rude, deformed, and hurting people” (87-88).

21. Pullan makes the point more graphically on the preceding page: “The infective stench of syphilis could easily drown the odour of sanctity.”

22. Generally, Christian ethical studies considers Luther’s departure from Augustine on this point part of a larger historical impulse in Europe to deny the “self-love” that Augustine had made respectable in the concept of *caritas*. English “puritan” preachers like Ames and Perkins took a middle ground in this dispute; that is, they rejected Augustine’s concept of *caritas* but never went as far as seventeenth century mystics like Madame Guyon who renounced all ordinary human or “self-love”(Post 14-15).

23. He specifically attacks those who “misinterpret” Paul’s words: “If anyone has all faith so as to remove mountains, but has not love, he is nothing” (I Cor 13:2).

24. In a lengthy exchange with D. Potter, Matthew Wilson, in *Mercy & Truth or Charity Maintayned by Catholiques* (1634), argued initially that “Charity was mistaken by Protestants.” Wilson argues that Protestants should not condemn Catholics because of a common understanding of charity.

25. “The White Devil; or The Hypocrite Uncased” in *The English Sermon: 1550-1650*, pg. 256.

26. Jordan observed that Elizabethan preachers spent significant time trying to articulate the Protestant doctrine that charity was necessary because charity displayed faith, but Jacobean

preachers, on the other hand, exhibited a more “confident”(180) rhetorical pose and mentioned Protestant justification less frequently.

27. One can hardly read a paragraph of Hooker’s influential sermon without noticing the juxtaposition. When Hooker explains that good works are holy and necessary (“sanctification”), he distinguishes such a belief from the Catholic understanding that sanctification through charity helps justify man’s soul to God: “Nowe concerninge the rightuousness of sanctification we denye it not to be inherente, we graunte that without we work we have it not, only we distinguishe it as a thinge in nature differente from the righteousness of justification”(113). We see the same “distinctions” made throughout: “Then what is the faulte of the churche of Rome? not that she requireth workes att their handes that wilbe save but that she attributeth unto workes a power of satisfying god . . . [when] salvation by Christe is the foundation of christianitye”(159).

28. Qtd. in Nygren, pg. 722. See Luther WA 36, p.424, 16ff.

29. Qtd. in Jordan, pp. 235-36.

30. Qtd. in Jordan, pg. 190.

31. Indeed, Hooker’s long and influential “justification” of Protestant charity cited above was part of a response to Walter Traver’s charges that Hooker did not sufficiently condemn Catholic beliefs (Hooker 83-298).

32. See also Lindberg, Riis. Even Slack, who generally tends to understate the significance of religion in poor relief, remarks that the Reformation made government interference with religious and charitable institutions easier.

33. See also Geremak, 121. Even Lis & Soly, who stress economic causes for changes in

charity, point to the years immediately following the Reformation as a watershed(84).

34. See Mollat, Geremak, Lis & Soly. See also Rawcliffe for a detailed look at how London officials slowly encroached on the church's control over charitable hospitals.

35. It is very easy to make too much of the shift from Wolsey to Cromwell in English history, but the emerging figure of Cromwell functions well as an emblem for the historical changes taking place in charity and poor relief which would shape Bethlem and eventually Bethlem dramas. The rise to power of the London bureaucrat with close ties to Protestant reformers, humanist thinkers, and London merchants parallels the rising influence reformers, humanist ideals, and London merchants had in charity. Cromwell's function in this "shift" was in fact more than emblematic. It was under his administration, for example, and from his immediate "circle," that this radical document appeared detailing a plan for poor relief so closely aligned with Lutheran principles of charity and continental ideas of reform that it had to be discarded or, rather, put in abeyance for a time when the English state had the power to impose it.

36. This study agrees with Slack that the formation of the Hospitals is too often taken for granted ("Social Policy" 95).

37. Brigden notes that national government in the 1550's was too preoccupied with an unpopular war with France and problems, in general, with the Reformation to do anything significant about poor relief (*London and The Reformation* 621).

38. Slack also notes that this temporary tax provided a model for the national poor rate of 1598 (*Poor Laws* 19).

39. Qtd. in Gareth Jones who explains that “every Bishop is called Ordinary, as if other judges were in this behalf incompetent or extraordinary”(4).

40. On Barnes, his placement at Bethlem, his status as martyr, and significance in London history see Brigden (*London and The Reformation* 247-75). See also James Edward Mcgoldrick, *Luther's English Connection: The Reformation Thought of Robert Barnes and William Tyndale*. Bethlem's mere association with an avowed Lutheran like Barnes may have given the place some cultural meaning now lost. Barnes allegedly said in 1536 that he would rather have the keepership of Bethlem than a Bishopric, a remark Allderidge interprets as a sign that Bethlem was a fairly lucrative operation (“Management” 144). It seems more likely, however, given his Reformist zeal, that the comment suggests that, from an early point, Bethlem was juxtaposed as a true and Godly City Charity to the corrupt and Popish charity of the state sanctioned church.

Chapter 2

The Honest Whore and Amplified Bedlam

As Michael MacDonald suggested, dramatists have distorted our understanding of Bethlem and, in particular, its physical size and population. While the discrepancy between fact and fiction on such fundamental matters might suggest that any further historical examination has come to a dead end before it begins, this study sees MacDonald's distortion as a clearly marked starting point in the attempt to reconfigure the relationship between Bethlem and Bethlem dramas, or determine where in the same cultural matrix forces shaping the former intersect with forces shaping the latter. That is, if we have a point where "reality" coincides with but clearly diverges from "representation," we can analyze more closely the reasons for that divergence and eventually trace the features common to dramatic representation and social reality.¹ In a reading of the first play to use Bethlem as a stage setting -- Dekker and Middleton's *The Honest Whore* -- I will show that Renaissance rhetoric produces the incongruity in size between dramatic Bethlem and actual Bethlem before moving on, in the following chapters, to show that understanding this particular strand (rhetoric) of the cultural matrix shaping Bethlem dramas allows us access to other strands common to both hospital and drama: in particular, the cultural pressures of charity.

Like so much Jacobean drama, *The Honest Whore* takes up "madness" -- as a term, a topic, a trope, a theme -- throughout.² The play opens with a funeral scene. A young

gentleman “turnde wilde,” Hippolito, disrupts the ceremony with what are, apparently, grief induced histrionics over the death of his betrothed, Infaelice. His friend, Matheo, and others must restrain him and his behavior: “Come, y’are mad”(1.1.9). Scene Two introduces the characters of the “sub-plot”: Candido and his household. Candido is an extraordinarily patient “linen-draper.” His wife wishes him not so patient and has enlisted her brother’s (Fustigo) aid in turning him “home mad” (1.2.90). A group of courtiers in search of amusement also seek to try Candido’s renowned patience. They would have him as “madde as an English cuckolde” (1.4.16). Candido’s wife asserts that his patience itself is a form of madness and calls him a “madman” when the courtiers’ trick fails to anger him (1.5.78). In Act Two, the courtiers tell the title character, Bellafront, to come “like a madwoman without a band, in your wastcoate” (2.1.223). Later in the same act, having fallen in love with Hippolito, Bellafront pleads frantically for him to reciprocate. He declines, taken aback by her overly enthusiastic overtures: “Madwoman, what art doing?” (2.1.448). In Act Three, in an attempt to anger Candido, Fustigo masquerades as his sister’s lover. Candido discovers the ruse and belittles Fustigo for his poor “acting”: “If youle needs play the madman, choose, a stage/ Of lesser compasse” (3.1.60-61). And, of course, the play culminates in Bedlam, where the machinations of the plot and sub-plots are brought together and resolved amidst a host of mad Bedlamites. Madness, in one form or another, permeates the play.

Dramatic representations and references such as this are, in one sense, not surprising. It was a time, MacDonald says, when the “English people became more concerned about the prevalence of madness . . . than ever before”(2). And “By representing both madness and the process of reading madness,” Carol Thomas Neely writes, the plays “theatricalize and disseminate the complicated distinctions” about madness being made at the time (“Documents” 316). The topic of madness was prominent, “confused, charged, and contested.” But the prominence and, especially, the proliferation

of madness in *The Honest Whore* results as much from the powerful influence of rhetoric in forming the drama: a claim which requires some general discussion of Renaissance theories of writing and speech.

Renaissance writers prized “copiousness.”³ An ideal, Joel Altman suggests, related to the rhetorical training of Renaissance writers. They were trained to search the “logical commonplaces” of Cicero and Quintilian, a method which simultaneously enabled the writer “to find many things to say about a given subject” and “provided him with an instrument for analyzing words, ideas, and events, thereby enlarging his understanding as well as his verbal inventory.”⁴ In the commonplaces

one found a grid of conceptual ‘viewpoints,’ as it were, each offering a different perspective upon the matter at hand. Cicero’s list of seventeen commonplaces includes such concepts as genus, species, parts, cause, and effect; Agricola’s is somewhat longer. The student might run through all the topics, or only a few, to gain new ways of thinking or writing about his subject. For example . . . in a memorable *tour de force*, [Thomas Wilson] takes the term ‘magistrate’ through virtually all the places -- defining it, giving its genus, dividing it into kinds, describing the qualities of the ruler, his necessary actions, efficient and final causes, effect, etc. -- until one has contemplated ‘magistrate’ in a wide variety of contexts. (50-51)

Here it might appear that subject matter has little to do with producing copiousness: the method generates discourse out of the neutral “matter at hand.” But, as Terrence Cave notes in *The Cornucopian Text*, certain subject matter (*res*) is more valuable than others in producing copious discourse (*verba*): “true copia -- as opposed to *vitiosa abundantia* or *loquacitas* -- is assured where *res* inform or guarantee *verba*” (6). In other words, certain subjects were more productive -- and hence more valued -- than others. Although he does not state it as explicitly, Altman acknowledges as much in his example: a term or concept

like “magistrate” lends itself to engagement with the logical commonplaces, lends itself to a proliferation of discourse, in a way other terms or concepts might not. Madness, I am arguing, has the same quality; and the same appeal to those trained to use the “places of invention.” In short, the “ambiguous”⁵ nature of madness - - its vastness, its vagaries, its wide range of meaning and implications - - made it particularly inviting to an age that embraced the methods of Sophistic rhetoric and valorized copiousness. A cursory glance at almost any Renaissance discussion of madness gives some indication of the verbal expanse associated with such a subject; while not exactly typical, Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* still functions well as an introductory example.

To understand the relevance of all this to *The Honest Whore* requires a more extensive consideration of rhetoric’s role in forming the drama. Altman and others have argued that certain rhetorical methods and values do not just influence drama in superficial ways; they do not just, for example, produce dialogue which heaps figures on top of figures in the hopes of generating copiousness - - although that stylistic peculiarity certainly exists as a byproduct of rhetoric as we shall see. Rather, these methods and their corresponding aesthetic and intellectual values help generate the fictions themselves: a claim which relies on the observation that mimetic fictions may emerge from specific rhetorical exercises. Altman suggests that rhetorical training in general teaches one to “sensitively judge” the general or abstract questions through particulars (65). An abstract or indefinite question -- “Should a man marry?” -- is analyzed or resolved by asking a definite or particular question -- “Should Cato marry?” “Fictional” scenarios or characters, Cato in this example, are habitually used to ask or answer larger questions. Those exposed to Renaissance rhetorical training explored questions by creating scenarios “ so that the issue [could] be examined with greater attention to its specific ethical and emotional content, and therefore adjudicated with greater subtlety. In the transition, intellectual inquiry assumes the form of affective imitation”(66). The intellectual movement from general to particular

is often described as the movement from “thesis” or indefinite question to “hypothesis” or definite question, and this movement underlies much fiction making (Trimpi 306-27).

Given that Renaissance dramatists were formally trained in these and related rhetorical methods, a closer look at the proliferation of the term “mad” in the first four acts of *The Honest Whore* indicates that the play resembles a sort of dramatized rhetorical exercise in which the playwrights take the term “mad” through all the traditional topoi or places. In Act One, when Mattheo calls Hippolito “mad,” he is referring to the young gallant’s excessive grief, his histrionic and disruptive behavior. No one in the play presumes Hippolito mad in the sense that he requires treatment, but rather invoke the term because Hippolito’s behavior resembles “true” madness. On the other hand, to be as grief stricken as Hippolito suggests a certain, at least temporary, kind of madness. Or it suggests that such profound grief might indeed drive one mad. The play begins, in short, by “analyzing” the subject into its “kinds” and “species”: an analysis here which also probes or raises questions of causes and antecedents. The abstract question or thesis -- one could speculate, for example, something like “what is madness?” -- motivates a hypothesis or “examination of the particulars in a given problem”: the creation of a fictional scene or character, Hippolito at the funeral in this case, which explores or examines one aspect of the term -- its association with excessive grief.

Later in the same act the authors display another “kind” of madness: anger. Candido’s wife worries that her husband “haz not all things belonging to a man”; she worries that “hee who cannot be angry is no man”(1.2.64). She plots, then, to make Candido “madde.” Here the topic of madness broadens even further. Like the opening scene, this scene raises questions about the relationship of extreme emotion -- anger, in this case -- to madness, but this scene also plays with the signifier itself. To be mad is to be angry while to be mad is also to be insane: such a play on words finds a “place” both in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and Cicero’s *Topica* (Lanham 166-67). The process continues in

scene four where the courtiers associate madness with jealousy: “madde as an English cuckold.” Candido’s patience itself, in its seeming excess, raises questions about his sanity: his wife repeatedly calls him a madman.

Madness has long associations with sin, too, so when Mattheo suggests that Bellafront the whore come to their home like a “madwoman without a band, in your wastcoate”(2.1.223) the authors are playing with not just surface parallels, but causes and effects.⁶ The questions of whether madness caused sin or sin caused madness tumble over one another in Burton and Bright and elsewhere. Simply put, throughout the opening scenes, questions about madness -- its limits, its parallels, its causes -- are repeatedly raised. The authors suggest distinctions and classifications about madness which consider and broaden the term’s meaning and, perhaps, form the skeletal outline of the actual fictional representations.

Almost every question about the multiple distinctions, parallels, and classifications of madness in the play is left unanswered; madness could indeed be excessive grief, anger, or jealousy. The charge of madness implicates everyone. Indeed, everyone ends up in Bedlam in Act Five. The rhetorical structure of the play -- the divisions and classifications of madness that resemble a “tour” through the logical commonplaces -- recalls rhetoric’s function as an “art of inquiry,”⁷ a means of exploring difficult questions: in this case, questions about the nature of madness. The play could be read, in short, as a dramatic version of a rhetorical inquiry into the subject of madness. Joel Altman, for the most part, stresses rhetoric’s historical function as an art of inquiry rather than an “art of persuasion” and it is that function he sees most often manifesting itself in the drama: “I shall be asking the reader to consider a great many Renaissance plays to be questions: questions about love, justice, sovereignty, nature, imagination -- even questions which question whether such questions can be answered”(2).

The Honest Whore, however, does not just raise questions about madness; on the

contrary, some questions are answered rather definitively: most importantly, Candido, while charged with madness (and, indeed, confined for it) is officially exonerated from the charge at the end of the play. Moreover, his “patience”, the alleged source of his madness, is valorized throughout. When in Act One, for example, the courtiers’ scheme to vex Candido fails, they end up repenting and commenting on his character:

Thou art a blest man, and with peace dost deale,
Such a meeke spirit can blesse a common weale. (1.5.28-29)

This is no questioning of the madness of excessive patience, but a defense or rebuttal of that charge early in the play. The defense stands out because the play does not offer it for any other character. They are all left, for the most part, implicated in the “mad” world of Bedlam. The rhetorical divisions and distinctions function, it would seem, psychogogically, in that they broaden the definition of madness only to make Candido’s position outside that broad definition more pronounced.

The intense focus here on Candido and madness in a play titled *The Honest Whore* may seem odd, but in fact his character is more important to the play than the usual assignment of his story to the subplot may suggest. The rhetorical operations I am tracing suggest this primacy, as does the initial title entry in the Stationers’ Register: “A Booke called. the humors of the patient man. The longinge wyfe and *The Honest Whore*.” The payment from Henslowe, similarly, was for “the paysent man & the onest hore” (Bowers; Hoy). Indeed, the play concludes with Candido “amplifying” the values of patience (5.2.495-514) and the Duke, the principal authority figure, complimenting Candido’s speech and inviting him to court:

Thou giv’st it [patience] lively coulours: who dare say
He’s mad, whose words march in so good aray?
Twere sinne all women should such husbands have.
For every man must then be his wives slave.

Come therefore you shall teach our court to shine,
 So calme a spirit is worth a golden Mine,
 Wives (with meeke husbands) that to vex them long,
 In Bedlam must they dwell, els dwell they wrong.(5.2.515-522)

In contrast, the “other” title character, the honest whore Bellafront, is accorded only seven lines at the conclusion (5.2.433-440). The “honest whore’s” redemption is, in fact, nothing remarkable even though the title suggests that she will play a prominent role. The Duke forces her -- in a very conventional fashion -- to marry Mattheo, the man who defiled her. Bellafront’s dramatic function is overshadowed by the play’s defense of Candido. The play concludes, in short, not with Bellafront’s redemption, but by guiding the viewer through the significance and importance of Candido’s exoneration by the Duke.

The most appropriate rhetorical term for this type of psychagogy, this guiding of emotional and intellectual energies towards a specific response, is amplification: a method for achieving copiousness which retains, most explicitly, its historical associations with rhetoric’s function, not as an “art of inquiry,” but as an “art of persuasion” -- specifically, an art of legal persuasion. The method originated in the presentation of legal proof; the forensic orator would “expand” on a topic so the jury could “see” the facts of the case in order to either increase their indignation at the crime or raise their pity.⁸ The method

consists chiefly in two activities: dividing and presencing. The former is accomplished through such operations as analyzing one’s subject into kinds and species, severing the whole into parts, searching out antecedents, and consequences, probing for cause, weighing relevant parallels -- procedures that follow hard upon the topics of dialectical invention and are capable of making a matter mighty and a hero as great as Alexander the Big.

Presencing is achieved by exhibiting one’s subject in images that possess a certain illustriousness -- what the Greeks call *enargeia* and the Latins

evidentia -- so that what obstrudes upon the audience's attention will not only appeal to the ear but be "displayed in their living truth to the eyes of the mind," as Quintilian puts it . . . [dividing and presencing] are not mutually exclusive faculties: the partitive acts of the one, when the poetics is working well, become the participatory offerings of the other, imparting to the imagination the vivifying nourishment that allows it to compose powerful and satisfying illusions. (Altman, "Vile Participation" 17-18)

When Dekker and Middleton divide madness into jealousy, excessive grief, sin, etc. in the first four acts of the play, they impart "to the imagination" of the audience the "vivifying nourishment" the audience needs to both construct and accept the illusion -- the presencing -- of Bedlam in Act Five. No single mad figure could represent the near endless distinctions and divisions the dramatists supply in the first four acts. No single mad figure could satisfy the "illusion" Dekker and Middleton have suggested -- the illusion that the whole world is, in one sense or another, mad. Bedlam, however, a place where everyone is indeed mad, at least partially satisfies that suggestion and presents a clear, forceful, and dramatic image of madness: a background which, furthermore, highlights Candido's "innocence." Hoy has suggested that Middleton's part in the collaboration is most strongly "felt in 1.5,3.1, [and] 3.3"(7) which supports his other suggestion that Candido is largely derived from Quieto, a very patient citizen character in Middleton's previous play *The Phoenix* (1604). It does seem that Middleton and Dekker specifically created a citizen character, depicted a citizen institution, and rhetorically guided viewers to a specific understanding of sanity and the citizen.

The effect of these rhetorical operations, moreover, would be to present an image of Bedlam not comparable or proportional to the actual institution, but one comparable or proportional to all the possible "amplified" divisions and classifications of madness. The first full representation of Bedlam the audience would have seen on the Jacobean stage --

one swarming with Bedlamites -- stems, at least in part, from the Renaissance rhetorical operations which inform so much of the drama: a rhetorical byproduct, in a sense, of the authors' amplification on the subject of madness. When the audience first "sees" Bedlam on stage, what they are seeing, in part, is the residual resonance of the rhetorical operations that generated the image and, even more, the residual resonance of the legal contexts which generated the rhetorical operations themselves. For example, Candido's wife has schemed to have Candido confined in Bedlam by the authorities. Her charge of madness remains legal in nature, enforced by the constable, and the first description of Bedlam is an amplified one, designed to instill guilt in her and increase the audience's (albeit comic) indignation at her crime:

Wife: I thanke you sir: George are there many madfolkes, where thy Maister lies.

Geo: Oh yes, of all countries some, but especially mad Greekes, they swarme: troth mistris, the world is altered with you, you had not want to stand thus with a paper humblie complaining: but you're well enough serv' d: provander prickt you, as it does many of our Cittie-wives besides . .

Wife: Ile to the monastery: I shall be mad till I enjoy him, I shalbe sick till I see him, yet when I doe see him, I shall weepe out mine eyes. (5.1.5-30)

The amplified description also, coincidentally, produces MacDonald's "swarme." Such hyperbole arises as a stylistic byproduct of the rhetorical training and methodology so deeply inscribed in Renaissance dramatic productions. What originally was a rhetorical method for heightening effect has stylistic ramifications. In *Endeavors of Art*, Madeleine Doran tries to explain the complicated semantic and practical relationship between amplification as a psychagogy and its stylistic effects.

The treatment in Elizabethan rhetorics of the figure of amplification is indicative of the interest in "copy" of style. Although this meant strictly an

augmentation or heightening of effect (*augendi* is Cicero's word) and was usually paired with its opposite, diminution, in effect it was often used synonymously with copiousness. For some the means of amplification -- comparison, example, description, repetition, periphrasis, digression -- inevitably led to expansion of the theme. Although Wilson gives dilation as only one of the means . . . he tends to assimilate the two in a statement like this: 'Amplifying of the matter consisteth in heaping and enlarging of those places, which serveth for confirmation of a matter.' (49)

In other words, Renaissance rhetorical training generates a widespread interest in copiousness to the point that the methods and terms expand beyond their technical origins to mean, simply, the value and practice of heaping on figures. This byproduct of the rhetorical training and influence further expands the institution's description and size.

There are mad men, as there are of tame,
 All humourd not alike: we have here some,
 So apish and phantastike, play with a fether,
 And tho twould greeve a soule, to see Gods image,
 So blemisht and defac'd, yet they act
 Such anticke and such pretty lunacies,
 That spite of sorrow they will make you smile:
 Others agen we have like hungry Lions,
 Fierce as wilde Buls, untameable as flies. (5.2.155-63)

The methods of amplification which produced the fiction also manifest themselves in the style of dialogue. The value of copiousness which makes madness such an attractive subject also produces a proliferation of speech in the characters' descriptions. Perhaps in part due to *The Honest Whore's* influence, hyperbole will almost always figure in Bedlam's stage descriptions. In Fletcher's *The Pilgrim*, for instance, "Bedlam" or the

madhouse looks huge:

Tis a house here
 Where people of all sorts, that have been visited
 With lunacies and follies waite thier cures:
 There's fancies of a thousand stamps and fashions,
 Like flies in severall shapes buze round about ye,
 And Twice as many gestures; some of pittty,
 That is would make ye melt to see their passions. (3.6.10-16)

Fletcher's "amplified" language creates an image of a huge institution, able to house all the varieties of madness that can be discussed. Interestingly, when Sir John Vanbrugh revives the play during the restoration, he amends the language to suit an age less fond of copiousness. In those changes Bedlam loses much of its size: Vanbrugh cuts the lines about "flies buzzing" with "twice as many gestures." When the demand for copiousness decreases, so does the representation of Bedlam -- even though by the time Vanbrugh is writing actual Bedlam has undergone substantial reformation. It now indeed does hold a swarm of bees or flies (140 patients). In a paradox of literary representation, what was small in actuality becomes large on the stage and what was large in actuality becomes small on the stage.

Other verbal descriptions of the institution appear generated, not by any mimetic interest, but by a similar desire to amplify the absurdity and the wrongfulness of the charge against Candido and to exploit the reference for comic effect. When Mattheo describes Bedlam, for example, the joke expands the census and, by extension, the size: here, he says, stay "all the mad-caps in Millan"(5.2.27). When the Duke searches for an actual census from the first madman he encounters, a "cured" sweeper, the dramatists' display no interest in representing Bedlam. They simply exploit the reference:

Pio: Sirra are all the mad folkes in Millan brought hither?

Sweep: How all, theres a wise question indeede: why if all the madfolkes in Millan should come hither, there would not be ten left in the Citty.

Duke: Few gentlemen or Courtiers here, ha.

Sweep: Oh yes? abundance, abundance . . . (5.2.120-6).

The language alone creates the image of a huge, expansive Bedlam as does the display of different types of madmen: a remnant of the rhetorical division and classification.

Notes

1. Simple and straightforward answers are surely available to this problem: but to begin answering such questions with general terms like “literary exaggeration” or “literary anticipation” partially extracts the drama from the cultural, historical network that produced them and effaces the complex processes of textual production involved and, moreover, such terms -- exaggeration and anticipation -- imply that drama merely “reflects” or “represents” social reality and those metaphors, in turn, are no longer sufficient to describe dramatic works. Donald Salkeld, in *Madness and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, is the only critic I am aware of who seriously entertains these questions in regard to Bedlam.

Rather than explaining the matter by nodding to “literary exaggeration” or “literary anticipation,” Salkeld offers a few more substantial answers: (1) Bedlam’s emergence on the stage was the result of “the rise of civic drama which contained scenes among familiar early modern institutions, such as hospitals and prisons” (2) and “To the extent that these institutions foreshadowed those of a later bureaucracy, the change [increased representations of Bedlam] may be ascribed, more generally, to the quiet undertow of an emergent capitalism tugging at the economic base of seventeenth century Europe” (156).

2. All citations of *The Honest Whore* refer to Bowers. In addition to Reed, see Lawrence Babb’s *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* and Carol Thomas Neely’s “Documents in Madness” for two particularly clear, forceful, and well documented statements on the prevalence of “madness” in the drama.

3. The Renaissance ideal of copiousness is well documented. For an exceptionally clear statement on the matter see Madeleine Doran. For a fascinating poststructuralist consideration of the issue see Terence Cave.

4. Joel Altman's *Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama*. Altman's work, it will become clear, informs much of this chapter. The critical assumptions most pertinent to this section are currently most distinctly associated with his book: "The origins of [renaissance drama] are to be found in the study of formal rhetoric, which in the sixteenth century was considered to be not only an art of persuasion, but also an art of inquiry, in which the methods of logic were employed with greater amplitude than that permitted the dialectician. Dramatists of the period were trained in the discipline from their early grammar school days [As evidenced by] the use of specific rhetorical forms learned in school, in a predilection for debate, in frequently disconcerting shifts of viewpoint, and in an explicit preoccupation with subject matter of rhetoric"(3).

5. Many critics and scholars have employed this term when discussing the Renaissance's fascination with "madness": most notably, Foucault points out in *Madness and Civilization* that "Madness and the madmen became major figures, in their ambiguity"(13). When Foucault notes the "ambiguity" of madness and madmen he is referring to the ambivalent place in the culture that madness held, both inside and outside the culture, contained and excluded. The "ambiguity" of madness was fascinating, however, in another "rhetorical" sense. In the examples cited above from *The Honest Whore*, for instance, one can see that "madness" describes no set of fixed disorders, but is exploited and played with as an ambiguous term: varying degrees of love, jealousy, grief, and even patience are termed "mad."

6. See, in particular, Penelope Doob and Basil Clarke.

7. This strain of the rhetorical tradition stresses its close ties with philosophy and dialectics. Bacon, for example, in his *Advancement of Learning*, notes that rhetorical topoi are valuable not just as Ciceronian storehouses of knowledge which may be drawn upon when an argument is needed, but as a way of directing “our inquiry.”

8. The rhetorical reading I apply here is substantially informed by Joel Altman’s “Vile Participation”: The Amplification of Violence in the Theater of *Henry V*.”

Chapter 3

Jonson, Bedlam and the Defense of “Humorous” Citizens

I have argued that the influence of Renaissance rhetoric partially explains the dramatic construction of *The Honest Whore*; specifically, I have argued that the play is a fictional “amplified” defense of Candido and that the principal rhetorical operations of amplification, division, and classification produced the enlarged representation of Bethlem. Now, while Renaissance rhetorical concepts like amplification and copiousness may partially explain or describe the divisions of madness and the complementary enlarged representation of Bethlem on stage, they, of course, do not fully explain why Bethlem was selected as an image in the first place nor do they fully explain what motivates the fictional defense of Candido. In short, even though my analysis stresses the influence of rhetoric, the term “rhetorical reading” may imply a sort of formalism not really at work here. Rhetorical methodology may inform the play, but the processes of division and classification demonstrated earlier do not tell us enough about *The Honest Whore* or Bethlem’s relationship to the stage.

A truly useful consideration of rhetoric’s influence must include more than a formalist analysis of the rhetorical operations at work. As Joel Altman puts it, a “rhetorical reading is by definition occasional, formal, psychological and cognizant of agency” (“Vile Participation” 4). Any rhetorical reading, then, requires some reconstruction of the historical situation of the author[s] and the “occasional” psychological forces that would

have allowed specific rhetorical operations to work on a particular audience. To put the matter in the form of a question, what motivates or directs the rhetorical operations at work in *The Honest Whore* beyond the exploitation of “madness” as unusually productive subject matter? Why do Dekker and Middleton defend Candido in particular and why do they defend him from the charge of madness in the way they do? Why might a Renaissance London audience find this sort of dramatic defense enjoyable, interesting, or persuasive? These are difficult and complex questions which resist straightforward answers or a clear, comprehensive thesis, but, for the sake of some momentary clarity, the questions can be -- temporarily -- recast: who motivates the rhetorical efforts of Dekker and Middleton and from whom do they defend Candido and the charge of madness? The answer to both questions is Ben Jonson.

In the course of establishing himself as England’s “true Poet,” Jonson participated in -- and possibly initiated -- the famous poetomachia or Poets’ War in which he, Marston, and Dekker used the stage as a vehicle to argue various personal and professional issues and, in the process, satirize one another. Primarily, James Bednarz writes

the literary combat of the Poet’s War involved a basic philosophical issue -- a debate on the theory of literature that came into being as a result of Jonson’s insistence on a new and dignified status for the poet, based on the principles of academic humanism . . . no matter how *ad hominem* the tone of criticism often became, it continued to be defined in relation to a philosophy of literature Jonson literally represented. (22)

Jonson’s call for a new status for the poet and poetry irritated Marston and Dekker who mocked him on stage in *Histriomastix* (Marston) and *Satiromastix* (Dekker). Jonson responded by mocking Dekker and Marston in *Every Man Out of his Humor*, *Cynthia’s Revels*, and *Poetaster*.¹ To some extent, the conflict also involved rivalries between various theater companies; generally, the conflict involved the artistic and financial

challenge that smaller, private, coterie companies and theaters -- Paul's Boys and the Chapel boys playing at Blackfriars -- presented to larger, public, and popular companies and theaters -- the Admiral's Men and Chamberlain's Men playing at the Rose, Fortune, and Globe. The plays of the former were marked by what Alfred Harbage called a "preponderance of satirical comedies" which were distinctly "urban and urbane" in tone and content, while the plays of the latter had a decidedly different "ethical cast," more "patriotic . . . in sentiment" (71-72). Jonson's plays, particularly their views on poetry and his view of society and social hierarchy, can be generally associated with the former, while Dekker's work is generally associated with the latter. In short, the poetomachia involved not just Jonson's efforts to establish himself as England's "laureate" poet, but the struggle for dominance between two different sorts of theater. But, as we shall see, it was primarily Jonson's poetic aspirations -- rather than conflicts between theater groups -- which determined the course of the poetomachia.

Even though traditional scholarship considers the "war" to begin either with Marston's *Histriomastix* (1598) or Jonson's *Every Man In his Humor* (1598) and end with Dekker's *Satiromastix* (1601) and Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601), this chapter attempts to read Dekker and Middleton's 1605 defense of *Candido* and their depiction of Bethlem in the context of this well known socio-literary exchange. I am not alone in arguing that the dates of the poetomachia should be extended; Harbage, for instance, pointed out long ago that that the poetomachia is very much "alive" as late as 1607 in Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (102). But, to date, no one has suggested that *The Honest Whore* is part of the conflict. In brief, I will suggest that Jonson's work during the poetomachia consistently savaged a "humorous", jealous (or cuckold) citizen figure and, in so doing, elicited a strong response from London citizens and specific playwrights. Dekker, in particular, responded to these representations in several plays, culminating with the collaborative defense of *Candido*. It is thus largely the work and figure of Ben Jonson and

the historical context of the poetomachia which motivates the defense of Candido and the dramaturgy of *The Honest Whore* -- a dramaturgy which produced the highly influential first full representation of Bethlem on the Jacobean stage.

But this is only a preliminary answer to what are, in fact, a preliminary set of questions. For the larger purpose behind reconstructing a rhetorical context for *The Honest Whore* is not just to learn more about how or why a specific play works on an audience but to tease out of that context how a specific grouping of a distinct, discursive practice works in the culture it also represents. While few issues in Renaissance literary studies demand that we be “cognizant of agency” or sensitive to the uniqueness of “literary” practices with quite the intensity that the poetomachia does, this study does not see the poets’ war strictly as a personal or literary quarrel abstracted or separate from other aspects of the culture -- social relations, economics, medicine -- in that the issues Jonson raises about poetry are deeply embedded in other discourses. Certainly, the drama of the poetomachia performed rhetorical work on an audience and the dynamics of that work needs to be recovered, but not solely for the sake of recovering a four hundred year old dramatic experience. The rhetorical dynamics of the poetomachia provide access to the broader, cultural work done by the drama and therein lies the significance of a close, rhetorical reading. The poetomachia was a social struggle, a very real historical exchange where the meanings of terms like “humors” and places like Bethlem (and the relationship between humors and Bethlem) were contested, negotiated, and produced. The stage was one place, in other words, where the historical process and production of Bethlem occurred. The “literary” dispute between Jonson and Dekker not only produces dramatic Bethlem, but also registers and participates in the processes which shaped and positioned Bethlem itself as a cultural product.

Most strikingly, in this dispute we catch glimpses of the at times bizarre and paradoxical processes which enabled a tiny, local medieval charity to transform into the

formidable and foreboding institution that, post Foucault, has come to epitomize -- in the popular and academic imagination -- the horrific, centralized power of the modern absolutist state. Let me explain first how these bizarre and contradictory processes work in the dramatic texts. At a time of often dizzying ideological complexity, Jonson and Dekker parallel one another in that they embody a similar cultural tension or contradiction -- both embody the residual culture of medieval London and would nostalgically reclaim that older and fast disappearing community to resist the dominant and emergent cultures in which they also live, but, paradoxically, that similarity draws them into a conflict wherein both employ strategies which reinforce the dominant and emergent cultural pressures they seemingly would resist. Generally, Jonson responds to a quickly changing London first by valorizing an old aristocratic figure -- the gallant -- who he imagines capable of mastering a city grown beyond medieval boundaries; while Dekker responds to a quickly changing London by valorizing a figure -- the citizen merchant -- whom he imagined embodied the slowly disappearing virtues of a medieval guild. While both figures emerge from resistant and residual cultural pressures, each figure facilitates the dominant and emergent pressures they would resist.

It is not particularly difficult to situate the playwrights' responses to changing London within or alongside the wholesale charitable reorganization underway in the City. Changes in poor relief came about largely in response to London's growth and the economic crises of the 1590s which increased the number of highly visible poor. Jonson and Dekker respond to the same social tensions and, moreover, their particular dramatic responses register and participate in the two distinctly different charitable responses of London. Jonson's plays, like the 1598 poor laws, reinforce the need to break London down into manageable sections where social superiors can monitor and correct the lives of the less fortunate. In Dekker's plays, conversely, we see a second idea of charity reinforced. Dekker's work suggests the necessity of social harmony for the whole city, a

harmony guided and directed by London citizens and represented by old London institutions. These two versions of charitable London come into conflict, not only in parliamentary debates on poor laws and other more specifically “political” forums, but also on the stage.

To take Jonson first: Jonathan Haynes has noted recently in *The Social Relations of Jonson’s Theater* how, in *Every Man In his Humor*, Jonson “rehabilitates” the figure of the gallant.

The gallant who for centuries had been a principal target of morality plays as a figure of foppery, novelty, and urban degeneracy, is rehabilitated . . . as the model for a new balance, a new class style that can cope with and dominate the city . . . Jonson’s attitude toward the gallant and the world he represents is nothing if not critical, but moral critics have often been too distracted by individual faults to see a generic social hero, or rather a triumphant cultural norm. (40-41)

Indeed, Jonson’s critique of the “individual” gallant and the intended universal breadth of his satire, if fully appreciated by modern criticism, was lost on much of his audience.

Many, like Dekker, saw the witty gallants, Prospero and Lorenzo, engaged primarily in duping and dominating other figures of the city.² They saw, in a sense, that these figures participated in the growing individualistic, competitive and “acquisitive” London that Jonson, seemingly, resisted and critiqued.³ Dekker and others did not overlook, as L.C. Knights did, how “Jonson is himself implicated in what he criticizes”(Wayne 6).⁴ For in responding to everchanging London with criticism, satire, and nostalgia, Jonson was also participating in and reinforcing the very culture he critiqued. While Jonson may have been ambivalent about the gallant figure -- and even offered substantial critiques -- it will be shown that he consistently linked this figure to his own individualistic, acquisitive, and

ostentatious poetic endeavors. A coincidence of poetic and social posturing which sparked Dekker's participation in the poetomachia and complicated Jonson's own social criticism.⁵

In parallel fashion, Dekker offered his own critique of quickly changing London -- its individualistic and acquisitive culture -- by valorizing, idealizing, and, most importantly here, defending a merchant citizen class which was fast doing away with the more medieval London he would reclaim.⁶ In the process, he seized on an emblem of medieval London -- Bethlem -- only, perhaps, to foster its growth, notoriety, and value to a new, more absolutist King anxious to control London.⁷ Bethlem, fast becoming obsolete and irrelevant as an institution of social welfare, is in part reconstituted on the stage. We read in the *Poetomachia*, then, a dynamic of contradictory and paradoxical cultural forces which participate in the shaping of the hospital.

My reading of the *Poetomachia* and its role in Bethlem's history starts with Jonson's *Every Man In His Humor* -- a groundbreaking play in many ways. For example, it was Jonson's first great theatrical success. More importantly, it begins or participates in the beginning of the Poets' War. For if Bednarz is correct that the "literary combat of the Poets' War . . . came into being as a result of Jonson's insistence on a new and dignified status of the poet," then *Every Man In* has to at least be considered one of the "war's" opening shots. Certainly *Every Man In* was one of Jonson's strongest statements about the new importance of poetry. While the well analyzed prologue was most likely not part of the initial performance, it still provides hints about Jonson's intentions. Jonson ostentatiously announces his arrival, the "Poet's" arrival, to the stage and his intentions to set a new standard.

Though need make many Poets, and some such
 As art and nature have not bettered much;
 Yet ours, for want, hath not so loved the stage,

As he dare serve the ill customs of the age:
 Or purchase your delight at such a rate,
 As, for it, he himself must justly hate.
 To make a child, now swaddled, to proceed
 Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and wee,
 Past threescore years: or, with three rusty swords,
 And help of some few foot-and-half-foot words,
 Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars:
 And in the tiring-house bring wounds to scars.
 He rather prays you will be pleased to see
 One such, today, as other plays should be. (1-14)

Of course, it is in the action, language and structure of the play itself that the claim for poetry is most strongly made. Altman argues, for instance, that the play demonstrates Jonson's view of a unique union of poetry and experience, an attempt to resolve or reconcile the classical opposition these two terms suggest in the figure of a "new hero -- the humane wit -- capable of supposing himself other than he is in order to judge more equitably the problems of our common life"(195). Lorenzo, the young gallant, learns the value of poetry in the real world. The poet's power of *inventio* is essential, not ornamental; Jonson thus negotiates the "central question" of the play: "Which is more valuable in the education of a young man . . . poetry or experience?" Altman cites Lorenzo Senior's opening remarks to demonstrate the "initial antithesis" on which this particular dramatic "inquiry" is based:

Myself was once a student, and indeed
 Fed with the self-same humour he is now,
 Dreaming on naught but idle poetry;
 But since, experience hath awak'd my spirits,

And reason taught them how to comprehend

The sovereign use of study. (1.1.16-21)

Bednarz notes the same qualities:

Jonson was for the first time in his career as dramatist to insist publicly that the state of poetry was 'Blessed, aeternall, and most true devine' . . . it is on the basis of his identification with 'Sacred *invention*,' 'Attired in the majestie of arte,/Set high in spirite with the precious taste/ Of sweete philosophie' that Jonson would draw a primary distinction between himself -- a "true Poet" -- and the 'empty spirits' against whom he contended in the theater. (5)

While literary theory is manifestly the issue at hand, Jonson's call for a new position for poetry and the poet does not contain itself within a strictly literary realm. To put it another way, Bednarz correctly notes that Jonson's theoretical posturing antagonized Dekker and Marston, but he does not fully consider that constructed oppositions or categories like "literature" and "society" obscure the extent to which Jonson's theoretical posturing intertwined with cultural realms beyond the purely "literary" or "poetic." If one examines, for instance, the manner in which Jonson's call for a new position for poetry coincides with and, in fact, sustains his rehabilitation of the gallant, we can better see that this play is not just a literary or theoretical act, but also a social act -- one which explicitly attempts to alter social relations. And, importantly, a social act which occurs in 1598 when parliament is establishing the new poor laws and reclaiming control over charity from London citizens. In other words, Jonson's refiguring of social relations coincides with the state's efforts.

One easily sees how Jonson's call for a new position for the poet disrupts his immediate social milieu. He wanted to place himself socially above others engaged in the same sort of work, and other playwrights resisted such an attempt. Jonson's efforts,

however, disrupt the always negotiating ranks of the “middling sort” in a related but broader sense. In brief, working playwrights were not the only ones unsettled by Jonson’s theoretical posturing. In *The Case is Altered*, Jonson writes, “[humor plays] pleases the Gentlemen: but the common sort they care not for’t, they know not what to make on’t, they looke for good matter, and are not edified with such toyes.” This is not surprising. Jonson’s humor plays, particularly *Every Man In*, valorized the new urbane gallant whose “first characteristic is mastery” (Haynes 41). These plays, it seems, generally appealed to a gentleman audience highly interested in refining the practice of mastery. Moreover, Haynes argues that Jonson’s drama -- its intense scrutiny of social interactions (conversations, gestures, “the small arts of everyday life”) -- was a particularly acute register, mediator and transmitter of a newly forming urban culture anxious about the nuances and subtleties of style and manners. Such subtleties were becoming more important, Haynes argues, because older structures that determined status were breaking down. Status barriers were becoming increasingly “permeable” and “diffuse”(Haynes 36). He relies on the sociological work of Norbert Elias to explain the new importance of style and manners:

As social and economic functions [became] more differentiated under the pressure of competition, social behavior [had to become] more refined, more precisely calculated, to transmit the right signals in an increasingly large and complex web of communication. (57)

In the young gallant figures of Prospero and Lorenzo, Jonson represented men of “polished good breeding and easy good manners”(Ayers 14) whose skills in social perception and performance enabled them to dominate in an “increasingly complex web of communication” where slight gestures and phrasing can indicate social distinction. For someone participating in the increasingly competitive social world of London, Jonson’s plays were both fascinating and an important source of information. Young gallants

enjoyed seeing themselves on stage and, perhaps, mastering the easy grace of Prospero or Lorenzo. These plays were not just mirrors reflecting society but also disruptive social gestures, facilitating specific cultural changes.

On the other hand, the more common sort or “non-gentry,” were sufficiently removed from the complexity of the social games -- the intricate system of rules which defined one’s social status and enabled social mastery -- Jonson illustrates in the humor plays. That they would “know not what to make on’t” makes sense. Or, even more likely, a large percentage had a fair idea what “to make on’t” but wanted no part of it (“they care not for’t”) in that they sensed a game of social competition with fairly specific rules and training that they could not win. In other words, the common sort potentially benefitted from the increasingly “diffuse” and “permeable” status barriers of a changing London (at the very least, changing conditions created space for citizen work fantasies figured in Dekker’s *The Shoemaker’s Holiday*)⁸; but the quick establishment of more precisely calibrated rules to replace the older social structures helped the gentry to consolidate and maintain social status. Making social distinction became more difficult in that those distinctions became, well, less distinct or more subtle, but the gentry were still more skilled and trained in the methods of making, maintaining, and exploiting those distinctions. Jonson’s plays facilitated that training. The game of social competition displayed in *Every Man In* was a game the citizens or common sort might prudently avoid or condemn, but the culture Jonson facilitated could not help but disrupt their social relations. In the culture at large, “respectable” society was narrowing. The “middling sort” were no longer so much the dispensers of alms, in charity with their neighbors, but often recipients of charitable gifts and newly subject to the massive regulation of manners occurring at the time (Archer 167).

Jonson saw poetry as a key component in this game of social competition.

Prospero and Lorenzo, the new cultural heroes, were not just charming and witty gallants,

but advocates for poetry. Jonson conflates the ability to compete socially with poetic prowess. Nowhere perhaps is this link more clear than in Prospero's letter to Lorenzo, a dramatic device which initiates the action:

Sirha, sweete villayne, come and see me;
 but spend one minute in my company,
 and tis enough: I think I have a
 world of good jests for thee: oh sirha,
 I can show thee two of the most perfect,
 rare and absolute true Gulls, that ever there
 saw'st, if thou wilt come. S'blood, invent
 some favorable memorable lye, or other,
 to flap thy father in the mouth withall:
 thou haft bene father of a thousand, in
 thy dayes, thou could'st be not Poet else. (1.1.154-62)

Certainly there is nothing particularly interesting in noting that a gallant has poetic skills, but for Jonson the same skills that make one a great poet also make one a successful social competitor. Prospero assumes Lorenzo's poetic skills allow him to dupe his father. And, indeed, for the better part of the play those poetic skills do provide Lorenzo and Prospero with the upper hand in the social world of *Every Man In*.

Altman argues that Lorenzo and Prospero are so masterful because the people they compete with and dominate socially lack the young gallants' poetic skills: "The gulls whom Prospero and Lorenzo encounter . . . are not merely *exempla* engaged in comic *consilia*, but . . . creators of bad fictions . . . bad because their inventive faculty serves their passions"(186). For example, Thorello, the jealous citizen merchant of the play, finds himself in psychological distress throughout because of his "flawed *inventio*": he imagines false scenarios -- "bad fictions" -- involving his wife that create marked paranoia. Crippled

with flawed *inventio*, Thorello becomes paranoid, an object for amusement in a game of social competition and poetry he can not play.

He is a gull played on by the more socially and poetically skillful Lorenzo and Prospero. He complains to Prospero's half-brother, Giuliano, about Prospero's behavior:

My brother [in-law] Prospero, I know not how,
 Of late is much declin'd from what he was,
 And greatly alter'd in his disposition.
 When he came first to lodge here in my house,
 Ne're trust me, if I was not proud of him.
 Methought he bare himself with such observance,
 So true election and so fair a form,
 And, what was chief, it show'd not borrow'd in him,
 But all he did became him as his own,
 And seem'd as perfect, proper and innate
 Unto the mind, as color to the blood.
 But now, his course is so irregular,
 So loose, affected, and depriv'd of grace,
 And he himself withal so far fall'n off
 From his first place, that scarce no note remains
 To tell men's judgments where he lately stood.
 He's grown a stranger to all due respect,
 Forgetful of his friends, and, not content
 To stale himself in all societies,
 He makes my house as common as a mart,
 A theater, a public receptacle

For giddy humour and diseased riot;
 And there, as in a tavern or a stew,
 He and his wild associates spend their hours
 In repetition of lascivious jests,
 Swear, leap, and dance, and revel night by night,
 Control my servants; and indeed, what not? (1.4.30-55)

Here, in Thorello's words, is a brief composite of the "rehabilitated" gallant. Certainly Jonson criticizes the gallant via Thorello's speech (and, seemingly, in his description of Prospero's fallen condition, registers some nostalgia for a gallant/citizen relationship now past), but Thorello's complaints merit closer analysis. Thorello implies that Prospero's change has something to do with humors ("perfect . . . Unto the mind, as color to the blood" and "He makes my house . . . a public receptacle/ For giddy humour"); he implies that this shift in Prospero's character is serious. But Jonson makes clear in the play that Prospero is anything but serious. He is playful. Thorello overestimates, in his humoral analysis, the seriousness of Prospero's change. He has legitimate enough complaints to be sure, but in explaining why he will not confront Prospero himself, Thorello hints at his paranoid condition, his inability to see his circumstances clearly.

. . . if I should speak,
 He would be ready in the heat of passion
 To fill the ears of his familiars
 With oft reporting to them what disgrace
 And gross disparagement I had propos'd him;
 And then would they straight back him in opinion,
 Make some loose comment upon every word,
 And out of their distracted fantasies
 Contrive some slander that should dwell with me.

And what would that be, think you? Marry, this.
 They would give out, because my wife is fair,
 Myself but lately married, and my sister
 Here sojourning a virgin in my house,
 That I were jealous! Nay, as sure as death,
 Thus they would say; and how that I had wrong'd
 My brother purposely, thereby to find
 An apt pretext to banish them my house. (1.4.81-97)

After Giuliano agrees to intervene, Thorello reveals his fears and displays more fully his paranoid condition.

Now, in good faith, my mind is somewhat eas'd,
 Though not repos'd in that security
 As I could wish; well, I must be content.
 How'er I set a face on't to the world,
 Would I had lost this finger at a venture,
 So Prospero had ne'er lodg'd in my house.
 Why, 't cannot be, where there is such resort
 Of wanton gallants and young revelers,
 That any woman should be honest long.
 Is't like that factious beauty will preserve
 The sovereign state of chastity unscarr'd,
 When such strong motives muster and make head
 Against her single peace? No, no. Beware
 When mutual pleasure sways the appetite,
 And spirits of one kind and quality
 Do meet to parley in the pride of blood.

Well, to be plain, if I but thought the time
 Had answer'd their affections, all the world
 Should not persuade me but I were a cuckold. (1.4.151-69)

Thorello's misjudgment of his situation and his misjudgment of the gallants' character and intentions severely undermines any criticism Jonson offers through him of the gallants; the gallants are behaving poorly, the play suggests, but only because Thorello's poor judgment allows them the opportunity. He sees only serious, "humorous" changes in Prospero (a misreading Jonson mocks and a matter to which I shall return shortly) rather than the playful, ironic gallants of Act One. It is difficult to see Jonson's critique of the gallants when the characters critiquing them are such dupes.

In contrast to Thorello's misjudgment and paranoia, in the very next act the audience watches as Lorenzo and Prospero engage in their characteristic activity - - "playing on gulls"(Haynes 41). Lorenzo and Prospero watch, amused, as Bobadilla, Mattheo, and Stephano make affected attempts to act like gallants. Prospero and Lorenzo encourage this foolishness while, in a long series of asides, they demonstrate they are merely amusing themselves:

Bobadilla: Signior, I must tell you this, I am no general man; embrace it as a most high favor: for, by the host of Egypt, but that I conceive you to be a gentleman of some parts, I love few words. You have wit: imagine.

Stephano: Ay, truly, sir, I am mightily given to melancholy.

Mattheo: Oh lord, sir, it's your only best humour, sir; your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir. I am melancholy myself divers times, sir, and then do I no more but take your pen and paper presently, and write you your half-score or your dozen of sonnets at a sitting.

Lorenzo Junior [aside]: Mass, then he utters them by the gross.

Stephano: Truly, sir, and I love such things out of measure.

Lorenzo Junior [aside]: I'faith, as well as in measure.(2.3.67-79)

Clearly, Jonson shows us, these gallants are more interested in this sort of game playing than cuckolding anyone. And, like Thorello, the other gulls are mocked or misled by their use of humors. They have no “humors” Jonson suggests, but try to display one because they believe a humor will enhance their social position.

The primary difference between the characters is that Prospero and Lorenzo (and Lorenzo’s servant Musco) are fully conscious of the fact they are playing social games, while Thorello, Bobadilla, and Mattheo are not. The reason they have such knowledge, such success, can not be attributed solely to their superior “social skills”; this play is largely about poetry and it is poetry which enables those superior social skills. The reason Prospero and Lorenzo have such knowledge, Altman contends, is their “productive,” as opposed to bad, “fiction making”(188); the gallants have the “imaginative capacity” to “suppose” themselves in “another’s place” and thereby “perceive others’ motivations”(189). They easily “imagine” or see the clumsy social desires of Bobadilla as well as the source of Thorello’s anxiety. The gallants can imagine, assume, and play roles in society -- a capacity which gives them a distinct advantage in social competition. For Jonson, of course, this fiction making involves nothing so base as deceit or social competition, but implies “a Jonsonian ideal -- the human being whose [poetic] play is an instrument of understanding and who therefore is not ‘forgetful of himself’”(Altman 189). In discussing Prospero, Altman says he “is a youth trying on the mask of a gallant for the possible pleasure it may afford. But in doing so . . . never forgets who he really is”(187). Altman sees in Jonson’s work and his gallants the influence of a specific rhetorical exercise -- the *ethopoeia* -- originally “devised to train the fledgling orator to put himself in his client’s place”(48).

The larger function of *ethopoeia* for the conspirators [Prospero, Lorenzo, Musco] should now be apparent. Unlike the gulls, it allows them to remain in touch with reality. . . *Invention* employed in the service of truth, Jonson implies -- whether that be fidelity to one's best interest, the scourging of others' pretensions, or the discovery of an appropriate mode of conduct -- is wit well used. Hence the paradox that one can be disguised and yet remain honest. (Altman 188)

Thorello, in contrast, does not see the "fictional" or, one could add, performative aspects of social competition because of his "flawed *inventio*." He does not see that in social competition the essential quality of a person may not be enough; social competition often requires "performative skills." In short, good fiction making can help. When Thorello gives up his jealousy ("I am not jealous, but resolved I have the faythfulst wife in Italie"), and realizes the flaws in his fiction making, he speaks briefly in verse:

For this I finde where jealousie is fed,
 Hornes in the minde, are worse then on the head.
 See what a drove of hornes flie in the ayre,
 Wingd with my cleansed, and my credulous breath:
 Watch them suspicious eyes, watch where they fall,
 See see, on heades that thinke they have none at all.
 Oh what a plentuous world of this will come,
 When ayre raynes hornes, all men besure of some. (5.1.606-13)⁹

Jonson may have suggested in the drama that Lorenzo and Prospero were putting on masks, merely playing gallants, but when Dekker and others respond to Jonson's call for a new status for poetry and the poet, they respond not just to his "theoretical" suggestions about the power of poetry, but also to the fact that Jonson closely aligns this power with a particular social group: the urban gallants. Moreover, they respond to the fact that he aligns

poetic skills with the ability to compete socially.

The larger social and charitable reorganization underway in the culture is realized in this “poetic” suggestion as well. Citizens were increasingly subject to the gentry and their growing participation in the expanding bureaucracy of the Tudor and Jacobean state. The new statutes passed in late Tudor England “extended the administrative role of the Justices, imposing on them tasks in the field of religion, economics regulation . . . and the relief of poverty” (Fletcher 3). And the Justices and those working under them, including overseers of the poor, were largely gentry or “new men” selected in a rather haphazard way (7). This new administrative power resolidified class distinctions. As Ian Archer writes,

Poor relief was increasingly used as a form of social capital The introduction of an additional tier in poor law administration in the form of the overseers of the poor in 1598, an office served by men of higher social status than the collectors of the poor they supplemented, was a further move towards the realization of these ambitions. (97)

Jonson’s claims for poetry coincide with a particular group’s engagement in social competition. One might go as far as to say that poetic power is a condition of possibility for successful social competition. From a slightly different vantage point, Haynes argues that Jonson’s play itself is a weapon or tool in social competition: “Our criticism needs to recover a sense of this art in society as a weapon, or tool, or organ”(3). Indeed, we come back to the mundane point that Jonson makes his way in the world via poetry; and the concurrent (but not mundane) analysis by Wayne that Jonson’s literary activities coupled with the social success he sought (and eventually achieved) severely complicate his own critique of social competition. Put another way, Altman may be correct that Jonson is writing about poetry and poetry’s ability to “serve the truth,” but Jonson’s intentions were undermined by the fact that, in this play, poetry functions mainly to foster, not necessarily “truth,” but the social success of a particular group.

In an attempt to control or even shut down the hyperkinetic social competition of London, Jonson's gallants would make the city more manageable, more of a closed milieu where increasingly "diffuse" and "permeable" status barriers solidify under their masterful gaze. Jonson's gallants can clearly see these diffuse status barriers and exploit them while others can not. This is consistent as well with the 1598 poor laws which gave overseers the opportunity to observe and judge neighbors less fortunate and less capable and can be, I think, categorized as a nostalgic impulse: a response to an everchanging London and an attempt to close off or make one's social relations more manageable by bestowing masterful qualities on an aristocratic elite whose real life counterparts no longer control events with such ease. Rather than satisfy this nostalgic impulse, however, Jonson's public act catapults him forward into the turbulent social streams of the poetomachia where others resist the powers he would bestow on himself via poetry and, importantly, the social class or figure with whom he would share those powers. Somewhat ironically, then, Dekker will read Jonson's nostalgic impulse as a new or emergent threat even though they share the same impulse. He does not see the gallants as an attempt to reclaim more communal, feudal social structures nor does he see Jonson's poetic claims as a means of achieving "truth" in an increasingly unstable world; on the contrary, he sees Jonson facilitating a new culture and new cultural practices while trying to succeed in that culture via poetry. In responding, he will duplicate Jonson's gesture. In an attempt to critique emergent forces changing London (including Jonson's plays), Dekker engaged his own nostalgic impulse by defending idealized citizen figures; the result of which is the reinforcement of a citizen merchant class that, in fact, undermines the realization of Dekker's nostalgic dreams. In these duplicate gestures, we catch glimpses of the cultural dynamics which catapult a monastic charity into a modern institution.

As suggested in Chapter One, Bethlem was driven to the periphery of the culture, and nearly made irrelevant, by the 1598 poor laws and the newly dominant system of

charity and poor relief. Yet, the institution survived, was reclaimed by the dominant authorities, and, after 1676, became a prominent place in the culture again. This survival and renewal is in part registered and facilitated by Bethlem's relationship to the stage. Dekker and Middleton placed Bethlem on stage, we will see, in response to what they perceived as Jonson's efforts to encourage a new social structure -- one organized around the aristocratic gallant rather than the London citizen; Bethlem survived, on stage, because of nostalgic impulses. Residual cultural pressures helped keep Bethlem alive in the face of newly dominant forces which threatened to eclipse it. To say Bethlem survived "on stage" is not just to say its image or representation was preserved, but to suggest that the stage reconstituted Bethlem's place in the culture -- literally preserved the discursive space necessary to sustain any institution -- at a time when the hospital had lost much of its reason for being. In other words, places -- like subjects -- depend on discursive formulations to maintain cultural identities. Bethlem might have lost its "place" without the stage.

Therein lies part of what makes Bethlem almost unique as an object of study. The case of dramatic Bethlem can be used to negotiate a longstanding chiasmic crux in literary critical theory. The "crux" can be described in the form of a twofold question: to what extent do various historical discourses, including Marxism, deny their own discursivity and textuality by representing themselves as having a special knowledge relationship with the "Real" and to what extent do more formalist practices, primarily associated with the term deconstruction (and some of its more apt but problematic statements such as "there is nothing outside the text"), abandon or ignore history? Bethlem hospital and Renaissance drama's special relationship to this crux can best be seen if one again notes that dramatic works constitute much of the hospital's history; that is, if one accepts the now commonplace ambiguity that "history" names both a specific discourse and a referent for that discourse, drama constitutes the bulk of the former on Bethlem. In short, there is a

productive irony that merits exploiting here: history, in the case of Bethlem, is potentially part fiction, but, used in this context, “history” is not restricted to referent or discourse. Instead, history broadens its sense and identifies the slippage between referent and discourse that constitutes social reality.

But such theoretical inquiry is only a marginal point here. We are still tracing Bethlem’s intersection with the stage. To wit: How is it that Jonson’s vision of the city and his attacks on citizens elicit Dekker and Middleton’s use of Bethlem? Certainly we can see general connections or parallels between Jonson’s artistic efforts to reorganize the city and the state’s efforts in the 1598 poor laws to reorganize the city, but how do the two coincide or intersect to bring Bethlem, of all places, to the stage? Why is it that Bethlem in particular became caught up in Dekker and Middleton’s nostalgic response to Jonson and is sustained on stage? Certainly there were several institutions, other hospitals for instance, related both to Jonson’s efforts and the state’s. The answer to these questions is found by examining exactly how Jonson went about making social distinctions, examining how he went about reorganizing society.

Jonson’s call for a new position for poetry coincides with his rehabilitation of the gallant; *inventio* makes one not only a good poet, but a successful social competitor. And, importantly for this argument, when Jonson satirizes “flawed *inventio*” and the ineffectual skills of poor social competition, he characteristically points to their reliance on a specific, if “misused,” term or concept: humors. For example, Jonson represents Thorello’s jealousy as a “humour,” a psychological imbalance or disease, and the “gentlemen” figures (the new gallants) besieging his home are not “urban degenerates” seeking to cuckold him, but the sympathetic figures of Prospero and his friends. Thorello explains his condition:

A new disease? I know not new or old,
 But it may well be call’d poore mortals Plague;
 For like a pestilence it doth infect

The houses of the braine . . .
 Till not a thought or motion in the mind
 Be free from the blacke poison of suspect.
 Oh, but what error is it to know this,
 And want the free election of the soule
 In such extreames? well, I will once more strive,
 (Even in despight of hell) my selfe to be,
 And shake this feaver off that thus shakes me. (208-25)

Thorello believes his jealousy stems from humoral madness, not the gallants' immoral conduct. He has not been cuckolded, but the audience, via Prospero and Lorenzo, enjoy his humoral sufferings as the odd responses of a paranoid citizen. In Jonson, though, "humoral" madness has ramifications beyond the physiological; "Humours" are mocked as the comical and ineffectual weapon of an unskilled or inadequate social competitor, relied on by one who can not explain or understand his social struggles.

What Thorello lacks, Altman explains, is not biochemical balance, but the poetic power of *inventio* (and the concomittant social skills those powers bring) that gallants like Prospero and Lorenzo have in abundance. For contrast, briefly consider Candido. Also a citizen besieged by the games of "wanton gallants"(and a fairly ingenious wife), Candido perceives the nature of these games and defiantly refuses to play or be "gulled"(3.1.55-63). He defiantly refuses to be made jealous or to be called mad or to rely on humours. At the end of the play, Candido is officially exonerated from the charges of madness when the Duke releases him from Bethlem. Therein we see the specific connection between Jonson's work in *Every Man In* and Bethlem's first appearance on stage. Jonson makes social distinctions by playing on "humors"; that is, he initiates a social struggle by employing a term or concept associated with madness. At the same time, the central institution of madness in London was itself in the center of a wider struggle over charity.

Jonson's use of humors at this time sets the stage on a cultural collision course with Bethlem; Jonson directed the poetomachia to a specific strand of the cultural matrix. Dekker and Middleton rely on an older emblem of madness and the city -- Bedlam -- to defend a citizen figure from the novel charges of "humorous" affectation levelled at citizen figures in Jonson's plays. No more inventive or socially skilled than Thorello, Candido does possess the virtue of patience, and that virtue allows him to overcome the gallants and refute charges of madness. Dekker "rehabilitated" the importance of citizen morality in response to Jonson's "rehabilitation" of the gallant's inventive and social prowess and the dramatic suggestion that a citizen is mad or humorous. In the process, he also reconstituted a City institution.

Thus, in the smaller cultural struggle of the poetomachia, Jonson's use of humors necessitates a defense against a specific charge -- madness -- and leads to the use of a specific hospital. But a full consideration of *The Honest Whore's* relationship to *Every Man In* must wait until the next chapter. For both plays may be read, again, as part of a larger exchange, one that encompasses several dramatic works between the first production of *Every Man In* in 1598 and the first production of *The Honest Whore* in 1605. And the matter of humors requires some extended discussion. For by engaging the discourse of humors, Jonson allows us to see "humors" as just that - - a discourse formation. In other words, when discussing humors we should not always be asking what the term means, but how it functions.

Haynes notes that "the coincidence of the newly invented gallant and the newly invented genre of 'humor' plays is not accidental" -- playing on humors stands as the gallant's most characteristic action. "The gallant may very well be humorous himself, both in the sense . . . of suffering from a psychological imbalance, and in the sense . . . in which a humor is a social affectation, an assertion of individual style" (40). What Haynes doesn't stress here is that this second sense of humors -- social affectation -- is relatively

new, that Jonson's play is just disseminating such usage on a wide scale, broadening the semantic range of meaning: from madness to an odd and affected way of tipping one's hat. David Riggs writes that "the very meaning of the word 'humors' had abruptly broadened from its older sense of a pathological type and had come to include the transitory mood, the fad, and the fashionable affectation" (40). Jonson himself acknowledges the confusion surrounding the broadening expanse in the induction to his next play: *Every Man Out of his Humor*. He (through his playwright character, Asper) distinguishes between physiological or psychiatric humor and social affectation.

... So in every human body
 The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood,
 By reason that they flow continually
 In some one part, and are not continent,
 Receive the name of humours. Now thus far
 It may, by metaphor, apply itself
 Unto the general disposition:
 As when some one peculiar quality
 Doth so possess a man that it doth draw
 All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
 In their confluents, all to run one way;
 This may be truly said to be a humour.
 But that a rook, in wearing a pied feather,
 The cable hatband, or the three-pied ruff,
 A yard of shoetie, or the Switzers' knot
 On his French garters, should affect a humour!
 Oh, 'tis more than ridiculous.(98-114)

That Jonson felt compelled to make such a distinction suggests something about the

audience response to *Every Man In* and the audience's general understanding of "humours." Jonson ridicules in *Every Man Out* those who have misunderstood humors, those "rooks" who engage in particular social affectations and call them humors.

As he separates one sense of the term -- in the supposed attempt to discourage its use -- he actually invigorates that sense of the word, helps make it part of the social world so that he can use it as a weapon. Jonson is providing one section of his audience with the ability to identify "false" humors, to unmask pretension and affectation, in the same manner he does. Presumably, the reliance on or affectation of humors Jonson refers to was a fairly successful social tool in its own right (hence his need to attack it so vigorously) providing a legitimate mode of "individual style" in a milieu where individual style is "highly prized," but extremely difficult to achieve because "the field is crowded and increasingly extreme measures have to be taken to define oneself in a saturated system of distinctions"(Haynes 42). Jonson coopts the term humor from its "authentic" discourse formations -- those physiological and psychiatric formations -- and helps reinscribe it in a newly emerging system of social competition and observation. Heretofore, "humors" had been more firmly embedded in physiological and psychiatric discourses: a semantic relationship which had provided a legitimizing context for its social use, a relationship which allowed one to use it to demonstrate individual style, but also protected that "style" from some charges of affectation. But, in Jonson, to accuse someone of being "humorous" was not just to single out some physiological quality; to accuse someone of being humorous was to accuse them of being a poor social competitor and to challenge someone's claim that they had a unique quality or self.

Jonson was about the business of calling everyone humorous, but the citizen merchant was singled out for particular abuse and many responded with singular indignation. In the character of Thorello (*EMIH*) we find a type of citizen character that Jonson will depict again and again, and it is to this type of figure Dekker and Middleton

will eventually respond; in the almost insanely jealous Thorello, we see not only the first of a type for Jonson, but also hints about the creation of *Candido*. Certainly the cuckold citizen is already a commonplace in Jonson's world, but this particular manifestation of an old joke adds some important new twists that, in and of themselves, elicited strong responses.

Chiefly, Jonson refigured Thorello's jealousy as a "humor": either a form of madness or social affectation. The citizen's jealousy was not attributed to female inconstancy or the gallant's immoral conduct ("urban degeneracy"), but to the inadequacies of the citizen himself. Additionally, both the suggestion of madness and social affectation may have suggested sin. Haynes suggests that gallants did not mind being "lampooned" on stage; indeed, they prized a detached ironic pose which would include laughing at oneself. Citizens, on the other hand, were not accustomed to falling under the masterful gaze of Jonson's gallants. When Haynes notes that the "gallant, who had for centuries been a principal target of the morality plays as a figure for foppery, novelty, and urban degeneracy, is rehabilitated"(40), he does not discuss the necessary implication: a rehabilitation or new position necessitates a shift and/or response somewhere else in society. The pertinent shift for this argument is the social place of the London citizen in relation to the newly emerging urbane gallant and the poet, both embodied in the figures of Prospero and Lorenzo. The privileging of the subtlety and sophistication of the gallant's gaze, his powers of social perception, downgrades the position of the citizen -- if for no other reason than the citizen character now falls under that gaze and receives a new form of criticism. In contrast, in earlier plays, closer to the morality plays in spirit and structure, the moral gaze of the citizen coincided with the plays' dominant outlook or sensibility. None of this is to suggest intention or to say that Jonson was anti-citizen: "Jonson does not defend the honor of the citizens, but neither does he endorse the view that citizen manners are inherently risible. He is interested in the play of class styles" (Haynes 59). No matter

the complexity of Jonson's social and political loyalties, one distinct reverberation of his new posturing remains the harsh satirical treatment of citizens at a time when the theater (and poetry) was still widely considered a frivolous, suspicious, and, in extreme cases, dangerous institution for the city; and, of the variety of issues Jonson's new position raises, his satiric representations of citizens elicit some of the most striking responses, testifying at once to the extent that this literary quarrel was embedded in other cultural matters and the very real effect his work had on a broad but identifiable social group.

In Jonson's play, both the citizen merchant Thorello and the other dupes are at the mercy, first, of Lorenzo and Prospero and, second, Justice Clement. In *Every Man In*, as Theodore Leinwand has pointed out, Justice Clement is "Jonson's *deus ex machina*"(116). This play, in other words, is dependent on the Justice of the Peace and all that institution represents -- particularly increasing authority and control of a national bureaucracy -- for its resolution. Indeed, one could argue that the gallants Lorenzo and Prospero are JPs in training. Certainly, most JPs share Lorenzo and Prospero's background and social status. Clement shares their capacity for duping and mastery. He quickly sees through their devices and tricks (5.3.31-32), enjoys some duping of his own in his feigned outrage over Cob speaking "against tobacco" (3.3.94), and generally carries himself with the easy grace and control Lorenzo and Prospero are only recently acquiring (3.3.129-138). It is Clement who gently counsels and corrects Lorenzo's understanding of poetry (5.3.294-335), and it is Clement who officially punishes and corrects the dupes Lorenzo and Prospero had been unofficially correcting in their gulling (5.3.335-352). For their part, Prospero and Lorenzo are, early in the play, struck by Clement's persona.

Lorenzo: Doctor Clement, what's he? I have heard much speech of him.

Prospero: Why, dost thou not know him? He is the *gonfaloniere* of the state here, an excellent rare civilian, and a great scholar; but the only mad, merry old fellow in Europe! I showed him you the other day.

Lorenzo: Oh, I remember him now. Good faith, and he hath a very strange presence, mehtinks; it shows as if he stood out of the rank from other men. I have heard many of his jests in Padua. They say he will commit a man for taking the wall of his horse.

Prospero: Ay, or wearing his cloak of one shoulder, or anything indeed, if it come in the way of his humour. (3.2.41-50)

Their remarks here are, for them, unusually tinged with admiration and respect. Clement is able at “jests,” he “stands out” from other men, and, from his government sanctioned position corrects those who breach the rules of social conduct. Clement, Prospero, and Lorenzo all share a distinct social sensibility: the easy grace and mastery of the governing or soon to be governing gentry.

Notes

1. For the most recent updating of the poetomachia and a brief, clear summary, see Bednarz. For more thorough, if dated, studies see Penniman, Small, Harbage, and Kay.
2. The Italianate names are from the 1598 quarto. Jonson anglicized the play in the 1616 folio version. See J.W. Lever's edition.
3. The term acquisitive comes from L.C. Knight's influential work *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson*. Don E. Wayne, in "Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson: Shifting Grounds of Authority and Judgment in Three Major Comedies" says "it is difficult to argue with Knight's central tenet that Jonson's plays exhibit an unremitting critique of acquisitiveness"(7).
4. Wayne argues convincingly that while Knights "view Jonson as a social critic" he tends to ignore the ways in which Jonson is implicated in what he criticized"; while Knights is correct that Jonson critiques the Renaissance tendency to individuation, self- assertion, and the emergence of the subject, he overlooks the extent to which Jonson was part of this tendency. Wayne goes on to argue that Jonson only slowly becomes aware of that tension or contradiction.
5. In brief, then, this study shares the "New Historical" attitude towards Knight's argument first articulated by Wayne. Haynes, too, offers a clear statement on the matter: "L.C. Knights [argued that] the ideology of the drama was the conservative economic and

social morality formed under medieval conditions, and its attitude toward the historical changes it observed was oppositional, satiric, moral. This is a powerful argument, though Harbage [*Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions*] noticed long ago that Knight's "crypto-feudal" sympathies led him to underestimate the role played in the drama by the new pride and assertiveness of the middle class . . . There is now something of a consensus that the theater was implicated in social change as well as opposed to it . . ."(11).

6. See David Scott Kastan's "Workshop and/as Playhouse: The Shoemaker's Holiday": "Dekker . . . idealizes the actual atomization of the culture in a fantasy of social cohesion and respect. He knew the realities of urban poverty . . . and the increasing inability of the city or state to conceive effective schemes and relief. The guild structure that once served to unite craftsmen in a fraternity devoted to the welfare and security of its membership became increasingly hierarchical and entrepreneurial, converting work from a system of solidarity to a system of exchange. In *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606), Dekker complains that the guilds "that were ordained to be communities, had lost their first privilege, and were now turned monopolies, structures no longer of communal association but of commercial advantage"(153).

7. See Stephen Mullaney's suggestion that cultural pressures could have prompted a "rereading" of the city and its emblems. He sees Stow's Survey as just such an attempt: "a timely work, prompted by the economic, social and cultural changes that were transforming the face of London, making the city unrecognizable to its own citizens and obscuring the emblems and devices of the community"(19). The impulse to "reread" the city was powerful and so must have been the impulse to reclaim a more familiar London. As for James's attitude toward Bethlem more will be forthcoming in my discussion of Middleton.

8. See Kastan and nn. 8.

9. In the folio edition, Thorello reminds the audience at this point that he has learned his versifying by participating as an actor in a play.

Chapter Four

Jonson, Satire, Humors, and Bethlem

Sometime in October of 1598, probably only a few weeks after *Every Man In* had played at the Curtain theater and some three quarters of a mile down the road in the North London suburb of Shoreditch, London clothworker Roland Sleford gives up his post as the “keeper” of Bethlem hospital -- a position he had held for some nineteen years. Two months later, the governors of Bridewell (the body charged with Bethlem’s administration since 1557) appointed a committee to “view and peruse the defaults” there.¹ The committee reported that the hospital’s physical condition was terrible, initiated repair work, and gave a detailed census of the twenty patients housed there. Unfortunately, even though the census and Sleford’s departure are coterminous -- and appear to have more than a coincidental relationship -- no hard evidence exists to suggest the exact nature of their relationship. Even without constructing a relationship between the two, however, a Bethlem historian would find each event of singular significance.

To begin with Sleford, Bedlam “keepers” displayed a well documented reluctance to give up their posts in the second half of the sixteenth century and if this historical reluctance is any indication, Sleford’s departure was not routine business. Patricia Allderidge provides a concise history of their tenacity and implies the desirability of the position:

The appointment of the keeper was made in the Court of Aldermen, and

there seems to have been little to choose between those appointed by the crown and those by the City: and if the King had previously rewarded his friends and servants with the patronage of Bethlem, it is hard to see any different motives at work in the City's administration. In 1561 the 'reversion and next avoidance of the office of the keepership of Bethlem with all fees, profits and advantages thereunto justly belonging' was, at the request of the Lord Mayor, granted to Richard Munnes, his Lordship's porter. Munnes (or Munes), a draper, had some difficulty in getting possession of his office because his predecessor Edward Alyn would not give it up; but within four years he had himself vacated it 'with most hearty thanks,' whereupon the court appointed Edward Rest, a grocer. On Rest's death in 1571, 'at the request of my Lord Mayor and for his sake', the keepership was given to John Mell, whose occupation is unspecified but whose suitability for the office may be assessed from the fact that in June 1578, the governors of Bridewell gave him notice to find "another place" by Michaelmas. He was said to have received various legacies and "cancelled them", and to have abused the governors, those who gave money to the poor, and the poor themselves. In July of the following year he was still there and was again dismissed, having by now also abused the surveyors, and committed other disorders jointly with his wife. Mell replied that he had been appointed by the mayor and aldermen, and would go if they disliked his behaviour: but his death in December freed the post without further controversy and it was given to Roland Sleaford. (149-50)

Even when administrative action prompted a keeper's departure, only death guaranteed a change. That a Bethlem keeper of twenty years would leave his post alive or without documented administrative action seems, thus, out of the ordinary.

And 1598 was not an ordinary year in Bethlem's history. In the preceding forty two years that the governors of Bridewell had been officially charged with Bethlem's administration, no similar investigation seems to have taken place. Alderidge, in her review of the Court Books of Bridewell and Bethlem, notes that, aside from the occasional and ineffective interference in keepership matters mentioned above, the governors of Bridewell seemed "to have been almost unconcerned with all Bethlem matters."

"Something," Alderidge speculates, drew the governors out to Bethlem.

We have no record of a specific incident that would have prompted an inspection or Sleford's departure, but we can indisputably claim that in 1598 there was a generally intensified sense, manifested and reinforced by the poor laws, that charitable institutions were in need of closer scrutiny, management, and control by authorities. And the historical coincidence of *Every Man In*'s first production and the events of Bethlem suggests the close cultural proximity of the widespread effort to reorganize charitable and social relations to the smaller cultural struggle of the poetomachia. At the same time that the state was reorganizing charity and its institutions, Jonson was attempting to reorganize his place, and the place of others, in the world. The state was making new distinctions about madness and who should control or be in the City's institution of madness; Jonson was making distinctions in society by singling out London citizens and mocking their "humors."

In *Every Man Out*, Jonson's next play after *Every Man In*, the attack on citizens continued. It not only continued, it intensified. While several diverse characters are forced "out" of their humors by Macilente's intrigues, the cuckolding of Delirio, the "good doting citizen," makes up most of the climactic last act. As Herford and Simpson point out, *Every Man Out* was in fact "a far more daring violation of precedent and tradition" than *Every Man In* and its "comprehensive castigation of follies" could "not fail to wring some withers" (HS I.2.22-23). But no matter the breadth of Jonson's satire, *Every Man Out* was specifically geared toward "the intellectual part of his audience": a focus which

intensifies the split between those skilled and trained in games of social competition and those who are not, those with powers of invention and those with “flawed *inventio*.” Jonson anticipated that the construction of his play would irritate citizens and tries to control that irritation by having the Grex, Mitus and Cordatus, stress the breadth or universality of his satire immediately before the cuckolding of Delirio.

Mit: Well, I doubt this last scene will endure some grievous torture.

Cor: How? You fear ‘twill be racked by some hard construction?

Mit: Do not you?

Cor: No, in good faith: unless mine eyes could light me beyond sense. I see no reason why this should be more liable to the rack than the rest: you’ll say, perhaps, the city will not take it well that the merchant is made here to dote so perfectly upon his wife; and she again to be so fastidiously affected as she is?

Mit: You have uttered my thought, sir, indeed.

Cor: Why, by that proportion, the court might as well take offence at him we call the courtier, and with much more pretext, by how much the place transcends and goes before in dignity and virtue: but can you imagine that any noble or true spirit in court, whose sinewy and altogether unaffected graces very worthily express him a courtier, will make any exception at opening of such an empty trunk as this Brisk is! Or think his own worth impeached by beholding his motley inside?

Mit: No, sir, I do not.

Cor: No more, assure you, will any grave, wise citizen or modest matron take the object of this folly in Delirio and his wife: but rather apply it as the foil to their own virtues. For that were to affirm that a man, writing of Nero, should mean all emperors: or speaking of Machiavel, comprehend all

statesmen; or in our Sordido, all farmers; and so of the rest: than which nothing can be uttered more malicious or absurd. Indeed, there are a sort of these narrow-eyed decipherers, I confess, that will extort strange and abstruse meanings out of any subject, be it never so conspicuous and innocently delivered. But to such, where'er they sit concealed, let them know the author defies them and their writing tables; and hopes no sound or safe judgement will infect itself with their contagious comments, who, indeed, come here only to pervert and poison the sense of what they hear, and for nought else. (2.6.127-58)

Citizens, Jonson anticipated, and “narrow-eyed decipherers,” not as well versed in the complexities and nuances of social codes as courtiers, would take offense; whereas the courtiers, in on the joke as it were, do not mind being lampooned on stage. Despite his attempt to offer a satire of all, Jonson seems blind to the fact that the very nature of his satire, the very form, with partial roots in university revels and courtly games, will especially distance his plays from citizens. And, moreover, he fails to see that his satire will encourage or try to set the rules for games of social competition that leave the citizen at a distinct disadvantage. He fails to see the distinction between his newer, more cutting satire and Dekker’s older satire, closer to the medieval complaint in its pleas for social harmony.

Delirio, the cuckold, follows hard on the almost insanely jealous Thorello and while the gallants and courtiers are ridiculed with almost equal vigor, no citizen figure possesses the redeeming aplomb or status in the play of a Lorenzo or the mastery of Macilente.² Citizens “lookd for good matter,” in these plays but instead found a “rehabilitated” gallant and in *Every Man Out* the new poet/scholar figure of Asper/Macilente, a figure of theatrical mastery who moves “without fear controlling the world’s abuses” (Inductions). Moreover, Delirio possesses none of the insight that makes Thorello at least interesting.

That Jonson's success in the humour plays and their increasingly hostile representations of citizen figures coincides with the advent of the war of theatres is no surprise. Jonson's claim for new status engages not only matters of literary theory but social and class concerns as well. Jonson's inclusion of Clove and Orange in *Every Man Out* -- satirical figures for Marston and Dekker -- can be seen not just as a function of personal animosity or theoretical differences, but also as a function of social and class competition. Dekker responds, I will show, not only to Jonson's personal attacks and theoretical posturing, but to the ridiculing of citizen figures those moves involve. Before considering Dekker's response, however, we must consider one more play by Jonson: *Poetaster*.

Jonson discovered that Dekker was planning to attack him in *Satiromastix* and wrote *Poetaster* in an attempt to preempt the attack. The play marks Jonson's loudest (most desperate?) claim for the new status of the poet. In the process, Jonson irritates almost everyone: "citizens of standing, professional persons . . ." (H&S 1.416). Of most concern for this paper, obviously, are the citizen protests elicited by *Poetaster* and how those protests are registered in other dramatic works. For along with upbraiding Dekker and Marston and others, Jonson returns to his now familiar strategy of creating a cuckold (or, in this case, a near cuckold) citizen and his wife: Albius and Chloe. Albius extends a line of characters that started with Thorello and Delirio; in Albius, though, Jonson offers some important variations on this type. Albius is mocked for his active engagement in social competition, whereas Thorello and Delirio were mocked more for their simple inability to compete.

Chloe has married Albius because citizens "kept their wives as fine as ladies; and that we might rule our husbands, like ladies; and do what we listed" (2.1.28). Her motivation recalls both Delirio's doting foolishness and Thorello's impotence in all social relations. Albius adds clumsy ambition. Unlike Thorello, he welcomes the opportunity for

gentlemen to mix in his house, but like Thorello, he lacks the skills to navigate such engagement. He relies on his wife:

Alb. But you know, wife; here are the greatest ladies, and gallantest gentlemen of Rome, to be entertained in our house now: and I would fain advise thee to entertain them in the best sort, i' faith wife.

Chl. In sincerity, did you ever hear a man talk so idly? You would seem to be master? You would have your spoke in my cart? You would advise me to entertain ladies and gentlemen? Because you can marshal your pack-needles, horse-combs, hobby-horses, and wallcandlesticks in your warehouse better than I; therefore you can tell how to entertain ladies and gentlefolks better than I? (2.1.35-45)

Interestingly, what minimal skill Albius does have comes from watching plays. His words simultaneously suggest the ways that plays diffuse manners and Jonson's willingness to mock the social climbers who were clumsily learning social graces at the theater.

At your ladyship's service [Aside] I got that speech by seeing a play last day, and it did me some grace now: I see, 'tis good to collect sometimes; I'll frequent these plays more than I have done, now I come to be familiar with courtiers. (2.2. 82-85)

Chloe shares Albius's ambitions; she enjoys and openly solicits the attention of gallants -- "Oh, they do so command me here, the courtiers"(2.1.31) -- while her husband clumsily interferes with her flirtations. In Act Four, Albius appropriately assumes the play role of "Vulcan" and Chloe "Venus," offering an opportunity for more explicit and bawdy flirtation involving the citizen's wife (4.3.34-83; 4.5.45-75).

Indeed, when in Act Four Scene Three Albius enters with the poets Crispinus (Marston), Demetrius (Dekker), and the soldier, Tucca, we see the central figures of the poetomachia lumped together in Jonson's dramatic imagination. Jonson represents

roughly the actual situation that he perceived himself to be in regarding the poetomachia. In *Poetaster*, the citizen figure he has been antagonizing (represented here in Albius), and the poets Dekker and Marston, and the crass but influential Tucca all conspire to attack the figure of Horace -- Jonson's dramatic alter ego -- by writing a satirical play about him. All Jonson/Horace's antagonists are bad actors, poets, cursed with flawed *inventio* and doomed to a position outside Caesar's court. Jonson's conflation of poetic skills and social prestige reaches an almost perverse or desperate pinnacle (Haynes 76-90). Jonson places himself, in the figure of Horace, at Caesar's side, a special person, neither a gentlemen nor a commoner, but the "Poet" deserving an emperor's ear, respect and friendship. Jonson, under siege, can not master the grace and ironic detachment of his fictional characters Lorenzo or Prospero; those characters did not necessarily remove themselves from the city, from social relations, but mastered techniques to dominate and move easily in society -- something Horace/Jonson now seems reluctant to do.

When confronted with the boorishness of Crispinus in Act Three, Horace can not play on this gull as Prospero might. He finds himself not amused, but trapped by the demands of social graciousness and ease of performance that he had so valorized. No matter how subtle, Horace can not politely dodge Crispinus. More important, Horace can not or does not play on Crispinus as a Prospero might. Jonson no longer playfully mocks "humorous" gulls, or those who rely on humorous affectation, but displays the frustration of communicating with one who completely misunderstands the social game or competition of which "humours" is a part.

In the exchange, Crispinus continually misidentifies Horace's discomfort as humours: "Tut, Tut: Abandon this idle humor 'tis nothing but melancholy" (3.1.185) and "What passion? What humour is this?" (3.2.24). Crispinus displays the gull's characteristic reliance on and misunderstanding of humors. As discussed earlier, Jonson had identified humors as potentially just another tool or weapon in social competition -- a

legitimate physiological term or concept often (mis)used by gallants trying to display “individual” style. Or, to be more precise, gallants often used the term or concept of humors to justify their individual style. For in a milieu where individual style is highly prized, where many people are trying to display individual style, charges of affectation must have been frequent and damaging. But, if one had a “humor,” one was not just affecting a style, but actually possessed a specific, distinct, individual quality or essence. Apparently, Crispinus, like other gulls, does not have the imaginative capacity/social savvy to see that the concept of humors could function this way socially. He does not recognize “humors” as a social tool. Consequently, when Horace offers many social cues suggesting Crispinus should depart, Crispinus does not see them as social cues but, in the lines cited above, misidentifies them as humors.

But, in a striking contrast to earlier gull to gallant/poet exchanges, Horace does not enjoy such obtuseness; on the contrary, he only expresses contempt and frustration. This is a far cry from Prospero and Lorenzo’s easy and pleasant exchanges with gulls and even remarkably different from Asper/Macilente’s cutting but still playful “outing” of humours. Here Jonson registers the frustration of having identified “humours” as just another social weapon or tool and yet not being able to use such a weapon because so many miss the point. Part of Jonson’s frustration seems to stem, in other words, from the fact that he is engaged in a serious game of social competition, but so many around him either do not understand the rules or refuse to play by the rules Jonson advocates. Crispinus believes there actually are such things as humours, some physiological determinant fostering eccentric, highly stylized behavior, and this frustrates rather than amuses Jonson. Jonson seems to be sensing that the city is now too vast for the gallant’s masterful gaze, that finely tuned powers of social perception only serve one well in a closed milieu; this accounts, in part, for Jonson’s impulse to abstract himself from society, to make his world smaller and more manageable. The dominant sensibility of this play is not the easy grace of the gallant,

but the frustrated desire of the ostentatious poet.

Jonson may have grown quickly frustrated with “humors” and “playing on” gulls -- certainly the humors genre dies quickly -- but the duration of his exploration can not measure its impact and may obscure the rich cultural tensions it absorbed. In linking “humors,” as psychological or physiological imbalance, to “humors,” as social affectation and its associations with social competition, Jonson also put the poetomachia on a course to intersect with the City’s principal institution of madness. That course becomes more clear when Dekker enters the Poetomachia.

One can understand Jonson’s frustration at the end of *Poetaster*. He has learned of Dekker’s forthcoming attempt to attack him *Satiromastix* and hurriedly constructs *Poetaster* to offset the assault. And faced with this sort of social competition, Jonson does, in a sense, repeat the strategy that served his fictional gallants so well: retreat. That is, he attempts to distance or distinguish himself from his dramatic competitors by pulling back from the competition or, more precisely, by lifting himself above the competition just as his gallants “pulled back” by developing a “connoisseur’s taste” for individual styles rather than try to concoct a new one in a saturated field. To rely on on the terminology of Speech Act Theory for a moment, Jonson repeats, on the level of the author this time, a strategy he had portrayed on the level of fictional characters. Jonson retreats from the poetomachia in his “Apologetical dialogue” as his fictional gallants tactically retreated or backed away from a competition to develop individual styles:

This ‘tis, that strikes me silent, seals my lips,
 And apts me rather to sleep out my time
 Than I would waste it in contemned strifes,
 With these vile Ibides, these unclean birds,
 That make their mouths their clysters, and still purge
 From their hot entrails. But, I leave the monsters

To their own fate. And, since the Comic Muse
 Hath proved so ominous to me, I will try
 If tragedy have a more kind aspect. (214-224)

Prudence dictates such a strategic retreat. Dekker was preparing to “demystify” Jonson’s gallant pose, a fact testified to in Jonson’s creation of Demetrius’s motivation, and by shifting to a more poetic persona Jonson avoids the unmasking of his own social weapon: the ironic, easy, detached pose of the gallant. Tucca and Tibullus’s reading of Demetrius’s writings in *Poetaster* give some indication of the charges Jonson tries to avoid.

Our muse is in mind for the untrussing a poet,
 I slip by his name; for most men do know it:
 A critic that all the world bescumbers
 With Satirical humours, and lyrical numbers . . .
 And for the most part, himself doth advance
 With much self-love, and more arrogance. . .
 And (but that I would not be thought a prater)
 I could tell you, he were a translator.
 I know the authors from whence he has stole,
 And could trace him too, but that I understand ‘em not full
 and whole . . .
 The best note I can give you to know him by,
 Is that he keeps gallants’ company;
 Whom I would wish, in time should him fear,
 Lest after they buy repentance too dear.

Subscri. Dem. Fan. (5.3.265-85).

To rearticulate the heroic gallant, to have Horace merely play on Crispinus, would open Jonson up to the charges Dekker will soon present; that is, Jonson has always been a social

competitor like everyone else and the detached, ironic ease of the gallant pose is just one more social weapon. In short, Jonson resisted displaying his own participation in the socially competitive world he critiqued. Jonson must maintain that he stands apart or above from such activity. Social competition is a base business, fit for and driving the likes of Dekker. Jonson has Demetrius/Dekker confess his motivation:

In troth, no great cause, not I; I must confess: but that he
 kept better company, for the most part, than I: and that better men
 loved him than loved me. (5.3.405-7)

My language here -- the stress on competition, strategies, moves, countermoves, tactics -- follows, again, the lead of Haynes who wants “to recover a sense of this art in society as a weapon, or tool”(3); Haynes is correct in trying to do so, I think, because his claims work so well with the powerful arguments Altman makes about the combative nature of rhetoric and its influence in these plays. Indeed, starting, with *Poetaster*, the cultural exchange out of which Bedlam emerges is couched in legal rhetoric -- something I have already discussed in the analysis of *The Honest Whore*'s construction. In *Poetaster* and *Satiromastix*, however, legal rhetoric is more apparent in the language of the play than in its actual construction. Crispinus and Demetrius are “arraigned” and punished in a trial at the end of Act Five of *Poetaster*. Dekker's *Satiromastix*, too, from the outset, takes the form of a legal battle. In Dekker's prologue, he notes the “world” “wilt sit as Judge” and that he will “leave it to the Jurie” to decide who is right or wrong in the dispute. Dekker, like Jonson, claims to be acting “se defendo.” Dekker feels he has been attacked, and plans to defend himself publicly by “untrussing the humorous poet” in a psuedo-legal (if comic) competition. Dekker's language here provides evidence for the claims Altman, Eden, Trimpi and others have made about the relationship of drama to forensic rhetoric. So too does Dekker's strategy and dramatic construction. Haynes offers a description of Dekker's strategy:

[Dekker] recycles the figures of Horace, Tucca, Crispinus, and Demetrius while shifting the setting to a vaguely archaic England . . . to plunge Horace/Jonson back into society showing his social relations

Everything mystified in *Poetaster* is demystified here.³⁽⁸⁶⁾

Dekker's willingness to rearrange or "recycle" characters, coupled with his use of legal terminology to describe his dramaturgy, is telling; his work recalls Altman's arguments about rhetoric and dramatic construction. Dekker takes Jonson's characters and places them in different "circumstances." He provides different "colors" for their motivations and actions as a student might in a Senecan declamation. The "facts" "places" and "persons" are the same, only the nature of their behavior is depicted in a different light.⁴ In *Satiromastix*, Horace remains the superior poet and Tucca the blowhard and so on just as things were in *Poetaster*, but Dekker allows the Jury/audience to see things in a different light. In so doing, he relies on what seems to be some classical Renaissance training. The issue of the case is who is right or wrong in the poetomachia. Dekker argues - - or dramatizes - - for his side.

The principle involved here is one deeply rooted in the rhetorical tradition: the more circumstances revealed in a given case, the further "qualified" the issue becomes, and the greater the opportunity for an equitable judgment based upon the widest possible construction of the question. In the classical rhetorical treatises that formed the basis of Renaissance literary education this principle was discussed in all considerations of the status or "stand" the orator might take in arguing his case. There were three major kinds of status: one could argue whether or not an act took place (*an sit?*); how it should be defined (*quid sit?*); or what its nature was (*qualis sit?*). It was this last area of inquiry, involving fundamental questions of justice and injustice and not merely issues of fact or legal definition, that Cicero and

Quintilian believed to be the greatest challenge to the orator, for it required him to examine the act in its fullest circumstantiality and draw it toward an appropriate judgment -- one that might well exceed what the law would have allowed had it been argued as bare fact. For there are ‘certain matters,’ writes Cicero, ‘that must be considered with reference to time and intention and not merely by their absolute qualities. In all these matters, one must think what the occasion demands and what is worthy of the persons concerned, and one must consider not what is being done but with what spirit anything is done, with what associates, at what time, and how long it has been going on.’ Such inquiry resulted in judgment according to principles of equity. (Altman 66-7)

Dekker’s fiction emerges out of his impulse to redefine the nature of the dispute (*qualis sit?*) so the jury/audience can see Jonson not as the great wronged Poet, but as a superior poet who has let his ego go too far. Dekker concedes the facts of the case, the “absolute qualities” of the dispute -- Jonson is a better poet -- but he demands a reconsideration of how Jonson handles that superiority. Dekker pleads his case in a dispute so the audience can see characters (and the real people they represent) as he sees them. Kathy Eden, in *Poetic and Legal Fiction in the Aristotelian Tradition*, provides a concise statement on the relationship between the dramatist and the forensic orator.

The tragic poet and the forensic orator, equally bound by the demands of probability, both face the task of transforming [a] past action -- the outline of a plot or the facts of a case -- from a random and inexplicable series of isolated events into a logical sequence of cause and effect. Insofar as the spectators at a theatrical performance or the jury at a legal trial witness, as if with their own eyes, an action that has been skillfully represented according to these requirements, they will -- in Aristotle’s view -- learn from that

representation not only what happened but why. And they will be moved in both cases to fear and pity and to reach judgments that accompany those responses. (5)

Dekker will return to this legal strategy, this dramaturgy, in *The Honest Whore*, only in that instance he defends a client different than himself and Marston: the figure of the cuckold citizen. *Satiromastix* thus offers significant clues about the motives, strategies, and social aspects of the poetomachia; it also offers a broader context for understanding the legal - rhetorical construction of *The Honest Whore* and *Bedlam*'s emergence on stage.

In *Satiromastix*, Dekker's tone is light and presents much that is "personal" about the ongoing dispute, but such personal references almost always coincide with commentary on the social and class relationships these particular personal relationships involve. When Crispinus and Demetrius confront Horace, their tone reveals the close personal relationships of the playwrights. They are friendly and conciliatory, attempting to make Jonson/Horace see their point of view.

Doe we not see fooles laugh at heaven? and mocke
 The Makers workmanship; be not you griev'd
 If that which you molde faire, upright and smooth,
 Be skewd a wry, made crooked, lame and vile,
 By racking coments, and calumnious tongues,
 So to be bit it ranckles not: for innocence
 May with a feather brush off the foulest wrongs.
 But when your dastard wit will strike at men
 In corners, and in riddles folde the vices
 Of your best friends, you must not take to heart,
 If they take off all gilding from their pilles,
 And onely offer you the bitter Coare. (1.2.212-23)

Earlier, however, Horace has revealed that these personal disputes engage class competition as well, a matter which is presented throughout the play.

Asin: Nay I ha more news, ther's Crispinus and his Jorneyman
Poet Demetrius Fannius too, they swaere they'll bring your life and
death upn' th stage like a Bricklayer in a play

Hor: Bubo they must presse more valiant wits than theyr own to
do it: me ath stage? ha, ha, Ile starve their poore copper-lace
workmasters, that dare play me: I can bring (and that they quake
at) a prepar'd troope of gallants, who for my sake shal distaste
every unsalted line, in their fly-blowne Comedies.

Asin. Nay that's certaine, ile bring a hundred gallants of my ranke.(1.2.137-
146)

Later, in Act Four, when Dekker/Demetrius explains his position we also see the personal, conciliatory gesture conflated with matters of social competition.

Hor: What could I doe, out of a just revenge
But bring them to the Stage? they envy me
Because I holde more worthy company

Dem. Good Horace, no; my cheekes doe blush for thine,
As often as thou speakst so, where one true
And nobly-vertuous spirit, for thy best part
Loves thee, I wish one ten, even from my heart.
I make account I put up as deepe share
In any good mans love, which thy worth earnes,
As thou thy selfe; we envy not to see,
Thy friends with Bayes to crown thy Poesie.
No, heere the gall lyes; we that know what stuffe

Thy verie heart is mad of, know the stalke
 On which they learning growes, and can give life
 To thy (once dying) basenes; yet must we
 Dance Antickes on your Paper. (4.3.211-22)

Demetrius/Dekker may dodge issues of social competition here, but immediately before this exchange Dekker the author has Tucca express the social antagonisms engaged by Jonson/Horace in the course of explaining the motives for the attack.

Hor: Why would you make me thus the ball?

Tucca: Ile tell thee why . . . because thy sputtering chappes yelpe, that Arrogance, and Impudence, and Ignoraunce, are the essential parts of a Courtier . . . because thou cryest ptooth at worshipfull Cittizens, and cal'st them Flat-caps, Cuckolds, and banckrupts, and modest and vertuous wives punckes and cockatrices. . . . because th'ast arraigned two Poets against all lawe and conscience; and not content with that , hast turn'd them amongst a company of horrible blacke Fryer. (4.3.183-99)

In this jumble of motivations and offended parties, we see the breadth of the ideological dispute and the breadth of Dekker's satire. When Dekker has Sir Vaughn ask Horace why he gave up the "honest trade of building chymneys, and laying downe Brickes . . . to make nothing but railes"(4.3.155-60) we see, similarly, the ideological complexity of the author. Dekker appeals to the citizen element still skeptical of poetry and the theatre while, at the same time, mocking or "demystifying" Jonson's own "non-gentlemen" origins. Dekker is about the business of rectifying a personal and professional conflict no doubt, but he is also defending the position and responding to the grievances of, again, a broad but identifiable social group. Jonson's humorous, cuckold citizens have struck a chord. That Dekker, via Tucca, also defends wronged gallants should not be overlooked -- his ideological position is no simple matter either -- but it seems more plausible to take his concern with gallants

and the court here as a fairly shrewd rhetorical move; just as Jonson's attempt to stress the breadth of his satire failed to mask the fact that citizens were taking the brunt of his attack, Dekker's attempt to stress the universality of his defense fails to mask his primary sympathies. The poet mocked for being "out at the Elbowes" probably does not have any profound interest in defending courtiers -- a point more poignantly obvious in other plays. In *The Honest Whore*, it will be shown, Dekker -- and the young playwright Middleton -- turn specifically to the defense of the citizen

Satiromastix and Jonson's refusal or retreat in *Poetaster* are generally taken to signal the end of the poetomachia. Certainly, Marston and Jonson reconcile almost completely.⁵ Dekker's relationship to Jonson between 1601 and 1605 remains a more cloudy issue. The plague closed the theatres for a year and in part because of that no more dramatic exchanges take place. But, in the interim, some strong traces of the conflict can be detected. The plague not only closed the theaters, but delayed London's coronation ceremonies for King James.⁶ Scheduled to take place in the summer of 1603, the ceremonies were postponed until the spring of 1604. Dekker's *The Magnificent Entertainment* "records the spectacle" that "greeted the King"(Hoy 2.128). "Oddly enough," Hoy notes, Jonson and Dekker were "the poets chosen to devise the greater part of his entertainment"(2.128-9). Hoy continues:

Time had not healed their quarrel. Jonson, obviously disdaining to appear in print with the dresser of plays whom he had ridiculed as Demetrius Fannius in *Poetaster*, published his part of the Entertainment separately . . . and Dekker, whose responsibility in the publication of *The Magnificent Entertainment* it was to give an account of the whole, had his revenge by treating with scarcely concealed contempt the learned contribution of the poet he had pilloried as Horace in *Satiromastix* The Entertainment consisted of a series of pageants staged at each of the seven triumphal

arches which were stationed at intervals along the processional way.

Jonson wrote the speeches delivered at the first and seventh of these

The fourth, fifth, and sixth pageants were . . . by Dekker Though

Jonson is never named in *The Magnificent Entertainment*, Dekker was

careful to attribute Zeal's speech . . . to Middleton.(2.129)

Dekker is careful to note, too, at the beginning of *The Magnificent Entertainment*, that the first pageant -- and the King's entrance to the city -- "should have bene performed about the Barres beyond Bishops-gate"(2.253-4). The pageant would have (or "should have"?) taken place, then, right in front of Bethlem hospital. Hoy says this about the shift in a note: "The 'Device' was not presented. . . at Bishopsgate, where no triumphal arch was erected, but at Fenchurch, and Jonson wrote it"(2.131).

A topographical coincidence, perhaps, but given the context of the poetomachia and Dekker's *The Honest Whore*, one with potential significance. Did the shift of the first pageant have anything to do with Bethlem? Was it in preparation for the first pageant that Dekker seized on the image of Bethlem for a play to be produced in the following year? In speculating about these questions, one should note David Rigg's summary explanation of the difference between Jonson's participation in the pageants and Dekker's: Dekker offered a "thoroughly medieval image of the commonwealth" while Jonson "exhibited a wealth of novel and iconographic material"(111). Dekker "was inviting the King to participate in the folkways of the London citizenry; James, who loathed crowds and prided himself on his erudition, found this invitation impossible to accept"(111). There are certain questions which can never be answered, but, I think, one can read here in the events of the coronation ceremonies the cultural tension or dynamic that is of prime interest to my analysis. In contrast to what appeared to be the "novel and iconographic" Jonson, Dekker seizes on older emblems or devices. Likewise, in *The Honest Whore*, he seized an older emblem or device whose meaning and cultural position was being contested. Dekker

reclaimed the emblem of Bethlem hospital to challenge Jonson's "novel" duping of gulls and eccentrics. In the incident of the pageants, we see Dekker and Bishopsgate come into conflict with and eventually be supplanted by Jonson's "novelty."

Ian Archer has demonstrated that the poor laws and the "reorganization of 1598" (152) encouraged a social structure whereby "more substantial" parishes and parishioners, although not "withdrawn from the community," were increasingly in a position of extracting "deference in return for patronage, in particular through the exercises of poor relief"(92-93). Poorer parishes, such as St. Botolph' Bishopgate, were made more explicitly dependent on wealthier parishes because collections from the wealthiest of parishes "were inadequate to support the poor without support from other parishes"(150). Topographical distinctions were becoming more pronounced. Bethlem and its parish were increasingly not as much a part of London as a whole, but a poorer subsection to be avoided.

Certainly, though, the poetomachia extends beyond 1601. In Dekker's *Westward Ho* (1604) and Jonson, Marston, and Chapman's *Eastward Ho* (1604) we see more clearly Dekker responding to the work of Jonson and vice versa. At the end of 1604, *Westward Ho* prompted Jonson -- with Marston and Chapman this time -- to produce *Eastward Ho*. *Westward Ho* is often misread, Hoy argues, as a depiction of citizen immorality (2.159-63); in fact, the play merely inverts the relationship of gallant "duping" citizen and, as a result, the citizen looks as immoral as the gallant whose role he has assumed. In this play, the citizen dupes the gallant and Dekker attempts to counter Jonson's habitual joke on the jealous or cuckold citizen. This play prefigures, in other words, Dekker's defense of Candido.

The play begins with the potential cuckolding of Justiniano, an Italian merchant living in London; Birlime, a bawd, entices Mistress Justiniano to leave her jealous husband for the play's dominant aristocratic figure -- the Earl. Like Candido's defiance of the

gallants, Justiniano unmasks Birdlime's trickery: "Do not I know these tricks?"(1.1.112). And, like Candido's wife, Mistress Justiniano calls his jealousy madness: "This madness shewes very well"(1.1.150). Justiniano responds:

Why looke you I am wondrous merry, can any man
discerne by my face, that I am a Cuckold? I have
known many suspected for men of this misfortune;
when thy have walked thorow the streets, which commonly
weare their hats ore their eye-browes, like pollitick penthouses,
which commonly make the shop of a Mercer, or a Linnen Draper as
dark as a roome in Bedlam.(1.1.151-56)

The language and situation here, obviously, hints at the character of Candido and *The Honest Whore*. Like Candido, Justiniano will eventually overcome his social superiors' attempts to antagonize him. But, in general, Dekker struggles in *Westward Ho* to find an adequate defense for the jealous or cuckold citizen. To begin, Justiniano, unlike Candido, reinforces the Jonsonian formula in that he is jealous. And poor. Mistress Justiniano complains:

Jealousy hath undone many a Cittizen, it hath undone
you, and me. You married me from the service of an
honorable Lady, and you knew what matches I mought
have had, what woulde you have me to do? I would I had
never seene your eies, your eies . . . Your prodigality, your
diceing, your riding abroad, your consorting your self with
Noble men, your building a summer house hath undone us,
hath undone us?(1.1.183-190)

As mentioned, the general strategy of this play is to defend the citizen by inverting Jonson's charges: in this play, citizens dupe gallants. But that strategy causes Dekker

problems that are displayed in Mistress Justiniano's complaints.

We see in this passage, for instance, the antagonism of Dekker toward urban gallants and a competitive, acquisitive London. Justiniano's "problems" arise from his close association with "Noble men" and their activities; his problems arise from his overwillingness to participate and compete in their world. It seems that in inverting Jonson's formula, in placing the citizen in the position of the gallant and vice versa, Dekker must place the citizen merchant in too close an alliance with the cultural position he would resist.⁷ Justiniano admits, "I have done as some Citizens at thirty, and most heires at three and twenty, made all away"(1.1.95-6). Dekker's inversion strategy forces this character to simultaneously embody the charges he would defend the citizen from (jealousy, cuckoldry) and the qualities of gallants ("diceing,"etc.); if a citizen is going to dupe a gallant, the citizen logically must act like or be like a gallant.

This causes an ethical or moral quandary for Dekker and hints at the unique fashioning of Candido's defense. Dekker's ethical tension in *Westward Ho* is displayed in Justiniano's defense of his own strategy. When his wife leaves because of his excessive jealousy, Justiniano decides "to live disguised in the City"(1.1.221), presumably to right the wrongs of his life. Justiniano (and Dekker) sensed or anticipated that the audience would have some qualms about this strategy. He ends Act One with some explanatory and preemptive remarks:

nor let the world by any imputation upon my disguise, for Court,
Citty, and Countrey, are meere as masks one to the other,
envied of some, laught at of others, and so to my comicall
businessse. (225-30)

Certainly this is a metatheatrical joke, but, nonetheless, the remark displays Dekker's difficulty. If he takes revenge on Jonson, if the citizen dupes the gallant, is he not the "same" as Jonson? Is the citizen not the same, morally, as the gallant in his willingness to

put on a rhetorical mask (we recall Altman's analysis of Jonson and this same dilemma)?

These tensions register, I think, Dekker's sense that his strategy, like the play itself, is severely flawed. Inversion implies justice, an eye for an eye, and justice is not necessarily the preferred posture of a pious city populace -- patience and mercy and honesty, it seems, offer better rhetorical faces. Seeking justice through inversion is not a good representation of a citizen's strategy. And Justiniano is not a good representative of the London Citizen figure Dekker would defend from Jonson. He is, after all, an Italian. A matter, again, of Dekker sensing the problem of inverting Jonson's formula; he wishes to refute Jonson and avoid representing the jealous or cuckold citizen Jonson depicted, but how does he go about this without making clear the charge he is refuting? In *Candido*, he finds a better, but still problematic answer. He avoids casting aspersions on London citizens by not setting the *The Honest Whore* in London (it takes place in Milan) and argues that the citizen is wrongly accused of jealousy and "humorousness." The citizen himself responds not by seeking justice, but, more appropriately, by exercising patience. That this is a London citizen is manifested by the depiction of an old London emblem: Bethlem.

That it takes the female characters in *Westward Ho* to enact Dekker's strategy seems further evidence of Dekker's dissatisfaction with that strategy. Justiniano's disguise, his trickery, does not prevent him from being cuckolded, although the tone of Act One suggests it might. He does, Hoy reminds us, help his wife "avoid the lustful embraces of the Earl (as Caelistine in *Satiromastix* avoided those of the King) by feigning death" (162). (Dekker, I will show shortly, consistently relies on this retrograde Romance strategy throughout the poetomachia.) Mistress Justiniano herself defies the Earl: "tho my husbands poore,/ Ile rather beg for him than be your Whore"(2.2.120). And, strikingly, in Act Three Scene Four a citizen's wife, Mistress Honeysuckle, blatantly inverts Jonson's humor formula when she "visits" or "plays on" the imprisoned gallant Monopoly.

Mono: O my little Honeysuckle has come to visit a Prisoner?

Mis. Hony: Yes faith as Gentlemen visit Marchants, to fare wel,
 or as Poets young quaint Revellers, to laugh at them. Sirrha, if I were
 some foolish justice, I woulde not beg thy wit never trust me
 Because [my wit] hath bin conceald al this while(3.3.40-52)

And, indeed, the play culminates in the citizen wives gulling the gallants:

They shall know that Citizens wives have wit enough to out strip
 twenty such guls; tho we are merry, lets no be mad;
 be as wanton as new married wives,
 as fantasticke and light headed to the ey, as fether-makers,
 but as pure about the heart, as if we dwelt amongst em
 in Black Fryers. (5.1.159-63)

The citizens are neither “mad,” nor immoral, nor affected, but as witty as the gallants. As
 Hoy writes

The trio of Citizen’s wives shows signs of yielding to the wits of their
 respective gallants, but only we discover in the end for the purpose of
 heightening the discomfiture of their would be seducers. (2.159)

Then, in 1605, a rather odd, successful and unique play appears: *The Honest
 Whore*. Some reconsideration of that play, not just of the internal dynamics discussed in
 Chapter Two, but in the context of the poetomachia, is necessary here. For *The Honest
 Whore* picks up almost literally where *Satiromastix* and *Westward Ho* left off.

At the end of *Satiromastix*, Sir Quintillian has devised a scheme to save his
 daughter - in - law’s chastity. The King had become enamoured of Celestine earlier in the
 play and forced her betrothed (and Quintillian’s son) Sir Walter Terrill to take an oath
 saying that Celestine would sleep with the King before sleeping with Terrill. Quintillian
 convinces Celestine and Terrill that the only way to save the former’s chastity and the
 latter’s word is for Celestine to die. Unbeknownst to all, he gives Celestine a “charme”

that will induce a death - like sleep. When Terrill and Quintillian present Celestine to the King she appears to be dead. Terrill restores her health and the devotion of all involved persuades the King to abandon his pursuit.

The opening of *The Honest Whore*, with its staged funeral, recalls this ending and scheme. The two similar older romance episodes and the romance episode of *Westward Ho* all serve similar functions. The episode in *Satiromastix* facilitates Dekker's untrussing of Horace/Jonson; in *Westward Ho* it helps invert Jonson's formula; and, similarly, the romance episode, the "main" plot, of *The Honest Whore*, facilitates Dekker and Middleton's defense of Candido. The romance episode in *The Honest Whore* also offers a critique of Jonson's use of humours. The "mad" humorous gallant of Act One, Hippolito, is not mad or humorous at all; the King would have everyone believe that to make his plan work, but Hippolito's histrionics are justified. They are not grieving affectation; they are legitimate outrage at the Duke's devious tricks. Eccentric behavior, Dekker seems to imply, can not be dismissed as "humours." At the same time, Dekker and Middleton are diligently demonstrating that Candido, the citizen draper, is not mad or humorous as Jonson's work had suggested the citizen was, but patient. In Act Three, Dekker and Middleton most strikingly invert Jonson's characteristic move of having a gallant viewing or playing on a gulled or humorous citizen. Candido simply refuses to be gulled or played on and calls Fustigo on his game playing.

Are you angry sir, because I namde the foole?

Trust me, you are not wise in mine owne house;

And to my face to play the Anticke thus:

If youde needs play the madman, choose a stage

Of lesser compasse, where few eyes may note

Your actions errorr; but if you misse,

As heere you doe, for one clap ten will hisse. (3.1.56-63)

Fustigo's response: "Zwounds Couzen, he talks to me as if I were a scurvy tragedian." I would offer some potentially interesting references here. When Fustigo first appears on stage (1.2) he appears in "some fantaskike Sea-Suite."⁸ In *Satiromastix*, Tucca, with Crispinus and Demetrius, had vowed to place Jonson in such a suit.

Tuc: Saist thou me so, olde Coale? come doo't then; yet tis no matter neither, Ile have thee in league first with these two rowly powlies: they shal be thy Damons and thou their Pithyasse; Crispinus shall give thee an olde cast Sattin suite, and Demetrius shall write thee a Scene or two, in one of they strong garlicke Comedies; and thou shalt take the guilt of consience for't, and swears tis thine owne old lad, tis thine owne: thou never yet fels't into the hands of sattin, didst?

Hor: Never Captaine I thanke God.

Tuc: Goe too, thou shalt now King Gorboduck, thous shalt, because Ile ha thee damn'd, Ile ha thee all in Sattin: Asper, Criticus Quintus, Horatius, Flaccus, Crispinus shal doo't, thou shalt doo't, heyre apparant of Helicon, thou shalt doo't.

Asin: Mine Ingle weare an olde cast Sattin suite? . . . if he carry the minde of a Gentleman, he'll scorne it at's heele. . .

Hor: No Captaine, Ile weare any thing.

Tuc: I know thous wilt, I know th'art an honest low minded Pigmei, for I ha seene thy shoulders lapt in a Plaiers old cst Cloake, like a Slie knave as thou art: and when thou ranst mad for the death of Horatio: thou borrowedst a gowne of Roscius the Stager . . . and sentst it home lowsie . . . (1.2.330-58)

But is not the Poetomachia over? Jonson had given up at the end of *Poetaster*.

Interestingly, Fustigo, too, has “sowde” his “oates.”

Wife: Very well; you ha travelled enough now, I trowe, to sowe your wilde oates.

Fust: A pox on em; wilde oates, I ha not an oate to throw at a horse, troth sister I ha sowde my oates, and reapt two hundred duckats if I had em, heere, mary I must intreate you to lend me some thirty or forty till the ship come, by this hand ile discharge at my day, by this hand.

Wife: These are your olde oaths.

Fust: Why sister, doe you thinke Ile forswear my hand?

Wife: Well, well you shal have them: put your selfe into better fashion, because I must imploy you in a serious matter.

Fust: Ile sweate like a horse if I like the matter.

Wife: You ha cast off all your olde swaggering humours. . .

I am the more sory, for I must imploy a true swaggerer.

Fust: Nay by this yron sister, they shall finde I am powlder and touch-box if they put fire once into me.(1.2.34-51)

The old references to humours and to Jonson’s famous temper (“powlder and touch-box”) seem to be reactivated here. Fustigo’s outrage at being called a scurvy tragedian on a public stage (*The Honest Whore* is performed at the large, public Fortune theater) also recalls Jonson’s grievances. Dekker and Middleton turn the tables on gallants, humours, and it appears, Jonson. On the large public stage, those “anticks” do not play well. Those “humorous” antics, Dekker suggests, belong on the small private stage of the coterie theater where *Poetaster* was performed. The gulling of “jealous” citizens does not, from the perspective of Dekker and Middleton, belong on the public stage either. And in Bedlam, an old emblem of madness, Dekker finds a place of the city -- old London --

where Jonson and the gallants' fine skills of perception are mocked. The gallants' ability to perceive subtle distinctions only works in a closed milieu. Bedlam, madness, and the growing vastness of the city mock such an attempt to master the populace under the subtle gaze of the gallant. Dekker's Bedlam "sweeper" describes the hospital as a place of social competition, a place where no one can maintain the detached pose of the gallant/observer, and everyone is caught in a swirl of social energy:

. . . we have good store of wilde oates here: for the Courtier is mad at the Cittizen, the Cittizen is madde at the Country man, the shoemaker is mad at the cobler, the cobler at the carman, the puncke is mad that the Marchant's wife is no whore, the Marchants wife is mad that the puncke is so common a whore. (5.2. 144-50)

Several prominent questions remain: why is *The Honest Whore* still fighting the Poets' War? Is this a not too distant reverberation? Or anticipation? Many have speculated that Jonson's revisions of *Every Man In* -- with its remarkable shift from an Italian setting to a London setting -- occurred in 1605.⁹ Is *The Honest Whore* a preemptive move on the part of Dekker to defend the citizen, just as Jonson preemptorily defended himself in *Poetaster*? Had Dekker and Middleton heard of this proposed revision and its shift in setting? Could their anticipation of such a project have anything to do with the prominent placement of a London institution, Bedlam, in an Italianate setting? A comparison of Jonson's quarto/Italianate version of 1601 to his folio/London version (of questionable dating) offers some textual hints that might help begin answering these questions.

For example, the quarto version has Thorello telling his brother to "have patience"(1.4.65). "After" Dekker's *Candido* and that character's emphasis on patience, Jonson omits the word from Kitely in the folio: "Nay, good, brother, let it not trouble you, thus"(2.1.81). Jonson describes Thorello's "gulling" as "trecherie" (3.1.15) in the quarto, but the gallants' "trecherie" becomes their "subtiltie" in the folio (3.3.15). A case,

perhaps, of Jonson constantly rearticulating and valorizing the gallants' activity. In Thorello's well known speech on jealousy, the citizen claims to "want the free election of the soule" (1.4.210), but Kitley claims "to want the mindes erection" (2.1.230) -- a small, but significant change this and one that recalls Altman's argument about "flawed inventio." Jonson seems to want to distinguish between Thorello/Kitley's "erected wit" and the character's "free election of the soul," the latter suggesting a spiritual failing while the former suggests a more intellectual one. Is this a case of Jonson responding to citizen criticism? The term "erected wit," Alan Sinfield has argued, has profound implications: "it is a precise epitome of the struggle over God and Man at the center of Puritan humanism" (204-5). That man possessed an "erected wit" contradicted Puritan beliefs about man's fallen nature; an erected wit, however, was central to the humanist project. In suggesting Kitley lacks an erected wit, Jonson at once capitulates to the specific demands of citizen audience and their complaints about presumption while offering a cutting remark on intellectual capacity. It seems a strong possibility that Jonson's anglicized version of *Every Man In* was produced in 1605 and related to *The Honest Whore*.

The trajectory of Bethlem's history is more clear. In struggling with the social and economic changes of London and their relationship to those changes, Dekker and Jonson participated in a conflict which simultaneously displayed and participated in paradoxical cultural pressures that made it possible for a medieval, monastic charity to lose prestige but retain enough cultural significance eventually to become an institution for "new" London. I have used the metaphor of a "catapult" throughout in that it expresses well, I think, the often uneven cultural processes of conflict, recoil, and violent forward motion that yanks Bethlem into the modern world.

It seems, too, that if these processes are as powerful and prevalent as I am suggesting, and if Bedlam is as central to them as I am suggesting, that more plays would have "represented" Bedlam as Dekker and Middleton did. Yet, representations of Bedlam

like Dekker and Middleton's are scarce, particularly in this time period when charity is shifting. In the next chapter, I will consider this "absence" of Bedlam, but close here where I began these chapters on the poets' war: with a few preliminary answers. *The Honest Whore* is filled with scenes of group madness, scenes one might expect to see if one walked into the hospital. But drama, as we saw in the "amplification" of Bedlam's size, does not simply reflect reality; it does not simply paint a dramatic picture of the world. At its most powerful, drama or art reworks reality, takes up various pictures of the real world, reshapes them into something new. In this process, "great" drama does something to reality or displays something about reality that we might not otherwise see in simpler representations or pictures. Or in reality itself for that matter.

What if, then, there was a drama in the same year more powerful than *The Honest Whore* that took up the reality of Bedlam as part of its subject matter and did something more than simply amplify its size? If we can assume for the moment that *The Honest Whore* is no one's idea of great drama, what would a great drama "about" or "representing" or "registering" Bedlam and charity look like? Would we, for example, see scenes of group madness, rather simple (if amplified) reflections, or would we see something more powerfully refracted? In 1605, Shakespeare's *King Lear* is performed. In the quarto version of that play (1608), a "mock trial" scene takes place (3.6) which, at least one critic has pointed out (Warren 45-57), always threatens to degenerate into a wild and incoherent scene of group madness in performance. The scene, in other words, looks something very much like *The Honest Whore's* scenes of Bedlam. In the folio version (1623), in a fairly famous piece of editing, that scene of group madness has been cut, presumably to enhance the artful coherence of the play. The next chapter considers how or whether this play, coterminous with *The Honest Whore*, also draws on Bedlam -- recently dislodged from its traditional position from the culture and appropriated by the stage -- for dramatic purposes only to ultimately and artfully distance itself from the famous charity.

Notes

1. Most of the historical material in this section draws on Allderidge's "Management and Mismanagement."
2. In his psychoanalytic reading, Riggs attributes Jonson's habitual representation of cuckold or jealous citizens to his "peculiar relish [for] sleeping with other men's wives" -- itself a function of his repressed anger (44).
3. I will elaborate on the matter of "demystification" shortly and briefly note here that Dekker's strategy differs interestingly from Marston's in that Marston generally "represents" Jonson, rather than his characters, on stage.
4. For a brief discussion of the distinctions between Dekker and Jonson's rhetoric in depicting these characters see Barish, 90-141.
5. Jonson and Marston collaborate on *Eastward Ho*. See R.W. Van Fossen's "Revels" edition of the play. He notes, too, that in 1604 Marston dedicated (without sarcasm) *The Malcontent* to Jonson.
6. Hoy offers an explanation of the historical circumstances in his introduction to *The Magnificent Entertainment*: "Queen Elizabeth I died in the early hours of 24 March 1603, and later that day James VI of Scotland was proclaimed King James I of England. He left Edinburgh for his new capital on 5 April and reached London on 7 May. Plans for his

coronation, scheduled to take place on St. James's day (25 July), began at once, according to Dekker, writing a year later, in March 'after his Majestie was proclaymd'. . . . But the outbreak of plague that began to rage in May had become so severe by early July that a proclamation was issued on 11 July curtailing the coronation ceremonies and decreeing 'that all parts of that solemnity which are not essential to it are forborne, together with his masjest'y solemn entry and passage through the City of London which is put off till the winter'"(2.128).

7. Leinwand has pointed out that Dekker's attempts to fashion a more heroic merchant figure were inhibited by "conventional" arguments against avarice and greed (36).

8. Both Herford & Simpson and Hoy comment on the well known story of Jonson returning a "lousy" coat.

9. See Gabriele Bernhard Jackson's edition of the play for a complete discussion of dating. To my knowledge, no critic has noted this sort of relationship between these two plays. See George Price's *Thomas Dekker* for what is a common remark on *EMIH* and Dekker: "Doubtless under the influence of Jonson's *EMIH* and *EMOH* plays, Dekker, in two plays called *The Honest Whore* tried to combine realistic depictions of London life with his accustomed morality and romance" (60).

Chapter Five

Enforcing and Exchanging Charity: Reconfiguring the Relationship Between the Stage and Bedlam in *King Lear*

In Act Four of Ben Jonson's *Epicœne*, Lady Haughty explains that in order to be accepted into the "College" of fine ladies Epicoene must go with the current members to "Bedlam, to the chinahouses, and to the Exchange"(3.23). I return to Jonson at the start of this chapter because his language frequently has supported the most common understanding of the relationship between Bedlam and the stage: the hospital was some sort of theater, a place of perverse entertainment for Londoners, and the practice of visitation was often depicted in plays.¹ Any reconfiguration requires, at the start, some description of the preceding configuration.

The term reconfiguration should not suggest, however, that the new will overthrow the old here. As the line from Jonson suggests, the hospital *was a theater of sorts*. This historical characterization does not so much need banishment as it does "kind nursery"(*King Lear* 1.1.14).² To take from Jonson the understanding that Bedlam was a theater is not so much to historicize inaccurately as it is to run the risk of historicizing too casually. We can assume, for instance, as many have, that because Jonson categorized visitation as crass recreation, Bethlem's theatrical or spectacular qualities were primarily aligned with the Renaissance stage itself; we can assume, in other words, that people came to see the mad primarily for the same reason they went to the theater. But, as Jonathan

Andrews has pointed out, the practice of visitation at Bedlam

can only be properly understood within the context of Bethlem's evolution as a charity. The hospital's enduring dependency on the good will of its benefactors had rendered public access to Bethlem not just economically expedient, but necessary, while charity had long required ocular proof of sickness and want and long displayed its objects as living exhortations.³

Indeed, a closer look at the practice of visitation shows that the spectacle of Bedlam had distinct cultural ties not so much with the Renaissance stage but with the spectacle that constituted much of early modern charity. The stage's relationship to Bedlam was largely determined by its capacity to appropriate this spectacular aspect of the hospital's charity when the more discreet and bureaucratic form of charity embodied in the 1598 poor laws supplanted Bedlam and other charitable institutions dependent on such display.⁴

Spectacle and display, including visitation, was part of the temporary and, as it turned out, intermediate system of the London hospitals that served the needs of London between the dissolution and the instantiation of the poor laws.⁵ The hospitals, the buildings themselves, stood not just as functional institutions serving the sick and poor, but as emblems and monuments. They represented the good works of their benefactors and their community; Stowe and other chroniclers celebrated their symbolic value.⁶ But, as suggested, this "spectacular" system was to be supplanted by a very different form of charity which came to be known as the English poor laws. As discussed in Chapter One, the 1598 poor laws extracted a poor rate or tax from each citizen, and two overseers of each parish collected and distributed that money to the deserving poor. Rather than display its charity and charitable objects at well known hospitals, an ever - growing London was compelled by necessity and law to turn to this more efficient, discreet, and nationally administered program as its primary means of dispensing charity. Bedlam represented a

very different charitable system than the state's; Bedlam was part of an intermediary and, to a certain extent, oppositional system, itself eventually engulfed by the state.

King Lear participates in this transition between two charitable systems, the intermediate system organized around the hospitals and the long lasting system organized around the poor laws, by appropriating Bedlam's spectacular qualities when the former system was dislodged from the center of the culture by the latter.⁷ Shakespeare was able in *King Lear* to do what Bedlam had done: show madness and its cure to elicit charitable -- using that word in its broadest sense -- feelings. In short, an institutional exchange took place between the state and the stage.⁸ The state was willing to have the spectacular displays of charity and charitable objects seen at Bedlam transferred to the stage because it was engaged in taking control of and reorganizing charitable relations, making charity more discreet and governable by the poor laws; the process, we shall see, involved pointing out how subject the older form of charity was to frauds and counterfeiters, pointing out the theatrical -- and thus inadequate -- nature of this system. The stage, on the other hand, was more than willing to acquire and use this form of display because of its symbolic power.

This borrowing or "exchange" had the concurrent effect of endowing *King Lear* with the sense of tragic pain present at a real early modern charity while theatricalizing that charity and its practices.⁹ Charitable practices were becoming more refined and more subtle, and the drama participated in this "civilizing process" by theatricalizing displays of charity such as madhouse visitation.¹⁰ In the 1598 census of Bedlam, the first government inspection of the hospital in forty years, the patients are listed by proper name: Salvado Mendes, Neme Barker, Elizabeth Androwes, Jone Bromfeild, Henrye Richardes, Elizabeth Dicons, etc. By the 1607 census, however, after Dekker and Middleton first used Bedlam as a stage setting in *The Honest Whore* (1605) and Shakespeare had exploited the relationship between charity and madness in *King Lear*, many patients had acquired more

theatrical monickers: “Black Will, Welsh Harry, Old Madam, Joan of the Hospital, Abraham”(Allderidge, “Management” 152-54).¹¹ By 1609 and *Epicoene*, Jonson is mocking visitation as perverse recreation.

In short, *King Lear* uses the dramatic power of an older form of charity, but, in so doing, is consistent and complicit with the newly dominant logic of the poor laws. This is evident in the play itself. *King Lear* displays many of the tensions which drove the older form of charity to the periphery of the culture and the stage in the first place: in particular, the older charitable system’s susceptibility to fraud and its tendency to disadvantage the shame-faced poor, those deserving of relief but unwilling to beg.¹² Most strikingly, though, in juxtaposing Lear’s fall from power to Edgar’s rise in power, the play registers the passing of the social welfare system of which Bedlam was a part and an acceptance, albeit skeptical, of the state’s new mastery of charitable relations, figured in the character of Edgar (and, to a lesser extent, Albany).

Let me begin by recounting and expanding on some general features of the development of poor relief in early modern Europe that were introduced in Chapter One. Authorities across Europe, across the confessional divide, became increasingly frustrated with a form of spectacle and display that they could not control: the acts and displays of the poor and beggars.¹³ In the widely influential treatise by Juan Luis Vives, *De Subventionem Pauperum* (1526),¹⁴ we see a common antagonism to beggars:

Suppose there is at some church or other high festival drawing great crowds: one has to make one’s way into the building between the two lines of diseases, vomitings, ulcers, or other afflictions disgusting even to speak of . . . Do you think they can all be made of iron that they would not be disturbed, fasting as they are, at the sight? Especially when ulcers of this sort are not only forced upon the eyes, but upon the nose and mouth, and

are almost touched by the hands and bodies of the passersby, so insolent are they begging. (8)

This repugnance to the poor, however, should not suggest a decrease in charitable impulses.¹⁵ Charity in some form, in the words of Michel Mollat, like poverty, “is always with us”(300). Vives’s principal interest, for example, was in modifying charity and controlling, rather than eliminating, the poor, and his treatise informed most major poor relief projects in early modern culture. His antagonism is directed specifically toward the spectacle of the poor, and the manner in which charity was elicited and distributed. In short, one could say Vives and those around him were charitably moved by the sight described above, but not in the way they wanted to be moved and, more importantly perhaps, not by whom they wanted to be moved. One of the ironic challenges facing reformers of poor relief determined to rid the streets of beggars was that it was these very sights which moved people to give. How could a culture elicit charity without this sight or spectacle? The Ypres Scheme for Poor Relief, *Forma Subventionis Pauperum* (1531), the plan that would play a significant role in the development of the English Poor Law, suggested other forms of spectacle, forms that did not involve direct contact with the poor. The “lyvely voyces” of the preacher “hath more efficactice strength and credence than the syghinges and sobbynges of a thousand complaynte of the pore men and dothe more good than the heuy and pytuouse outcryes of the wretched bodyes” (56-57 Salter). Early modern culture was interested in transferring the power to elicit charity away from the poor.¹⁶

As disturbing to authorities as the mere ugliness of the beggars and the potential for social disruption was the fact that such displays or “acting” worked; the poor themselves elicited and, to a certain extent, controlled charity. The anxiety expressed by Vives and others stems from the fact that the poor had such an influence over “one of the main instruments of social organization”(Titmuss 73). The instrument of charity as it existed in early modern Europe -- dependent on displays, visibility, ocular proof -- was too easily

accessed and manipulated.¹⁷ Authorities reduced this access, then, not by urging the public to become less charitable (charity, again, is simply too vital a means of social organization to forego), but by stressing the current system's vulnerability to counterfeiters

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"these counterfayted poore and usysured nedy folke that lyve idely and under the cloke of beggyng they idlyly hyde and shadow sluggardly and al mischef to the great undoinge of the comen welth"(47) -- and its inability to assist the "shame-faced" poor, those unwilling to "act" or beg for relief.¹⁸ This dual "failing" of charity, we shall see later, is displayed in *King Lear*. A more discreet and discriminating form of charity, less subject to uncontrolled forms of display, would reduce the poor or near poor's ability to determine charitable relations and, instead, reward those who did not take advantage of the system's accessibility, those compliant with authorities.

In fact, a desire to preserve social hierarchy partially motivated sixteenth century charitable interest in the shame-faced poor; charitable distributions to the shame-faced poor, who were often persons of at least "citizen rank" who had suffered reverses of fortune, prevented "bringing the ruling classes into disrepute by going on the streets and publicly begging" (Pullan 229). The social category "deserving poor" so prevalent in early modern charitable discourse "was taken from the impoverished social elite"(Geremak 24). Rather than allow the poor, counterfeit or otherwise, significant control over charitable relations, Vives suggested that officials collect "alms" from citizens and distribute relief, while removing the poor from the streets, ensuring both that charity would be given and that the spectacle would end. The poor or near poor were not unaware that they were losing what little power over charity they had. More discreet programs of the mid sixteenth century designed to help the shamefaced poor and undermine the spectacle of begging could provoke "furious resentment" of regular beggars, "whose trade it undermined and to whom it refused alms"(Pullan 267).

As suggested in Chapter One, England did not have the capacity to implement such poor relief until 1598. In the interim, London created the Royal Hospitals. The proposals of Vives and others came into effect in 1598 in part because the hospitals did not solve the problems of spectacular charity Vives and others attacked. In many respects, the hospital system perpetuated those problems. The poor filled the streets of London in increasing numbers (Archer 161). Moreover, the hospitals failed to help the shame-faced poor of the parish. Rather than decrease the spectacle of charity, the hospitals became places of display, monuments themselves. And, in at least one pertinent instance, the hospitals spawned a very particular kind of counterfeiter: the bedlam-beggar. Michel Mollat describes the collapse of hospital - based systems in poor relief across Europe:

the traditional charitable institutions failed to achieve their goals or achieved them only partially. All suffered from economic difficulties. Many were ill adapted to the new forms of poverty. *Created mainly to serve the abject and the disabled, these institutions failed to recognize the existence of the working poor and were overwhelmed by the growing numbers of vagabonds and other social outcasts.* Some were corrupted in their purposes. Renewal, reform and new leadership were needed. (271)

The hospital system, then, was an intermediary one, retaining many of the characteristics of the more spectacular kind of medieval charity.¹⁹ And the 1598 poor laws took its place.

After 1598, the state was fully engaged in enforcing its new system of charity and poor relief, driving an older form of charity to the periphery of the culture. *King Lear* played a part in this effort. As Judith Kronefeld has argued

King Lear clearly relates to the outpouring of homiletic literature that came at a time when there was both an increase in poverty and/or salience of the poor, and an increase in governmental response to poverty. (789)

She argues, correctly I believe, that the language of the play

belongs to the traditional and authoritative, not to say authoritarian, discourse of charity, as controlled and orchestrated by Elizabethan and Jacobean legislators and administrators -- city and town alderman, JPs, churchwardens and overseers of the poor -- and by Anglican and Puritan ministers.

Kronenfeld, however, treats "charity" as a discursive monolith. She does not acknowledge that while there was a dominant discourse, displaying and supporting the logic of the poor laws, this discourse was a response to an older understanding of charity and still, in a sense, competed with that older understanding. Local authorities, for example, were "rather hesitant" in their support of poor laws (Archer 244). Hence the need for the "outpouring" of homiletic literature Kronenfeld describes. And *King Lear* does not just "relate" to this effort; specifically, it draws on the spectacular qualities of the older form of charity recently made ripe for "symbolic acquisition." In particular, it draws on Bethlem, and in so doing helps transfer much of that institution's power to elicit charity to where authorities enforcing the poor laws wanted it, the periphery of the culture: to be more precise, the stage.

The dramatic transfer takes place so expertly, so painfully and profoundly, that we may easily deny that a transfer took place at all. The grandeur of the play seems to place it above or outside the history and culture which produced it. But we can not deny an obvious and important cultural connection. *King Lear* and Bedlam did the same thing: showed madness and its cure to elicit a charitable response. The play throughout calls attention to the pitiful sight of the mad Lear. In Act Four, he is a "side-piercing sight"(6.85). Later he is referred to as "A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,/ Past speaking of in a King" (4.6.192-3). Such pitiful sights and spectacles worked. So much so, that it almost seems paradoxical that a play which demonstrates over and over again the inadequacy and falsehood of open displays of love, pain, and begging -- Goneril and

Regan's declaration of love in Act One, Edmond's false injury, Edgar's disguise -- ultimately relies on one for its undeniably successful dramatic effect. But the seeming paradox dissolves upon acknowledging that the spectacular charity of which sixteenth and early seventeenth century Bethlem was a part also worked -- it elicited charitable feelings -- but it had distinct flaws, flaws which correspond to the tragedy of *King Lear* and its bleak ending. It could not effectively solve the problems of poor relief, it could not distinguish between the deserving and the undeserving, it bred counterfeiters, and it was in the process of being supplanted by an as yet untried system.

The extent to which Shakespeare intended to elicit such charity and pity seems barely relevant, given the overwhelming critical response to the play. But a brief consideration of his primary source, the anonymous *True Chronicle Historie of King Lear*, suggests the possibility and provides an introductory "insight into the half-hidden cultural transactions through which great works of art are empowered" (Greenblatt, *Negotiations* 4).²⁰ The *True Chronicle Historie of King Leir*, John Murphy tells us, was deeply involved in the polemics of Reformation, including disputes over charity. For example, Perillus, a figure loyal to the King much like Kent, reminds Leir late in the play of the Protestant dictum that true charity depends on faith, not deeds:

Leir. Oh, how can I perswade my selfe of that,
 Since the other two are quite devoyd of love;
 To whom I was so kind, as that my gifts,
 Might make them love me, if'twere nothing else?
Per. No worldly gifts, but grace from God on hye,
 Doth nourish vertue and true charity.
 Remember well what words Cordella spake,
 What time you askt her, how she lov'd your Grace,
 She sayd, her love unto you was as much,

As ought a child to beare unto her father. (1768-77)

The play as a whole exhorts charity of all kinds. Cordella, Leir's youngest daughter, continuously appeals for all to live in "perfit charity" (1091); Perillus offers his own flesh to feed the starving Leir (2120-2130); Leir hopes that "kind pity" will "mollify the hearts" of those who see him in such "great extreames"(2172). Leir, unlike Lear, does not go mad; he only comes close to starvation. That Shakespeare might seize on a source like this at a time after the plague had closed the theatres and charity was of great concern is no surprise. That one of the major changes he would make in the play is the creation of Lear's madness and Edgar's Bedlam-beggar is of particular interest to us. Of the many scenes constructed in the older play to elicit charity, the principal one is Cordella's feeding of a starving Leir and Perillus (2160-2180). The scene marks the reconciliation of the King and the daughter he has disowned. In *King Lear*, that charitable gesture is refigured as Cordelia's efforts to cure Lear's madness.²¹ In reworking his source, Shakespeare draws on the theatrical displays associated with Bedlam to move his audience in a novel way. One could speculate that he substituted curing the mad for feeding the hungry, one scene constructed to elicit charity for another.

The first allusion to Bedlam in the play shows quite clearly the dramatic effect Bedlamites could have on viewers and how easily such an effect could be appropriated. In Act One, Edmond assigns for himself the role of "villainous melancholy"(1.2.122). He will usurp the inheritance of legitimate Edgar and his character will use "a sigh like them of Bedlam" to initiate his plan. When Edgar approaches, Edmond lures him in by sighing: "O these eclipses do portend these divisions"(1.2.14). The sigh elicits a concerned question from Edgar: "How now, brother Edmond, what serious contemplation are you in?" The sound of the Bedlam is as available to Edmond as a means of soliciting a "charitable" reponse as the disguise of the Bedlam-beggar is available later to Edgar. In fact, we can identify the sighs of Bedlamites as the initial dramatic source of both Edmond and Edgar's

performance. Edgar's part in the plot involves no more really than realizing that he has been duped and mastering the trick used against him.

Edmond and Edgar perform as they do, it is important to note early, because in drawing on the spectacle of Bedlam, Shakespeare created a dramatic world very much like the poor relief system of which Bedlam was a part, one which demands open and dramatic displays as a means of separating the deserving from the undeserving, the legitimate from the illegitimate, and consequently allows for a substantial amount of deception and manipulation of charitable feelings. The play begins with King Lear demanding a demonstration of love so that his "largest bounty may extend/ Where merit doth most challenge it"(1.1.45-46). Those unwilling or unable to perform, like Cordelia and Kent, initially fare far worse than those like Goneril and Regan, or Edmond who is willing to "study deserving"(1.1.30). Edgar's later success depends on his quick realization that a world insistent on demonstration and display necessitates such performances to "enforce" charity.

While I may 'scape
 I will preserve myself, and am bethought
 To take the basest and most poorest shape
 That ever penury in contempt of man
 Brought near to beast. My face I'll grime with filth,
 Blanket my loins, elf all my hair with knots,
 And with presented nakedness outface
 The wind and persecution of the sky.
 The country gives me proof and precedent
 Of Bedlam beggars who with roaring voices
 Strike in their numbed and mortified bare arms
 Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary,

And with this horrible object from low service,
 Poor pelting villages, sheepcotes and mills
 Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers
 Enforce their charity. 'Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!' (2.3.5-20)

As William C. Carroll has pointed out, "for most of Shakespeare's audience, Tom o' Bedlam would not have been a figure to pity, but one to flee" (431). He was, in short, exactly the type of figure the poor laws were designed to eliminate. Many have been led to ask why Shakespeare would appropriate for Edgar, a character both play and audience are generally sympathetic towards, the role of a "documented fraud"? However, once we recall that in drawing on the older form of spectacular charity for its dramatic effect the play is consistent and complicit with the logic of the poor laws driving that older form of charity to the stage, we find an answer. In appropriating the role of Poor Tom for Edgar, the play does not so much elicit sympathy for bedlam-beggars as it does elicit sympathy for a character sophisticated enough to master the disguises and tricks of such figures.

And Edgar's ability to assume the role displays an important distinction between the authority figure at the beginning of the play and the authority figure at the end. While Lear operates in and facilitates a charitable system dependent on display, he seems to have taken too little care of how it works in practice. Early on, he unknowingly critiques the system he himself has perpetuated. When Regan tells Lear to ask for Goneril's forgiveness, Lear half mockingly, half pathetically, responds by feigning to beg:

Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
 Age is unnecessary. On my knees I beg
 That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food. (2.4.124-127)

These are, Regan tells him, like the acts and displays of all beggars, "unsightly tricks"; these are the tricks Edgar did not mock, but began to master, in the preceding scene. Edgar, the young, eventually obtains that which Lear, the old, could not and, not

coincidentally, that which the founders and enforcers of the poor law would have the culture believe they had obtained: a compassionate mastery of charitable relations. In Act Four, Edgar describes himself as

A most poor man made lame by fortune's blows,
Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. (209-213)

If Edgar's contrived biography of Poor Tom, highlighting the "beggar's" lustful and lazy ways (3.4.75-85), is any indication, Edgar simultaneously embodies an empathetic understanding of conditions which drove one to such a situation and the increasing disgust a culture had for beggars that manifested itself in the poor laws. Only when Edgar "separates" himself from Poor Tom does the bedlam-beggar become a "fiend" (4.6.72). In some ways, Edgar is the quintessential "shame-faced" pauper that authorities across Europe were so concerned to prop up. Brought low by a reversal of fortunes, Edgar discreetly uses charity not only to regain his social position, but to improve it and he masters a figure, the professional beggar, that was often the shame-faced poor's chief competition for resources.

Edgar, like Shakespeare, chooses the role of Bedlam-beggar not to endorse the behavior of such figures, but because their actions worked. They elicited charity, and Edgar needs and wants that power. So, we should recall, did the state. Interestingly, the play points to the social power implicit in the mastery of charitable relations by linking Edgar's assumed role to one of the most striking moments of insubordination in all of Shakespeare. When a servant rises up to challenge Gloucester's blinding -- "A peasant stand up thus!"(3.7.77) -- other servants join forces with the bedlam-beggar in assisting Gloucester and manifest a distinct awareness of the power held by such a person:

get the bedlam

To lead him where he would. His roguish madness

Allows itself to anything. (3.7.100-102)

The real Bedlam-beggars had discovered a means, albeit limited, to control their own social relations. That is, they drew on Bethlem's place in the culture as a legitimate charity to gain some form of acceptance and power. In turn, the state took this power from the beggars by implementing the poor laws. That is, the state took power away from the beggars by supplanting institutions like Bethlem with an institution less accessible to manipulation, less susceptible to fraud. Shakespeare's participation in this process can be marked fairly easily by observing that he uses Bethlem's theatrical qualities on the stage and thus trivializes that institution's ability to elicit charity. In transferring Bethlem to the stage, Shakespeare participated in the gradual diminution of the institution's place in the culture.

Complicity with the poor laws is more subtly registered, however, in the juxtaposition of Lear's fall and Edgar's upward mobility. At the end of the play, Edgar has noticeably collected all the power by collecting all the charity. Margreta de Grazia notes that Edgar, as Poor Tom, is the recipient of Lear's kindness in the hovel and Gloucester's "handout" in Act Four. She has observed how "All the superflux comes Edgar's way as if by fatal attraction"(31). In that Justices of the Peace supervised and enforced the poor laws, Poor Tom's assigned role as JP in Lear's mock trial prefigures the latent power Edgar has over charity (3.6.17). Operating in a discreet, calculated, yet compassionate, fashion, Edgar supplants the dramatic Lear who is, in contrast, rash and insistent on display; Edgar supplants Lear as the poor laws supplanted Bethlem.

That Edgar's rise in power parallels Lear's fall and that such a shift registers a transition from an older social system to an emerging social system has often been observed. John Danby articulates a standard response to the play:

On the one hand are those who accept the old order (Lear, Gloucester, Kent, Albany) which has to be seen as, broadly speaking, the feudal order;

on the other hand are the new people, the individualists (Goneril, Regan, Edmund, Cornwall) who have the characteristic outlook of the bourgeoisie.²²

We can identify the historical transition registered in the play with greater specificity, however, once we focus on the central issues of the play -- charity and madness -- and read them alongside the changes in poor relief taking place. The new system of poor relief, for example, while widely supported, did meet with resistance: "There had been many forces ranged against this [poor law] development. Traditional ideals of neighbourly charity, even to strangers, and the tenacious social and religious ritual of almsgiving, without regard to its practical consequences, impeded change" (Slack 129). The new poor laws were often considered cruel and occasionally became part of religious disputes over charity. Catholics charged that the Protestant emphasis on faith devalued good works and that such discriminating charity was unchristian; Protestants countered that they were no less compassionate, but more discerning, and pointed out that the older (and more Catholic) form of charity was harmful in that it rewarded the wrong people for the wrong behavior.²³ Anglican polemicists and advocates for the poor law dominated the debate, insisting that the new system was both compassionate and discerning.²⁴

Like much of the dominant discourse of the Anglican church and the state, the play seems to try to strike a balance between the perceived callousness of the new system of poor relief and the perceived ineffectiveness of an older, but well intentioned system. The play finds that balance, somewhat uneasily, in Edgar, and to a lesser extent, in Albany. A balance is found by tempering the perceived extremes of two camps depicted in the play.²⁵ Edgar represents the older system, initially duped by a "Bedlam trick," growing more sophisticated and discerning in its charity; Albany, initially aligned with Goneril, Regan, and Edmond, represents the newer system tempering its more modern social policy with

compassion. Goneril, like the growing protestant bourgeoisie responding to challenges to their charity, critiques Albany's "harmful mildness," his misguided and undiscerning charity.

This milky gentleness and course of yours
 Though I dislike not, yet under pardon
 Y'are much more a-taxed for want of wisdom
 Than praised for harmful mildness. (1.4.318-21)

Goneril's speech resembles very much the language used to chastise older charity. Albany is rebuked again in Act Four:

Milk-livered man
 That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
 Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
 Thine honour from their suffering; that not know'st
 Fools do those villains pity who are punished
 Ere they have done their mischief. (4.2.48-53)

The notorious inconclusiveness of the play's ending corresponds to the fact that the system of the poor laws was in its infancy, still contested. That Edgar, the principal figuration for the newly dominant system, ends the play as a chivalric knight from a romance is fitting for a culture still very much imagining a new form of charity. There is a great deal of ideological irony, too, in Edgar's transformation from beggar to knight. As a Bedlam-beggar, Edgar "enforces" charity, but after defeating Edmond he "exchanges" charity (5.3.160). The gentler term masks his violent means and his rise in power.²⁶ Similarly, the state had seized control over charity and was allowing its subjects to "exchange" charity under the guidelines of the poor rates. It was the Bedlam-beggars, the state and the play would have us believe, that were "enforcing" something which by rights should be freely given or exchanged, eliding the state's own control over charitable

relations and exaggerating (and literally “demonizing”) the influence such beggar/actors exerted. By the end, Edgar even has the previously disenfranchised and embittered Edmond thinking charitably: “Some good I mean to do,/ Despite of my own nature”(5.3.236).

While much has been made of Lear’s growing sympathy toward the poor, his charitable understanding and power remains, in comparison to Edgar’s, feeble throughout. His conception of relationships depends almost totally on exchange -- open exchange. Even his conception of familial love very much involves the services one member of a family renders another. Cordelia’s response hurts him not only because he “loved her most” but because he “thought to set [his] rest/ On her kind nursery”(1.1.113-14). Lear continually reminds his daughters of the gifts he has given. Even while holding Cordelia’s dead body, Lear remind her and everyone, “I killed the slave that was a-hanging thee” (5.3.2267). Cordelia remarks that she lacks a “still-soliciting eye” -- an ability to beg favours -- and this “Hath lost [her] in [Lear’s] liking”(1.1.220). We note, too, that in disowning the deserving Cordelia, he cuts her off from charity.

The barbarous Scythian,

Or he that makes his generation messes

To gorge his appetite, shall be as wed

Neighbour'd, pitied and relieved as thou. (1.1.106-110)

The rather distinct boundaries we have for charitable practices -- service to others, helping the poor, love for God and family -- are all blurred here.

The King’s inability to extract a show of love from his daughter reveals the larger problems of a poor relief system dependent on display. Those unwilling to act or beg openly suffer. Indeed, when Regan tells us that France has received Cordelia at “fortune’s alms”(1.1.249), we are alerted explicitly that a charitable exchange is underway. The love Cordelia receives from France when disowned by Lear very much resembles the love

shown the “shame-faced” poor. His attraction grows when she becomes poor:

Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich being poor . . .

‘Tis strange that from their cold’st neglect

My love should kindle to inflamed respect. (1.1.239-244)

‘Tis strange, though, only if one believes like France that “Love is not love/ When it is mingled with respects that stands/ Aloof from the entire point”(1.1.228-30). Love and charity are never freely given, never absolute; they are always “compromised, impure, contingent.”²⁷ They are always structured by cultural and social pressures. And the culture of which *King Lear* is a part was intensely concerned with loving the shame-faced poor and ensuring their charity. The subtle emotional appeal to the “shame-faced” poor is easily missed, even when Cordelia, the beneficiary of such culturally directed love in Act One, makes a more explicit appeal:

Had you not been their father, these white flakes

Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face

To be exposed against the warring winds,

To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder

. . . and was thou fain, poor father,

To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn

In short and musty straw?(4.7.29-38)

Cordelia can only appeal on behalf of the shame-faced poor; Edgar acts.

More discreet charitable judgments are simply beyond Lear. He struggles to distinguish the truly deserving from the undeserving, the firm from the infirm. He does not know how to judge Cornwall’s behavior when the Duke does not greet him immediately:

Tell the hot Duke that Lear --

No, but not yet; maybe he is not well.

Infirmity doth still neglect all office
 Whereto our health is bound. We are not ourselves
 When nature, being oppressed, commands the mind
 To suffer with the body. I'll forbear
 And am fallen out with my more headier will,
 To take the indisposed and sickly fit
 For the sound man. -- Death on my state. (2.4.79-87)

Lear interrupts himself, as he does in the more famous speech on “true need,” increasingly unable to judge correctly. His cry “Death on my state” prophesizes the passing of his ways. The older world of Lear and Gloucester was too vulnerable to deceit and fraud, negligent of those suffering quietly, and growing progressively unsure of its own judgment. It was, like Lear, unable to articulate persuasively an understanding of the increasingly complex needs of the poor or near poor who did not display the conventional trappings of an abject beggar:

O reason not the need! Our basest beggars
 Are in the poorest thing superfluous.
 Allow not nature more than nature needs,
 Man's life is cheap as beasts: Thou art a lady;
 If only to go warm were gorgeous,
 Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wearest,
 Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But for true need --
 (2.4.234-41)

Defining “true need” was a challenge all of Europe faced; it was not simply an inability to empathize on the part of Lear. By the time Lear finally comes to feel the paucity of his generation's understanding, the disenfranchised King can only cry out

Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,

That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
 How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
 Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
 From seasons such as these? O! I have ta'en
 Too little care of this. Take physic, Pomp;
 Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
 That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
 And show the Heavens more just. (3.4.28-36)

This histrionic exhortation -- while moving -- is not only a far cry from Edgar's gradual acquisition of charitable understanding and power, but some distance from the measured, calculated control the state had imposed on English charity and poor relief. As Raman Selden writes, "Lear's self-identification with the outcast poor is different from Edgar's; there is ultimately no detachment or strategy in his passionate recognition of man's injustice"(157). Immediately after Lear's famous exhortation he comes face to face with one of the problems undercutting such displays: they are subject to fraud. Edgar appears as Poor Tom shouting, "Do Poor Tom some charity"(3.4.52).

Gloucester, too, realizes belatedly the failings of his world and, like Lear, can only cry out pathetically:

Heavens, deal so still!
 Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
 That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
 Because he does not feel, feel your power quickly;
 And each man have enough. (4.1.66-71)

Greenblatt has pointed out how plays often call attention to "alternative theatrical practices"(15). Lear and Gloucester's social status in the play may occlude that fact that in these famous lines exhorting charity, as in Edgar's disguise as Poor Tom, characters draw

on the theatrical practices of beggars and others requesting alms, practices the state was happy to have transported to the stage.²⁸ One suspects, too, that such exhortations were not unlike the written advertisements Bedlam and other hospitals used to request money or the cries of the hospital's "proctors" sent round London with collecting boxes.²⁹

Perhaps no incident so powerfully demonstrates the play's attempt to strike a balance between the failure of spectacular charity and the perceived potential for cruelty in the poor laws better than the blinding of Gloucester. Gloucester is blinded for his charity toward Lear which, in an attempt to appease the new potentially harsher and more discriminating order, he had ironically and unsuccessfully tried to conceal: "Go you and maintain talk with the Duke, that my charity be not of him perceived" (3.3.13-15). Despite his efforts at discretion, Gloucester, like Lear, does not have the ability to master the subtleties of the new charity. Importantly, neither do most members of the new generation. Gloucester and Lear may appear ineffective, pathetic, or "unsightly" in their efforts to give and receive charity, but, for Shakespeare it would seem, the refinement and reform of these practices has the potential to produce more evil than mere clumsiness in those of an older generation. Discriminating charity could mask or produce cruelty. Those blinding Gloucester do so with a sense of righteousness and belief in the value of withholding undeserved charity. When Gloucester cries out for Edmund's help, Regan describes Edmond as "too good to pity" Gloucester (3.7.87). In contrast, Albany is a "moral fool"(4.2.55) for his undiscerning good will. Cornwall and Regan are very much aware of the power of sight to arouse pity and, like many programs for poor relief, want to curb this, but their efforts are horrific and extreme: "It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,/ To let him live; where he arrives he moves/ All hearts against us" (4.5.9-11). To put it another way, the daughters' failure to understand Lear's "true need" is, in a sense, not that different from Lear's own inability to articulate it; both young and old struggle to make charitable judgments. But the failings of the young look decidedly more

cruel.³⁰ Lear and Gloucester both are “more sinned against than sinning.”

Only in Edgar does the play find a balance between the undiscerning compassion of the old and the overly harsh judgment of the new. Only he successfully enforces and exchanges charity. As he positions Gloucester at the imaginary cliff, Edgar says in an aside, “why I do trifle thus with his despair/ Is done to cure it” (4.6.34-35). Many have noted how unnecessary such a trick is, in that it seems all Edgar need do is reveal his identity and forgive Gloucester. But Edgar’s actions are informed by cultural pressures at work in the play and are consistent with his gradual acquisition of charitable knowledge and power. If Edgar’s trick is cruel, it is so only to the extent that the emerging control over charity manifested in the poor laws had the potential for cruelty.³¹ Like Goneril and Cornwall, Edgar values controlled, discriminating, discreet, and purposeful charity, but unlike others of his generation, his charity is tempered by compassion. In kind, Edgar balances the compassion and “feeling” of Gloucester and Lear with sound judgment and skill. When Gloucester finally gives, he gives blindly and, importantly, it is Edgar who elicits and collects the money (4.1.64; 4.6.28) (de Grazia 30-31).

Edgar masters the system of display that Lear not only facilitates but embodies, the charitable system of Bedlam. In Act Three Lear is confronted by Edgar who is disguised as a Bedlam-beggar. As has often been noted, the confrontation propels Lear into madness. On seeing the nearly naked Edgar, Lear imitates him: “Off, off, you lendings, come on”(3.4.97). The mimetic and cultural link between King Lear and the notorious hospital is never more clear. Lear imitates Edgar who imitates the Bedlam-beggars who imitate Bedlamites. Each actor or imitator in the link (one could add Edmond and his use of the Bedlam sigh) draws on Bedlam’s ability to elicit charity or sympathy. The wheel has come full circle, one might say, in taking a legitimate place of charity and “placing” it on stage in the figure of Lear suffering in his hovel.³² Such is the skill of the playwright

that in experiencing the dramatic pain generated by the juxtaposition between Edgar's feigned madness and Lear's "real" madness we barely notice that Lear is an actor, too.³³ Bethlem's legitimacy as a real place of charity and suffering in the culture has been expertly transferred to the stage. Lear's "real" suffering threatens to drive Edgar out of his disguise: "My tears begin to take his part so much/ They'll mar my counterfeiting"(3.6.95). Edgar is at once the actor and the state, performing as one, sympathizing with and using the very real dramatic power of an older institution at the same moment it usurps that power. If, as Margreta de Grazia suggests, we read Poor Tom/Edgar as snatching up the "superfluous" clothes Lear has tossed off -- receiving his first "gift" on the way to accumulating power -- we can literally see the passing of one charitable system to another (31).

King Lear is often said to be unique in the pity it evokes and in the bleakness of its vision. Both the pity and bleakness are the result of two institutions, charitable Bethlem and the stage, coming into such close contact with each other. Bethlem was losing much of its identity as a legitimate local, London, Protestant charity in the face of the state's increasing control over poor relief. It had degenerated and it had been theatricalized. Nevertheless, we will see in the next chapter on Thomas Middleton's *The Changeling* that Bethlem, at least for a Protestant puritan playwright responding to the actions of a pro-Catholic King, had not lost all of its symbolic status.

Notes

1. See in particular Reed (23). Jonson's *Epicoene* is frequently used as evidence. Fredson Bowers, in his edition of Dekker and Middleton's *The Honest Whore* (1605), five years earlier than *Epicoene*, cites Jonson. See MacDonald(4); and Mullaney who, in discussing the tendency to call Bedlam a theater, writes "the theatrical metaphor is hardly inappropriate, if it can be called a metaphor at all" (71-72). Most recently, William C. Carroll, in *Fat King Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* has written that "The 'Bedlam poor' are thus just another form of popular entertainment, culturally equivalent to various urban curiosities, or to such theatricalized spectacles as bear-baiting or 'stage- plays'"(100).

2. Rene Weis's *King Lear: A Parallel Text Edition* is used throughout and quotations, unless otherwise indicated, come from the quarto (1608) version. It will become clear that I see the play, at least the quarto version, as emerging from a very specific cultural and historical moment. Differences between the two texts that are relevant to my argument are generally discussed in notes.

3. "A History of Bethlem Hospital c. 1600-1750", 16. See also Andrews "'Hardly a Hospital, But a Charity For Pauper Lunatics': Therapeutics at Bethlem in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," in *Medicine and Charity Before the Welfare State*, 63-81; and Alderidge. Scholars, as has been suggested throughout, have been reluctant to consider Bedlam a charity. Carroll briefly suggests that "Part of Bedlam's enormous cultural appeal may have derived from its locus as an intersection of both the poor and the mad, two of the most compelling and disturbing marginal social groups of the period"(101).

4. Colin Jones, in *Charity and bienfaisance: the treatment of the poor in the Montpellier region*, has argued that a similar conflict of charities takes place in France during the early eighteenth century. Enlightenment thinkers began to challenge the display and spectacle of large, well known institutions by juxtaposing them to the more practical and modern notion of *bienfaisance*: “Bienfaisance . . . was a rational and methodical activity which sought an appropriate response to suffering as circumstances required, and exuded a reassuring pragmatism. This was thought to contrast with the charity embodied in foundations”(2-3). One can speculate that the Protestant backing of the Poor Laws in England prompted the earlier conflict and transition.

5. For Bethlem, visitation and display was particularly imperative. The land revenues of Bethlem were much smaller than those of any other hospital and thus the famous asylum depended on other sources of income. See Carol Rawcliffe “The Hospitals of Later Medieval London.” Bedlam is part of a system of hospitals, but as Sandra Cavallo, “The Motivations of Benefactors: an overview of approaches to the study of charity” in *Medicine and Charity Before the Welfare State*, writes, “Each institution has in fact a strong individual identity, a life and logic of development all its own, which can only partly be traced to a pattern, common to the category to which it nominally belongs”(48).

6. John Stow, *A Survey of London* (1603). See also Jordan’s discussion of Andrew Willett’s *Synopsis Papismi* (1634), 235.

7. Bedlam, like the lazar houses described by Stephen Mullaney, was a marginal spectacle operating in the Liberties, the cultural space about to be occupied and dominated by the stage:

the popular drama did not move into a blank or neutral field when it occupied the margins of the city. It moved into a province with its own tradition of ambivalent spectacle: a tradition which served, in a sense, to prepare the ground for Elizabethan drama, and which the stage appropriated and adapted to its own dramatic ends (22).

Mullaney's argument reminds us that the exchange I am discussing in this paragraph took place at a time when the stage was struggling against charges of immorality. The stage would be particularly invested, in other words, as it often is today, in demonstrating *its* charity, its willingness to function as an institution for social good. Margreta de Grazia, in "The Ideology of Superfluous Things," in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, reminds us that *King Lear* with its charitable exhortations was performed at court on St. Stephen's Day ("Boxing Day").

8. I refer the reader to the quote from Greenblatt on the dynamics of institutional exchange cited in Chapter One and point out that Greenblatt emphasized the transposition of minor materials -- Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* -- not nearly as central to the play and culture as charity and madness. Carol Thomas Neely points out, in "Documents in Madness": Reading Madness and Gender in Shakespeare's Tragedies and Early Modern Culture," how three recent and important studies by Greenblatt, Jonathan Dollimore, and Stanley Cavell have all underplayed the significance of Lear's madness (322).

9. In an 1811 essay, "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare," Charles Lamb offered what is still a standard response to the "pain" evoked by *King Lear* and notes impressionistically the powerful cultural pressure of charity at work in the play.

So to see Lear acted -- to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night, has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him (7).

In the introduction to *Shakespearian Negotiations*, Greenblatt suggests that every institutional exchange with the stage has a cost, even “symbolic acquisitions”: “No cash payment is made, but . . . something is implicitly or explicitly given in return for it”(10).

10. My discussion of the refinement of charitable practices is consistent with and generally informed by the work of Norbert Elias in *The Civilizing Process*. The suggestion that the “spectacle” of charity disappears is consistent with and generally informed by Michel Foucault’s argument in *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* that punishment becomes less visible or spectacular in the early modern period.

11. This shift corresponds to a difference between the quarto edition (1608) of *King Lear* and the folio (1623). In the quarto’s first reference to Bedlam (1.2.122), Edmond plans to imitate a sigh “like *them* of Bedlam” whereas in the folio edition he plans to imitate a sigh like “Tom o’ Bedlam”(1.1.126). William Carroll, in “‘The Base Shall Top Th’ Legitimate’”: The Bedlam Beggar and the Role of Edgar in *King Lear*,” argues that the revision, if not simply a “compositor’s misreading,” suggests an “attempt to equate Edmund’s assumed voice and Edgar’s enforced role . . . more closely”(428). I would suggest the earlier version indicates a closer proximity to the cultural source on which the play draws. In addition, I should note here again, as I did at the end of the Chapter Four, that, from the perspective of this study, it is no coincidence that *King Lear* appears at roughly the same time as *The Honest Whore*. Both seize on Bedlam, recently dislodged from its traditional position. Dekker and Middleton’s “borrowing” is earlier, but much

more primitive, and the similarities and distinctions between the two plays are discussed toward the end of this chapter.

12. Jonathan Dollimore, in *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology, and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*, has noted similarly how *King Lear* shows that justice is too important to be left to empathy and pity (192). He observes, I think, the more discriminating and “rational” logic of the poor laws at work in the play.

13. Europe’s increasing repulsion to beggars is well documented. See, in particular, Bronislaw Geremek’s *Poverty: A History* on the willingness of beggars to “act”(48).

14. Both Vives and the Ypres Scheme are found in F.R. Salter’s useful collection *Some Early Tracts on Poor Relief*.

15. R. H. Tawney’s influential *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926) promulgated until recently the notion that charity decreased with the Reformation. See A.L. Beier *The Problem of the Poor in Tudor and Early Stuart England* for a concise summary.

16. Historians have noted the utilization of the poor by the elite in “choreographical fashion”(Cavallo 55).

17. Carroll offers an interesting reading of the sixteenth century’s obsessive and inadequate attempts to brand or mark the poor and frauds (*Fat King, Lean Beggar* 39-47). He argues that the authorities exaggerated the accessibility of the system and the acting prowess of beggars: “Rarely has any culture fashioned so wily and powerful an enemy out of such degraded and pathetic materials”(47).

18. On the problem of the shame-faced poor in Europe see in particular Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice*, 221-32, 372. Thomas Browne would later articulate the Anglican church's emphasis on seeing the often easily missed needs of the shame-faced and deserving poor, "true charity is sagacious Acquaint thyself with the Physiognomy of Want, and let the Dead Colours and first lines of necessity suffice to tell thee there is an object for thy bounty" (419).

19. Slack, in *The English Poor Law*, remarks that the hospitals were a reminder that English poor relief developed as part of an older European movement (15).

20. The play, usually dated from the early 1590s, is printed in Geoffrey Bullough's *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. (337-402). See, too, John L. Murphy, *Darkness and Devils: Exorcism and King Lear* .

21. Martin Mueller has traced carefully the influence of Leir on Lear in "From Leir to Lear," and notes that Shakespeare had already used the charitable scene of feeding an old man in the woods in *As You Like It*.

22. Selden cites Danby (145). See, too, de Grazia's excellent summary of studies that have tried to identify the historical shift registered in the play (19-21).

23. See, in particular, Jordan 155 ff. "The English Protestant was throughout our period only thinly separated in time and environment from the ancient church and the monuments of its kind of charity Nor did the Catholic controversialist across the Channel fail to taunt an aggressive but a still new faith with the good works of the ancient church and with

the niggardly charity which should in logic have been the consequence of the Calvinist's repudiation of the Catholic doctrine of works "(229).

24. See Jordan's excellent and comprehensive reading of charitable literature, 77-142, 228-39.

25. That one version of the play, the quarto, has Albany speaking the authoritative last lines and the other version, the folio, assigns them to Edgar, suggests that a difficult balancing act was taking place.

26. de Grazia notes how Edgar's "reentitlement gets lost in the pomp and circumstance of the duel that achieves it"(26).

27. Barbara Hernstein-Smith *Contingencies of Value: Alternative Perspectives for Critical Theory* (1). Interestingly, Hernstein-Smith begins her anti-essentialist argument with this very passage from *King Lear*, pointing out that "evaluation" is not like "love or at least not like love so conceived . . . it is always mingled with regards that stand aloof from the entire point." Even for Hernstein-Smith, to consider love and charity as not pure or fixed is difficult. As Colin Jones writes in *The Charitable Imperative: Hospitals and Nursing in Ancien Regime and Revolutionary France* , "Since the development of welfare states over the last century, it has been common to view charity towards the poor and needy -- voluntaristic, individually motivated, compassionate, freely given -- as essentially opposed or contradictory to the principle of compulsion. The two concepts, however, had an associative rather than autonomous relationship for most of the medieval and early modern period the idea of the charitable imperative lay at the heart of medieval and early modern poor relief"(1).

28. Kronefeld has shown that the language in these famous speeches is “well accounted for by traditional Protestant rank-respecting exhortations to and concepts of charity”(764).

29. See Nicholas Orme and Margaret Webster’s *The English Hospital: 1070-1570* . They also note that some became “hostile to this kind of importuning of the public” (99).

30. In a distinctly related and contemporary play, *Timon of Athens* (1605), Shakespeare displays a similar nostalgia for older -- classical -- forms of gift-giving coupled with an understanding of that system’s failings and a skeptical acceptance of newer forms of exchange.

31. William C. Carroll explains that “much recent commentary has been very critical of Edgar’s actions . . . though there are still strong defenders of Edgar’s essential goodness”(*Fat King, Lean Beggar* 190). I would suggest that this dual response to Edgar is really a result of the charitable contradiction he embodies, a contradiction particularly apparent in the charitable impulse underlying the poor laws. Charity is intended to help or reform, but often, if not always, degenerates into punishment or hurts recipients in some way. Carroll writes, “a charitable impulse does motivate much of the Poor Law legislation, but there was undoubtedly an equally strong motive of social control at work”(36). Mary Douglas writes in the forward to Mauss’s *The Gift* that “Charity is still wounding for him who accepted it, and the whole tendency of our morality is to strive to do away with the unconscious and injurious patronage of the rich almsgiver.” In Edgar, we see this contradiction.

32. We recall that in *The Honest Whore* (1605) Dekker and Middleton are “placing”

Bedlam on the stage at the same time; the difference it seems is that their borrowing (or representation) is considerably less artful and less powerful. Their use of Bedlam and “group madness” seems, in comparison to *King Lear*, quite literal or primitive.

Interestingly, Roger Warren, “The folio omission of the mock trial: Motives and Consequences” in *The Division of the Kingdoms: Shakespeare’s Two Versions of King Lear*, 45-57, points out that, in performance, the “mock trial” of the quarto (3.6.) -- when Shakespeare is drawing most closely on Bedlam -- always threatens to degenerate into a similarly primitive scene of group madness. Warren argues that this potential to degenerate into something less artful prompts the cutting of this scene from the folio.

33. Similarly, the theatricality of Edgar’s “cure” of Gloucester distracts us from considering the theatricality of Cordelia’s cure of Lear. We tend not to see her cure as an “act” at all and experience the temporary relief she brings that much more profoundly.

Chapter Six

The Changeling, The Pilgrim and the Protestant Critique of Catholic Good Works

In Dekker and Middleton's *The Honest Whore* (1605), the Duke knows Bethlem's name and its principal function, but he does not know its location.

Duke: How farre stands Bethlem hence?

Omn: Six or seaven miles. (5.1.97-8)

In Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* (1622) the "castle-captain" Vermandero not only knows the location of Alibius's madhouse -- it is contained inside the well fortified walls of Alicante -- he knows Alibius and commissions the madhouse director's work:

Alibius: We have employment, we have task in hand;

At Noble Vermandero's our castle captain,

There is a nuptial to be solemniz'd,

Beatrice-Joanna his fair daughter bride;

For which the gentleman hath bespake our pain. (3.4.247-50)

In the period between 1605 and 1622, in the time between *The Honest Whore* and *The Changeling*, actual Bethlem's relationship and proximity to state authority had changed as well. Bethlem's status as a local, citizen charity had been largely lost. The 1598 poor laws had supplanted the Royal Hospitals, and by 1622 the Crown had thoroughly seized control of the institution: the hospital had the personal attention of the King of England and, as we shall see, had the King's man within its walls. Robert Reed tells us that King James had "claimed the privilege of legal guardianship of the institution"(51). Moreover, and more interestingly, the King

personally intervened in Bethlem's affairs:

in 1618. . . the king personally engineered the removal of Thomas Jenner from the mastership of Bethlem: three months later, he appointed one of his private court physicians, Dr. Hilkuah Crooke, as Jenner's successor . . .

.(21)

How does one read the events of 1618? How does one read *The Changeling* and its relationship to those events? Certainly the initial temptation exists to see James's intervention in Bethlem affairs through Foucauldian eyes. With the figures of Dr. Crooke, and James, we have, it seems, the active presence and collusion of medical and royal authority. May we not read the beginnings of or hints at the modern absolutist state's medical "personage" and the confinement of madness Foucault described? And, given the recent critical interest in Thomas Middleton's "oppositional" work, may we not see *The Changeling* as displaying oppositional anxiety to the growing absolutism of James's regime by dramatizing the institution Foucault made emblematic of the power of the modern absolutist state -- the psychiatric hospital?

Such is the power and influence of Foucault that it can generate questions like these -- questions which defy and contradict Foucault's own dictum. So nicely do *The Changeling's* scenes of group madness and confinement and Dr. Crooke's dual status as medical official and state authority fit Foucault's paradigm that we forget his own reluctance to construct "narratives of continuity." As Jean Howard writes in a particularly clear (and pertinent here) summary, Foucault

refuses to look for continuities, for precursors of one era in former eras, but by a massive study of the situated discourses of particular disciplines he attempts to let their strangeness, their difference, speak. (19)

To read *The Changeling* and Dr. Crooke and James as we are initially tempted to do, I think, is to read them in historical continuity, as precursors, a move Foucault cautions

against. We assume a linear path, an historical progression which includes small beginnings (the implementation of a court physician) and grand finishes (the massive state run spectacle of Royal Bethlem Hospital in the Restoration), not to mention that we assume a continental analysis works well in a London setting.

This is not to suggest that Foucault's analysis is irrelevant to the events of 1618 and *The Changeling*. It is only to point out the ways in which we are tempted, as was the case in the previous chapter examining *King Lear* and the matter of visitation and Bethlem's spectacle, to assume too much and to historicize too casually. Even though Foucault has shown most powerfully how institutions like Bethlem may play a part in political and social struggles, his work has also obscured the exact nature of Bethlem, its charitable status. And if we are to use his work effectively we must be more precise in detailing what it meant to be a charity in early modern England; otherwise we miss the fits, starts, and stops in history. We miss Bethlem's birth as a specific charitable house, its survival of the dissolution, its emergence as a celebrated local London charity, its degeneration and loss of status with the enactment of the 1598 poor laws, and its eventual usurpation by the state. This is no narrative of continuity.

We misunderstand, too, the drama's relationship to this institution. To take the pertinent example, an uncharitable understanding of the "madhouse"¹ best known to Middleton and his audience has inhibited scholars' attempts to situate *The Changeling* in its social and political context.² Even Margot Heinemann, who established something of a critical consensus in suggesting Middleton's work as a whole belongs in a "clearly discernible line of dramatic production which appeals to and encourages" Parliamentary and City Puritan sympathies, could not convincingly demonstrate that *The Changeling* itself is "oppositional"; and her difficulty stems primarily from an inability to historicize the seemingly bizarre sub-plot (174-80). But once one reconstructs charity's relationship to Bethlem, the play seems much more compatible with Middleton's other work. *The*

Changeling is oppositional -- staunchly Protestant, anti-Catholic, sympathetic with city officials, and antagonistic to the policies of James -- but the nature of that opposition lies in its relationship to charity. Charity's relationship to *The Changeling* also helps explain what is perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the play: "the pathological intensity" of the beautiful Beatrice and ugly Deflores's "violent sexual union" (Morrison 221).

The complex and agonistic efforts to form Protestant charity shape not only Bethlem, but help generate and shape two Jacobean madhouse plays -- Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* and Fletcher's *The Pilgrim*. Unable to deliver the persuasive argument that one could move upwards to God through good works, Protestant theologians struggled to articulate their justification for charity in a form that would still encourage giving. We recall from Chapter One, in fact, in the effort to reestablish faith as the source of works -- or develop a charitable belief system to function as *caritas* had -- Protestants critiqued Catholic charity as often as they argued that works sprang from faith. If the dominant feature of early modern charity across Europe was its attempt to distinguish the deserving from the undeserving poor, we can begin to see in a Protestant culture's ruminations over religious justification one of the odd features specific to English charity. At the time of *The Changeling*, charity in England shared with Europe a focus on the demonstrably unfortunate, such as the mad of Bethlem, but unlike Catholic Europe, England had a complicated, contested, and newly forming religious justification for that focus.

Protestant charitable discourse, in other words, works to reestablish faith as the source for good works by repeatedly exposing the Catholic perversion or potential for perversion in the motivation underlying good works. Under these historical and cultural pressures, much "Protestant" charity could seem "Catholic" in its underlying intention and, occasionally, meet with resistance from the more puritan minded. If, in the process of exhorting charity, an English preacher spoke too much of a relationship between good

works and grace -- either from ignorance, carelessness, economic desperation, or true Catholic sympathies -- someone would respond to the popish language.³ Protestant charity was formed amidst this contested and skeptical discourse. The sin to fear in England, then, was not so much loving or being charitable towards someone for their attractiveness (*cupiditas*) as it was loving the demonstrably unfortunate for sinful, superstitious, and Catholic reasons.

This culture wide struggle over charity partially explains why, in 1618, when James took an unprecedented personal interest in one of London's longstanding charitable institutions by replacing the city appointed keeper of Bethlem, Thomas Jenner, with court physician Hilckiah Crooke, a king widely perceived to be pro-Catholic met with resistance and skepticism from staunchly Protestant city officials.⁴ Patricia Allderidge's account explains that Crooke initiated events by complaining to the king that Thomas Jenner "was not fitted for his office and was inadequate in medical matters." James recommended his personal physician as replacement in July of 1618. In October, a "committee had been set up to consider His Majesty's letter recommending Helkiah Crooke to be master 'under the patronage and oversight of the mayor and citizens of London of the Hospital of Bethlem.'" The language suggests that the City was asserting authority over *its* hospital and testing the limits of its autonomy by only considering the King's recommendation. James's response indicated as much. He commissioned his own committee to investigate "his hospital" and insisted that Crooke "was to have some allowance from the hospital revenues while the investigation was in progress." The conflict did not lessen in the next few years. There is evidence of Crooke rather vociferously defending himself against charges of mismanagement. By 1632, Crooke had been removed by City officials for corrupt practices. After which there was a "marked and immediate increase" in charitable gifts to Bethlem.⁵

On New Year's Day, 1622, five months before *The Changeling* was first performed, and while Crooke was defending himself against the City's charges of corruption, the King's Men perform John Fletcher's *The Pilgrim* at Court.⁶ Rather than display Protestant skepticism about charity, Fletcher's play valorizes works rather indiscriminately or, at the very least, fails to draw the distinction between Protestant and Catholic charity insisted upon by so many puritan minded preachers. And, in his depiction of the madhouse keeper, Fletcher displays a confidence in that character's abilities commensurate with, presumably, the King's confidence in Crooke.⁷ I will demonstrate that, if the exchange between the Court of Alderman and James was a very real struggle between social actors to determine the nature and government of a charity, *The Pilgrim* prompts another similar -- but specifically dramatic -- exchange between Middleton and Fletcher. For, in *The Changeling*, Middleton quite clearly reconceives many of Fletcher's characters (and much of his plot) and demystifies their superficial or Catholic charitable gestures by sexualizing those gestures.⁸ That is, like so much Protestant charitable discourse, Middleton's play responds to a valorization of good works by exposing the Catholic perversion or potential for perversion underlying those works and, in the process, offers a subtle critique of James's intervention in London's charitable affairs and a bitterly satirical look at Catholic charity generally.

Middleton and Fletcher participate in what was a social, religious, and political dispute involving charity and Bethlem by reworking that cultural material into dramatic form. The stage was one forum, as suggested throughout, where the production and negotiation of Protestant charity took place. The reading differs slightly from much New Historical criticism in that it emphasizes, not the uniqueness of drama as cultural practice, its ability to expose cultural tensions and contradictions not readily apparent elsewhere, but the drama's dependence on the anxious rhetoric found in the disputes over Reformation

charity.

Disputes about charity dominate the opening scenes of the infrequently read *Pilgrim*. An overbearing father, Alphonso, prefers that his daughter, Alinda, as renowned for her charity as her beauty, marry Roderigo, a banished nobleman turned “outlaw,” instead of her true love, Pedro, a courtier. Pedro comes to Alinda disguised as a Pilgrim begging alms; she recognizes him only after he leaves. Alphonso worries noticeably about the sin of his daughter’s indiscriminate charity. When Alinda appears on stage dispersing alms to a throng of beggars and pilgrims, Alphonso responds:

She is so full of conscience too, and charity,
 And outward holinesse, she will undoe me:
 Relieves more beggars, then an hospitall;
 And all poor rogues, that can but say their prayers,
 And tune their pipes to Lamentations,
 She thinks she is bound to dance to. (1.1.74)

The precise and subtle argument for discriminating charity that Calvin, Luther, and Protestant preachers struggled to make is here cast in the most negative light. Alphonso advocates discriminating charity not for holy purposes but to protect his own wealth.⁹

Most characters do not share Alphonso’s view of Alinda or her charity. Curio and Seberto, two of Alphonso’s friends, try to convince Alphonso that he is too harsh on a wonderful daughter: “so excellent in all endowments” (1.1.5). Almost everyone except for Alphonso thinks well of Alinda, who, unlike Beatrice, maintains her good reputation. Most of Act One works to demonstrate the holiness and attractiveness of Alinda’s indulgent or indiscriminate charity while mocking those, like Alphonso, who critique her. Alinda’s maidservant, Juletta, echoes Alphonso’s concerns:

Your open handed bounty
 Makes em flock any oure: some worth your pittie,

But others that have made a trade of begging. (1.1.96)

Alinda's response mirrors the rhetoric of Catholic critics of Protestant charity:

Wench, if they ask it truly, I must give it:

It takes away the holy use of charity

To examine wants. (1.1.100)

Alphonso shows a gold piece to a beggar only to take it away in a petty gesture (1.2.70); Seberto finds him "too unreverent" in his charitable obligations (1.2.75). Alinda's Porter, reprimanded for treating beggars cruelly, complains that they lack only ambition (1.2.7-10). In general, the play portrays Alphonso's opinions as wrongheaded and works to mock him and his words. In fact, Alphonso's realization that he has made mistakes plays a significant part in the drama's resolution: "I dare say nothing;/ My tongue's a new tongue Sir, and knowes his tither"(5.6.77-78). Accordingly, when Alphonso offers "Protestant" criticisms of Alinda's "Catholic" charity, we gain some sense of the play's religious perspective.

The play hollows out Protestant puritan rhetoric about charity. Consider Alphonso's version of the doctrine of elect and the Protestant critique of the Catholic tendency to emphasize charitable deeds over faith as a means to salvation. When Seberto reminds Alphonso, on a stage full of beggars and Pilgrims, of his charitable obligations, he responds with characteristic coarseness:

Yes, I warrant ye, If men could sale to heaven in porridge pots

With masts of Beef, and Mutton, what a voyage should I make. (1.2.22-25)

Alinda, on the other hand, should be loved for what Reformed doctrine would have considered her indiscriminate charity: "Tis charity/ Methinks, You are bound to love her for" (1.1.25). She mixes easily and carelessly with the "lousy" beggars and Pilgrims. A Pilgrim explains that so many have come to see Alinda, "a living monument of goodnesse" (1.2.40-49). Alphonso calls this "sainting" of Alinda a new "way of begging"(1.2.47), a

remark which receives criticism (1.2.54).

In Act Two Alinda leaves home in pursuit of Pedro. Both arrive independently at Roderigo's camp. Roderigo, Pedro's sworn enemy, recognizes him and takes him prisoner. Alinda saves his life when, disguised as a boy servant, she persuades Roderigo that to kill Pedro on such unfair terms would be dishonorable. Having escaped Roderigo, both Alinda and Pedro, still separated by circumstance and still in disguise, seek refuge in a madhouse. Pedro and Alinda recognize one another in the madhouse, are again separated, but rely on a series of tricks and feigned madness to evade Alphonso and Roderigo. While pursuing his daughter, Alphonso is hospitalized as the result of a forged letter testifying to his madness. Eventually, all parties reconcile in the mad hospital.

Interestingly, the first scene in the madhouse explores the competence of the madhouse keeper.¹⁰ Two investigators free a mad scholar, believing him sane, but their assessment proves incorrect when, as the master of the house predicts, the scholar quickly turns mad at the mention of a thunderstorm. The challenge to the master's authority and skill, followed by a quick and dramatic confirmation of that authority and skill, could be seen as a gesture of affirmation towards the King's controversial appointee. Fletcher's madhouse, and its competent master, "have few Citizens: they have bedlames of their own . . . / And are mad at their own charges"(4.3.16-18); "madhouses" for the elite, such as the one run by Crooke in his own home, provided better care for their patients and the citizen madhouse, Bethlem, could use the guidance of James and his physician.

In contrast, the master of the madhouse in *The Changeling*, Alibius, requires reformation (5.3.210-16). The play ends with his "change," like Crooke's fate, still to come. To the extent that these two representations of madhouse keepers can be considered topical references, one can take this as evidence that Middleton was offering a distinctly different view of James's interest in the demonstrably unfortunate of Bethlem. Middleton had reason to be suspicious of Fletcher's production given its Spanish source, setting, and

valorization of Catholic doctrinal positions at the time of Charles and Buckingham's "pilgrimage" to Spain.¹¹ Given the City's resistance to Crooke, he certainly had reason to be skeptical of madhouse keepers. But it is by reconceiving the character of Alinda as Beatrice that Middleton most distinctly responds to Fletcher's work and participates in the struggle to form Protestant charity.

In mixing with the lousy beggars and pilgrims, Alinda may seem a marked contrast to Beatrice, also the sheltered daughter of a wealthy man, who cannot bear to look at the ugly Deflores and would rather throw away a glove he has touched than wear it again. Middleton and Rowley, though, would not necessarily have a generous view of a character like the saintly Alinda. To the Protestant citizen, the actions of St. Catherine of Siena, the late fourteenth century mystic who had a predilection for kissing (and drinking the pus from) the cancerous sores of patients, were sinful "charity," a mere superficial and superstitious showing, which the more satirically minded puritan might suggest was akin to lewd forms of sex and carnal lust.¹² Deflores, we note, maintains an interest in Beatrice despite her longstanding repulsion partly because others, "far worse" than him, receive care. "I'll despair the less," he says after one of Beatrice's tirades

Because there's daily precedents of bad faces

Belov'd beyond all reason. (2.1.83-84)

Some women, Deflores remarks, are "odd feeders"(2.2.155), attracted to the ugly, deformed or maimed for no good -- or holy -- reason. Deflores's motivation suggests that, for these playwrights, Catholic charitable relationships with the demonstrably unfortunate (the play is set in Alicante, not London), like Alinda's contact with lousy beggars or James's interest in Bethlem, often mask sinful or perverted intentions on the part of both giver and recipient.

A Protestant audience would note that, in her overtures to Deflores, Beatrice couches her intent to have Piracquo murdered in charitable language and gestures. She

touches his face and and tells him that he was “not wont/ To look so *amorously*” (2.2.74), feigning she has overcome the loathing for his appearance she demonstrated earlier. Then, she offers to treat his boils: “I’ll make water for you shall cleanse this/ Within a fortnight” (2.2.75-95). Deflores asks, “With your hands lady.” To which Beatrice responds, “Yes, mine own, sir; in a work of cure/ I’ll trust no other.” Her offer here mimics the traditional offer of charitable cleansing told in the story of the good Samaritan. Looking at his desire to do the deed, for money she thinks, Beatrice convinces herself that “possible his need/ Is strong upon him. - There’s to encourage thee” she says, handing him money (2.2.129).¹³ Charitable discourse this, complete with distinct charitable gestures, all laced with the cultural anxieties about the perversion or potential for perversion of good works.

Protestant reformers could not deny that Catholics like Alinda did good works, but they argued that the Catholic faith or intention underlying those works undermined the deed. Cranmer explained in the homilies: “For that faith which brings forth . . . evil works, or no good works, is not a right pure, and lively faith, but a dead, devilish, counterfeit, and feigned faith . . .”¹⁴ Feigned or Catholic faith brings forth not good works, he explained in “An Homily or Sermon of Good Works Annexed Unto Faith,” but “*shadows and shows of lively and good things*”(42). The production of “shadows and shows” of charity like Beatrice’s exchange with Deflores is linked in Protestant theology to the “wilfulness” inherent in the Catholic doctrine of good works.

. . . notwithstanding God’s commandment, he gave credit unto the woman seduced . . .and so followed his own will, and left God’s commandment. . .
 . all his succession hath been so blinded through original sin, that they have been ever ready to decline from God and his law, and to invent a new way unto salvation by works of their own device.¹⁵

False works, in other words, implied that one follows his or her own will. Middleton and

Rowley demonstrate Cranmer's promise that wilfulness, like a daughter's refusal to obey her father, can lead to hypocritical and sinful shows of charity.

After Deflores murders Piracquo, he presents himself to Beatrice-Joanna demanding sex and mocking the nature of the relationship she has initiated.

. . . I have eas'd

You of your trouble, think on't; I'm in pain

And must be eas'd of you; 'tis a charity . (3.4.98-100)

"An essential part" of Catholic compassion, Brian Pullan reminds us with considerably more tact than Deflores and distinctly less bias than Middleton, is "physical contact" with the demonstrably unfortunate (*Poverty and Charity* 29). Catholic charity involved a "kind of ascetism which entailed . . . mortification of the senses by immediate proximity to dirt, disease, and stench." Beatrice, in the satiric hands of Middleton and Rowley, becomes literally and with "pathological intensity" the "odd feeder" the playwrights saw in Alinda.

While *The Changeling* opens with Alsemero trying to reconcile his romantic interest in "beauty" or Beatrice, rather than a charitable interest in ugliness, with the "holy purpose," we should not let that obscure the fact that this play exposes at the outset the potential for unholy purposes in love relations.

'Twas in the temple where I first beheld her

And now again the same; what omen yet

Follows of that? None but imaginary;

Why should my hopes or fate be timorous?

The place is holy, so is my intent:

I love her beauties to the holy purpose (1.1.1-7).

In Fletcher, the pilgrims explained more convincingly -- and without the troubling hint of superstition ("what omen yet") -- that they came to see Alinda, not with "prophane eyes,"

but with a “holy purpose”(1.2.40-49). Read in conjunction with Fletcher, Alsemero’s opening lines remind us that at least one of those pilgrims, the disguised Pedro, has something more than a charitable interest in Alinda. From the moment Alsemero struggles with his desire for Beatrice’s beauty, Middleton and Rowley sexualize and thus demystify the “Catholic” love so prominent in *The Pilgrim*, reworking Fletcher’s material to suit a more puritan temperament and skeptical citizen patronage. Pedro identifies himself to Alinda by quoting poetry on a ring which he had presented sometime earlier as a gift (1.2.160-172), thus encouraging her to pursue him and disengage herself completely from her father and her father’s chosen suitor, Roderigo; in a grotesque piece of demystification, Beatrice believes herself free from Vermandero’s choice and able to pursue Alsemero when Deflores presents her with Piracquo’s ring finger still attached (3.4.28).

As suggested earlier, establishing a relationship between the sub plot and the main plot of *The Changeling* has caused much critical consternation, but like the main plot, the sub plot exposes the perversion or the potential for perversion in the holy motivation for charity. Alibius worries that the visitants to the madhouse have less than a charitable interest in his madhouse: Isabella. As suggested in the previous chapter, to the extent visitation to Bethlem took place in the manner Jonson and other satirists suggested, it took place at least under the auspices of charity. The cultural anxiety displayed again is the concern that good works may involve sinful or Catholic motivation.

Everyone on stage accepts -- on sight -- Tony’s rightful place in Alibius’s madhouse, his legitimacy as charitable object: “This sight takes off the labor of my tongue” (1.2.81-87). The audience responds (in the only way they can) by accepting Tony as Alibius and Lollo do: under the auspices of feigned charitable care.¹⁶ As R. V.

Holdsworth has pointed out, the audience does not know Tony feigns idiocy or madness until Act Three Scene Three (270); the true nature of Tony’s “deformity” becomes clear, in short, immediately after the audience watches Deflores kill Piracquo. Having just seen the

product of Beatrice's sinful motivation, an audience watches as yet another charitable relation is shown to be motivated by unholy intentions, a mere shadow or show of true charity.

In sexualizing the charitable relationship throughout, the playwrights heighten the sense that charitable motivation has been perverted. As many critics have argued, the woman's body, her chasteness, is often a site where the culture locates anxiety about various social concerns, concerns about pollutions or invasion. In *The Changeling*, the anxiety or tension about "polluted" charity is located in the female body. Certainly, Isabella's body -- her fidelity and constancy -- stands in stark contrast to Beatrice's inconstancy and wilfulness, and was a site where Protestant culture glorified and constructed the value of companionate marriage. But equally striking in this play, I think, is the dramatic *placement* of that body. Restricted by her husband to the cramped, confined space of the madhouse, Isabella is skeptical of finding anything entertaining or rewarding in the charitable care or viewing of madness. When Lollio offers to show the "pitiful delight" of madmen, she responds, "let me partake, *if* there be such a pleasure." When shown the madmen, she responds, "Alack, alack, 'tis too full of pity/ To be laugh'd at . . . (3.3.20-40). Her charity, like her marital chastity, remains challenged but unperverted.

Isabella exists as a figure in the very restricted space allotted to sinless or holy charity in early Stuart London, crushed between the pressure to act charitably and the counterpressure against charity, urging one not to give indiscriminately or without good motive. She occupies one of the narrow spaces where a culture would try to reconcile a charitable interest in the demonstrably unfortunate with its holy purpose: a madhouse.

Notes

1. *The distinction between mad “houses” and mad “hospitals” for Middleton’s audience is not clear. The only full length study of madhouses traces their origins to Bethlem and the early seventeenth century. See W.L. Parry-Jones’s *The Trade in Lunacy: A Study of Private Madhouses in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* . One of the first known private “madhouses” was operated by court physician Hilkiah Crooke who handled a few of his more affluent patients in his home (Roy Porter, *Mind-forg’d Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency* , 137) and who, interestingly, was the keeper of Bethlem at the time of *The Changeling*; in that, one sees how the public and dramatic imagination could have conflated “houses” and “hospitals.” See, too, MacDonald, who argues, “Bethlem was the only institution of its kind . . . private institutions . . . did not begin to proliferate until the last half of the seventeenth century”(4).*

2. The play’s dramatic power has drawn most critical energies in a formalist direction and that focus, too, has inhibited the recognition of “charity” in the work. See Peter Morrison’s account of issues that have captivated *The Changeling*’s critics. “A Cangoun in Zombieland: Middleton’s Teratological Changeling,” in ‘*Accompaning the players*’: *Essays Celebrating Thomas Middleton, 1580-1980*, 219-41. See also R.V. Holdsworth’s *Three Jacobean Revenge Tragedies* for reviews and bibliographies of Middleton scholarship.

3. Hooker’s influential “justification” of protestant charity cited above was part of a response to Walter Traver’s charges that Hooker did not sufficiently condemn catholic

beliefs. See *The Works of Richard Hooker*, 83-298.

4. This particular struggle is set, as suggested above, in the context of widespread opposition to James's growing absolutism, but I am attempting to emphasize the "charitable" nature of these social and political battles. See Alderidge "Management and Mismanagement," 155.

5. Jordan, *Philanthropy in London: 1480-1660*, 189-90.

6. *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, ed. Fredson Bowers.

7. Phillip Finkelpearl, in *Court and Country Politics in the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher*, has convincingly demonstrated that Fletcher was no crypto-catholic or simple spokesman for James and I am not contradicting that assertion here; for Fletcher was no City Puritan either. The problems of city charity were, one suspects, less relevant to him and it is possible that in reworking his primary source for the drama (most likely the English version of Lope de Vega's *El Peregrino en su Patria* titled *The Pilgrime of Castele* and first printed in 1621) Fletcher ignored, as did many preachers, charitable distinctions.

8. The well known primary "source" for *The Changeling* is John Reynold's *The Triumph of God's Revenge against The Crying and Execrable Sinne of Wilfull and Premeditated Murther* (1621), but that narrative is, of course, not the only influence on the play. My reading will show that the major points on which Middleton differs from Reynold's -- the addition of the madhouse sub-plot, Deflores's ugliness, Beatrice's strong repulsion to him -- can be explained by the influence of Fletcher and charity. See N. W. Bawcutt's edition of

the play, 113-129.

9. Protestant preachers and Catholic propagandists were very aware that the Protestant position might be refigured by the greedy for unholy purposes. See Hill, 259-98.

10. Reed has speculated that *The Changeling* makes topical references to James and Dr. Hilkiah Crooke's appointment at Bethlem (13-54), but, to my knowledge, no one has said the same of the *Pilgrim*.

11. For a discussion of how well English dramatists might have been aware of Lope de Vega or the origin of *The Pilgrime of Castele* see Dale Randall's *The Golden Tapestry: A Critical Survey of Non-chivalric Spanish Fiction in English Translation 1543-1657*, 102-112.

12. The exploits of St. Catherine are recounted in Nancy Siraisi's *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice*, 46.

13. Deflores's role as charitable object here, I am suggesting, stems mainly from his "deformity." More could be made of his unusual and sketchy social status. Deflores describes himself as a "gentleman" whose "hard fate" has thrust him "out to servitude"(2.1.48-49) and an early modern audience might have recognized some affiliation with the charitable category "Poveri Vergognosi."

14. *The English Sermon: 1550-1650*, pg. 29. Three of Cranmer's four surviving homilies are printed in this text. For convenience, they are referred to here as the "Homily of Salvation"; "A Short Declaration"; and "Good Works Annexed Unto Faith." This quote

comes from the “Homily of Salvation.”

15. “Good Works Annexed Unto Faith,” 45.

16. Pedro’s payment to Alibius and Lolloio may obscure the fact that Tony and Franciscus gain access to Isabella under the auspices of charity. The 1598 census at Bethlem reveals that friends, families, or parishes often maintained occupants in a similar fashion.

Conclusion

That Middleton and Rowley respond to *The Pilgrim* in the way that they do, at the time that they do, suggests that Bethlem had not entirely lost its cultural significance by 1622. It was still, for some, a place of Protestant citizen charity. But the process already underway in the early 1590s, the change from a charitable system based on hospitals to a charitable system based on poor laws, had already taken its toll. After 1598, Bethlem was lost in a process which would transform it from a local medieval charity to an institution of a national welfare system.

Oddly enough, dramatists like Dekker and Middleton, who seemed very interested in preserving old city institutions as they were, helped facilitate this transformation. They “preserved” Bethlem on the stage only to see it fully absorbed by the growing state they resisted. In the great fire of 1666, the Bethlem Dekker and Middleton knew burned down. A new Bethlem was rebuilt by the state and a member of Christopher Wren’s famous team of architects: Robert Hooke. The new structure was no monastic slum or hovel, to use Michael MacDonald’s terms. The new Bethlem was grand and palatial. And, of all the “Bethlem” plays discussed here, it was *The Pilgrim* which was rewritten for production during the Restoration. As for *King Lear*: Nahum Tate was in the process of removing much of the play’s pain and suffering -- pain and suffering, I believe, that were in the play as a direct result of the stage’s contact with Bethlem. The Protestant city charity and its relationship to the stage was obscured.

Indeed, this study, which began as an attempt to historicize madness and Bedlam in the early modern period has become an attempt to historicize charity -- perhaps a task even

more problematic. For not only was “charity” differently conceived in early modern England than it is today, charity -- as a term, a concept, an impulse, a cultural practice -- is never easily understood or defined. The impulse to care for the less fortunate or the impulse simply to give is structured by complex cultural and historical pressures.

Examining charity, in short, is as complicated as examining madness.

For example, throughout this study I have referred to the poor laws in England as a charitable system. This may strike some as odd because the poor laws were a tax, they were compulsory, and this contradicts the primary defining feature we have for charity: that it is, in the words of historian Colin Jones, “voluntaristic, individually motivated, compassionate, and freely given”(3). However, it is becoming increasingly more clear to me that this contradiction would not have seemed as profound for those in the early modern period as it does for us living in the logic of late capitalism. As Jones has written, “The two concepts [compulsion and charity] . . . had an associative rather than an autonomous relationship”(5) in our time period. The idea of pure charity, in other words, is a mistake or illusion of capitalism, an attempt to convince ourselves that we still engage in more humane forms of exchange that bind us together rather than in relations determined by inhumane economic structures. The idea is an attempt to help us forget that we need and accept bureaucratic structures like the poor laws to sustain ourselves in the free market. As Mary Douglas writes in the Foreword to Marcel Mauss’s *The Gift*

the whole idea of the free gift is based on a misunderstanding. There should not be any free gifts. What is wrong with the so-called free gift is the donor’s intention to be exempt from return gifts coming from the recipient. Refusing requital puts the act of giving outside any mutual ties.

(vii)

The idea of pure charity in our world is like our thirst for the pure gift. And, as Derrida has recently written, the gift is the “impossible”(7). That such a desire should

emerge or intensify in the middle the sixteenth century as capitalism emerges is not surprising. We can see, I think, in Calvin and Luther's attempts to abstract "charity" from any kind of economy, any kind of exchange, even the "exchange" system of merit for salvation manifested in *caritas*, a thirst for the pure gift -- the impossible or utopic -- amidst deep structural changes.

Understanding Bedlam then has forced us to understand charity. And understanding charity will force us to understand the "gift."

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The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. in English.

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