MADNESS IN ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

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MADNESS IN ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State College in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

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Denton, Texas
August, 1949
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CHAPTER I

THE ELIZABETHAN CONCEPTION OF MADNESS

Insanity, which has long been a favorite theme of Elizabethan drama, summoned the dramatist's imagination to wonderful creations -- creations that were fantastic and grotesque, but unforgettable. Mad folk and mad scenes, which were given manifold treatment, were occasionally funny and amusing, but more often pathetic and tragic. Insanity was often a definite part of the plot development; again it might be a subsidiary part. Mad people often furnished the trivial underplots or offered coarse jests and songs for low entertainment; hopeless maniacs added color and tended to increase absurdity in the light comedies. On the other hand, mad scenes and Bedlam characters offered pageantry, intensified catastrophe, and heightened sublimity. These various conceptions of madness could have been attempted only in an age when people found life both exciting and wonderful; and the people of Queen Elizabeth's day did love life; they were curious about human nature; they enjoyed incongruous emotions; and they wanted stories that would stimulate their imaginations. Men loved life with its actions and its passions; they wanted the whole picture. Thus we see why the
drama appealed to the people of the sixteenth century and why the Elizabethan theater became a popular institution with madness as a favorite theme.

Men were in a temper to think human life, with its passions, a very important and interesting thing. They did not turn away from this world, and despise it in comparison with a heavenly country, as did the finest souls in the Middle Ages; they did not, like the writers of the age of Queen Anne, care only for "the town"; it was men they cared for, and the whole of manhood -- its good and evil, its greatness and grotesqueness, its laughter and its tears.¹

The earliest conception of madness that was revealed in literature is based on the idea of possession by evil spirits.

This conception came down from remote ages; it accounts, for example, for the madness of King Saul in the Old Testament, when "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an evil spirit troubled him" (Samuel, XVI, 14). In the Elizabethan Age, demoniacal possession was still regarded as one of the most potent causes of insanity; it was made to account not only for mental disease but for all kinds of physical deformations and imperfections, whether occurring alone, or as is often the case, accompanying idiocy.²

Few of the Elizabethans doubted the power of evil spirits. The prevalent conception that deformity was regarded as a divine judgment definitely guided conduct.

The influence of the demonological conception of insanity was clearly seen in the exorcisation scene in Twelfth

¹Edward Dowden, Shakespeare, p. 6.
²Edgar Peers, Elizabethan Drama and Its Mad Folk, p. 9.
Night when Fabian, the clown, disguised as Sir Topas, the curate, was sent to visit Malvolio, the lunatic. The idea of the fiend pervades the scene. When Malvolio urged Sir Topas to go to his lady, Sir Topas (the clown) reproached him:

"Out, hyperbolical fiend! How vexest thou this man? Talkest thou nothing but of ladies?"

When Malvolio complained of his wrongs, Sir Topas said:

"Fie, thou dishonest Satan! I call thee by the most modest terms; for I am one of those gentle ones that will use the devil himself with courtesy. Say'st thou that house is dark?"

In Act III Malvolio asked for Maria, Sir Toby, and Fabian to leave him to enjoy his private thoughts. Maria remarked that Malvolio's speech was influenced by the fiend:

"Lo, how hollow the fiend speaks within him!"

"Lo you, and you speak ill of the devil, how he takes it at heart! Pray God he be not bewitched."

Again in Twelfth Night, Maria referred to the Elizabethan conception of the possession by the devil. When Olivia called for Malvolio, Maria explained:

"He's coming, madam; But in strange manner. He is sure possessed."

"He does nothing but smile; your ladyship Were best have guard about you if he come; For, sure, the man is tainted in his wits."

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4 Ibid., II, 35-38.  
5 Ibid., III, iv, 101, 111-113.
6 Ibid., II, 8-10, 12-14.
It is interesting to note that good Elizabethan doctrine taught that the devil was more powerful with melancholy spirits. When Hamlet delayed, one definite point in his favor was that he wanted to test the king further because he feared the ghost might be the spirit of the devil:

The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy, --
As he is very potent with such spirits, --
Abuses me to damn me; I'll have grounds
More relative than this: -- the play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. 7

To illustrate the common belief in the Elizabethan conception that madness is based on the idea of possession by evil spirits, let us note Edgar's warning: "Take heed o' the foul fiend: obey thy parents; keep thy word justly; swear not; set not thy sweet heart on proud array." 8 When Edgar, disguised as a Bedlam beggar, was asked what he had formerly been, he answered that he was once a proud serving-man. He added a defiant attitude toward the foul fiend:

Wine lov'd I deeply, dice dearly, and in woman out-paramour'd the Turk; false of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand; bog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy poor heart to woman. Keep thy pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend. 9

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7 William Shakespeare, Hamlet, II, i, 626-633.
8 William Shakespeare, King Lear, III, iv, 77-79.
9 Ibid., II, 84-89.
Further proof of the doctrine of the possession by foul fiends was revealed in Edgar's words to his blind father, whom he was guiding toward Dover. As Edgar walked along, he talked incoherently; he accentuated the influence of fiends in his attempt to explain his mental state:

Poor Tom hath been scar'd out of his good wits. Bless thee, good man's son, from the foul fiend! Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once; of lust, as Obidicut; Robbedinence, prince of dumphness; Mehu, of stealing; Modo, of murder; Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and mowing, who since possesses chambermaids and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master.\(^{10}\)

A remification of the idea of evil spirits is the attributing of mental diseases to the influence of witchcraft. Almost everybody believed that witches themselves were victims of mental disturbances;\(^{11}\) others thought witches could cause or cure melancholy. For example, the people believed that witches invoked St. Vitus dance or cast other evil spells; and, as a precautionary measure, people often wore amulets or charms against evil. It is interesting to recall that although almost everybody believed in witchcraft, its practice and vogue were greatest among the ignorant class.

In *King Lear*, Edgar, in disguise as a creature from Bedlam, expressed this idea of linking the fiendish element with the prevailing belief in ghosts and witchcraft:

\(^{10}\)Ibid., IV, i, 63-68.

This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives the web and the pin, squints the eye, and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth.¹²

In referring to those who believed in the spirits, Lily Bess Campbell writes:

( The part of the whole subject which attracted most attention just at the time Shakespeare was at the height of his career was the relation between melancholy (with incidentally other forms of madness) and various supernatural appearances. There were two opposite views: those who considered ghosts and witchcraft to be traceable to the effects of melancholy and those who believed them to be manifestations of the supernatural. But the signs of the conflict are so deeply imprinted in literature of melancholy as well as of demonology that to the student of Shakespearean tragedy they transcend in interest all else in literature. When witches were burned, when the whole nation was stirred over the authenticity of witchcraft, it was inevitable that those who wrote on the subject should write vividly and earnestly.¹³

It is interesting to note that some of the physicians and realists insisted that the supernatural manifestations reported were either frauds or results of the effect of melancholic humors. Those who advocated the supernatural element argued that ghosts were spirits released from purgatory or that ghosts were sent from God as manifestations of good. King James himself is accredited with the latter view.


¹³Lily Bess Campbell, Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes, p. 84.
It must be remembered [writes Miss Campbell] that even the Devil's advocates thought that passions and melancholic humors paved the way for the visits of the Devil in disguise, and that the advocates of natural causes saw in these supernatural visitations the evidences of a mind diseased, generally through the ravages of passion.\footnote{Ibid., p. 92.}

Every writer of the Elizabethan age was interested in the excess of humor. Although it would be tedious to summarize the whole analysis of the humors, it is fitting that we explain that man is thought of as a little world, comprising in himself all the elements that go to the making of the great world. There are four elements: fire, air, water, and earth. Four elements adhere in the following characteristics: hot, cold, moist, and dry. Fire is hot and dry; air is hot and moist; water is cold and moist; earth is cold and dry. In every man there are four humors: blood, choler, phlegm, and melancholy. They correspond to the elements.

According to Miss Campbell,\footnote{Ibid., p. 55.}

Newton explains particularly of melancholy that the melancholy juice goes in part to the veins to help blood, in part to the spleen or mylt, but the spleen being like a sponge, when it is obstructed or falls into weakness, it forces or permits melancholy to get into every other part of the body.

This is a partial explanation of the humors and the effect of excessive humors on the body. Thus we see why writers were much concerned with excess of humor because they believed
the humors affected the temperaments of their characters. A man who was dominated by any one humor was considered abnormal in some ways. Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* portrays abnormal types in a very popular and effective manner.

In her study of tragic heroes, Lily Campbell asserts that if we are to understand Shakespeare's tragedies, we must find out how men looked at the evil in the day when Shakespeare lived. Explanations will be better understood when we trace problems from their medieval origins. Chaucer's *Monk's Tale* proves that tragedies were considered examples of didacticism. In fact, the Renaissance inherited from medieval times a great philosophy in Boethius' *De consolatione Philosophiae*, which was very important to Renaissance thought.

Tragedy, guided by philosophy, came to show that those who do evil are never unpunished, since an unquiet mind is the inevitable reward of evil doing. Passions create in the heart of a man such turbulence that there is no longer possible to him the quiet mind on which happiness is conditioned.\(^{16}\)

Stressing Shakespeare's plays as mirrors of passion, Campbell brings out that moral philosophy centered around the struggle between the sensitive appetite and the reason. The Renaissance philosophers found absorbing interest in the apparent connection of abnormal conditions of mind and body

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as reflected in drunkenness, melancholy, frenzy, and madness.

It must be added that the combination of the tragic and the comic also shows the medieval influence. ("Even when dramatists depict some weighty affliction, such as blindness or madness, they occasionally fall back into the manner of the earlier period, which sought to get comedy even out of such things as these,"17) It must be remembered that the symptoms of insanity that appear pathetic to the modern audience often seemed funny to our Elizabethan ancestors.

Madness was offered for various motives: to arouse sympathy, to make sport, to amuse the groundlings, to intensify feeling, or to promote pageantry. Shakespeare alone seemed to refuse to sacrifice so grand a passion to comic treatment and to expose it to the lower class of play-goers as a subject for vulgar jest or idle talk. Although Shakespeare offers both amusing and tragic mad scenes, one never reads or sees them with a complete sense of hopelessness or depravity, for he presents madness with sympathy, insight, and even sublimity. In fact, Shakespeare reached the height of his genius in his dramatic use of madness; he never forgot that his audience was "fond of unusual spectacle and brutal physical suffering. They like battles and

17 William Greisenach, The English Drama in the Age of Shakespeare, p. 245.
murders, processions and fireworks, ghosts and insanity."18)

A unique conception of madness is the superstition relating to the mandrake plant about which many peculiar notions have been drawn. The resemblance of the strange root to the human figure made these ideas prevalent. For example, when the plant root was taken from the ground, it would make gruesome, horrible, sad groans. Anyone who happened to hear the shrieks of the plant would immediately become a victim of madness -- or death. A reference to the mandrake is found in Romeo and Juliet:

Shrieks of mandrakes, torn out of the earth
That living mortals, hearing them, run mad.19

A superstition influencing another Elizabethan conception of madness centers around the mysterious word lunatic. Shakespeare's works show clearly the supposed influence of the moon on insanity and on the recurrence of maniacal periods. The word lunatic is derived from luna which means moon in the Latin language;20 and for many, many years the moon and lunatics were closely associated.

The belief in the association of the moon with lunacy is explained in The Honest Whore in a Bedlam scene when the Duke asked:

And how long is't ere you recover any of these?
  Sweeper: Why according to the quantity of

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18Ashley Thorndike, Shakespeare's Theater, p. 408.
19William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, IV, iii, 47.
the moon that's got into 'em. An alderman's son will be mad a great while, a very great while, especially if his friends left him well. A whore will hardly come to her wits again. A puritan, there's no hope of him unless he may pull down the steeple, and hang himself i' th' bell-ropes.21

A doctrine that was current in Elizabethan thinking was the notion that "nature in man sometimes takes the form of a wayward, erring tendency, which, when unregulated by law, results in the confusion of all that makes for stability and happiness in life, and it would seem as if the world to the madman is a world in which this tendency is allowed its rights. . . . Let us revert now to the theory that a fond imagination may creep covertly into the brain and undermine rationality."22 This idea might be held relevant to the sad, disappointed lover, the overly assiduous student, the tyrant ruler, or the ambitious person whose superfluous zeal or woe might lead to the path of the wayward Bedlam beggar.

The Bedlam beggar, a well-known figure of the Elizabethan age, was originally an inmate of Bedlam, an organized asylum for mad folk. The original Bedlam or "Bethlem monastery" was formerly the Hospital of St. Mary Bethlehem in Bishopsgate Street, a priory before the dissolution was granted by Henry VII to the citizens of London. It was converted into an asylum for lunatics. In 1557 it was merged


with Bridewell, a hospital presented by Edward VI to the city as a house of correction. Later Bedlam became the best-known madhouse in London. Shakespeare and his contemporaries were familiar with the discharged inmates -- the half-crazed, wandering vagrants who were left to roam the country and live on charity.

(Edgar in *King Lear* is an example of the Bedlam beggar. Although he was a Bedlam creature in disguise only, he played the part so well that he was stimulating. This Poor Tom was portrayed as a lunatic who roamed the countryside living on the charity of kind people. Of course, he was possessed by the foul fiend. Edgar's portrayal of the Bedlam beggar is considered one of Shakespeare's works of art. Edgar posed effectively as an original inmate of Bedlam or Abraham's man because he had observed them keenly:

This country gives me proof and precedent Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices, Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms, Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary; And with this horrible object, from low farms, Poor pelting villages, sheep cotes, and mills Sometimes with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers Enforce their charity.

Thus Edgar for worthy motives put aside his own identity to assume the role of Poor Tom, the Bedlam beggar.

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23Peers, *op. cit.*, p. 27.


There were recognized causes, symptoms, and manifestations of insanity even in Queen Elizabeth's day. Symptoms included quickening of the pulse and heart-beat, unconscious and incoherent mutterings, and unawareness or awareness of the nature of the disease. Peculiar manifestations -- exaggerated gesturing, dressing fantastically, playing with straw, strewing flowers, sleeping with eyes open, and walking in the sleep -- were notable. Walking dazedly, singing incoherently, and laughing wildly were typical symptoms or manifestations. General bad behavior and inconsistent ravings were common. Inscongruous emotions -- sudden touches of pathos followed by outbursts of anger -- were ordinary manifestations. Delusions were common. Causes of insanity were expressed as too much learning, irritation, worry, grief, shock, jealousy, domestic sorrow, blighted affections, persecutions, extreme guilt or remorse, and extreme melancholy.

It is also interesting to note that melancholy was often associated with unrequited love. Since the romantic, sad lover has always been a popular role in both comedy and tragedy, one can easily see that the Elizabethan audience would enjoy the emotional, melancholy lover. That madness is often associated with the lovelorn is revealed in Rosalind's words to Orlando:

\[26^{\text{Peers, op. cit., p. 24.}}\]
Love is mere madness; and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is, that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too.27

The above quotation pictures vividly modes of punishment for the mad folk: dark houses and whippings. Victims, when confined to dark rooms, were often deprived of knives, girdles, or pictures. Although inmates of Bedlam were occasionally reprimanded, they were usually further punished by silent reproaches. Later chains were used to prevent escape, and castigation was freely and cruelly employed. When there was a lack of popular sympathy for the insane, one could hardly expect a very humanitarian treatment of the victims. The keepers of asylums needed few tests to prove that the patients were mad; needless to say, patients received little care and much ridicule.28

As to the treatment of the inmates of Bethlem Monastery, we have Father Anselmo's own words in explanation:

They must be us'd like children, pleas'd with toys, And anon whipt for their unruliness.29

To reiterate this idea, we have the Sweeper's verification that proved quite amusing to the Duke and his companions:

I was a mad wag myself here, once, but I thank Father Anselmo, he leaht me into my right mind.30

27William Shakespeare, As You Like It, III, ii, 241.
28Peers, op. cit., p. 29.
The theory that the "unconscious incoherence of a disordered brain" may be used as a relief element is expounded by Richard Moulton. It is easy to see that the modern audience and the Elizabethan play-goers differed in sympathetic temperament; for the Elizabethan audience found insanity amusing, whereas modern audiences think madness is pathetic.

However this may be, it is clear that the wildness of insanity is used in Shakespeare's plays as a variation and relief to tragedy. . . . The more Shakespeare's dramas are examined, the more evident it will be that the principle of relief is the law underlying the mixture of tones in tragedy.31

Shakespeare's knowledge of the insane has never ceased to excite wonder and astonishment. Even modern investigators marvel at Shakespeare's psychology. As we know, scientific study of insanity began the latter part of the eighteenth century. In 1866 Abner Kellogg, assistant physician of the state lunatic asylum at Utica, New York, wrote:

This power of entering into the deep and hidden mysteries of nature and the universe -- of lifting the veil, and drawing thence facts not yet manifested to the world . . . , is characteristic of what has been termed poetic inspiration. Shakespeare's power consists, first, of an extraordinary faculty for close observation, and acute perception of the nature and relation of all things which come up before the eye and mind, and, in the second place, of a wonderful faculty, only possessed by a few such persons in varied degrees, of calling up at will from the recesses of the memory with great distinctness, every perception there recorded, and of making such use of it as may seem fit.32

31 Richard Moulton, Shakespeare as a Dramatic Thinker, pp. 188-190.

32 Abner Kellogg, Shakespeare's Delineations, pp. 2-3.
Kellogg writes of the agreement of thought among the co-workers of the asylum: "In fact we believe a very complete physiological and psychological system could be deduced from the writings of Shakespeare."33

It is suggested that Shakespeare's system was in accordance with the scientific research and experience of the next two centuries. It was startling and amusing that the opinions of Utica physicians concur in concluding that they have seen all of Shakespeare's insane characters paralleled in the inmates at Utica. Kellogg states firmly that Shakespeare did not learn his psychology from contemporaries whose ideas were vague and undigested because he admits that two and a half centuries later scientists had added little to what Shakespeare appeared to have known in these intricate subjects pertaining to insanity.

A modern authority adds his confirmation:

Shakespeare was far in advance of his time, seeing in some way features of insanity which were commonly overlooked, and using remedies which we consider quite "modern" even today [1914]. . . . If we would contrast genius with mediocrity, we look at Shakespeare and his contemporaries.34

It is amazing to note that Shakespeare's delineations of insanity often parallel modern conceptions of symptoms, causes, and cures of mental illness; however, Elizabethan conceptions prevail throughout his plays.

33Ibid., p. 3. 34Peers, op. cit., p. 177.
Shakespeare and his contemporaries naturally accepted, to a great extent, the prevailing ideas of their day. They could hardly fail to portray these contemporary ideas and conceptions of madness in their plays because the subject of lunacy was commonplace and because figures from Bedlam and spirits of angels or of Satan fitted into the practices and customs of everyday life and everyday speech.
CHAPTER II

THE CAUSES OF MADNESS

Realization that madness was a favorite theme with Elizabethans brings a new question: what were the causes of madness in those days? Study reveals various and manifold causes; chief among them were grief or sorrow, blighted love and affections, jealousy, domestic worries, senility, confusion, strain, despair, extreme irritation, persecution, unrestrained passions, ill-spent life, and continual and vehement meditations.

The predominating cause of madness as revealed in the twelve plays chosen for study was shock, extreme grief, or domestic sorrow. Victims of grief or sorrow include Isabella and Hieronimo, the mother and the father of murdered Horatio in The Spanish Tragedy; Cornelia, the mother in The White Devil; Ophelia, the devoted daughter of Polonius in Hamlet; and Lear, the mad King himself.

Grief and shock ruined the lives of Horatio's parents, Hieronimo and Isabella. Symptoms were first evident in Isabella whose own pathetic words reveal the cause of her lunacy:
So that, you say, this herb will purge the eye,
And this, the head? --
Oh! -- but none of them will purge the heart!
No, there's no medicine left for my disease,
Nor any physic to recure the dead.
Horatio! O, where's Horatio? ¹

The father's grief was just as poignant as the mother's
and the cause as obvious:

₀ eyes! no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears;
₀ life! no life, but lively form of death;
₀ world! no world, but mass of public wrongs,
Confus'd and fill'd with murder and misdeeds!
₀ sacred heav'ns! if this unhallow'd deed,
If this inhuman and barbarous attempt,
If this incomparable murder thus
Of mine, but now no more my son,
Shall unreveal'd and unreveig'd pass,
How should we term your dealings to be just,
If you unjustly deal with those that in your
justice trust?
The night, sad secretary to my moans,
With direful visions wakes my vexed soul,
And with the wounds of my distressful son
Solicits me for notice of his death.²

Both parents were grief-stricken, but there was a notable
difference in their reactions. Isabella's growing madness
tended toward despair and hopelessness; Hieronimo's, toward
revenge and tragedy.

Pedro, in conversation with Jacques, verified the cause
of their master's madness as they waited with lighted torches
at midnight for the distracted Hieronimo:

₀ Jacques, know thou that our master's mind
Is much distraught, since his Horatio died,
And -- now his aged years should sleep in rest,

² Ibid., 11, 109-123.
His heart in quiet — like a desperate man,
Grows lunatic and childish for his son.
Sometimes, as he doth at his table sit,
He speaks as if Horatio stood by him;
Then starting in a rage, falls on the earth,
Grieves out "Horatio, where is my Horatio?"
So with that extreme grief and cutting sorrow
There is not left in him one inch of man.\(^3\)

Cornelia, mother to Vittoria and Flamino, lost her
sanity over grief and disappointment in her unscrupulous
children. When Cornelia mistook her own Flamino for a
gravedigger, a lady explained the cause of Cornelia’s pa-
thetic madness:

\[\text{Alas! her grief}
\text{Hath turned her child again.}\] \(^4\)

Because of the pain that Ophelia felt when she realized
that Hamlet loved her no more, and because of the loneliness
she felt for her only brother Laertes, and chiefly because
of the shock of her father’s sudden death, she was deprived
of her reason. In a short time Ophelia had lost her lover,
hers brother, and her father. Although Ophelia had affec-
tion and tenderness for those she loved, she did not seem
to have passionate strength. She could not stand on her
own resources. Thus the cause of Ophelia’s madness was both
shock and grief.

After the King listened to Ophelia’s incoherent mutter-
ings and singing, he expressed his idea of the cause of her
madness:

\[^3\text{Ibid., xii, 903-914.}\]

\[^4\text{John Webster, The White Devil, V, iv, 554.}\]
0, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death.

First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove;

Poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgement,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts.5

That sorrow and grief are common reasons for insanity
is confirmed by words from young Lucius in Titus Andronicus.
He was running from his Aunt Lavinia, the pathetic, mutilated victim of Tamora's barbarous passion. Being deprived of tongue and hands, Lavinia could not explain her strange behavior. When asked about his Aunt Lavinia's strange appearance and bewildering conduct, young Lucius replied:

My lord, I know not, I, nor can I guess,
Unless some fit or frenzy do possess her:
For I have heard my grandsire say full oft,
Extremity or grief would make men mad;
And I have read that Hecuba of Troy
Ran mad for sorrow.6

The cause of Lear's madness was revealed in grief because of filial ingratitude. Lear himself, as he is tottering on the brink of insanity, expressed this idea:

When the mind's free,
The body's delicate; the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to 't? But I will punish home.

6William Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus, IV, i, 15-21.
No, I will weep no more. In such a night
To shut me out! Pour on! I will endure.
In such a night as this! O Regan, Gerald!
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all, --
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;
No more of that!

Strangely, Lear, in his confused thinking, asked the
Bedlam creature whether unselfish daughters caused his poor
condition. One remembers that as Lear entered the heath,
he had to encounter Edgar, who was disguised as a Bedlam
beggar. Contact with this feigned madness agitated Lear's
mind and led to complete collapse. As Lear listened to the
madman's ravings, he asked whether the reason for Edgar's
insanity was filial ingratitude:

Didst thou give all to thy daughters? And art thou
come to this? 8

There are many conjectures concerning the cause of
Lear's insanity. It is sometimes attributed to unrestrained
passion. Lacking the quality of patience, Lear became an
easy victim of despair when his daughters turned against him.
Because he prolonged his agony and magnified the ingratitude
of his daughters, he became wild and confused. It must be
remembered that Lear was an old man whose passionate temper
was conducive to insanity. When his will was thwarted, when
his physical health was affected by exposure to the storm,
and when his mental health was hampered by the shocks and

7William Shakespeare, King Lear, III, iv, 11-22.
8Ibid., 11. 48-49.
disappointments of life, he became a raving madman.

Probably the second most outstanding cause of insanity in Elizabeth's day was disappointment in love or blighted affections. Victims of blighted affections and unrequited love were Aspasia and Amintor in *The Maid's Tragedy* and Orlando, the furious and jealous lover in Green's *Orlando Furioso*. Ophelia probably belongs in this group even though shocked grief was the primary cause of her insanity; her blighted affection for Hamlet definitely entered into her confused thinking. Hippolito's unnatural melancholy was caused by both love and grief. When he saw the funeral procession of his beloved Infelice, he suffered an emotional crisis. In fact, all these victims suffered emotional crises.

Amintor was a melancholy type whose mental confusion was brought on by disillusionment in love and the consequent strain of knowing that Evadne was the King's mistress, that the King had wronged him, and that he had wronged Aspasia. From the beginning of his marriage, one frustration followed another; for Amintor, on his wedding night, was forced to stand in amazement and listen to his bride's almost incredible words:

You are deceived.
Put off amazement, and with patience mark
What I shall utter, for the oracle
Knows nothing truer. 'Tis not for a night
Or two that I forbear thy bed, but ever. 9

Amintor, stunned and hurt, wondered what he could do to save
his honor:

Was ever such a marriage-night as this?
You powers above, if you did ever mean
Man should be used thus, you have thought a way
How he may bear himself and save his honor:
Instruct me in it; for to my dull eyes
There is no mean, no moderate course to run;
I must live scorned or be a murderer. 10

When Evadne admitted to Amintor that it was the King who had
wronged him, Amintor felt hopeless in his confusion:

Oh, thou hast named a word, that wipes away
All thoughts revengeful! 11

Amintor felt terrified; he could only suffer and wait; and
we know the tragic outcome of his suffering and waiting.

Hippolito was another example of the love-lorn, senti-
mental hero. His grief which bordered on madness was re-
vealed at the beginning of the drama, The Honest Whore; this
mad grief was caused by the supposed death of his sweet-
heart, Infelice. This was a strange story, for the Duke,
Infelice's father, had feigned a funeral and had sent his
daughter away to get rid of the lover, Hippolito. But Hip-
polito was hard to get rid of; he remained the mourning,
faithful lover:

9 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, The Maid's Tragedy,
II, 1, 352-359.

10 Ibid., 11. 408-419. 11 Ibid., 11. 523-524.
Curst be that day for ever that robb'd her
Of breath, and me of bliss!\(^{12}\)

Hippolito's true love was expressed in extravagant words:

If ever, whilst frail blood through my veins run,
On women's beams I throw affection,
Save her that's dead; or that I loosely fly
To th' share of any other wafting eye,
Let me not prosper, Heaven! I will be true,
Even to her dust and ashes; could her tomb
Stand whilst I liv'd, so long that it might rot,
That should fall down, but she be ne'er forgot.\(^{13}\)

And Hippolito lived up to his promise. In fact, the plot of *The Honest Whore* was cleverly handled from the standpoint of madness; the lovers were even married in Bedlam Monastery.

Melancholy and unrequited love often are associated as a cause of madness. Aspasia is the type of sad, love-lorn maiden that was a favorite in drama; her melancholia or madness was caused by brooding over unrequited love. In her own room, Aspasia holds forth upon the miseries of unrequited love as her two waiting gentlewomen listen:

> Ales, poor wenches!  
> Go, learn to love first; learn to lose yourselves;  
> Learn to be flattered, and believe and bless  
> The double tongue that did it; make a faith  
> Out of the miracles of ancient lovers,  
> Such as spoke truth and died in't; and, like me,  
> Believe all faithful, and be miserable.\(^{14}\)

As a usual thing Aspasia was sweet and sad, but this scene with her gentlewomen reveals Aspasia's grief at its bitterest

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\(^{12}\)Thomas Dekker, *The Honest Whore*, I, i, 118-119.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., II. 141-148.

\(^{14}\)Beaumont and Fletcher, *op. cit.*, II, i, 11-21.
Then, my good girls, be more than women, wise;
At least be more than I was; and be sure
You credit anything the light gives life to,
Before a man. Rather believe the sea
Weeps for the ruined merchant, when he roars;
Rather, the wind courts but the pregnant sails;
When the strong cordage cracks; rather, the sun
Comes but to kiss the fruit in wealthy autumn
When all falls blasted. If you needs must love
(Forced by ill fate), take to your maiden-bosoms
Two dead-cold aspices, and of them make lovers.
They cannot flatter nor forswear; one kiss
Makes a long peace for all. But man --
Oh, that beast, man! Come, let's be sad, my girls: --
That down-cast of thine eye, Olympos,
Shows a fine sorrow.15

In utter despair Aspasia wants the world to realize that she
is a forsaken woman;

I stand upon the sea-breach now, and think,
Mine arms thus, and mine hair blown with the wind,
Wild as that desert; and let all about me
Tell that I am forsaken.16

Her false lover had caused this extreme attitude of sorrow
that led to insane action.

In Robert Greene's Orlando Furioso, the reason for
Orlando's violent madness was love and jealousy. After Or-
lando had succeeded in winning the love of the fair Angelica
(for she had had suitors from three continents), he went in-
to the woods to meditate on thoughts of love. Here he was
betrayed by a jealous suitor of Angelica into believing that
Angelica loved Medor. Secrepent's accomplice was a simple

15Ibid., 11. 28-53. 16Ibid., 11. 120-124.
shepherd, in disguise, of course. They engraved on the
trees love verses linking the names of Medor and Angelica.
One of the roundelays that Orlando found read thus:

Angelica is Ladie of his hart,
Angelica is substance of his joy,
Angelica is medicine of his smart,
Angelica hath healed his annoy.17

Orlando was furious when he read the false verses, but when
the simple shepherd confirmed the rumors, Orlando went stark
mad. The cause of his madness Orlando admitted:

What dares Medor court my Venus?
What may Orlando deeme?
Aetna forsake the bounds of Sicily,
For now in me thy restlesse flames appeare,
Refused, contemned, disdain'd: what worse then these?18

Brooding over his misfortune, he became insane. His first
manifestation of furious madness was mistaken the shepherd
for Medor, drawing him by the leg, and returning later with
the leg around his neck.

Many dramatists used the prevailing idea that love and
madness are closely intertwined. Dekker even used the mad-
house as the setting in *The Honest Whore*. We recall that
Hippolita, who had just been informed of all the true condi-
tions by the doctor, was amused at the doctor's plan to
bring the lovers together at Bethlem Monastery:

At Bethlem Monastery! The place well fits;
It is the school where those that lose their wits

Practice again to get them, I am sick
Of that disease; all love is lunatic.¹⁹

These lines definitely fit the Elizabethan conception that
love is often the cause of lunacy; but they exaggerate the
idea by saying all love is lunatic.

Love and jealousy as causes of madness were substanti-
ated by explanatory words of Father Anselmo while the sec-
ond and third madmen were entertaining guests at Bethlem
Monastery:

Is, you; this hitherto
Fell from the happy quietness of mind
About a maiden that he lov'd, and died.
He followed her to church, being full of tears,
And as her body went into the ground,
He fell stark mad. This is a married man;
Was jealous of a fair, but as some say,
A very virtuous wife; and that spoiled him.²⁰

In Hamlet, the Elizabethan conception that madness was
caued from disappointed or violent love is expressed by
Polonius:

This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property forgoes itself
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures.²¹

Senility or old age was often referred to as a cause

¹⁹Dekker, op. cit., IV, iv, 101-105.
²⁰Ibid., V, ii, 422-430.
²¹William Shakespeare, Hamlet, II, i, 102-106.
of insanity. It was often called dotage. At the beginning of *King Lear*, the reader realizes that Lear was getting old and that his powers were failing. His state of senility was revealed through childishness, vanity, and vacillating moods.

After Cordelia was mistreated by her father, Goneril said:

>You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little. He always lov'd our sister most; and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

To this comment Regan replied:

>'Tis the infirmity of his age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.22

It will be remembered that as Goneril arrived to join forces with Regan against Lear, he became a pathetic figure. His wrath had given way to this pitiful state. He tried to avert madness by crying out:

>   You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!  
>   You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,  
>   As full of grief as age; wretched in both!23

These lines reaffirm two causes of Lear's insanity, grief and old age.

Another reference to old age as a reason for madness was expressed by one of two Portuguese about Hieronomo after one of his extreme ravings:

    Doubtless this man is passing lunatic,  
    Or imperfection of his age doth make him dote.24

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23Ibid., II, iv, 73-75.
Timon’s strange malady offers an excellent study of the distracted and confused mind. He suffered delusions and hallucinations after experiencing the shock of disappointment and grief. Timon’s grief differed from the average person’s in that he had been shocked by the treatment of former friends who failed to rally to his needs when he faced financial adversities. Timon, who was proud of his coterie of Athenian friends, felt that he could fall back upon those who had enjoyed his bounty. To his worried steward he said:

Come, sermon me no further;
No villainous bounty yet hath pass’d my heart;
Unwisely, not ignobly, have I given.
Why dost thou weep? Canst thou the conscience lack
To think I shall lack friends? Secure thy heart;
If I would broach the vessels of my love,
And try the argument of hearts by borrowing,
Men and men’s fortunes could I frankly use
As I can bid thee speak.

.........................

And in some sort these wants of mine are crown’d,
That I account them blessings; for by these
Shall I try friends; you shall perceive how you
Mistake my fortunes; I am wealthy in my friends.25

One can easily see how Timon’s enthusiasm for his friends faded into uncontrolled despair when all of his friends turned a deaf ear to his requests for loans. His faithful steward’s words show sympathy:

Has friendship such a faint and milky heart,
It turns in less than two nights? O you gods,
I feel my master’s passion!26

26Ibid., III, 1, 60-62.
Timon's wrathful resentment was climax ed in his farewell banquet which marked Timon's change into a misanthrope. The last guests to be pushed from Timon's house exclaimed that Lord Timon was surely mad. One lord aptly expressed the change: "One day he gives us diamonds, next day stones."\textsuperscript{27}

Two direct references are made to the cause of Timon's strange madness and unusual behavior. Alcibiades, an Athenian captain, excused Timon's behavior in this way:

\begin{quote}
His wits
Are drown'd and lost in his calamities.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

Toward the end of the play when Timon so strangely refused the offer of the Athens Senator for leadership, the Senator explained the cause of Timon's mental change:

\begin{quote}
At all times alike
Men are not still the same; 'twas time and griefs
That framed him thus.\textsuperscript{29}
\end{quote}

Continual meditation on unpleasant thoughts, especially those dealing with intense passion, often leads to madness. It is particularly interesting to note that Hamlet, Hieronimo, Isabella, Aspasia, and Amintor brought on themselves various degrees of madness from vehement and continual meditation; whereas Orlando (Furioso), Cornelia, Ophelia, Lear, and Timon of Athens suffered mental collapse rather suddenly from real

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 1. 133.

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., IV, 111, 88.

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., V, 1, 127-129.
shock, extreme disappointment, domestic worries, and intense grief or strain.

Meditations arising from or marked by impetuosity of feeling can definitely lead to confused thinking and eventually to hopeless insanity. The thinking person is more subject to mental collapse. For example, Hamlet -- the intelligent, thoughtful, meditative young man -- delayed in his efforts for revenge, whereas the bold, aggressive, fighting Norwegian, Fortinbras, would have acted without hesitation. A parallel illustration might be made with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. She was ambitious, resolute, and thoughtful. Because of guilt and strain, she suffered disquietude of mind and remorse of conscience until she became insane and likely met death at her own hands. Macbeth, who was frank, friendly, and generous, seemed indecisive at first; but after he committed one murder, he seemed to become insensitive to crime as he said:

*From this moment*  
The very firstlings of my heart shall be  
The firstlings of my hand.*

Macbeth proved to have physical courage but no moral strength. At least his numerous, desperate, and atrocious actions helped to keep him sane, although he lived and died tragically.

In considering the cause of Lady Macbeth's madness one cannot overlook the guilty conscience and the gloomy

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meditations following her share in murdering the King. Shakespeare excels in the ability to portray emotions arising from the true realization that hope is shattered and that ruin is inevitable. This is true when Lady Macbeth became extremely desolate and remorseful because of her guilty conscience. She was left alone with gloomy thoughts and brooding memories. Because of her dreadful secret she could expect no sympathy; she passed day after day alone with her gloomy meditations. Realizing that her husband's ceaseless activities were leading to despair and ruin, she relived her share in the horrible crime until she became mentally ill.

Lady Macbeth's madness was the outcome of her mind's dwelling on the scene and circumstances of their crime, the murder of King Duncan. The sleepwalking scene revealed many manifestations of madness: sleeping with eyes open, sleepwalking, peculiar gestures, despairing sighs, pallid lips, unnatural fear of the darkness, and the unconscious revelation of her secret. As a somnambulist Lady Macbeth revealed thoughts and facts that she had hidden in the deepest recesses of her heart and soul:

Here's the smell of the blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., V, i, 56-58.
Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale: -- I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate; come, come, come, come, give me your hand; what's done cannot be undone: to bed, to bed, to bed.32

As one realizes the outcome of Lady Macbeth's dwelling on the scenes and circumstances of the crime, one wonders why she did not follow the advice she gave her husband earlier:

These deeds must not be thought
After these ways. So, it will make us mad.33

A distracted state of mind can be the culmination of calamities in the life of a weak character or of an evil character. Ophelia and Cornelia were both sweet, loving, and tender; but when emergencies and calamities came, neither Ophelia nor Cornelia was strong enough to face them normally. When their hearts were crushed by grief, sorrow, and disappointment, their minds gave way. To Cornelia, her children's weaknesses and one son's death were unbearable. Ophelia, a clinging type, always leaned on others. This gentle but extremely submissive faculty made her an easy tool for any person who won her confidence. When her props fell, she fell. In like manner, a disordered or demented mind often results from an ill-spent life. Cardinal and Frederick, the two brothers of the Duchess of Malfi; Flamineo,

32Ibid., II. 68-71, 72-75.

33Ibid., II, II, 33-34.
the unscrupulous, wicked, and almost imperturbable villain of The White Devil; the ambitious Macbeth; and perhaps the mistreated Timon of Athens, who became a misanthrope, might be classed in this group. Although the Cardinal and Macbeth never did become raving maniacs, they were definite victims of evil doings and of ill-spent lives.

An extremely guilty mind or conscience brought on by shock and guilt was reason for raving madness in the case of Ferdinand, one of the brothers in The Duchess of Melfi. Ferdinand, who was partially responsible for the strangling of his sister and her two little children, was driven to extreme remorse by self-condemnation and fears which led to raving madness. The strangeness pertaining to Ferdinand's madness was its sudden appearance, for he began his frenzied state when he realized that he was responsible for the death of the Duchess. He censured Bosola for carrying out his orders:

> For thee, as we observe in tragedies  
> That a good actor many times is cursed  
> For playing a villain's part, I hate thee for 't,  
> And, for my sake, say, thou hast done much ill will.  

Ferdinand ordered Bosola to get to some unknown part of the world. He left the stage in distracted mood:

> I'll go hunt the badger by owl-light; 'tis a deed of darkness.

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34 John Webster, Duchess of Melfi, IV, 11, 472-477.
35 Ibid., 11. 558-559.
In the study of the distracted mind of the Cardinal, one is impressed with the confusion and strain of the guilty mind. The Cardinal, who had planned murders so fearlessly, began to show the strain of the ill-spent life:

I am puzzled in a question about hell; He says, in hell there's one material fire, And yet it shall not burn all men alike. Lay him by. How tedious is a guilty conscience! When I look into the fish-ponds in my garden, Methinks I see a thing armed with a rake, That seems to strike at me.36

In conclusion, one may say that the causes of insanity as reflected in the mad folk of our Elizabethan plays are varied. Timon of Athens was disillusioned and confused when his friends failed him; Hieronimo and Isabella of The Spanish Tragedy lost their sanity because of the shock and grief they felt over their only son's murder; Cornelia, the mother in The White Devil, was a victim of disappointment and grief over her children; Ophelia's frenzied state resulted from the shock and grief of her father's death and from disappointment in Hamlet, her lover; Asetia, Amintor, and Hippolito were not able to meet the emotional crises of their lives; Ferdinand became a maniac when he fully realized that he was responsible for the Duchess' death. Orlando, who was madly in love with Angelica, became a victim of fury over false verses that linked the names of Medor and Angelica. Lady Macbeth was the best example of the insane

36 Ibid., V, iv, 155-160.
person whose unfortunate state was the result of re-living unpleasant and sinister experiences and brooding over them. Lear, the unique mad King, was mad partially because of un-restrained passions and senility, but mostly because of shock and grief at the ingratitude of his selfish daughters. Thus we conclude that the common factor in the various causes of madness is emotional strain.
CHAPTER III

THE DIFFERENT MANIFESTATIONS OF MADNESS

The manifestations of madness are the signs, marks, disclosures, or displays of unnaturalness; they are words, gestures, or acts of revelation by mad folk. Excellent catalogued manifestations were given by Ophelia to Polonius when she became frightened at Hamlet's unusual appearance and strange behavior and by Horatio and the Gentleman who were reporting Ophelia's mad condition to the Queen. Ophelia's graphic description of Hamlet's manifestations, which was quoted in a previous chapter, was so good that Polonius was convinced of Hamlet's insanity and its cause. It is to be remembered that Hamlet's pretense was so clever that many critics have since conjectured that he was truly mad. The second list of manifestations of madness is taken from Horatio's and the Gentleman's conversation with the Queen when they were reporting Ophelia's real madness. This portrayal of Ophelia's early manifestations of insanity is quite dramatic:

Horatio: She is importunate; indeed, distract; her mood will needs be pitied.
Gentleman: She speaks much of her father; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and heats her heart;

38
Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sense; her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

Horatio:
'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.¹

After Horatio's words of warning, the Queen was prepared for further disclosure of Ophelia's mad condition.

Ophelia entered singing:

How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle hat and staff,
And his sandal shoon.

He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass green turf,
At his heels a stone.²

Ophelia's pathetic incoherent songs and mutterings continued after the King made his appearance:

Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go
With true-love showers.

²Ibid., 11. 23-26, 29-32.
Pray let's have no words of this;  
but when they ask you what it means,  
say you this: [Sings]  
Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day,  
All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window,  
To be your Valentine.\(^3\)

Later Isberte returned home; he was heartbroken as he listened to her pathetic laments:

[Sings] They bore him barefoot'd on the bier;  
Hey no nonny, nonny, hey nonny;  
And on his grave rain'd many a tear, --

.............................
You must sing, "A-down-a-down, and you call him a-down-a-a."
O, how the wheel becomes it!  
It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

.............................
There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember; and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.\(^4\)

Turning to Timon of Athens, we look for peculiar symptoms and find the first strange manifestation of Timon's madness in his abrupt change from a kind, liberal lord to a misanthrope. Timon, a lord of Athens, had been famous as a generous host. Friends who flattered him had been lavished with gifts and favors. An example of Timon's generosity was the giving of precious stones as favors at a special dinner. Flavius, Timon's faithful steward, was distressed over Timon's generosity because he knew that Timon's finances were

\(^3\)Ibid., ll. 37-39, 46-51.
\(^4\)Ibid., ll. 164-166, 170-173, 175-178.
dwindling away. Timon comforted himself by thinking that his friends who had enjoyed his bounty would reciprocate. When Timon sent his servants to request loans from friends, his one-time friends not only refused help but pushed the payment of their own bills. Of course, Timon was sorely grieved and bitterly disappointed. His sudden change was most reactionary; he resolved to spend the rest of his life hating mankind. He was never a sane, rational being again. Timon makes an excellent example for the study of a confused state of mind. His display -- his continual display of hatred and distrust of mankind -- was almost uncanny.

After Timon was disappointed in his friends, he became completely disillusioned. He regarded all life ironically; he felt that all was confusion. He even prayed to God that there be a score of villains:

Let no assembly of twenty be without a score of villains; if there sit twelve women at the table, let a dozen of them be -- as they are.5

This was only a part of the prayer that marked the change in Timon's life. He had just called his false friends together for a feast; but when the dishes were uncovered, they were full of lukewarm water which he threw in the faces of his astonished guests. The once genial host drove his false friends from his house. Timon cried out vehemently:

---

Stay, I will lend thee money, borrow none. --
What, all in motion? Henceforth be no feast
Wherast a villain's not a welcome guest.
Burn, house! sink, Athens! henceforth hated be.
Of Timon, men, on all humanity. 6

Timon's feeling of aversion to mankind and his growing
distrust of his fellowman were evident in his railing just
outside the walls of Athens:

Matrons, turn incontinent!
Obedience fail in children! Slaves and fools,
Pluck the grave wrinkled Senate from the bench
And minister in their steads! to general filths
Convert, o' the instant, green virginity, --
Do 't in your parent's eyes! bankrupts, hold fast;
Rather than render back, out with your knives
And cut your trusters' throats! bound servants,
steal!

... . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
And let confusion live! 7

His denunciation of Athens and of mankind was given in bit-
ter words:

Timon will to the woods; where he shall find
The unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.
The gods confound, -- hear me, ye good gods all, --
The Athenians, both within and out that wall!
And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow
To the whole race of mankind, high and low! 8

There was abundance of proof in The Spanish Tragedy for
the insanity of both Isabella and Hieronimo. Manifestations
of Isabella's madness reached their height in her wild run-
ning and calling for her son, Horatio, whereas her wild

6Ibid., 11. 114-118. 7Ibid., IV, 1, 3-10, 21.
8Ibid., 11. 35-40.
imagination reached its height in inconsistent mutterings:

My soul hath silver wings,
That mounts me up unto the highest heavens;
To heav'n; ay, there sits my Horatio,
Beck'd with a troop of fiery cherubins,
Dancing about his newly heal'd wounds,
Singing sweet hymns and chanting heav'nly notes;
Here harmony to greet his innocence,
That died, ay died, a mirror in our days.
But say, where shall I find the men, the murderers,
That slew Horatio? Whither shall I run
To find them out that murderous my son?9

We note above the mixture of the incoherent, the coherent,
the real, and the poetic.

Isabella, like Ophelia, showed a kind, tender concern
for others even in her wildest ravings:

Dear Hieronimo, come in a-doors;
0, seek not means so to increase thy sorrow.10

When Hieronimo replied that he was very merry, Isabella pite-
ously asked:

How? be merry here, be merry here?
Is not this the place, and this the very tree,
Where my Horatio died, where he was murder'd?11

Later Isabella returned with a weapon and cut down the ar-
bour as she said;

I will revenge myself upon this place,
Where thus they murder'd my belov'd son.12

Manifestations of Hieronimo's madness were obvious the
time he asked Jaques and Pedro to meet him at midnight with

10 Ibid., xiia, 953-954. 11 Ibid., 11, 958-960.
12 Ibid., IV, ii, 197-198.
lighted torches. His distracted words of grief for his murdered son were heart-rending:

I pry through every crevice of each wall,
Look on each tree, and search through every brake,
Beat at the bushes, stamp our grandam earth,
Dive in the water, and stare up to heaven;
Yet cannot I behold my son Horatio.13

When Hieronimo asked why they had the torches in the dark, the servants explained that he had commanded them to meet him. Typical of the mentally unbalanced person, Hieronimo did not remember:

No, no, you are deceiv'd! not I; -- you are deceiv'd! Was I so mad to bid you light your torches now? Light me your torches at the mid of noon, When - as the sun-god rides in all his glory; Light me your torches then.14

Pedro explained to Hieronimo that the heavens were gracious but that his misery made him speak irrationally. Hieronimo retorted wildly:

Villain, thou liest! and thou dost naught But tell me I am mad; thou liest, I am not mad! I know thee to be Pedro, and he Jacques. I'll prove it to thee; and were I mad, how could I?15

In the second scene of Act III Hieronimo received a strange letter explaining the guilt of Lorenzo and Balthasar. Observers noted new plots with one crime following another. It seemed that a bloodthirsty drama was well on its

13Ibid., III, xiii, 915-919.
14Ibid., II. 924-927.
15Ibid., II. 940-943.
way and that Hieronimo’s madness was more and more obvious.

Scene xi was full of his wild and emotional ravings:

'Tis neither as you think, nor as you think,
Nor as you think; you’re wide all!
These slippers are not mine, they were my son Horatio’s;
My son! and what’s a son? A thing begot
Within a pair of minutes — thereabout;
A lump bred up in darkness, and doth serve
To balance these light creatures we call women;
And, at nine month’s ends, creeps forth to light,
What is there yet in a son,
To make a father dote, rave, or run mad?

Ay, ay, ay; and then time steals on, and steals, and
steals, till violence leaps forth
Like thunder wrapped in a ball of fire,
And so doth bring confusion to them all.16

In the same scene the two Portuguese inquired the way to
Lorenzo’s house. Hieronimo’s incoherent raving made no sense
to the strangers;

There is a path upon your left-hand side,
That leadeth from a guilty conscience
Unto a forest of distrust and fear —
A darksome place, and dangerous to pass;
There shall you meet with melancholy thoughts,
Whose belial humours if you but uphold,
It will conduct you to Despair and Death —

There in a brazen cauldron, fix’d by Jove,
In his fell wrath, upon a sulphur flame,
Yourselves shall find Lorenzo bathing him
In boiling lead and blood of innocents.17

One of Hieronimo’s most poignant mad scenes was the
despairing time when he entered with a poniard in one hand
and a rope in the other:

16 Ibid., xi, 710-719, 753-756.
17 Ibid., ii. 768-774, 781-784.
Now, sir, perhaps I come and see the king;  
The king sees me, and faint would bear my suit;  
Why, is not this a strange and self-seen thing,  
That standers-by with toys should strike me mute?

Hieronimo then talked about a judge sitting upon a seat of  
steel and molten brass and holding between his teeth a fire-  
brand that led unto a lake where hell stood. He seemed to  
think this judge would help revenge Horatio's death. His  
deluded mind brought varied imaginings. One minute he would  
fling his dagger and halter away; then he would take them up  
again. Foremost in his mind was the idea of revenge:

    Soft and fair, not so;  
    For if I hang or kill myself, let's know  
    Who will revenge Horatio's murder then?

In keeping with the imaginings of the deluded mind,  
Hieronimo indirectly admitted his awareness of delusions  
and hallucinations as he talked with the painter whose son  
had also been murdered:

    How dost take it? art thou not sometimes mad?  
    Is there no tricks that comes before thine eyes?

The lines quoted above also bring out the mark of madness  
that shows inconsistency in awareness of the disease. It is  
to be remembered that Hieronimo told his servants that he  
was not mad; but here he admitted his awareness of mad symp-  
toms.

\[18\text{Ibid.}, \text{xii}, 790-793.\]  
\[19\text{Ibid.}, \text{ll. 805-808.}\]  
\[20\text{Ibid.}, \text{ll. 1007-1008.}\]
Hieronimo arranged with the painter to draw him like old Priam of Troy:

Make me curse, make me rave, make me cry, make me mad, make me well again, make me curse hell, invoke heaven, and in the end leave me in a trance -- and so forth.21

The violence and inconsistency of his outburst to the painter continued:

O no, there is no end; the end is death and madness!
As I am never better than when I am mad; then methinks I am a brave fellow; then I do wonders; but reason abuseth me, and there's the torment, there's the hell. At the last, sir, bring me to one of the murderers; were he as strong as Hector, thus would I tear and drag him up and down.22

It is notable that after Hieronimo's incoherent ravings he could talk rationally of his paramount desire for revenge. He even admitted that all times did not fit acts of revenge and that he must wait for the propitious time.

As he pretended to read his book, he meditated and planned:

Thus therefore will I rest me in unrest,
Dissembling quiet in unquietness,
Not seeming that I know their villainies,
That my simplicity may make them think,
That ignorantly I will let all slip;
For ignorance, I wot, and well they know,
Remedium malorum inera est.

.......

No, no, Hieronimo, thou must enjoin
Thine eyes to observation, and thy tongue
To milder speeches than thy spirit affords,
Thy heart to patience, and thy hands to rest,
Thy cap to courtesy, and thy knee to bow,
Till to revenge thou know, when, where and how.23

21Ibid., xii s, 1050-1053.  22Ibid., 11. 1055-1060.

23Ibid., 11. 1089-1095, 1099-1104.
Frederick, the raving madman of The Duchess of Malfi, was a victim of delusions and fearful imaginings. He wrestled with his own shadow, he beat his doctor, and he thought himself a soldier.

When Cardinal called for help, Ferdinand, whose reason was completely dethroned by then, rushed into the scene demanding a fresh horse. His poor, deluded mind thought a battle was in progress. Demanding that they yield, Ferdinand scuffled with the Cardinal and wounded him and also gave Bosola his death-wound as he muttered incoherently:

Now you're brave fellows. Caesar's fortune was harder than Pompey's; Caesar died in the arms of prosperity, Pompey at the feet of disgrace. You both died in the field. The pain's nothing; pain many times is taken away with the apprehension of greater, as the toothache with the sight of a barber that comes to pull it out. That's philosophy for you.24

Just as these words were finished, Bosola killed Ferdinand, whose dying words showed rational thinking:

Give me some wet hay;
I am broken-winded.
I do account this world but a dog-kennel;
I will vault credit and affect high pleasures
Beyond death.25

Delusions and inconsistent ravings were definite manifestations of Frederick's madness until the tragic end.

The once noble and personable Cornelia, the mother of Vittoria and Flamineo in The White Devil, became an object

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24 John Webster, The Duchess of Malfi, V, v, 71-74.

25 Ibid., II. 77-79.
of despair. One is reminded of Ophelia's frenzied state as he listens to Cornelia's incoherent mutterings and wild songs of lament:

Call for the robin-red-breast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.
Call unto his funeral dole
The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole,
To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm;
But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
For with his nails he'll dig them up again.26

Cornelia, who mistook her own son for the Gravedigger, wildly scattered flowers. Summing the similarities between Ophelia and Cornelia, we find that both dressed fantastically, followed the maniacal instinct for flowers, intermingled coherence with incoherence, and sang wanton ditties. Both shared the weakness of not being able to face normally the calamities of life. Cornelia's inconsistent utterances showed concern for her children:

This rosemary is withered; pray get fresh,
I would have these herbs grow up in his grave,
When I am dead and rotten.
Reach the boys;
I'll tie a garland here about his head;
'T will keep my boy from lightning. This sheet
I have kept this twenty year, and every day
Hellow'd it with my prayers; I did not think
He should have worn it.27

Cornelia again called for flowers which she threw to her listeners as she raved incoherently:

27 Ibid., ll. 108-120.
You're very welcome:
There's rosemary for you; and rue for you; --
Heart's-ease for you; I pray make much of it;
I have left more for myself. 28

Again the element of reasonable thought entered into her
wandering mind as she seemed to play on the word Heart's-
ease.

Flamineo, whom his mother did not recognize, was forced
to listen to her inconsistent mutterings and her tragic ditties as Larentes had been forced to listen to Ophelia's. Cor-
nelie talked about old superstitions concerning screech-
owls, strange singing crickets, and yellow spots on the hand
as signs of death. Abruptly she said:

Cow-slip water is
good for memory: pray buy me three ounces of 't. 29

Abruptly Cornelie's incoherent ravings ended with these
words:

Now the ware is gone, we may shut up shop.
Bless you all, good people. 30

At this point Flamineo, the usually imperturbable, wicked
son, felt compassion for this poor distracted figure who
was once his devoted mother.

Orlando's furious madness was manifested in various and
violent ways. He grabbed by the heel the shepherd who had
verified the false story of Angelica's and Medor's love.

28Ibid., II. 126-130. 29Ibid., II. 150-151.
30Ibid., II. 182-184.
Later he entered with his victim's leg. This violent act was followed by mad ravings and delusions:

Villains, provide me straight a Lions skin, 
Thou seest I now am mightie Hercules: 
Looke wheres my massive club upon my necke, 
I must to hell, to seeke for Medor and Angelica, 
Or else I dye. 
You that are the rest, get you quickly away, 
Provide ye horses all of burnisht gold, 
Saddles of corke because Ile have them light, 
For Charlemaine the Great is vp in armes. 
And Arthur with a crue of Britons comes 
To seeke for Medor and Angelica.31

In the first scene of Act III Orlando entered attired like a madman. He said his Angelica was dead and buried, and he wanted Orgalio to cry. Then he ordered him not to cry and beat him:

Why slave, wilt thou weep for Medors Anglica, 
thou must laugh for her. . . . I must to hell, 
to seeke for Medor and Angelica.32

Orlando's incessant ravings were typical of the madmen:

Woods, trees, leaves; leaves, trees, woods; tria sequuntur tria. Ha Minerua, salve, God morrow how doo you to day? Tell me sweet Goddessse, will Jove send Mercury to Calipso to let mee goe.33

Abruptly Orlando began saying that Angelica was dead and buried. When the clown Rafe called him a madman, Orlando beat him. Beating his associates seemed to be one of Orlando's chief manifestations.

32 Ibid., III, I, 879-880.
33 Ibid., II. 843-846.
To sack and raze imaginary Babylon was Orlando's second delusion. In his soldier role he fought and killed Brandemart, but his poor deluded mind caused him to think Angelica, whom he does not recognize, a brave knight responsible for the successful combat. In keeping with the wandering mind of a lunatic, Orlando suddenly ordered Orgalio to run to Charlemoine to get him to find Angelica.

True to the antics of a madman, Orlando often changed moods and roles. It is to be recalled that he had imagined himself as Hercules and later as a soldier. In Act IV he entered as a poet, still talking about his fair Angelica. Feeling confused, Orlando lay down to talk to the stars. Orlando commanded the fiddler to play for Orlando, "Then play a fit of mirth to my Lord." But when Orlando awoke, he beat the fiddler. It was notable, however, that wine, soft music, and restful sleep miraculously changed our furious madman to sanity again.

A Waiting-Gentlewoman gave the first account of Lady Macbeth's manifestations of madness:

Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her night-gown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon 't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.  

34 Abid., IV, ii, 1180.

35 William Shakespeare, Macbeth, V, i, 4-9.
The Doctor asked what she had heard Lady Macbeth say; but since the Gentlewoman had no one to confirm her report, she refused to repeat Lady Macbeth's words. Suddenly Lady Macbeth appeared, walking in her sleep. She was carrying a lighted taper, and the Gentlewoman explained that she commanded continual light. They continued their close observation of her open eyes, her unconscious mental state, the rubbing of her hands, and her heavy sighing. Her most unfortunate words revealed her secret sufferings. Her shifting thoughts were typical manifestations:

The thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now? -- What, will these hands ne'er be clean? -- No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.  

The Gentlewoman's comment was most apt: "She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that; heaven knows what she has known."  

One of the best portrayals of Bethlem Monastery and its inmates was given by Father Anselmo himself. While Gespasa Trebozzi, the Duke of Milan, and his companions were waiting at Bethlem Monastery for sundown -- at which time they hoped to stop the wedding of Infelice and Hippolito -- they felt time heavy on their hands. They asked Father Anselmo for permission to see the lunatics. Anselmo not only welcomed them but also explained to them the various types and

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36 Ibid., 11. 47-50.  
37 Ibid., 11. 53-54.
manifestations of madness:

There are of mad men, as there are of tame,
All humour'd not alike; we have here some,
So spish and fantastic, play with a feather,
And, though 't would grieve a soul to see God's image
So blemish'd and defac'd, yet do they act
Such antic and such pretty lunacies,
That spite of sorrow they will make you smile.
Others again we have like hungry lions,
Fierce as wild-bulls, untameable as flies,
And these have oftentimes from strangers' sides
Snatched rapiers suddenly, and done much harm.
Whom if you'll see, you must be weaponless.38

This above quotation might be used for a threefold purpose; it explained definite manifestations of madness; it showed both the tragic and comic aspects of madness; and it developed a point in the plot, for Father Anselmo craftily managed to take the weapons from the Duke and his companions. This heightened the romantic interest, for Father Anselmo was further aiding the lovers.

No mad character of Elizabethan drama could be considered comparable to Lear in different manifestations of madness; in fact, no play gave mad folk greater exaltation than did Shakespeare's King Lear. Some dramatists use madness as a subsidiary element; others, as a definite part of plot development; but King Lear is almost madness itself. The atmosphere of gloom is expressed by Lear himself in early lines of the play when he admits the weaknesses of old age:

Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.
Give me the map there. Know that we have divided
Into three our kingdom; and 't is our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburden'd crawl toward death. 39

In fact, the whole play centers around the madness of the
old king and his ravings. The dramatic effect of the play
is heightened by the feigned madness of Edgar which en-
hanced the interest in the subplot. As Thorndike expresses
it, "The assumed madness of Edgar becomes an accompaniment
for the real madness of Lear." 40 "This is the tragedy of
life as Shakespeare saw it, and the cry of bewilderment and
agony seems to come from the poet's heart." 41 The portrayal
of Lear's insanity is truly one of the mysteries of Shake-
speare's art and genius.

Early manifestations of despair are evident in the first
act. One recalls the unpleasant situation when the Fool's
curious and poignant wit had annoyed Goneril so much that
she revealed her true, malicious nature. The outburst was
extremely disturbing to her father, who immediately began
planning to go to Regan, his other daughter. As the Fool
pretended on, Lear became conscious of the remorse he felt
for his unkindness to Cordelia. At the end of Act I Lear
seemed to be aware of approaching madness as he shouted:

39 William Shakespeare, King Lear, I, 1, 29-34.
40 Thorndike, op. cit., p. 167. 41 Ibid., p. 170.
0, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!  
Keep me in temper; I would not be mad.\[42\]

As Lear's self-control lessened, his alternating moods of 
tenderness and reproach prompted his ravings. He prayed 
for patience:

You heavens, give me that patience, patience I 
need!\[43\]

His state of mind and speech definitely showed distortion. 
Lear's anguish reached its height when Regan manifested her 
cruel nature:

You think I'll weep;

No, I'll not weep.
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flews.
Or ere I'll weep. O fool, I shall go mad!\[44\]

Becoming hysterical, Lear rushed out into the night of fierce 
weather. From this point on, scholars conclude that Lear 
is really mad. The storm furnished a dramatic background 
for Lear's passion:

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!  
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.  
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;  
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,  
You owe me no subscription; then let fall  
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,  
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.  
But yet I call you servile ministers,  
That will with two pernicious daughters join  
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head  
So old and white as this! O! O! 't is foul!\[45\]

\[43\]Ibid., II, iv, 265-266.  
\[44\]Ibid., II. 276-280.  
\[45\]Ibid., III, ii, 14-24.
A clear view of the manifestations of Lear's madness came from the mouth of Cordelia as she consulted with a doctor:

Alack, 'tis he; why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank furmer and furrow-weeds,
With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cockoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;
Search every sore in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye.\(^{46}\)

When Cordelia asked the doctor what could be done to restore her father's bereaved sense, the doctor explained:

Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks.\(^{47}\)

Cordelia urged the doctor to do all he could for her father's distress.

Lear finally reappeared; he was fantastically dressed with wild flowers. He made a pathetic figure; he was wild and confused; yet reason was mixed with madness as he raved:

Through tatter'd clothes great vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.
None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em;
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal th' accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not.
Now, now, now, now!
Pull off my boots; harder, harder; so.\(^{48}\)

\(^{46}\)Ibid., IV, iv, 1-8. \(^{47}\)Ibid., Ii. 12-13. \(^{48}\)Ibid., vi, 142-151.
His revings shifted from one inconsistent idea to others just as incoherent:

Nature's above art in that respect. There's your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper; draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will do't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills. 0, well flown, bird! I' the clout, i' the clout! Hewgh! Give the word.

What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears; see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear; change places, and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar.

It was a great relief when Lear was finally brought to Cordelia's tent in the French camp by means of a chair carried by servants. He awoke to soft, sweet music and thought Cordelia was a spirit:

You do me wrong to take me out o' th' grave.
Thou art a soul in bliss.

The doctor suggested that Lear was not fully awake and should be left alone. When he did awake, he was aware of his infirmity:

Pray, do not mock me,
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.

But he recognized Cordelia, who was tender and kind. The

\[49\text{Ibid.}, 11. 102-108, 164-169.\]
\[50\text{Ibid.}, vii, 45-46.\]
\[51\text{Ibid.}, 11. 59-63.\]
doctor comforted Cordelia by telling her Lear's rage was killed, but he advised that he not be questioned more. The scene was filled with pathos as Lear said:

You must bear with me.
Pray you now, forget and forgive; I am old and foolish.\(^{52}\)

In concluding the study of the different manifestations of madness, we choose *King Lear* as the outstanding mad play and Lear himself as the representative madman because of his various and manifold manifestations. Lear's revelations showed varying moods and passions. One recalls that as Lear's self-control grew less and less, he was extremely moody. At times he would be angry, sarcastic, hysterical; at other times he would be tender and loving. He would respond to the least show of love, but he would again retaliate with bitter reproaches. Lear would rave and rave, but he became calm at intervals. His speeches were sometimes poetic, reasonable, and impressive. True to the antics of a madman, Lear dressed fantastically and followed the mad instinct in scattering wild flowers; his actions were often wild and fearfully confused. The wanderings of his deluded mind were evident in his imaginary trial of his cruel daughters and in his delusion as a philosopher. As a madman Lear was superb. Only Shakespeare could have artistically revealed Lear's manifold manifestations in such a way as to

\(^{52}\)Ibid., ll. 84-85.
establish him as one of the sublime figures of tragic drama.

Summarizing the manifestations of madness, one would list the following: strange appearance, bad behavior, varying moods and uncontrolled passions, fantastic dress, wild instinct for wearing and scattering flowers, pathetic songs, inconsistent and incoherent mutterings, delusions and hallucinations, intermingling of the coherent with the incoherent and the poetic with the real, wild and emotional ravings, and confused, tragic, and often violent actions.
CHAPTER IV

PRETENDED MADNESS

Elizabethan dramatists usually used pretended madness for the purpose of creating the right dramatic effect or for lending gruesome or peculiar atmosphere. If feigned madness was not a dramatic device, it was a part of the plot. If one doubts the effective use of feigned madness, let him scrutinize the pretenders -- Hamlet, Edgar in *King Lear*, Bellafront in *The Honest Whore*, Flamineo in *The White Devil*, Titus Andronicus, and Malvolio, who is accused of madness. Hamlet's pretense was so realistic that many critics maintain that he was actually mad. Edgar's feigned role of the Bedlam beggar was wonderfully impressive. Bellafront and Flamineo, who pretended insanity for relatively short periods, did so for completely selfish purposes. Titus Andronicus feigned madness as a method for seeking a horrible revenge. Malvolio, the butt of a joke, had pretended madness thrust upon him, for he was victimized by the pretense of others. However, each pretender was delightfully entertaining in his particular role, and assumed madness itself added color and pageantry to the dramas.

There was no pretense of madness more effective than
that of Hamlet; in fact, his pretended madness was so good that many still contend that Hamlet was really mad. For years and years scholars have argued the question: was Hamlet's madness real or pretended? It seems consistent to agree with the proponents of the theory that Hamlet's madness was feigned.

The romantic tragedy of Hamlet represented the conflict between an intelligent, sensitive individual and an antagonizing world. His inner struggle seemed to conflict with the expected action of revenge; his melancholy moods were the natural outcome of these dual forces. One must remember that Hamlet's mental condition was the outcome of the circumstances of his environment; his father's sudden death, his mother's hasty marriage, his interviews with his father's ghost, and the proof of the guilt of his uncle. These early existing conditions and Hamlet's melancholy temperament led to his pretense of madness for a purpose.

In the fifth scene of Act I Hamlet had just seen his father's ghost and had listened to his father's demand for revenge. Horatio felt the wondrous strangeness of the occurrences of the night, and he was sympathetic with Hamlet as he listened to Hamlet's strange words announcing his plan for feigning madness:

Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself --
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on --
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As "Well, well, we know," or "We could, and if we
would,"
Or "If we list to speak," or "There be, and if
they might,"
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know ought of me; -- this not to do,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
Swear.\textsuperscript{1}

One cannot but be impressed by Hamlet's pathetic words that revealed the theme of the tragedy:

\begin{quotation}
0 cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right.\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quotation}

The first portrayal of Hamlet's feigned madness was given by Ophelia to Polonius, her father. She entered frightened and explained her fears to her father:

\begin{quotation}
My lord, as I was sewing in my closet, 
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd;
No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle;
Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors, he comes before me.\textsuperscript{3}
\end{quotation}

When Polonius asked whether the Prince was mad for her love, Ophelia answered: "My lord, I do not know, but truly I do fear it."\textsuperscript{4} Ophelia continued to explain what Hamlet had done, and said:

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., ll. 189-190.
\item Ibid., II, i, 77-84.
\item Ibid., ll. 84-85.
\end{enumerate}
He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
Then, he to the length of all his arm,
And, with his other hand, thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head, thus waving up and down,
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being: that done, he lets me go;
And with his head over his shoulder turn'd
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And to the last bended their light on me. 5

When Polonius asked Ophelia if she had spoken unkindly to
Hamlet, she replied thus:

No, my good lord; but as you did command,
I did repel his letters and denied
His access to me. 6

Feeling confident that Hamlet's love for Ophelia had driven
him mad, Polonius rushed to tell the king.

The King described Hamlet's changed personality to
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and invited them to be Hamlet's
merry companions:

Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,
Since not th' exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from the understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both,
That, being of so young days brought up with him,
And since so neighbour'd to his youth and humour,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time; so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
So much as from occasions you may glean,

5Ibid., 11. 87-100. 6Ibid., 11. 107-109.
Whether ought to us unknown, afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.⁷

Referring to her changed son, the Queen added her word of welcome:

And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. Go, some of ye,
And bring the gentleman where Hamlet is.⁸

Polonius told the King that he had found the cause of Hamlet's lunacy. When the King suggested to Gertrude that Polonius had found the source of her son's distemper, the Queen's reply was rather significant:

I doubt it is no other but the main;
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.⁹

As soon as the King finished his interview with the ambassadors of Norway, he and his Queen listened to Polonius' words:

Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad;
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness
What is 't but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go.¹⁰

The Queen interrupted to ask for more matter, with less art.

Polonius continued:

Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true 'tis pity,
And pity 'tis 't is true; a foolish figure!
But farewell it, for I will use no art,
Mad let us grant him then; and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,

⁷Ibid., 11, 4-18. ⁸Ibid., 11, 35-37.
⁹Ibid., 11, 56-57. ¹⁰Ibid., 11, 90-94.
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause:
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpends,
I have a daughter -- have whilst she is mine --
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this; now gather, and surmise.\(^{11}\)

Polonius read the love letter, and then he went on to explain
that he had discovered his daughter in accepting Hamlet's
advances:

"Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;
This must not be." And then I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens,
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
And he, repulsed -- a short tale to make --
Fell into sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for.\(^{12}\)

While the King and Queen were considering the possibility
of this cause for Hamlet's condition, Polonius suggested
that he and the King hide behind an arras and eavesdrop
upon Hamlet and Ophelia when they encountered each other.

Later Polonius spoke to Hamlet, who had entered reading
a book. When Polonius asked Hamlet if he knew him, Hamlet
called him a fishmonger. His incoherent mutterings seemed
typical of the madman:

For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog,
being a good kissing carrion, -- Have you a daughter?

Let her not walk i' th' sun; conception is a

\(^{11}\)Ibid., ll. 96-108. \(^{12}\)Ibid., ll. 141-151.
blessing, but not as your daughter may conceive.
Friend, look to 't.  

When Polonius asked what Hamlet was reading, Hamlet answered:

Slanders, sir; for the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards, that their faces are wrinkl'd, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams; all which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir, should be old as I am, if, like a crab, you should go backward.  

In the above lines Hamlet mixed the incoherent with the wise; Polonius felt that there was method in his madness and left Hamlet to contrive the means of a meeting between the supposed lovers.

Hamlet's interview with Ophelia was indeed strange; he admitted he had loved Ophelia once, and then contradicted himself:

You should not have believ'd me, for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it; I lov'd you not.  

When Ophelia admitted that she was deceived, Hamlet gave her a strange command:

Get thee to a nunnery; why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offenses at my beck that I have thoughts to put them in. What should

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15Ibid., III, 1, 118-120.
such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery.16

When the interview was finished, Ophelia felt frightened and sad; Polonius was baffled; but the King was convinced that love was not the cause of Hamlet's strange behavior.

Love! his affections do not that way tend; Nor what he spoke, though it lack'd form a little, Was not like madness. There's something in his soul O'er which his melancholy sits on brood, And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose Will be some danger; which for to prevent, I have in quick determination Thus set it down; he shall with speed to England, For the demand of our neglected tribute.17

But before the King could carry out his plans, many things happened. Hamlet went to his mother's room; there he, in violent outbursts, reproached the Queen bitterly. A quick response to the Queen's cry for help betrayed Polonius, who was hiding behind the arras. Thinking it was the King, Hamlet killed Polonius. The Queen gave the King an account of Hamlet's actions:

Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend Which is the mightier; in his lawless fit, Behind the arras hearing something stir, He whips his rapier out, and cried "a rat, a rat!" And, in this brainish apprehension, kills The unseen good old man.18

When the King inquired where Hamlet had gone, the Queen explained:

16 Ibid., II. 122-133.
17 Ibid., II. 169-178.
18 Ibid., IV, I, 7-12.
To draw apart the body he hath kill'd;
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.19

A new development came with the play that Hamlet hoped
would be a true test of the King's guilt; and it really
worked. Hamlet, in talking to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
before the play, welcomed them, but sarcastically predicted
that his uncle-father and aunt-mother would be deceived.
When Guildenstern questioned Hamlet further, he explained:

I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is
southerly
I know a hawk from a handsaw.20

This statement seemed climactic, for afterwards Hamlet ap-
peared to act more than to pretend.

In summation, one might say that under the mask of mad-
ness Hamlet could observe and speak while he waited for his
opportunity for revenge. It is to be recalled that Hamlet
decided to put on antic disposition on the first night he
encountered the ghost. Hamlet first feigned madness be-
fore Ophelia who described Hamlet's peculiar appearance and
conduct to her father. He had suddenly appeared before
Ophelia bareheaded, carelessly dressed, and frightened in
manner. His face was pale, his knees were knocking together,
and his look was piteous. He had taken her by the wrist and
held her hard. With peculiar gestures he had perused her

19Ibid., II, 11, 24-27.  20Ibid., II, 11, 396-398.
face. Sighing heavily and glaring steadfastly at Ophelia, Hamlet had walked blindly from the room.

It is interesting to note that the King speaks of Hamlet's transformation by saying he was neither the outward nor the inner man he once was. These words reveal the effectiveness of Hamlet's pretense.

To Polonius, Hamlet's feigned madness was most real. In the first place, Hamlet called Polonius a fiskmonger. His incoherent mutterings seemed typical of the madman; and, true to type, Hamlet mixed the incoherent with the coherent. Polonius was positive that Hamlet's madness was caused by his love for Ophelia.

Hamlet's outbursts to Ophelia seemed mad indeed. He urged her to get to a nunnery, and he talked wildly and incoherently of his not having loved Ophelia and of not having given her gifts. Then he admitted that he had loved her once; but his paramount request was that she get to a nunnery. It seemed logical that Ophelia thought a noble mind was surely overthrown.

The outbursts that Hamlet made against the Queen showed intense and uncontrolled passion as he condemned her bitterly for her lack of respect for his dead father and for her sensuousness. He was so violent that she feared his madness and called for help.

The most intense and uncontrolled display of passion, whether pretended or real, was expressed in Hamlet's behavior
at Ophelia's grave. The Queen described his actions thus:

This is mere madness and thus a while the fit will work on him.21

The reader can easily see both the real Hamlet and the pretender. The real Hamlet was portrayed in his famous soliloquies and in conversations with Horatio; however, one cannot forget Hamlet's role of assumed madness, for it was depicted with true artistry.

In garnering ideas from Shakespearean scholars, we find varied opinions on Hamlet's assumed madness. Mr. Peers writes: "There is no pretender who does the thing so well as Hamlet -- as a masterpiece of literary art no character can touch him."22 "Hamlet receives the command of the paternal ghost but feigns madness,"23 Stoll says in confirmation. Mr. Brandes reaffirms this idea:

Hamlet assumes madness in order to lull the suspicions of the man who has murdered his father and wrongfully usurped his throne; but under this mask of madness he gives evidence of rare intelligence, deep feeling, peculiar subtlety, mordant satire, exalted irony, and penetrating knowledge of human nature.24

In Hamlet Shakespeare used assumed madness as the means for speaking sharp and bitter truths.

Richard Moulton elaborated upon the relief element in Hamlet as he upheld the theory of pretended madness:

21 Ibid., V, 1, 308-309. 22 Peers, op. cit., p. 181.
23 Edgar Stoll, Shakespeare Studies, p. 135.
Hamlet was never mad: the poet's treatment is so
clear on this point that I can only express as-
tonishment that any different view should have
crept into criticism. . . . 25

Moulton explained the purpose of Hamlet's madness.

The hysterical incoherence of the supposed madness
is used to mock king and courtier, and to mock even
Ophelia herself, whom in the general hollowness of
all appearances Hamlet has come to doubt. 26

A beautiful tribute is given to Shakespeare for superb
artistry in handling Hamlet's pretense:

The task was a grateful one; for earnestness cuts the
deeper the more it sounds like jest or triviality,
and wisdom appears doubly wise when it is thrown
out lightly under the mask of folly, instead of pe-
dantically asserting itself as the fruit of reflec-
tion and experience. Difficult for anyone else, to
Shakespeare the enterprise was merely alluring; it
was, in fact, to do what no other had as yet suc-
cceeded in doing -- to draw a genius. Shakespeare
had not far to go for his model, and genius would
seem doubly effective when it wore the mask of
madness, now speaking through that mouthpiece, and
again unmasking itself in impassioned monologues. 27

Edgar's pretended madness as a part of the plot of King
Lear is one of the best examples of pretense in English
drama. Edgar resorted to feigned madness as defense against
Edmund's treachery and his father's wrath. Realizing his
precarious situation, Edgar found a measure of safety in
the role of a wandering Bedlam beggar:

25Moulton, op. cit., p. 191.
26Ibid., p. 193.
27Brandes, op. cit., p. 362.
While I may escape,
I will preserve myself; and am bethought
To take the besest 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 in knots;
And with presented nakedness outface
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,
Sometimes with lunatic bens, sometime with prayers,
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!
That's something yet; Edgar I nothing am. 28

When Edgar entered again in Act III, he was disguised as
a madman. Here on the heath, near a novel, Edgar encountered
Lear, Kent, and the Fool in the midst of a storm. One real-
izes Edgar's clever pretense as he listens to the words ut-
tered by this wandering Bedlam creature:

Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom the foul
fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through
ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath
leid knives under his pillow and helters in his pew;
set reatabane by his porridge; made him proud of heart,
to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inch
bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor.
Bless thy five wits! Tom's a-cold. 0, do de, do de,
do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, starblasting, and
taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend
vexes. 29

Edgar's ravings gave a sinister picture of Bedlam life:

Poor Tom! that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the
tadpole, the wall-newt and the water; that in the
fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats

28 William Shakespeare, King Lear, II, iii, 5-22.
29 Ibid., III, iv, 50-59.
cow-dung for sallets; swallows the old rat and the
ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of the standing
pool; who is whipp'd from tithing to tithing, and
stock-punish'd, and imprison'd; who hath had three
suits to his back, six shirts to his body;
Horse to ride, and weapon to wear;
But mice and rats, and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year. 30

Later Edgar participated in Lear's imaginary trial of
his daughters. Edgar was the robed man of justice. As
Edgar realized the piteous condition of the mad king, he
said to himself:

My tears begin to take his part so much,
They war my counterfeiting. 31

Again we see that Edgar's naturally smooth manner and
his cool, calculating mind made his feigned madness an as-
set as he kindly attended his blind father and guided him on
his way to Dover. When Edgar noticed Gloucester's bleed-
ing eyes, he was touched; and he managed to be a real prop
to his father even though he was disguised as a Bedlam beg-
gar.

As the action of the tragedy of King Lear fell rapidly
to the denouement, Edgar explained his disguise to Albany,
who asked how he had learned about his father's troubles:

By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;
And when 'tis told, 0 that my heart would burst!
The bloody proclamation to escape,
That follow'd me so near -- 0, our lives' sweetness!
That we the pain of death would hourly die,
Rather than die at once! -- taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags; t' assume a semblance

30 ibid., 11, 118-127. 31 ibid., vi, 58-59.
That very dogs disdain'd; and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, saiv'd him from despair;
Never -- O fault! -- reveal'd myself unto him,
Until some half-hour past, when I was armed.32

Many dramatists have used feigned madness for effect
in a scene or two, but Shakespeare here showed his genius
in depicting the Bedlam creature, not as a dramatic device
but as a definite part of the unforgettable plot of King
Lear.

Interest is drawn to our only female pretender, Bella-
front, in Dekker's *The Honest Whore*. Her pretense of mad-
ness was made for strictly selfish reasons, but it definitely
added dramatic interest to the last act. When Bellafront
entered the scene at Bethlem Monastery as an inmate, she
contributed an element of suspense and surprise. The Duke
inquired about her. Father Anselmo explained that she was
a new inmate who still had the freedom of the house. Al-
though some of the men had known Bellafront intimately, they
denied it. To their denial Bellafront retorted:

Then you are an ass, -- and you an ass, -- and you
an ass, -- for I know you.33

Bellafront insisted on telling fortunes, and Father An-
selmo consented. It was her fortune-telling that revealed
the disguises of Hippolito and Infelice to the Duke and his

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32Ibid., V, iii, 181-193.
33Dekker, op. cit., V, ii, 372-373.
group. Hippolito explained that they were already married; Anselmo, kneeling, admitted his share in the marriage and reconciliation; for he had hoped to bring about peace and happiness for all. Giving the couple his blessing, the Duke added a command to Father Anselmo:

*Rise, friar, you may be glad you can make madmen tame, and tame men mad.*

But the drama does not end with the Duke's blessings to his own children. Bellafront, the pretender, asked the Duke for a reward for her fortune-telling. One can imagine Matheo's amazement when Bellafront confronted him with these words:

*I had a fine jewel once, a very fine jewel, and that naughty man stole it away from me; -- a very fine and a rich jewel.*

The Duke told Matheo that he must make amends for Bellafront's lunacy by marrying her. Matheo was astounded at the Duke's request that he marry a madwoman. After the Duke suggested that Father Anselmo could bring Bellafront to her wits, Matheo reluctantly said he would marry her. Again Bellafront added the desired dramatic effect:

*I thank your grace, -- Matheo, thou art mine. I am not mad, but put on this disguise only for you, my lord; for you can tell. Much wonder of me; but you are gone; farewell. Matheo, thou didst first turn my soul black, now make it white again.*

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I do protest,
I'm pure as fire now; chaste as Cynthia's breast.36

In The White Devil one finds an example of feigned madness in Flamino's attempt to divert suspicion from himself by pretense of distraction. Flamino will be remembered as the unscrupulous brother of Vittoria. When Brachiano paid a visit to Camillo and Vittoria, he became infatuated with Vittoria. Flamino, who was weak, selfish, and unscrupulous, encouraged his sister to meet Brachiano; thus he became her accomplice. Strangely Brachiano's wife and Vittoria's husband met sudden deaths. Vittoria was apprehended, tried, and sentenced; but even before the trial Flamino was heard talking to himself:

I do put on this feigned garb of mirth
To gull suspicion.37

After Vittoria was given a sentence of confinement in a house of convertites, Flamino became a sound man again; however, he still found feigned madness quite convenient at times:

Because now I cannot counterfeit a whining passion for the death of my lady, I will feign a mad humor for the disgrace of my sister; and that will keep off idle questions. Treason's tongue hath a villainous palsy in't; I will not talk to any man, hear no man, and for a time appear a politic mad-man.38

36Ibid., II, 508-516.
38Ibid., I, 531-540.
Carrying out his idea of diverting all suspicion from himself, Flamino intermittently feigned madness. As he stepped from the Monticello mansion into the courtyard, he raved distractedly:

We endure the strokes like anvils or hard steel,
Till pain itself make us no pain to feel,
Who shall do me right now?
Is this the end of service?
I'd rather go weed garlic; travel through France,
and be mine own ostler; wear sheepskin linings, or shoes that stink of blacking; be entered into the list of the forty thousand pedlars in Poland. Would I had rotted in some surgeon's house at Venice, built upon the pox as well as on piles, ere I had served Brachiano!39

When the ambassador offered comfort, Flamino expressed the wish that he were a Jew:

There are not Jews enough, priests enough, nor gentlemen enough.40

Flamino further carried out his feigned madness by striking Lodovico. It is to be recalled that useless and pointless bickering and fighting were typical gestures of lunatics.

The un-Shakespearean, bloody drama, The Tragedy of Titus Andronicus, had a pretended madness in Titus Andronicus himself. Although the characters are coarse and the story is gruesome and impossible, one cannot deny the dramatic power of Shakespeare in this bloody drama. In order to understand Titus' pretended madness, we need to glance at the story. Titus, who had just returned to Rome after victories

39 Ibid., ii, 1-21. 40 Ibid., l. 68.
in Gaul, refused the imperial throne in favor of Saturninus, his older brother. To show his complete loyalty, Titus offered Saturninus his daughter Lavinia, who was already betrothed to Bassianus. Titus' own sons sided Bassianus in carrying Lavinia off by force; and Saturninus immediately planned his marriage to Tamora, the recently liberated Gothic queen. Even though Titus slew one of his own sons who sided Bassianus and Lavinia, the emperor distrusted him. Because Titus had sacrificed Tamora's oldest son as solace for his fallen sons of war, Tamora hated him; and, as soon as possible, she plotted with her sons to slay Bassianus and to dishonor and mutilate the body of Lavinia. Fiendish Tamora and brutish Aaron, the Moorish captive, were horrible creatures in their lustful, murderous acts, which were not detected until the dramatic end. Seeing Lavinia's mutilated body and fearing ravishment were crushing experiences to her father, but fearing that his own sons had murdered Bassianus added extra anguish to Titus' already disturbed mind.

Titus' feigned insanity was first evident when he asked his brother Marcus why he struck a dish with a knife, and, when Marcus explained that he had killed a fly, Titus raved thus:

Out on thee, murderer! thou kill'st my heart; Mine eyes are cloy'd with view of tyranny; A deed of death done on the innocent Becomes not Titus' brother . . . Poor harmless fly,
That, with his pretty buzzing melody.
Come here to make us merry! and thou hast kill'd
him.\textsuperscript{41}

When Marcus offered the explanation that it was a black ill-
favored fly like the empress' Moor, Titus apologized, ad-
mitted that Marcus had done a charitable deed, and added
his insult upon the fly. After this incident was over, Mar-
cus lamented:

\begin{quote}
Ales, poor man! grief has so wrought on him,
He takes false shadows for true substances.\textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

Titus had no sooner pretended the role of madness than
he began to send strange messages to the ravishers and
their accomplices. Young Lucius and an attendant were sent
to the palace with a bundle of weapons with verses written
upon them. When Lucius' son was announced, Aaron commented:
"Aye, some mad message from his mad grandfather."\textsuperscript{43} The
scroll held the following message:

\begin{quote}
"Integer vitae, scelerisque purus,
Non eget Mauri jaculis, nec arcu."\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

Again in Act IV Titus appeared bearing arrows with let-
ters at the ends of them. He hoped to teach young Lucius
to be skillful at archery. To Publius and Sempronius he
gave orders to spade and pierce the earth:

\begin{quote}
Then, when you come to Pluto's region,
I pray you, deliver him this petition;
Tell him, it is for justice and for aid,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{41}William Shakespeare, \textit{Titus Andronicus}, III, ii, 54-61.
\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., ii. 79-80. \textsuperscript{43}Ibid., IV, ii, 3.
\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., ii. 20-21.
And then it comes from old Andronicus
Shaken with sorrows in ungrateful Rome.®

At these distracting words, Publius and Marcus felt deeply concerned and hoped to have him attended carefully until time could bring some kind of remedy; they felt a keen urge for vengeance on the traitor Saturninus. When Titus failed to get response from Pluto, he said:

We will solicit heaven, and move the gods
To send down Justice for to wreck our wrongs.®

He then gave his companions arrows, and they all shot their shafts into the court. A clown entered with a basket containing two pigeons. Titus ordered the clown to deliver these pigeons to the emperor; he also added a note wrapped around a knife.

At the palace Saturninus, holding the arrows that Titus shot, complained bitterly of these wrongs:

And what an if
His arrows have so overwhelm'd his wits,
Shall we be thus afflicted in his wrecks,
His fits, his frenzy and his bitterness?
And now he writes to heaven for his redress;
See, here's to Jove, and this to Mercury;
This to Apollo; this to the god of war;
Sweet scrolls to fly about the streets of Rome!®

Saturninus, who resented Titus' thrusts, agreed quickly to Tamora's suggestion that she entreat Titus and offer him golden promises if he, in turn, would rescue Lucius from the

®Ibid., iii, 13-17.
®®Ibid., ii. 50-51.
®®Ibid., iv, 9-16.
warlike Goths, for they wanted the Goths dispersed; they feared both Lucius and the Goths. Tamora and her two sons went in disguise to Titus. Using crafty devices, Tamora told Titus that she was Revenge and that her two sons were Rape and Murder; they promised Titus to seek revenge on all who had wronged him. When Tamora cleverly suggested that Titus and his son Lucius meet them for a banquet, Titus seemingly fitted into her cunning scheme. Tamora left her two sons with Titus as she went about her business. Tamora thought her art had worked, but Titus' words reveal the true state of affairs:

I know them all, though they suppose me mad;
And will o'er-reach them in their own devices;
A pair of cursed hell-hounds and their dam.48

Titus ordered Chiron and Demetrius arrested and bound fast. With Lavinia looking on, Titus faced Lavinia's ravishers with words of condemnation. As Lavinia held a basin for the blood, Titus cut their throats; he then ordered that their bodies be baked for a pie to be served their empress mother at the banquet which she had so cleverly planned. At the banquet when the Emperor asked for Tamora's sons, Titus replied:

Why, there they are both, baked in that pie;
Whereof their mother deoctily hath fed,
Eating the flesh that she herself hath bred.
'Tis true, 'tis true; witness my knife's sharp point.49

\[48\textit{Ibid.}, V, ii, 142-144. \quad 49\textit{Ibid.}, iii, 59-63.\]
After this horrible revelation, Titus killed Tamora, the mother of the two ravishers of his lovely daughter, whom he had just killed because he believed that when Lavinia's death ended her shame, the father's sorrow would surely die.

Thus we see how Titus' pretended madness helped to develop the plot and bring a dramatic, revengeful end.

In writing about pretended madmen, one cannot overlook Malvolio, who was made the victim of a practical joke in the mirthful Twelfth Night. Malvolio was sane enough, but he was victimized by the pretense of others. Sir Toby, Maria, and the Clown accused Malvolio of madness for a jest. Malvolio, who was Steward to Olivia, was serious-minded, extremely pious, and very intolerant of others. Tiring of Malvolio's attitude of piety and realizing his romantic interest in Olivia, Maria instigated the practical joke. Falling into Maria's trap, Malvolio made himself ridiculous to Olivia and obnoxious to the onlookers. Sir Toby explained the plans for Malvolio's treatment as a madman:

Come, we'll have him in a dark room and bound. My niece is already in the belief that he is mad; we may carry it thus, for our pleasure and his penance, till our very pestime, tired out of breath, prompt us to have mercy on him; at which time we will bring the device to the bar, and crown thee for a finder of madmen.50

As part of the practical jest Sir Topas the curate, really Olivia's Clown, Feste, went to call on Malvolio, the lunatic.

To Sir Topas, Malvolio attempted to explain:

Sir Topas, never was man thus wronged; good Sir Topas, do not think I am mad; they have laid me here in hideous darkness.

Clown: Fie, thou dishonest Satan! I call thee by the most modest terms; for I am one of those gentle ones that will use the devil himself with courtesy. Says'lt thou that house is dark?

Malvolio: As hell, Sir Topas.

Clown: Why, it hath bay-windows, transparent as barricades, and the clear storeys towards the south-north are as lustrous as ebony; and yet complainest thou of obstruction?

Malvolio: I am not mad, Sir Topas; I say to you this house is dark.

Clown: Madman, thou errest. I say there is no darkness but ignorance; in which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog.

Malvolio: I say this house is as dark as ignorance, though ignorance were as dark as hell; and I say there was never man thus abused. I am no more mad than you are; make the trial of it in any constant question.

When the Clown asked Malvolio how he lost his five wits, Malvolio insisted that he was as sane as any man in Illyria. He further complained:

They have here propertied me; keep me in darkness, send ministers to me, asses, and do all they can to face me out of my wits.51

Urging the Clown to bring him a light, paper, and ink, Malvolio wrote a letter of complaint to Olivia which he signed, "The madly used Malvolio." Later when he was taken before Olivia and the Duke, he learned the truth after he bitterly asked:

Why have you suffer'd me to be imprison'd,
Kept in a dark house, visited by the priest,

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51 Ibid., IV, 11, 32-53.
And made the most notorious gack and gull
That e'er invention play'd on? tell me why.

As Malvolio left the stage, he shouted bitterly: "I'll be
revenge'd on the whole pack of you."\[52\]

Although Malvolio succeeded in winning a certain amount
of sympathy from the audience at the last especially, the
same audience would agree that Maria's naughty trick added
amusement and color to the play.

Summarizing the use of pretended madness, one finds
that Hamlet's assumed role was so real that many critics
question its pretense and that Hamlet's feigned madness was
assumed for the purpose of revenge. Edgar, a master pretender, assumed the life of a Bedlam beggar as his only
method of defense against the wrath of his father and the
treachery of his evil brother. Bellafront, the only femin-
mist of the pretenders, added mirth and amusement to the
last act of The Honest Whore when she cleverly feigned mad-
ness to catch a husband. Flamino, the villain of The White
Devil, was truly a great pretender. He pretended mirth,
madness, and even death; in fact, pretense was a means to
his unscrupulous and selfish ends. In Titus Andronicus
Shakespeare offered feigned madness as a definite part of
the plot development. Titus' feigned insanity added a
course but dramatic effect because one remembers that Titus

\[52\]Ibid., V, 1, 349-352, 386.
assumed madness to seek a horrible revenge which was won by gruesome and sinister methods. Melvolio did not choose to pretend madness; he had madness thrust upon him as a practical jest; but one must admit that the play would have been less mirthful without Melvolio’s dilemma. Thus one concludes that pretended madness, as well as madness, offers amusement or relief, heightens dramatic effect or color, and accentuates peculiar, horrible, or gruesome atmosphere.
CHAPTER V

THE AMUSING, HORRIBLE, AND TRAGIC
ASPECTS OF MADNESS

After studying causes and manifestations of madness, one naturally questions the purpose of the mad folk and the mad scenes. Was madness amusing, horrible, or tragic? For dramatic effect madness was sometimes horrible, again it lent fun and amusement, but more often it heightened tragedy.

No Elizabethan play offers more fun and amusement in the mad theme than does Dekker's *The Honest Whore*. The plot was cleverly developed through the aid of mad people, mad scenes, and even a madhouse. The dramatic effect of the last act was definitely heightened by its mad creatures in their rightful setting, Bethlem Monastery. One can easily see how the Elizabethan audiences would be highly amused throughout the play. In one place Father Anselm was showing the Duke of Milan and his companions through Bethlem Monastery to keep them amused so that the lovers could escape. Fun really began when Fluello asked the Sweeper if he belonged to the madhouse. The Sweeper had his answer ready: "Yes, for sooth, I am one of the implements; I sweep the madmen's rooms, and fetch straws for 'em, and

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buy chains to tie 'em, and rods to whip 'em.\(^1\) When Pirotto asked whether all the mad folks in Milan came to Bethlem Monastery, the Sweeper exclaimed: "How, all? There's a question indeed! Why if all the mad folks in Milan should come hither, there would not be left ten men in the city."\(^2\) Being asked whether there were lawyers among the inmates, the Sweeper remonstrated: "Oh no, not one; never any lawyer. We dare not let a lawyer come in, for he'll make 'em mad faster than we can recover 'em."\(^3\) When the Duke asked whether there were gentlemen or courtiers as inmates of Bethlem Monastery, the Sweeper's reply was very amusing:

0 yes, abundance, abundance! Lands no sooner fall into their hands, but straight they run out o' their wits. Citizens' sons and heirs are free of the house by their father's copy. Farmers' sons come hither like geese, in flocks, and when they ha' sold all their cornfields, here they sit and pick the straws.\(^4\)

In answer to Sin gui's question about women inmates, the Sweeper exclaimed: "Ah, ay, a plague on 'em, there's no ho! with 'em; they're madder than March hares."\(^5\)

One of the first mad victims encountered was an old man wretched in a net. When one of the visitors asked what he did with his net, he peevishly explained:

\(^2\)Ibid., ii. 129-132.
\(^3\)Ibid., ii. 147-150.
\(^4\)Ibid., ii. 134-140.
\(^5\)Ibid., ii. 144-145.
Dost not see, fool? There's a fresh salmon in 't; if you step one foot further, you'll be over shoes, for you see I'm over head and ears in the salt water; and if you fall into this whirlpool where I am, y' are drown'd: y' are a drown'd rat. I am fishing here for five ships, but I cannot have a good draught, for my net breaks still, and breaks; but I'll break some of your necks if I catch you in my clutches. Stay, stay, stay, stay, where's the wind? where's the wind? where's the wind? where's the wind? Out, you gulls, you goose-caps, you gudgeon-eaters! Do you look for the wind in the heavens? Ha, ha, ha! No, no! Look there, look there, look there! the wind is always at the door; hark how it blows, puff, puff, puff!

**All:** Ha, ha, ha!

**Madman:** Do you laugh at God's creatures? Do you mock old age, you rogues? Is this gray beard and head counterfeit that you cry, ha, ha, ha? Sirrah, art not thou my oldest son?  

On and on the madman raved until Father Anselmo had servants remove him. Modern visitors at an asylum would be struck with sympathy, but Elizabethans thought these insane people were amusing and funny.

The first Madman suggested that one of the visitors was his oldest son, but when Pioratto consented to be the son, the Madman exclaimed:

Then th' art a fool, for my eldest son had a polt-foot, crooked legs, a verjuice face, and a pear-colour'd beard. I made him a scholar, and he made himself a fool.  

When Pioratto held out his hand, the Madman decided he had ten-penny nails like his second son and wanted him to kneel

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for his father's blessing. The Duke and his companions made sport with the madmen and forgot temporarily their mission at Bethlem Monastery.

Another amusing inmate of Bethlem Monastery, the madmen's pound, was Candido in The Honest Whore; and it will be remembered that his own wife planned Candido's madness as a last resort to break his extremely patient spirit.

When Viola plead with the Duke to release Candido, she said:

He's among the lunatics;  
He was a man made up without a gall;  
Nothing could move him, nothing could convert  
His meek blood into fury; yet like a monster,  
I often beat at the most constant rock of his unshaken patience, and did long
To vex him.\(^8\)

Later Viola, Candido's wife, and George entered Bethlem Monastery to ask the Duke to dismiss Candido from Bedlam.

When Father Anselmo entered with Candido, the Duke asked if he was mad. This was his reply:

Then may you know I am not mad, that know  
You are not mad, and that you are the duke.  
None is mad here but one. --  
How do you, wife? What do you long for now?  
... She says for this [patience]  
I'm mad; were her words true,  
I should be mad indeed. 0 foolish skill!  
Is patience madness? I'll be a madman still.\(^9\)

When Viola knelt and asked forgiveness, the Duke suggested they join hands and hearts and hinted that Candido had laid too much stress on patience. Candido remonstrated:

\(^8\)Ibid., 1, 74-80. \(^9\)Ibid., 11, 546-556.
Patience, my lord! why 'tis the soul of peace;  
Of all virtues, 'tis nearest kin to Heaven;  
It makes men look like Gods...  
It is the beggar's music, and thus sings,  
Although their bodies beg, their souls are kings.  
'O my dread liege! It is the sap of bliss  
Rears us aloft, makes men and angels kiss  
And last of all, to end a household strife  
It is the honey 'gainst a waspish wife.10

The Duke smiled in approbation, and the play ended in a  
truly amusing and comical vein:  

Thou giv'st it lively colours: who dare say  
He's mad, whose words march in so good array?...  
Come, therefore, you shall teach our court to shine.  
So calm a spirit is worth a golden mine.  
Wives with meek husbands that to vex them long  
In Bedlam must they dwell, else dwell they wrong.11

To an Elizabethan, the scene from Twelfth Night in which  
Maria, Sir Toby, and Feste torment Malvolio proved extremely  
funny. They laughed at the victimized Malvolio who begged  
for paper and pen to write Olivia of his miseries. Of  
course, Malvolio's previous pious and intolerant attitude  
toward all frivolity and foolishness made him an apt subject  
for the joke. It is most amusing to contrast Malvolio for  
what he was with Malvolio for what he thinks he was. Sir  
Toby expressed the idea that Malvolio might go mad from  
disappointment: "Why, thou hast put him in such a dream  
that when the image of it leaves him he must run mad."12  

No madman's ill behavior was more amusing than furious  
Orlando's. Organio, a servant, first explained Orlando's

10Ibid., 11. 569-588.  
11Ibid., 11. 589-597.  
12William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, II, v, 211.
madness, which was in the form of cruel behavior:

O my Lord of Aquitaine the Count Orlando is run
med, and taking of a shepheard by the heelis,
rends him as one would teare a Larke. See where
he comes with a leg on his necke.\textsuperscript{13}

Orlando’s delusions were very amusing; he thought he was
Hercules and that Charlemaine the Great was armed and search-
ing for Medor and Angelica. Orlando announced that he was
going to hell to seek for them. Later Orlando entered as a
soldier with a drum. With him were other soldiers with pans.
In a fight Orlando killed Brandemart, and everyone fled but
Angelica, whom Orlando failed to recognize. These mani-
festations of Orlando’s madness grieved Angelica, who said:

\begin{quote}
Thankes gentle Fortune that sendes mee such good hap,
Rather to die by him I love for deare,
Than live and see my Lord thus lunaticke.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

The deluded mind also caused Orlando to think that Angelica
was a fighting young squire. He even suggested knighting
her for killing Brandemart:

\begin{quote}
Kneele downe sir Knight, rise up sir Knight,
Here take this sworde, and hie thee to the fight.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Orlando created laughter as he talked incoherently of the
duties of gods and goddesses, made verses to Angelica, and
lay down to talk to the stars. When the fiddler’s music
waked Orlando, he struck the musician over the head. One

\textsuperscript{13}Robert Greene, \textit{Orlando Furioso}, II, 1, 754-757.
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., III, 11, 993-996.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., II, 1000-1001.
of the most amusing incidents was Orlando's ordering Organio to bid Charlemaine to find Angelica. Organio returned with the clown dressed as Angelica. Orlando proceeded to beat the clown. The groundlings enjoyed extravagant and atrocious acts such as this:

**Orlando:** Are you Angelica?

**Clown:** Yes marry I am.

**Orlando:** Wheres your sweet hart Medor?

**Clown:** Organio, give me eighteen pence, and let me go.

**Orlando:** Speake strumpet, speake.

**Clown:** Marry sir he is drinking a pint or a quart.

**Orlando:** Why strumpet, worse than mars his trothlesse love. Falsert than faithles Cressida; strumpet thou shalt not scape.

**Clown:** Come, come you doo not use me like a gentle-woman; and if I be not for you I am for another.16

At this point Orlando beat the Clown off the stage. The Elizabethens, especially the groundlings, loved beatings.

One can imagine the amusing laughter aroused by Orlando's questioning if he had been mad when the audience had beheld all his pethetic, furious, and violent words and actions.

*What was I mad? What furie hath enchanted me?*17

It is obvious that play-lovers were excited when Orlando

16Ibid., I. 1058-1070. 17Ibid., IV, I, 1309-1310.
learned the truth, settled his score with Sacrepant, and went to be happily reconciled with Angelica. When Orlando asked Angelica's pardon for his lunacy, Angelica's reply was most amusing:

O no my Lord, but pardon my amis,
For had not Orlando lovde Angelica,
Nere had my Lord fale into these extremes
Which we will pale private to our selves;
Nere was the Queen of Cypres halfe so glad,
As is Angelica to see her Lord,
Her deare Orlando settled in his sense. 18

Probably the most amusing med scene in King Lear came when Lear arraigned a pair of stalks as his supposed daughters on trial for their cruelty. He asked Edgar, the Bedlam beggar, to be the robe judge. Lear accused Goneril of kicking him. Just before Regan was to be brought to trial, she escaped, according to poor Lear's deluded mind. Humor was heighten in when suddenly Lear's ravings ran to other inconsistencies: "The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me."19

Duke Ferdinand, a victim of guilt and fear, offered amusement early in his maniacal state. He was even afraid of his shadow. In Act V of The Duchess of Malfi the Duke attempted to throw himself down on his shadow. When Males- testi remonstrated, Ferdinand retorted:

You are a fool; how is 't possible I should catch my shadow, unless I fall upon 't? When I go to

18Ibid., V, ii, 1556-1562.
19William Shakespeare, King Lear, III, vi, 60-61.
hell, I mean to carry a bribe; for, look you, good gifts evermore make way for the worst persons.  

The Elizabethan audience obviously enjoyed Ferdinand's ravings about acquiring the art of patience. The doctor attempted to help Frederick by doing mad tricks with him, but Ferdinand, beginning to fear his doctor, threw him down and beat him. Later in the last act Ferdinand was aroused by the Cardinal's screams for help. Ferdinand, thinking he heard a battle cry, entered shouting, "Give me a fresh horse." It is to be imagined that the groundlings found this scene exciting; for it offered strong and mixed emotions. Ferdinand, thinking he was on the battlefield, urged his enemy to yield. At this point humor faded, for in this mad rage Ferdinand wounded the Cardinal and Bosolo. Bosolo in turn killed Ferdinand, whose dying words strangely expressed coherent thought:

    Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust,
    Like diamonds, we are cut with our own dust.

Ferdinand's unnatural death offers a typical example of the inconsistency of the mentally deranged. His death was brought about by acts devoid of reason; yet after he was stabbed, his dying words showed definite reason. The Elizabethans enjoyed this type of incongruity.

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20 John Webster, The Duchess of Malfi, V, iv, 42-43.
21 Ibid., v, 63.
22 Ibid., 11. 88-89.
In turning to the tragic aspect of madness, one realizes that Lear's insanity must have reached the demand for tragic effect, even by Elizabethan standards, when the poor old man appealed to heaven and to his daughters, and neither heeded his voice. When Kent urged him to go to the near-by hovel for partial protection against the storm, Lear uttered these piteous words:

My wits begin to turn.
Come on, my boy; how dost, my boy? art cold?
I'm cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange,
And can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.23

No scene is more pathetic and tragic than the one in which Lear entered with Cordelia's dead body in his arms. One can never forget the wrath, tenderness, and greatness of these tragic words:

Howl, howl, howl, howl! 0, you are men of stones!
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever!24

At first he was stunned with grief at the realization that Cordelia was dead. He was not strong enough to face this crowning disaster. He died of grief. One realizes the grandeur and pathos of Lear as he reads or listens to his last words:

And my poor fool is hang'd. No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,

23 William Shakespeare, King Lear, III, ii, 63-68.
24 Ibid., V, iii, 257-259.
And thou no breath at all?
Thou 'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!
Pray you, undo this button. Thank you, sir.
Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
Look there, look there.\textsuperscript{25}

As the curtain goes down on \textit{King Lear}, the average theater-
goer would agree with the critic who wrote the following:

The most powerful character among the maniacs, by far the greatest figure in our drama of insanity, if not indeed in the whole of English drama, is \textit{King Lear}. . . . He is as lovable, even in his great weakness, as the most affectionate of all Shakespeare's characters, yet more terrible than his darkest villains. He takes hold at once of our sympathy, our pity, and our imaginations, and the tragic feelings evoked by the drama conflict in us with the more human emotions roused by his own essential humanity.\textsuperscript{26}

One of the most unforgettable and tragic scenes of all Shakespeare's plays is Lady Macbeth's famous sleep-walking scene. With the physician and gentlewoman in concealment, the stage was set for the Queen's silent entrance. She was dressed in her nightgown and was carrying a taper with her right hand and feeling her way with her left hand extended. Her pallid face revealed sleepless nights as her perched lips repeated her sorrow and remorse in whispered words that truly revealed the anguish of her heart and soul:

\textit{Out, damned spot! out, I say! -- One; two; why, then 'tis time to do 't; -- Hell is murky! -- Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? -- Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him? . . . The}

\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid., II. 305-311.} \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{26}\textit{Peers, op. cit., p. 66.}
Thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now? --
What, will these hands ne'er be clean? -- No more
o' that, my lord, no more o' that. You mar all
with this starting.

The Doctor and Gentlewoman were shocked at what they heard.
The Gentlewoman said she would not have Lady Macbeth's
guilty heart for anything; the Doctor's comment was unques-
tionably wise but tragic: "More needs she the divine than
the physician."

The pathetically tragic side of Ophelia's madness was
revealed in Laertes' unguarded words as he saw for the first
time the form of his distracted sister:

O heart, dry up my brains! tears seven times salt
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eyes! --
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! isn't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life!
Nature is fine in love; and where 'tis fine
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

One remembers that Laertes had returned home demanding an
explanation of his father's death. He was faced with double
grief, for he was forced to look helplessly upon his dis-
tracted sister and to listen to her incoherent and wild
ravings:

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There's fennel for you, and columbines: -- there's rue for you; and here's some for me: -- we may call it herb-grace o' Sundays: -- O, you must wear your rue with a difference. -- There's a daisy: -- I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died: -- they say, he made a good end.

And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
   No, no, he is dead,
   Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow
All flaxen was his poll:
   He is gone, he is gone,
   And we cast away mean;
   God he' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray
God. -- God b' wi' ye.30

The Queen gave the account of Ophelia's death which added a most tragic effect and incorporated the tone of madness:

There is a willow grows salient a brook
That shows his hoar leaves in thy glassy stream;
There with fantastic garlands die she come
Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.
There, on the pendant boughs her coronet weeps
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indu'd
Unto that element: but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.31

Later at the churchyard the funeral took place. As the Queen scattered flowers over Ophelia's grave, she added this pathetic note:

Sweets to the sweet; farewell!
I hop'd thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave.\(^{32}\)

One could hardly fail to be touched by the dramatic picture of the dazed Ophelia, whose reason was dethroned, singing herself to a peaceful rest. At the same time the onlooker realizes the tragic hopelessness of her condition which could be solved only by her unnatural death.

The tragic element of madness was found in the confused state of mind of Aspasia and Amintor in The Maid's Tragedy. Confusion reigned throughout the play because Aspasia was disappointed when Amintor married Evedne; Amintor was doubly disappointed when he learned that Evedne had married him only to make her children legitimate, for Evedne admitted that she was the King's mistress. Amintor, chaste and sentimental, was deeply hurt. He would have killed anyone else who had wronged him, but not the King. None but Melantius, Evedne's brother and Amintor's faithful soldier friend, shared Amintor's secret. After Melantius convinced Evedne of her unpardonable wrong, Evedne killed the King and offered herself to Amintor. This only added to Amintor's

\(^{32}\text{Ibid.}, \text{V, 1, 266-268.}\)
confusion and despair. In the meantime Aspatia, disguised as her own brother, forced Amintor to fight her. After stabbing the youth, Amintor felt extremely remorseful. Turning to Evedne, he admitted a growing wildness:

Behold,
Here lies a youth whose wounds bleed in my breast,
Sent by a violent fate to fetch his death
From my slow hand! And, to augment my woe,
You now are present, stain'd with a king's blood,
Violently shed. This keeps night here,
And throws an unknown wilderness about me.33

Amintor returned to prevent Evedne's taking her own life; but he came too late, for Evedne had stabbed herself. Amidst all this sorrow Amintor felt physically and mentally shaken:

This earth of mine doth tremble, and I feel
A stark, affrighted motion in my blood.
My soul grows weary of her house, and I
All over am a trouble to myself.
There is some hidden power in these dead things,
That calls my flesh unto 'em; I am cold;
Be resolute, and bear 'em company.34

Amintor felt that he had only one incentive to live: to right the wrong he had done to Aspatia:

Though she may justly arm herself with scorn
And hate of me, my soul will part less troubled,
When I have paid to her in tears my sorrow.
I will not leave this act unsatisfied,
If all that's left in me can answer it.35

Aspatia roused to Amintor's encouraging words but died in his arms. Realizing that Aspatia was gone, Amintor was sorely

34Ibid., ll. 308-315. 35Ibid., ll. 330-337.
grieved to a point of desperation:

The soul is fled for ever; and I wrong
Myself, so long to lose her company
Must I talk now? Here's to be with thee, love!36

Amintor stabbed himself. Thus tragedy was heaped upon tragedy.

Further words are necessary in behalf of Aspatia, who, dressed as her soldier brother and disguised with scars, had entered an anteroom in Amintor’s apartment. These were her tragic words as she waited for Amintor:

This is my fatal hour. Heaven may forgive
My rash attempt, that causelessly hath laid
Griefs on me that will not let me rest,
And put a woman’s heart into my breast.
It is more honor for you that I die;
For she that can endure the misery
That I have on me, and be patient too,
May live and laugh at all that you can do.37

Although Aspatia was subordinated to Evadne, she impressed the audience because of the pathetic situation in which she was placed when her betrothed husband was commanded by the King to marry Evadne. Her purity of character and her undying love for Amintor were considered most admirable. "Nothing but sad thoughts in her breast do dwell"38 described Aspatia, a victim of melancholy whose unselfish and altruistic motives in life and in death made her a favorite among tragic heroines.

36 Ibid., II. 416-419. 37 Ibid., V, 111, 1-8.
38 Ibid., II, 1, 70.
Timon of Athens' abnormality, caused by shock and disappointment, was truly tragic as he regarded life as universal confusion. Disillusioned and desperate, Timon uttered despairing thoughts about life and death:

I am sick of this false world; and will love naught
But even the mere necessities upon 't.
Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave;
Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat
Thy grave-stone daily; make thine epitaph,
That death in me at others' lives may laugh.39

Looking on the gold that he has dug, he meditated bitterly:

O thou sweet king -- killer and dear divorce
Twixt natural son and sire! thou bright defiler
Of Hyman's purest bed! thou valiant Mars!40

When the Senators came from Athens to ask Timon to return to Athens and to take the leadership in driving back Alcibiades, Timon's answer was pessimistic and tragically sad:

If Alcibiades kill my countrymen,
Let Alcibiades know this of Timon,
That Timon cares not. But if he sack fair Athens
And take our goodly aged men by the beards,
Giving our holy virgins to the stain
Of contumelious, beastly, mad-brain'd war;
Then let him know, -- and tell him Timon speaks it,
In pity of our aged and our youth, --
I cannot choose but tell him that I care not,
And let him tak'at worst.41

Timon's last words were ironical, bitter, and tragic:

Come not to me again; but say to Athens,
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion

40 Ibid., 11. 400-403. 41 Ibid., V, 1, 87-96.
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood
Who once a day with his embossed froth
The turbulent surge shall cover; thither come,
And let my grave-stone be your oracle. . .
Sun, hide thy beams!
Timon hath done his reign. 42

The play ended with a soldier’s message of Timon’s death, presumably suicide. For proper dramatic effect, this was the logical end for one who had hated mankind.

A sad example of one who suffered mentally because of an ill-spent life was the Cardinal in The Duchess of Malfi. The Cardinal was a melancholy, brooding type of person, who was suffering the pangs of a guilty conscience. He and his brother had persecuted their sister for marrying her steward. When persecution failed to drive the Duchess mad, the brothers had her and her children strangled. Julia, the Cardinal’s mistress, insisted upon knowing the horrible secret. Her request cost her her life, for the Cardinal asked her to swear upon a book:

Kiss it.
Now you shall never utter it; thy curiosity
Hath undone thee; thou’rt poisoned with that book.
Because I knew thou couldst not keep thy counsel
I have bound thee to ’t by death. 43

Confused in mind and guilty in heart and soul, the Cardinal faced new problems; consequently he planned more horrible deeds, for he had to get rid of Julia’s dead body; and

42Ibid., 11. 217-226.
43Webster, op. cit., V, 11, 483-490.
then he must see that Antonio and Bosolo were out of his way.

The horror of the murders in *The Duchess of Malfi* was expressed by Bosolo when the Cardinal ordered him to remove the dead body of Julia and to kill Antonio:

*I think I shall shortly grow the common bier for churchyards.*

In order to get Julia's body out of the house at midnight, the Cardinal ordered all the servants to bed. He told them not to heed any violent fit that Ferdinand might have and suggested that he himself might feign mad tricks and shout out in the night, but for the servants to pay no attention to them. The horrors that the Cardinal had planned reversed themselves; inevitably, the Cardinal would soon meet a tragic death. Pondering over his guilt, the Cardinal looked up and saw Bosolo, whose ghostly face seemed mixed with determination and fear. Bosolo had come to kill the Cardinal. Forgetting that he had told his servants that he might feign a mad trick, the Cardinal desperately shouted for help:

*Here's a plot upon me; I am assaulted! I am lost, Unless some rescue!*

One is impressed with the irony of fate at this point, for it was Frederick, the maniac, who answered his brother's call

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45 *Ibid.*. IV, 200-203.
for help; and it was this same helpless, hopeless creature who gave the Cardinal his death blow. Thus one is touched by the tragedy that accompanies unrestrained passions and ill-spent lives.

Flamineo, like the brother of the Duchess of Malfi, was a victim of an ill-spent life, and he was forced to face the tragic effects:

I have lived
Riotously ill, like some that live in court,
And sometimes, when my face was full of smiles,
Have felt the maze of conscience in my heart.
Oft gay and honored robes those tortures try;
We think caged birds sing, when indeed they cry.46

Suddenly Flamineo was face to face with Brachiano’s ghost, in his leather cassock and breeches, boots, and cowl. In the ghost’s hand was a pot of lily-flowers, with a skull in it. The Ghost showed Flamineo the skull and threw dirt upon him. When the Ghost left, Flamineo was frightened. His disturbed mind censured Vittoria; his general reactions predicted an inevitable and gloomy catastrophe:

This is beyond melancholy. I do dare my fate
To do its worst. Now to my sister’s lodging,
And sum up all these horrors: the disgrace
The prince threw on me; next, the piteous sight
Of my dead brother; and my mother’s dotage;
And last this terrible vision; all these
Shall with Vittoria’s bounty turn to good
Or I will drown this weapon in her blood.47

Despair, desperation, madness, and untimely death were the

46 John Webster, The White Devil, V, iv, 197-205.
47 Ibid., 11. 242-255.
tragic results of Flamineo's ill-spent life.

Despite the fact that The Spanish Tragedy is distinguished by insanity, intrigue, physical horrors, stabbings, and suicide, it is powerful melodrama. Its mad scenes mix the tragic and horrible aspects. In the fourth scene of Act II, Hieronimo and Isabella expressed deep grief for their murdered son and uttered words of foreboding gloom:

**Hieronimo:** For in revenge my heart would find relief.

**Isabella:** Time is the author both of truth and light,
And time will bring this treachery to light.\(^{48}\)

Andrea, in chorus, complained that Balthazar should have been slain instead of Horatio. At the end of Act II, Revenge prophesied heaviness; tragedy seemed inevitable. There is tragic foreboding in every word of Hieronimo's plan for revenge:

_Bethink thyself, Hieronimo,_
_Recall thy wits; recount thy former wrongs_  
_Thou hast received by murder of thy son,_  
_And lastly, not least; how Isabel,_  
_Once his mother and thy dearest wife,_  
_All woe-begone for him, hath slain herself._  
_Behover thee, then, Hieronimo, to be reveng'd!_  
_The plot is laid of dire revenge;_  
_On, then, Hieronimo, pursue revenge;_  
_For nothing wants but acting of revenge.\(^{49}\)

The horrible effect of madness was accentuated in The

\(^{48}\) Thomas Kyd, The Spanish Tragedy, II, iv, 162, 163-164.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., IV, iii, 20-30.
Spanish Tragedy to heighten the catastrophe. Just before Hieronimo bit out his own tongue, he defied the King:

Indeed,
Thou may'st torment me, as his wretched son
Hath done in murd'ring my Horatio;
But never shalt thou force me to reveal
The thing which I have vow'd inviolate.
And therefore, in spite of all thy threats,
Pless'd with their deaths, and eas'd with their revenge,
First take my tongue, and afterwards my heart.50

After Hieronimo bit out his tongue, the King was planning to make him admit his confederates in his revengeful acts and murders by writing; but Hieronimo was too fast for him. With the knife intended to mend the pen, Hieronimo stabbed the King and himself.

Duke Ferdinand in Webster's The Duchess of Malfi presents an excellent study of man in a confused state of mind. He reeled and staggered when he saw the face of his sister whose cruel death he had caused. Although he had desired her death, he immediately went mad when he fully realized what he had done. His incoherent utterances reflected the fact that he dwelled in the painful memory of his atrocious crime. One of the first mutterings of his distracted mind revealed the method they had used for his sister's death: "Strangling is a very quiet death."51 The maniacal state of Ferdinand mixes the tragic and horrible aspects of madness.

50Tbid., II. 456-463.
51John Webster, The Duchess of Malfi, V, iv, 38.
The horrible aspect of the Cardinal and Frederick's torturing punishment of the Duchess had a sinister introduction:

**Frederick:** I have this night digged up a mandrake.

And I am grown mad with 't.\(^{52}\)

Frederick, having received a letter that related that his sister had grown into a notorious strumpet, was intemperate in his anger. The Cardinal was calmer, but he and Ferdinand were greatly disturbed over the scandalous rumor that the Duchess had three bastards. When they learned that the Duchess had married her steward, they grew even angrier. Antonio was forced to flee for his life; the Duchess was taken as a prisoner to her palace in Amalfi. There Ferdinand prepared horrors for torturing his sister. Because Ferdinand had sworn never to see the Duchess again, he went to his sister in the night and had the attendants leave with the lights. Then he began his unnatural and gruesome horrors by saying:

I come to seal my peace with you. Here's a hand \[gives her a dead man's hand\]
To which you have vowed much love; the ring upon 't you gave.\(^{53}\)

When the Duchess cried for the lights after this horrible experience, the attendants brought back the lights; but the light only revealed more horrors in the form of artificial

\(^{52}\)Ibid., II, v, 1, 3. \(^{53}\)Ibid., IV, i, 87-91.
figures of Antonio and his son. After Bosola explained
that this sad spectacle meant that her husband and children
were dead, the Duchess seemed momentarily on the point of
giving way. To bring his sister to greater despair Ferdin-
and explained his further plans:

I will send her masques of common courtesans,
Have her meat served up by bawds and ruffians,
And, cause she'll needs be mad, I am resolved
To move forth the common hospital
All the mad folk, and place them near her lodging;
There let them practise together, sing and dance,
And act their gambols to the full o' th' moon;
If she can sleep the better for it, let her.54

The horrible and gruesome aspect of establishing mad-
men around the Duchess' lodging was expressed by the Duchess'
faithful maid when the Duchess asked about the hideous noise:

'Tis the wild consort
Of madmen, lady, which your tyrant brother
Hath placed about your lodging. This tyranny,
I think, was never practised till this hour.55

Surprisingly, the Duchess welcomed this form of tyranny:

Indeed, I thank him. Nothing but noise and folly
Can keep me in my right wits; whereas reason
And silence make me stark mad.56

A servant announced the madmen;

There's a mad lawyer; and a secular priest;
A doctor that hath forfeited his wits
By jealousy; an astrologian
That in his works said such a day o' the month
Should be the day of doom, and, failing of 't,
Run mad; an English tailor craz'd i' the brain
With the study of new fashions; a gentleman-usher
Quite beside himself with care to keep in mind

54Ibid., II. 239-252. 55Ibid., II. 7-12.
56Ibid., II. 6-9.
The number of his lady's salutations
Or "How do you," she employ'd him in each morning;
A farmer, too, and excellent knave in grain,
Mad 'cause he was hind'red transportation;
And let one broken that's mad loose to these,
You'd think the devil were among them.57

It was amazing to note the Duchess' endurance of such remarks as this one from the Second Madman: "Hell is a mere glass-house, where the devils are continually blowing up women's souls on hollow irons, and the fire never goes out."58

A Madman sang this song to a dismal kind of music:

O, let us howl some heavy note,
Some deadly dogged howl,
Sounding as from the threatening throat
Of beasts and fatal fowl!
As ravens, screech-owls, bulls, and bears,
We'll bawl, and bawl our parts,
Till irksome noise have cloy'd your ears
And corrosiv'd your hearts.
At last, when our choir wants breath,
Our bodies being blest,
We'll sing, like swans, to welcome death,
And die in love and rest.59

The foolish talk of the madmen was followed by a dance given by eight madmen. Then Bosola, disguised as an old man, entered to pave the way for the executioners who brought a coffin, cords, and a bell. One marveled at the Duchess' courage as she said: "Peace; it affrights not me."60 She maintained that same self-control and courage to the end.

Ferdinand immediately expressed remorse and censured Bosola;
Let me see her face
Again. Why didst thou not pity her? What
An excellent honest man mightest thou have been,
If thou hadst borne her to some sanctuary!
Or, bold in a good cause, oppos'd thyself,
With thy advanced sword above thy head,
Between her innocence and my revenge!
I bade thee, when I was distracted of my wits,
Go kill my dearest friend, and thou hast done 't.61

Ferdinand admitted that he had hoped his sister would remain
a widow so that he could mass a fortune at her death:

And that was the main cause, -- her marriage,
That drew a stream of gall quite through my heart.62

Ferdinand had brutally and horribly planned the torturing
process and the strangling death of the Duchess; but when
he looked upon her face and realized the seriousness of
his deed, he seemed to feel deep remorse. From then on his
ruin seemed inevitable.

Nothing could be more horrible than the results of
Titus Andronicus' feigned madness. Titus had pretended to
be mad in order to seek revenge on Tamora and her sons.
When Tamora left her two sons disguised as Rape and Murder,
Titus realized the time had come for revenge:

Fie, Publius, fie! thou art too much deceiv'd, --
The one is murder, Rape is the other's name;
And therefore bind them, gentle Publius; --
Caius and Valentine, lay hands on them; --
Oft have you heard me wish for such an hour,
And now I find it; therefore bind them sure;
And stop their mouths, if they begin to cry.63

61Ibid., 11. 266-274. 62Ibid., 11. 280-281.
63William Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus, V, iii, 155-162.
No scene of horror could excel the one in which Titus and his mutilated daughter, Lavinia, entered with Titus bearing a knife and her, a basin. His words were horrible:

Come, come, Lavinia; look, thy foes are bound. -- Sirs, stop their mouths, let them not speak to me; But let them hear what fearful words I utter. O villains, Chiron and Demetrius! Here stands the spring whom you have stain'd with mud; This goodly summer with your winter mix'd, You kill'd her husband; and for that vile fault Two of her brothers were condemn'd to death, My hand cut off and made a merry jest; Both her sweet hands, her tongue, and that more dear Than hands or tongue, her spotless chastity, Inhuman traitors, you constrain'd and forced. 64

Titus told Lavinia to hold her basin for the blood, and then he continued:

Hark, wretches! how I mean to martyr you. This one hand yet is left to cut your throats, While that Lavinia 'tween her stumps doth hold The basin that receives your guilty blood. You know your mother means to feast with me, And calls herself Revenge, and thinks me mad; -- Hark, villains, I will grind your bones to dust, And with your blood and it I'll make a paste; And of the paste a coffin I will rear, And make two pasties of your shameful heads; And bid that strumpet, your unhallow'd dam, Like to the earth, swallow her own increase. This is the feast that I have bid her to, And this the banquet she shall surfeit on; For worse than Philomel you us'd my daughter, And worse than Progne I will be reveng'd. And now prepare your throats. 65

The entire play centers around horrible revenge. The sordid element is definite; the gruesome ending, unforgettable.

Webster's dramas reveal the horrible in its mental

aspect. Physical horrors often took place in Shakespeare's and Kyd's plays. One recalls that Gloucester got his eyes put out; Isinina suffered horrible mutilations, for her revishers cut out her tongue and cut off both her hands; Titus himself fruitlessly sacrificed his hand in an attempt to save his sons' lives; and Kyd's Hieronimo split his own tongue. Webster did not torture his victims physically, but he broke their spirits and shattered their moral strength so that hopeless frustration and insanity were the ultimate outcomes. Webster's characters betrayed themselves. This was evident in the roles of the Cardinal and Frederick in The Duchess of Malfi and Flamino in The White Devil. Next to Shakespeare comes Webster in dramatic insight.

In conclusion, one sees the dramatists' varied uses of the amusing, the tragic, and the horrible aspects of madness. Catastrophe is often intensified through mad scenes and mad characters. This statement proved true in the tragic, mad roles of Hieronimo and Isabella in The Spanish Tragedy; in Lady Macbeth's somnambulistic role before the tragic dénouement in Macbeth; in the Cardinal's melancholic broodings and Ferdinand's revenges in The Duchess of Malfi; in Cornelia's pathetic madness and in Flamino's confused thinking that led to distraction in the play, The White Devil; in Lear's unexcelled madness as well as Edgar's assumed madness in King Lear; in Timon's distorted and confused
agonies; and in Ophelia's frenzied state. Fun and amusement were found in the peculiar antics of Orlando Furioso, in the forced pretended madness of Malvolio, in Duke Frederick's humorous ravings, and in the incomparable madscene of The Honest Whore. In several of the plays one finds both tragic and horrible aspects. Undoubtedly there is an intermingling of tragic and horrible aspects in Hieronimo's slow but certain revenge; in the brothers' persecution of their sister, the Duchess of Malfi; and in Titus Andronicus' sinister acts of a horrible revenge. In summation, one gathers from the works of the Elizabethan dramatists that madness was a popular theme because in its amusing aspect it added absurdity and merriment to comedies, and in its horrible and tragic aspects it added force and power to the inimitable and incomparable tragedies of English drama.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It has been shown in previous chapters that the Elizabethans had an interesting conception of madness, that there were definite causes and manifestations, that feigned madness played an effective part in the drama of the age, and that madness might be treated from three aspects: amusing, tragic, or horrible.

The study of the twelve selected plays revealed that madness was a popular theme and that the Elizabethan conception of madness was significantly brought out in the dramas of the age. It seemed natural to begin this study on madness by apprehending what the Elizabethans knew, thought, or believed about madness in their day.

The earliest conception of madness revealed in literature is based on the idea of possession by the devil or evil spirits. Many illustrations of this idea have been propounded, and quotations from Elizabethan plays have proved this conception prevalent. Few Elizabethans doubted the power of evil spirits. Mental and physical deformities were to them results of divine judgment. Many Elizabethans believed so much in these conceptions that their conduct was
guided by such ideas. One recalls the many references to
the foul fiend, especially in the portrayal of Edger, the
disguised Bedlam beggar in *King Lear*, and in the pretense
thrust upon Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*. The influence of
the fiendish element and of superstitions was expressed in
*Titus Andronicus* by Tamora, the captive Gothic queen who
married Saturninus and became empress of Rome:

> And when they showed me this abhorred pit,
> They told me here, at dead of the night,
> A thousand fiends, a thousand hissing snakes,
> Ten thousand swelling toads, as many urchins,
> Would make such fearful and confused cries,
> As any mortal body hearing it
> Should straight fall mad, or else die suddenly.¹

That mental diseases were attributed to witchcraft was
an Elizabethan conception revealed in *Macbeth*’s hallucina-
tions, *Hamlet*’s ghosts, and *Flamineo*’s encounter with *Brachiano*’s ghost. Naturally the conception of madness as
caused by evil spirits was linked with superstitions related
to witchcraft. The superstition of the mandrake plant was
also prevalent in Elizabethan drama as illustrated in
quoted lines from *Romeo and Juliet*, *Titus Andronicus*, and
*The Duchess of Malfi*.

The theory that a fond imagination may creep into the
brain and undermine rationality might account for the melan-
choly types, such as *Hamlet*, *Amintor*, *Aspasia*, the *Cardinal*,
and *Timon of Athens*. This doctrine that nature in man

sometimes takes an erring tendency makes stability and happiness vanish into confusion for the madman.

Moulton's idea that Shakespeare's use of insanity was for variation and relief seems amply justified. Moulton theorizes that Hamlet's feigned madness offered relief and varied the dramatic effect of the play. Edgar's pretended madness lent relief from Lear's real madness. Lear's attempt to arraign his daughters for their cruelty offered humorous relief:

**Lear:** Arraign her first! 'Tis Goneril. I take my oath before this honorable assembly, she kick'd the poor King her father.\(^2\)

Further relief was offered when the poor King's deluded mind thought the second daughter had escaped. In connection with Moulton's theory that madness is used as relief is the idea that Elizabethan play-goers differed from modern ones in sympathetic temperament. They found insanity funny and amusing, whereas the modern theater-goers think that madness is pathetic and tragic.

Dramatists of the Elizabethan age often depicted some weighty affliction, such as blindness and madness, as comical. Madness was often used to arouse sympathy, to make sport, to amuse the groundlings, to intensify feeling, and to promote pageantry. Shakespeare alone used insanity with sympathy, insight, and even sublimity. Madness was a grand

passion to Shakespeare and could not be treated too lightly though he could add an amusing tone with its use. As all dramatists strove to please the audience, so did Shakespeare. The dramatists responded to their patrons' keen interest in madness.

The study of madness in Elizabethan drama has substantiated the claims held by Kellogg and Peers in their opinions of Shakespeare's application of mental psychology. It is to be remembered that Kellogg and his doctor associates agreed that they had seen all of Shakespeare's insane characters paralleled in the inmates of their Utica Asylum. Kellogg wrote that scientists who lived two and a half centuries later had added little to the apparent knowledge of Shakespeare on the intricate subject of madness. Peers, who wrote his book in 1914, said that Shakespeare was far in advance of his time and that he used modern methods of treating victims of insanity. The element of soft music as a balm for shattered nerves was applied to Orlando in Robert Greene's Orlando Furioso and to Lear, the mad King. Orlando came back to normalcy while attended by a faithful friend; Lear was under the loving care of his devoted daughter, Cordelia. Music and harmonious, happy environment are excellent settings for the awaking mental patients. Even though one realizes that Shakespeare had a keen understanding of mental disease and its treatment, he must also remember
that Shakespeare presented in his plays the vague Elizabethan conceptions of madness and superstitions because the people wanted them.

It was most interesting to try to determine the causes of madness. Shock and grief were chief causes of madness as exemplified in the cases of Hieronimo and Isabella in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Cornelia in *The White Devil*, and Timon in *Timon of Athens*. Love has always been considered a cause of insanity; sometimes the victim is disappointed in love; again he is extremely jealous. Orlando in *Orlando Furioso* was a victim of jealousy. Aspatia, the tragic love-lorn heroine in *The Maid's Tragedy*, was disappointed in her lover. Amintor, the poetical romantic, pure-minded lover in *The Maid's Tragedy*, was a victim of disappointment in his love affairs. Both Aspatia and Amintor became victims of extreme melancholy, as did the incomparable Hamlet. Hieronimo of *The Spanish Tragedy* and the Cardinal in *The Duchess of Malfi* were also the melancholy type. Domestic sorrow or grief marked Ophelia's madness; blighted affections also accentuated her affliction. Uncontrolled or incongruous passions caused madness in the cases of Lear and Frederick. Old age has always been considered a cause of insanity. Senility, as well as unrestrained emotions and shock at the unkind treatment from ungrateful daughters, caused Lear's madness. A guilty
conscience often leads to insanity. Proof is found in the characters of the Cardinal and Ferdinand in *The Duchess of Malfi*, in Flamenco of *The White Devil*, and in Lady Macbeth, whose devouring ambition led to crime which she relived again and again until she became insane. Lady Macbeth's madness was actually caused by continual and vehement meditation on gloomy thoughts and experiences. Thus one draws the conclusion that madness is caused by shock, grief, disillusion, strain, blighted affection, melancholy, unrequited love, jealousy, senility, and persecution. It is interesting to note that mad victims were not able to face the emotional crises of their lives.

No ramification of the study of madness held more fascination than the perusal of the different manifestations. Early manifestations were often observed in strange dress, peculiar behavior, moods of self-pity and melancholy, and varying moods and passions. Confused thinking led to wild and emotional ravings and actions. Often peculiar gestures -- nods, winks, beating of the breast -- marked distraction. The victim of insanity raved coherently one time and incoherently the next; ravings were usually inconsistent but occasionally real or poetic. Victims often suffered delusions and hallucinations. For example, the furious Orlando first thought he was Hercules, and later, a poet. Lear, one recalls, in his deluded mind imagined himself a philosopher.
Frederick, in *The Duchess of Malfi*, thought he was on a battlefield and cried out for a fresh horse. Other manifestations include walking dazedly, singing incoherently, laughing wildly, and acting strangely. Sudden touches of pathos were often followed by extreme emotional outbursts. This was particularly true in Lear's madness. Frenzied creatures often dressed fantastically, played with straws, and strewed wild flowers. Ophelia, Cornelia, and Lear felt the mad urge for fantastic dress and use of flowers. Mad creatures seldom recognized their loved ones. Women, such as Cornelia and Ophelia, often sang mournful, wanton ditties. Lady Macbeth was the outstanding somnambulist, whereas many victims of insanity walked and talked in their sleep or slept with eyes open. Many mad creatures uttered unconscious and incoherent mutterings, but maniacs -- Frederick, Hieronimo, and Lear, for example -- will be remembered for their wild, emotional ravings. Bad behavior was a definite manifestation; tragic and violent actions often followed bad behavior.

This idea was prevalent in *Orlando Furioso* when Orlando's madness first became evident as he tore off the shepherd's leg. His ravings and actions, which showed a prodigious effort at dramatic stage effects, were furious manifestations of the maniac. One never forgets the mad Ophelia and her manifestations after he once sees her come on the stage crooning to herself, talking incoherently of her sorrows --
her father, the grave, and occasionally of Hamlet -- and strewing flowers as she confuses everything in her mind and in her speech. Lear's manifestations of madness were numerous; he seemed at times to be aware of his disease; at other times, unconscious of his madness; he was poetic, then real; he was coherent and later incoherent. He felt extreme self-pity and lost all self-control. He first became hysterical; later he became completely wild. He raved and raved. He gained mental composure but lost it again. Thus one sees that the manifestations of madness vary.

Pretended madness was a fascinating study, for pretended madness, as well as madness itself, was a popular theme. Close observation of the pretenders will cause one to rate Hamlet the master pretender. Although critics differ, many concur that Hamlet's pretense was used for self-preservation. He pretended madness and deceived the King while he delayed in revenging the death of his father. Under the mask of madness he could watch, wait, and talk until the right opportunity came. Elmer Edgar Stoll tells us that in Hamlet Shakespeare used ("feigned madness as an artifice and a natural employment of the revenger at court.") He also thinks Hamlet's madness is comprehensible;

It is really feigned, not partly involuntary; and this is in keeping with Hamlet's words as he announces his intention, and with his perfect sanity

3Elmer Edgar Stoll, Art and Artifice in Shakespeare, p. 90.
when alone or with his friend. So, though less psychological, it is much more dramatic than if it were the presentation of a "disordered mind." Thus Stoll reaffirms the idea that Hamlet's feigned madness was more dramatic than real madness would have been. Second in rank among the pretenders is the stimulating Edgar. This posing Bedlam beggar was possessed by the foul fiend, roamed the countryside, and lived on charity. Edgar's pretense was the result of his brother's treachery; Edgar resorted to the Bedlam role for safety. Shakespeare handled Edgar's part masterfully in all kinds of situations. Edgar became frigid, tender, or forgiving as the occasion demanded. In *The Honest Whore* the sublime passion was degraded for Bellafront's selfish purposes, because Bellafront assumed madness and became an inmate in Bethlem Monastery for the selfish motive of winning a husband. Her pretense was cleverly carried out, and she won the undesirable Matheo as her husband. Although Malvolio was really sane, he was the victim of a joke. Madness was not his pretense but the pretense of others, for Malvolio was accused of madness for a jest by Maria, Sir Toby, and the Clown, who grew tired of Malvolio's intolerance. Although his feigned element was subsidiary, it added amusement and color to the play. The last pretender, Titus Andronicus, assumed madness in order to seek a horrible revenge. His feigned madness helped

\(^{\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 117.}}\)
him to achieve his purpose, but one wonders whether Titus' madness could possibly be feigned as one listens to his horrible words and realizes the gruesomeness of his incredible and horrible actions. Thus one sees that pretended madness adds artistry, amusement, color, pageantry, horror, tragic atmosphere, and general theatrical effects.

Having learned the Elizabethan conception of madness, its causes, and its different manifestations, one would naturally turn to the question: Why did the dramatists use madness? Was the theme of madness used for comic effect? Was it amusing? Or did it heighten catastrophe by adding a tragic or a horrible, gruesome atmosphere? Study has revealed that madness was sometimes comic, sometimes tragic, and often horrible. Webster handled madness in a most amusing manner in *The Honest Whore*. The Sweeper's explanations of mad creatures, punishments, and cures were entertaining. The madmen's antics were both amusing and funny. The Duke and his companions found merriment and sport in their encounter with the inmates of Bethlem. No one could doubt the statement that the practical joke on Malvolio added fun and color to the mirthful play, *Twelfth Night*. It is easy to conceive the element of relief in *King Lear* when the tenseness of the tragic drama is broken by the humorous trial scene; poor deluded Lear had Edgar, the Bedlam beggar, acting as judge in the comic trial of his two ungrateful
daughters. Some of Frederick's revings brought laughter to the audience who enjoyed *The Duchess of Malfi*.

In reviewing the horrible aspect of madness, no play stands out more forcefully than Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, which combines murder, incest, rape, mutilation, and pretended madness in such a way that one wishes one could forget the tragic results. Tamora, the barbarous captive queen, sought unrelentingly for revenge upon Titus, who in turn pretended madness to avenge the wrongs Tamora and her unscrupulous sons had so unmercifully bestowed upon Titus' family. No one could forget the mutilation and revishment of Lavinia; nor could one forget Titus' atrocious acts of revenge when he ground the bodies of Tamora's sons and served them in a meat pie at a banquet. Just before Tamora was killed, she was informed that her sons' flesh and bones had been baked in the pie she had just eaten. Again one is horrified at Hieronimo's slow but unrelenting efforts at revenge. At the end of the play the characters all seemed to kill each other, and Hieronimo even sliced his own tongue just before he stabbed the King and then himself. Remembering that the Elizabethans enjoyed incongruous emotions, one can imagine that their desire for excitement was completely satisfied.

Turning to the tragic aspect of madness, one cannot fail to appreciate the dramatic effect of the tragic tone
in Ophelia's mad scenes -- her pathetic attire, her dazed condition, her wanton ditties, her incoherent murmurings, her hopeless condition, and the tragic end. One can never forget the impressive but tragic sleep-walking scene in Macbeth when Lady Macbeth unconsciously revealed the burden of her heart and soul as she relived the murder of King Duncan and attempted unsuccessfully to wipe the blood from her hands. Although the mad element in The Maid's Tragedy is less dramatic, it is tragic; for the melancholy brooding of the love-lorn Aspasia and the grief and shock felt by the disappointed lover, Amintor, led to the tragic death of the four characters involved. No play has a more tragic figure than the disillusioned Timon of Athens; he became a confirmed hater of mankind who, supposedly, met death at his own hands. No one could erase from his memory the mad speeches and the sharp denunciations of this embittered outcast, one of the most tragic figures of English drama. Usually Shakespeare has his characters die like men -- or cowards, villains, or devils; but Timon dies like a dog. It is easy to agree with the critics who say Timon of Athens is un-Shakespearean; but it is truly tragic.

Judging from the study of the twelve chosen plays, one concludes that madness is thoroughly amusing only in the pretense in Twelfth Night and the mad Bethlem scene in The Honest Whore. Madness, as depicted in the tragedies, was
always tragic and often horrible. In Titus Andronicus, Shakespeare combines rape, murder, incest, and madness for a horrible, gruesome end. Kyd’s The Spanish Tragedy is a series of horrors, revenges, stabbings, and suicides. Hamlet might be called the tragedy of grief and revenge; King Lear was a play of wrath and unrestrained passions in old age; and Macbeth, a tragedy caused by over-vaulting ambition and subsequent self-condemnation and fear. The conception of madness in tragedy is definitely powerful.

Madness was often a part of the plot development; occasionally, a subsidiary element. Titus’ feigned madness was a definite part of the development of the plot in Shakespeare’s Titus Andronicus. Hamlet’s assumed madness was so skillfully woven into the drama that many contend Hamlet was truly mad; but there could have been no powerful drama without the feigned element of madness in Hamlet. King Lear was truly a mad drama; Lear himself became a maniac; Edgar, a master at pretended madness. Kyd’s The Spanish Tragedy dealt primarily with the mad father and mother whose ravings and revengeful acts brought tragic results. Webster’s The White Devil was cleverly developed with the popular theme of madness in effective usage, for many scenes of the drama portrayed mad folk and mad scenes in a real madhouse. Shakespeare’s Timon of Athens revealed the mad speeches of a misanthrope; the whole play centered around the abnormal attitudes of distrust and hate. One realizes that mad folk often
furnished the trivial underplots or offered coarse jests and songs for low entertainment. It must not be forgotten that many of the mad scenes were tragic, but others lent genuine humor which the Elizabethans felt was harmless and legitimate. The patrons of the theater loved life in all of its congruous and incongruous aspects. Madness fascinated them; consequently it was a popular theme.

One concludes that madness and all of its ramifications played an important part in Elizabethan drama. In the first place, the dramatists, to a great extent, presented madness according to Elizabethan conceptions that mental and physical deformities were caused by evil spirits. Despite the superstitious idea of possession by the devil, the dramas reveal other causes due to shock, grief, domestic worries, blighted affections, and disappointment in love; persecutions, extreme confusion, senility, and melancholy. The manifestations were various and manifold; they varied from idle chatter and pathetic songs to maniacal ravings and violent actions. Pretended madness lent color, relief, and theatrical effects. Madness was presented from three aspects: amusing, horrible, and tragic. Mad creatures and mad scenes often added absurdities to comedy; the mad scenes often increased the horrible and gruesome element; and truly madness heightened tragedy. Madness undoubtedly held a legitimate place in the unexcelled and unforgettable drama of the Elizabethan age of English literature.
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